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"WAR IS KIND"

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The Syracuse University Professoriate, 1870–1960: Four Grand Masters in the Arts

BY DAVID TATHAM

This paper was read on 15 September 1994 as part of the Syracuse University Library Associates lecture series.

For much of his long tenure as Chancellor of Syracuse University, William Pearson Tolley hosted each spring a dinner honoring retiring faculty, to which he invited all other faculty, as well as members of the administration and staff. I first attended in 1960, as a very junior administrator, military service behind me, but still a year and a half from teaching my first class.

The Chancellor’s Dinner was the sole occasion each year when the professoriate of all the University’s schools and colleges gathered together socially, and it was a time when many of them, at least for an evening, shared a restored sense of community and a heightened feeling that everyone present played a vital part in the enterprise of teaching and learning. By the late 1950s, the Chancellor’s Dinner had become a gala event that filled Sims Dining Hall, the present Lowe Art Gallery, with more than five hundred people. The Sims kitchen brought forth its most elegant meal of the year, though in those days of institutional abstemiousness the stemware at each place held water only. A spirit of bonhomie reigned, in part because many of those assembled had arrived from one or another of the cocktail parties that ritually preceded this event at private homes throughout the city, and in part because at this event teaching, the most fundamental of university functions, took center stage to receive honors. This seemed right, since nearly every retiree in

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1. “Chancellor’s Annual Dinner” and “Chancellor’s Retirement Dinner” files, Syracuse University Archives.
those years had spent his or her professional life in the classroom as an undergraduate teacher, and had spent it at Syracuse University.²

The Sims Hall Chancellor's Dinners culminated in an address on a topic of general interest. The subjects ranged widely, from foreign affairs to natural resources; but in 1960 Sawyer Falk, the University's esteemed professor of drama, complimented his audience by taking teaching itself as his topic. He drew distinctions between the great teacher, who, as he observed, "sets aflame the student's mind," and other teachers, an ever-difficult task, since, as he also observed, "tokens of greatness defy classification and analysis."³ But he had no difficulty in categorizing lesser kinds of teachers, all worthy enough, but far from transcendent greatness. Such lesser types constituted the mass of his audience, of course, and those of us at the beginning of careers in teaching seemed to understand as he spoke that while we might become useful pedants of the better kind, none of us was likely to become Falk's highest type, the teacher who succeeds as a creative artist succeeds, who reaches beyond the mind's scholarly engagement with a body of knowledge to touch, without sentiment, the human heart. His speech sparked thunderous applause.

I will return to Sawyer Falk's address and the question of why it made such a stunning impact on his colleagues, but first I take his subject merely as a point of departure to discuss four figures of great achievement in the arts at Syracuse University during its first century: George Fisk Comfort, Irene Sargent, Ivan Meštrović, and Sawyer Falk himself. I have selected the four not only because they are intrinsically interesting people (which is not a requirement for great teaching) and are from fields in which I have some competence, but also because their careers reflected local manifestations of changes that occurred in the professoriate nationwide at four points in its history. Though each represents a different generation, they share a few things: great learning grounded in the classical tradition; exceptional success as teachers; a national reputation—international in the case of Meštrović—achieved through work

². A few of the retirees were library staff.
³. Sawyer Falk's address was later published. See footnote 27.
outside university teaching; and enough strength of character to discomfort some colleagues.

George Fisk Comfort came to Syracuse in 1871, when the institution began its second year. He came just as American higher education entered a period of wholesale reform of its curriculum. Comfort's chief contribution to that reform was to bring the study of the fine arts—art, architecture, and music—into the curriculum. Professional education in these fields had previously been the province of academies, conservatories, and apprenticeships. Comfort made that preparation also the business of universities. He sustained the growing belief of his times that the fine arts constituted a moral force for the good, but he now also cast them in more topical terms as indispensable to the creation of the national high culture that Americans hoped would dawn in the post-Civil War years. More than a little boosterism bolstered Comfort's argument at this level, but the genuineness of his belief in the future greatness of American society in general, and of its art and architecture in particular, is beyond question. At the level of curricular innovation, Comfort, as much as anyone, introduced the systematic study of the history and theory of the arts to American college classrooms, and he did this without textbooks or slides.4

Comfort brought an interesting background to Syracuse. He had earned degrees in classical philology in the 1850s, then spent five years in the 1860s, poor as a church mouse, traveling throughout Europe to see at first hand the major monuments of art and architecture of Western civilization. In Berlin he studied with the historian Leopold von Ranke, among others, and in both Berlin and London he absorbed the thought that had arisen in those cities to redefine for the modern world what an art museum should be and do. These new ideas, grounded in philology, organized art objects systematically on objective "scientific principles," classifying them geographically and chronologically, and working out their historical significance. Museums guided by this new thought began to build comprehensive collections of objects judged by connoisseurs

4. I have drawn Comfort's biographical history from the Comfort Family Papers, Syracuse University Archives.
to be fine or at least characteristic specimens of visual art from pre-history to the recent past. By the middle decades of the nineteenth century these ideas had begun to put an end to older ways of thinking about art objects merely as curiosities, as religious artifacts deserving veneration more than study, as badges of princely power or private wealth, or as objects whose beauty spoke for itself and required no explanation. The age of the public art museum had opened, and the explanation of art, based on “scientific principles,” now became a scholarly enterprise.

Museums guided by these ideas became symbols of civic stature. By the early 1870s, major American cities had moved decisively to establish public collections of art meant to rival those of Europe. Soon, artists themselves came for the first time to view the art museum, and a rapidly developing museum culture, as a factor in their own production. Beginning with Syracuse’s initiative in 1871, American colleges and universities increasingly measured their own stature by a commitment to the teaching of the fine arts, a realm that a decade earlier had no place whatever in their curricula.

Earlier, on his return to America in 1866, Comfort had taught briefly at Allegheny, Drew, and, probably, Princeton. Then, in 1869 he accepted the invitation of a group of civic leaders in New York City to instruct it in the principles underpinning this new age of museums and to develop a plan for a grand public art collection in New York. From this came the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870. Comfort helped secure the museum’s Central Park site from Boss Tweed and served on the museum’s board for a year. Then, married and in need of a regular income, he accepted Syracuse University’s invitation to create an undergraduate degree program in the arts.

From the beginning his plan for Syracuse’s new college included departments of art, architecture, and music, but the meagerness of his resources required him to proceed by stages. Art got underway in 1873 with the opening of the Hall of Languages. Architecture soon followed; music began in 1877, all housed, along with the College of Liberal Arts, as well as the University library and chapel (both doing double duty as classrooms), in the same imposing building.
George F. Comfort in 1906 (Syracuse University Archives).
Comfort organized every aspect of these fields of study, planning each course in detail before finding someone to teach it. He had no useful models available to follow and no cadre of academics ready to teach his courses. His initial faculty in art and architecture consisted of local practitioners whom he persuaded to give their time gratis: these included the painters George Knapp and Sanford Thayer, the architect Archimedes Russell, and the photographer Ward Ranger (who had served on Smithsonian Institution expeditions). At Comfort’s prompting, local musicians organized a glee club and did the spade work that led to the hiring of William Schultze to begin professional studies in music in 1877. With this Comfort began to assemble a paid faculty of professional teachers. The interactive relationship among the three units gave Syracuse’s College of Fine Arts a distinct identity, one beyond the reach of independent academies and conservatories of the day and much broader in its scope than the historically more celebrated programs in arts, each very different from the other, that began in the mid-1840s at Harvard and Yale.

Why did Syracuse’s pioneering program succeed? First, it had the enormous advantage of being launched at a new institution, one as yet unburdened by tradition but very much needing to establish a distinctive identity among the several colleges already in central New York. Then, too, from the start Syracuse welcomed women, a necessity for a proper music program. Moreover, the University served its students custodially, in loco parentis, and some parents of nascent artists, architects, and musicians must have found this a more salubrious arrangement than that typically offered by the boarding houses that served private conservatories and academies. But probably more important than any of these things was a readiness among cultivated Americans of Comfort’s generation to begin to shake off feelings of cultural inferiority in the arts vis-à-vis Europe and to commit themselves through artistic production to the building of a high culture on home ground.

One measure of the new college’s success was its new home, the John Crouse Memorial Building, opened in 1889 and named for its donor who, ironically, had no particular interest in the arts and
who harbored misgivings about coeducation. The building’s auditorium served as the University’s chapel for forty years, until the construction of Hendricks Chapel. Crouse included a spacious art exhibition room, the distant forebear of both the Syracuse University Art Collection and the Lowe Art Gallery. This building, growing enrollments, an ever larger faculty, and the acquisition of such treasures as the Wolff-Leavenworth collection of prints and the Audubon double-elephant-folio Birds of America attested to Comfort’s success. He may also have played a role in the University’s acquisition in the 1880s of the library of his celebrated teacher Leopold von Ranke.

In 1893 Comfort resigned to accept an offer to head a college of fine arts at an envisioned new university in Texas. The proposed institution did not materialize, leaving him at age sixty nearly penniless and without a job. He returned to Syracuse and attempted to regain a University appointment. Though the deanship he had left was once again vacant, and many of his colleagues and local citizens urged Chancellor James Roscoe Day to reappoint him, the strong feeling of John D. Archbold, chairman of the University’s board of trustees, that anyone who willingly left the University “family” could never be welcomed back, prevailed. Comfort declared bankruptcy. He wrote to his son,

I have surrendered my library, though it has gone hard with my feelings. I somehow had hoped to keep it... but I have given it up. My intellectual life for over thirty years was locked up with that library. I bought the books here and there, in Europe and America, when I was a young man

5. Comfort’s wife expressed grave disapproval of the broadened use of John Crouse’s name when in 1904 it ceased to apply only to the building he had donated and became the name of the college housed in the building. Anna Manning Comfort to former Chancellor Charles N. Sims, 29 September 1904; to John D. Archbold, 7 June 1911; and to Frank Smalley, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Comfort’s former colleague, 13 June 1911. Comfort Family Papers, Syracuse University Archives.
and when an older man. I have used them in writing my books and getting up my lectures. It was . . . hard to give it up, but it is done and my mind is calm. Let it go!7

His wife, Anna Manning Comfort, who had earned a medical degree in the 1860s, practiced in New York, and then set aside her career for a few years in Syracuse to raise her children, now returned to her profession to try to keep the wolf from the door. She had already served as the family’s main source of income in the earliest years of her husband’s deanship when the University found itself in financial distress and could not pay his modest salary for several months.8

Within a few years, Comfort rose from the ashes of his ruined career to repeat on a much smaller scale in the city of Syracuse what he had done in New York nearly thirty years earlier. He brought an art museum into being. After five years of planning, in 1900 the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, now the Everson Museum, opened its doors. From the evidence of the museum’s first decade, a case can be made that, despite the meagerness of his resources, Comfort was perhaps the most innovative and visionary museum director in America in these years.9 The University, reflecting Chancellor Day’s censorious stance, kept its distance. Paid little more than a subsistence salary, Comfort remained director of the Syracuse Museum until his death in 1910 at age seventy-seven.

The break that Comfort’s College of Fine Arts had made with the old liberal arts curriculum in the 1870s signaled the spirit of the times. Within a generation, now following rather than establishing a national pattern, Syracuse instituted colleges of applied science, forestry, agriculture, and teaching, and planned others. The faculties of these colleges had little to share in their intellectual and

8. Comfort Family Papers, Syracuse University Archives.
9. His chief rival in innovative thinking about American museums in the first decade of the century was John Cotton Dana of the much better funded Newark Museum, a younger man who, unlike Comfort, was sympathetic to the early stirrings of modernism in America.
professional interests. When Chancellor Tolley instituted his annual retirement dinner in the 1940s, he meant to restore some sense of common ground to a now highly diversified faculty by honoring the then near-universal activity of undergraduate teaching.

Irene Sargent joined the faculty of the College of Fine Arts in 1895. She was but one of several notable women on the College of Fine Arts faculty. Jeanette Scott, who had attended the Pennsylvania Academy beginning in Thomas Eakins's last year of teaching at that institution, and then studied in Paris for five years, came to Syracuse directly from Paris as an instructor in 1895. Soon promoted to professor, she headed the department of painting from 1912 to 1927. Minnie Mason Beebe, widowed at an early age, joined the college as professor of history and French, reflecting Comfort's belief that since the arts held such intimate associations with languages and history, the college should have its own faculty in these fields. She taught for thirty-seven years; a University building once bore her name. Belle Brewster, who had studied voice and choral conducting first in Germany and then in London at the Royal College of Music with Sir George Henschel and Alberto Randegger, taught for more than a quarter of a century. Rilla Jackman taught in the Teachers College rather than in the College of Fine Arts, but her once-standard text in the history of American art, published in the early 1920s, allied her with the College of Fine Arts. During Sargent's long tenure, the faculty of the College of Fine Arts grew from twenty-five to forty, and during all this time women occupied a third or more of its positions. Not until recent

10. I thank Cleota Reed, who is preparing a monograph about Sargent, for unpublished biographical data. See Reed's preliminary studies, "Irene Sargent: Rediscovering a Lost Legend," Syracuse University Library Associates Courier 16 (Summer 1979): 3–13; and "Irene Sargent: A Comprehensive Bibliography of Her Published Writings," Courier 18 (Spring 1981): 9–25. I also thank Bettina Chapman, former trustee of the University, for sharing with me her recollections of her classes with Sargent in 1931–32.

11. Beebe Cottage, a residence for women students at 119 Euclid Avenue, in the 1980s became the administrative center of the University's Division of International Programs Abroad.


13
years have women again begun to constitute an equivalently prominent part of the University’s faculty in the arts.13  
Sargent gained her advanced education in the history of art and architecture through studies with Charles Eliot Norton and others at Harvard in the late 1870s, presumably as an auditor, and then at universities in Rome and Paris. She traveled widely in Europe, taught privately, and published critical essays on literature before coming to Syracuse. In the College of Fine Arts she taught not only the history of art and architecture but also Romance languages. For advanced students she taught Gothic architecture in French and the High Renaissance in Italian.

Her teaching schedule, typical of its times, filled the day. In the spring semester of 1920, in her mid-seventies, she taught courses in the history of architecture, the history of world art, the history of American art, and the history of ornament, as well as first- and second-year Italian, third-year Latin, a tutorial in Dante, and technical French for architects. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, she taught in her classroom in Crouse College steadily from ten to five, with an hour off for lunch. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, she taught from nine to twelve.14 At the start of those courses in which she closed the classroom shutters to show lantern slides, she ritually intoned: “The gentlemen will kindly sit in the rear of the room, and the lady students will sit in the front. Gentlemen and ladies will not sit together, as the dark inspires men to evil deeds.” No one laughed.

In after hours she found time to publish in journals a large body of historical and critical essays in the arts, more than a hundred over nearly thirty years, wide-ranging in their subjects and original in their observations. Some of her articles continue to be anthologized. Between 1900 and 1904 she served as de facto managing editor of Gustav Stickley’s newly founded Craftsman magazine while con-

13. The expectation by the 1940s that faculty have advanced degrees tended to eliminate women in some fields, since they had little access to advanced study. Sargent was among the very few women teachers of architectural history in American universities, but she had no women students in this field.

Irene Sargent (Syracuse University Archives).
tributing regularly to its monthly issues. In its first year she devoted entire issues to John Ruskin and William Morris. Sargent began her writing career before scholarly journals in the visual arts had come into being in America—they began to appear after the First World War. With Stickley's help, she in essence created a journal for herself and like-minded students of the fine and decorative arts. After Stickley moved from Syracuse to New York in 1904, Sargent gained a new outlet through *The Keystone*, a jeweller's trade journal in Philadelphia. Except for a few scattered pieces, Sargent's papers seem not to have survived; if they had, they would surely illuminate much about the emergence of scholarly publication in the arts in America in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Comfort and Sargent make an instructive contrast. Comfort's important publications, in philology and museum theory, came early, before he arrived in Syracuse. Thereafter, he invested his energies in creating a field of study, organizing a curriculum, and assembling the people to make it work; but he published little, other than pieces for the Syracuse newspapers that explained, in fascinating detail for present-day readers, the rationale for the new college and its courses. In contrast, Sargent's prolific activity as an author began when she joined the faculty, and went hand in hand with her long career as a teacher, the one endeavor reinforcing the other, and neither interrupted by deanly duties. Her writings were not pedagogical; they addressed the general educated public. She represented a new spirit in the professoriate, one that rewarded the teacher who went beyond the classroom to make an impact for the good on society at large.

She was a socialist of the William Morris stripe, no threat to the established political order but a devoted believer in the power of the arts and crafts—of handwork—to improve the social and aesthetic distress spawned by industrialization. In the 1870s, Comfort had seen the public museum and civic art as the best measures of a society's cultural maturity. Thirty years later Sargent looked as well to the arts of design and decoration in the domestic dwelling and the public schools. As much as anyone publishing in America, she strove to dissolve arbitrary distinctions between fine and decorative arts. Through her criticism she elevated discussion of the crafts to a
more serious level than had previously been known in America. Despite her years, she managed to accommodate the rapid changes that arrived with the new century. Notes taken from her lectures in the 1920s mention Picasso and Cubism.

Comfort and Sargent in succession taught the history of art and architecture for nearly sixty years to students preparing for careers as artists and architects. They did so in an era when university administration was much simpler and more personal than it would become by the middle decades of the twentieth century. We know the details of Sargent's teaching load in the late 1920s because one of Charles Wesley Flint's reforms after he assumed the Chancellorship in 1922 was to institute modern systems of record-keeping. Day's age of autocracy gave way to Flint's era of procedural fairness, with its growth of committees, forms, and administrative staff. This shift in the twenties probably underlay Sargent's response to a Saturday morning class in the autumn of 1931, when she learned from the students that in the afternoon they would be in Archbold Stadium watching the Syracuse football team play Michigan State. She said, "I am sorry to have to tell you that Syracuse University will be unable to prevail in this contest, since Michigan State University is a well run institution and Syracuse University is tied up in red tape."15

Though she was a woman of great learning, Sargent had no academic degrees. Syracuse rectified this by awarding her an honorary M.A. in 1911 and an honorary D. Litt. in 1922. In 1926 she became the second woman in the nation inducted as an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects. She died in 1932, unretired at age eighty. In an era before Social Security, or TIAA/CREF, retirement from university teaching often meant poverty, genteel or worse. Sargent lies buried in Oakwood Cemetery in the now all-but-forgotten Syracuse University lot for indigent faculty, her grave marked by a stone donated by a devoted student.16 The deep-

15. Recalled by Bettina Chapman.
16. According to tradition, the former student was Mary Imogen Day, daughter of Chancellor Day, and for some years an instructor in music in the College of Fine Arts.
ening of the Depression prevented the appointment of a successor. As a stop-gap, a member of the music faculty was assigned to teach her courses in the history of the visual arts, which he did, with some success, by reading her lecture notes. The fact that as late as 1946 he was still doing so reflects the near-paralyzing effect of the Depression and the Second World War on the University.

Ivan Meštrović joined the faculty in 1947, at age 64, as an internationally celebrated sculptor. Though he liked to emphasize that he had emerged from peasant stock, he had in fact received a first-rate education in sculpture and architecture in Vienna early in the century amid the first stirrings of modernism. Rodin claimed him as his natural successor. Working in Yugoslavia, by 1920 he had become a major figure of world art. By 1927 his heroic equestrian statues of Indians were a commanding presence in Chicago’s Grant Park. His refusal to return to his native Croatia after the Communists took power in 1946 left him, in a world only just beginning to heal after years of depression and war, in need of a haven. Through the intercession of the sculptor Malvina Hoffman, William Pearson Tolley created a professorship for Meštrović. By then, Comfort’s College of Fine Arts had become three largely independent schools of art, architecture, and music. The College of Liberal Arts had begun its own program in art history and musicology for students not intending studio or performance careers.

In the School of Art Meštrović became, in effect, an artist-in-residence, that is, someone whose career has been in the arts rather than in university teaching, and who continues that career while assuming a new one. In the decades following the war many universities began to add luster to their faculty rosters by appointing painters, novelists, dancers, singers, poets, and others as artists-in-residence. Meštrović stands among the earliest and the most successful of this new species of teacher.

17. Recalled by former students and faculty of the 1940s. The lecture notes seem not to have survived.

18. For Meštrović’s biography, see Laurence Schmeckebier, *Ivan Meštrović: Sculptor and Patriot* (Syracuse University Press, 1959), and the Ivan Meštrović clipping file, Syracuse University Archives.
Ivan Meštrović at work on *Croatian Rhapsody* (Syracuse University Archives).
For his eight years at Syracuse, during which time he worked steadily on his own commissions, his students, who were chiefly at the graduate level, revered him. He had arrived at a time when the University, like others nationwide, had begun to put a new emphasis on graduate programs. By the time he left, in 1955, to accept a professorship at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, distinctions between undergraduate and graduate teaching, long-established in the nation’s premier institutions, had begun to appear everywhere. I recall that in the 1950s most younger faculty members of my acquaintance aspired to a condition of pure graduate teaching, a state few ever achieved. A belief had arisen within the professoriate’s younger generation that undergraduate teaching offered lesser challenges and brought lesser rewards. This belief dominated much of American higher education for the succeeding generation.

The University converted a carriage house on Marshall Street, east of University Avenue, into a sculpture studio; but Meštrović did much of his teaching of graduate students at his home on Livingston Avenue, where the University erected a military surplus prefabricated building as an annex to his own studio. A newspaper clipping shows him standing by one of his works in that facility with visitors (not students) at a reception. Graduate student-apprentices in sculpture began most days with a three-hour life drawing class conducted by Meštrović in his studio, following which he retired to his house for lunch and a siesta while they turned their attention to their projects. He emerged at two, critiqued each student’s efforts, and then went to his own work in his adjoining studio, encouraging his students to observe him. They left at five; he continued into the evening. His limited command of the English language proved no impediment to communication. 19

The degree of independence relative to the rest of the faculty enjoyed by artists-in-residence becomes clear in a recollection published by Professor Jim Ridlon. As a student, he sought to be admitted to one of the master’s classes. Meštrović looked at his work and said no. Ridlon asked the dean of the School of Art to inter-

19. I am grateful to Professor Emerita Luise Meyers Kaish of Columbia University for her recollections of study with Meštrović.
cede. Knowing that the young man had notable talents, Dean Schmeckebier gave him a memo to carry to the sculptor, requesting that he be admitted to the class. Meštirović took the memo from Ridlon, read it, held it to his ever-present cigar, and watched it burn. It is hard to imagine an “ordinary” member of the faculty of the arts at that time responding quite this way to a message from the dean, even though some of them, such as Arthur Poister, the School of Music’s nationally acclaimed teacher of organ, were of near-equivalent stature in their fields.

Like Comfort, Sargent, and Falk, Meštirović possessed a degree of creative energy that seemed phenomenal to others. In his eight years at Syracuse he fulfilled numerous commissions for patrons in the United States and Europe, including some for Syracuse University, including a bust of Chancellor Tolley now in Lubin House. One Syracuse commission was never begun. At the request of the Chancellor, but without consultation with the artist, a large block of limestone was set into the second story of the north wall of the Women’s Building in the hope that Meštirović would agree to carve it. Sculptural architectural decoration is a product of studios, however, and not of open-air carving on scaffolds, and the project came to naught. By the time he left for South Bend, a move rationalized too simply at the time by the claim that he preferred to conclude his career at a Catholic school rather than at a Methodist one, Syracuse University owned more than two dozen of his works. Any institution must count itself fortunate when an artist-in-residence proves to be not only a passionately committed teacher but also a richly productive artist. Teachers pass from memory; art survives, tended by the muses, daughters of Mnemosyne (Memory) and Zeus (Power).

Of my quartet of major figures in the arts at Syracuse, only Sawyer Falk determined as a student to make a profession of university teaching. He committed himself to drama, a field that had been omitted at Syracuse, and elsewhere throughout the nation,

20. Stars Magazine, Syracuse Herald American, 15 April 1984, p. 5. Ridlon persisted and later became one of Meštirović’s most distinguished students.

21. I have drawn biographical information from the Sawyer Falk Papers, Syracuse University Archives.
when degree programs in fine arts began to appear in the 1870s. As late as the early 1920s, drama as an independent field of study still had no place in academe. Dramatic literature remained the province of classics and modern language departments. Dramatic production remained an extracurricular activity. Falk essentially accomplished for drama what Comfort had accomplished for art and music more than fifty years earlier: he gained it acceptance into the university curriculum. He was not alone in this effort in the 1920s to elevate drama above the status of entertainment on American campuses, but he soon became and long remained a national leader of the movement to gain academic respectability for a field long viewed as unworthy of it.

When Falk established drama as a field of study at Syracuse in 1927 it did not become a component of the College of Fine Arts. As happened at many other institutions, drama found a place in the school of Speech and Dramatic Arts. This left it in an ever-awkward operational relationship to the fields of art and music, whose students drama needed for its productions, as well as to the Department of English, with whom drama now competed in the field of dramatic literature. Even within the University’s School of Speech the Department of Drama’s intimate relationship with other arts distinguished it from the normative and therapeutic goals of the rest of the school. As professor of drama, Falk wore two hats. He was at once a classroom teacher (who headed a department) and the director of university dramatic activities. The latter responsibility embraced not only those productions that served Department of Drama students as professional training for the “living theatre,” but also other productions open to students campus-wide as an extracurricular activity. When a colleague described Falk as uncommonly rigorous in the standards he demanded of his students, and sometimes gruff and testy in his relations with others at the University, he merely described the manner of a person determined to pilot a new and still vulnerable field of study through rough waters.22

22. William Pearson Tolley’s reference to Falk as a “prima donna” in Tolley’s At the Fountain of Youth: Memories of a College President (Syracuse, 1989), 96, doubtless reflects Falk’s necessary independence of spirit. A more considered
After studies at Columbia and New York University, and teaching at Hillsdale College in Michigan, Falk at age twenty-nine received an invitation from Chancellor Flint to develop an academic program in drama. In accepting the appointment in the spring of 1927, he wrote:

My fundamental opinion of the study of Drama is that it must stress two points of view: the cultural, whereby it merits inclusion in a college curriculum, and the practical, whereby it justifies, as it must, its relation to a living theatre, . . . [and] implies art to be done rather than art to be talked about. 23

In a news release announcing his appointment, which it described as the most important in its field in the nation, the University made clear what it had promised Falk:

Erection of a new theatre building to house two complete stages, classroom, workshops, and equipment comparable to the best playhouses in New York City. The Chancellor has promised that this will be completed within two years. Professor Falk is already at work on it. . . . 24

In the event, Falk was left to make bricks without straw. The Crash of 1929, a decade-long Depression, and the Second World War and its aftermath prevented him from even seeing a purpose-built facility for his program, or for that matter, any facility worthy of his goals. He improvised, using such spaces as the lobby of Slocum Hall and the downtown Civic Theatre until, after the war, he gained for his program part of Machinery Hall when it was emptied of obsolete engineering apparatus. Into this he built, to his own design, the Boar's Head and Coronet theatres, scarcely adequate to the purposes, but from which came a continuing series of opinion, and one shared widely, was reflected in Vice Chancellor Frank Piskor's note to Falk the morning following his address at the 1960 faculty dinner: "Last night's performance and paper were magnificent. I am proud to know you." Sawyer Falk Papers, Syracuse University Archives.

23. Falk to Hugh Massey Tilroe, dean of the School of Speech, Sawyer Falk Papers, University Correspondence, 1927–29, Syracuse University Archives.

Sawyer Falk (© 1939 Bachrach).
admirable productions, many of which are remembered decades later by Syracuse theatre-goers of wide experience for moments, scenes, and individual performances, scarcely surpassed on the professional stage.

Falk’s curriculum and teaching moved ahead largely undeterred by the inadequacy of his facilities. His emphasis on acting as the “rock foundation” of studies in drama gave his program distinction, and so did his teaching in other areas. He and his students made films before 1930. He provided, through articles, correspondence, and national discussion, the first body of principled thought on film censorship. On censorship itself in any realm he became an early and powerful voice in support of intellectual freedom. He taught script-writing and wrote plays himself. His work as a director in the professional theatre in New York, and his leadership in national theatre organizations over many years, added to his reputation as a man who could do anything well.

He had been told in 1927 to form a department, and that department would be his. For more than a third of a century he ruled it, much as a stage director rules a production. He did not suffer fools gladly and he wasted no words when it came to protecting his department’s interests and reputation. A single instance points up his recurrent need to work across administrative boundaries from his relatively isolated position in the School of Speech. In 1947 Ernst Bacon, a distinguished musician indeed, served as dean of the School of Music. The school’s students were essential to the success of many of the activities overseen by the Department of Drama. Bacon, perhaps reflecting a current of thought within the music faculty, wrote to Falk in a memo on 8 January, between semesters, sounding rather like Pooh-Bah:

In order to facilitate all our cooperative arrangements, we suggest that when you wish to use any of the music students in music shows of your undertaking, you give us a list of the persons desired and we will clear the matter of their availability and the desirability of their participation with their respective voice teachers. 25

25. Sawyer Falk Papers, Correspondence with Ernst Bacon, Syracuse University Archives.
The next day, Falk responded:

I have your note regarding the participation by students of the College of Fine Arts in the Dramatic Activities of Syracuse University. The only thing I have to say at this moment is that I don’t intend to be bound by rules that you make up as you go along; nor do I intend to be beholden to you or to anybody else in your school. You cannot seem to understand that this is an extracurricular activity open to all students in terms of their choosing.26

By the late 1950s, Falk’s students from three decades as well as his colleagues in his field at Syracuse and other universities viewed him not only as a legendary teacher, but also as a heroic one, and this is perhaps why Chancellor Tolley invited him to address the retirement dinner in 1960. Falk titled his address “The Sons of Acestes,” taking as his text that passage of the Aeneid in which four archers compete for honors by shooting at a dove tethered by a ribbon to a ship’s mast. Falk used the archers as models for his four types of teachers.27

The first shoots and hits the mast, no mean feat, and earns the cheers of the assembled onlookers, as a show of a high degree of competence should. None of the other three would hear cheers.

The second shoots and, reluctant to kill a tethered bird, hits instead the ribbon, breaks it, and sets the dove free. The third archer instantly raises his bow and sends his arrow directly to its mark, catching the bird in mid-flight and bringing it to the ground.

At which point the fourth, Acestes, having no target, raises his bow and shoots an arrow heavenward, toward the gods, and as it passes into the clouds it bursts into flame. Aeneas awards first place to Acestes, and Falk did the same to the rare type of teacher who succeeds in aiming beyond secure competence, who seeks to do more than to free his students from the ties of convention, who aspires to more, even, than to synthesize ideas in flight and bring

26. Ibid.
27. Falk, The Sons of Acestes (Syracuse University, 1960). Illustrated with drawings by Professor Robert Marx, and designed by Professor Peter Piening, the pamphlet publication of Falk’s address was twice reprinted.

26
them to earth for close study. Falk’s rare great teacher reaches for the gods and in doing so sets a flame his students’ minds.

Falk elaborated richly on this story and its implications for teaching in his own time, and he held his audience in thrall. He was a performer, and at his best this evening. Surely one of the reasons why those gathered in Sims applauded him so enthusiastically, and he received so many congratulatory notes in the succeeding days, rested in his colleagues’ pride of association with him. At least as much as the national football championship of the previous autumn, Falk gave the assembled faculty reason to believe that Syracuse was indeed a school of excellence.

But the applause also had something to do with a complex historical moment. In 1960 nearly everyone in Falk’s audience understood to some degree that an era was ending, that a new epoch had arrived. Undergraduate teaching, which had been the mainstay of Syracuse’s professoriate since 1871, and which had long been accepted as a noble enterprise, now seemed destined to assume a secondary status in the envisioned next phase of the University’s development. In his address Falk quoted his good friend Brooks Atkinson, drama critic of the New York Times: “We sometimes forget that teaching is a great force in civilization. Great teaching is creative; given the raw materials of mind and spirit it can produce men [and women] who are awakened to the wonders of the universe.” Hardly anyone in American higher education in 1960 would have disagreed with this sentiment, but at the same time it was not hard to see that universities were reordering their values.

The view from 1960 revealed a new order. Faculty appointments and faculty rewards in most fields at the university level would now come from research more than teaching, or at any event, from graduate rather than undergraduate teaching. Believing that heavy teaching loads lowered the quality of instruction (pace Comfort, Sargent, and Falk), university faculties would teach less, and shift a significant part of undergraduate instruction to teaching assistants. Increasing specialization would further diminish the common ground within the institution, and would find faculty often communicating more vitally with colleagues, agencies, and others in their specialty outside the university than with anyone.
within. The interplay of faculty with public, locally and farther afield, so vital to Comfort, Sargent, Meštrović, and Falk’s generations, would diminish sharply. The new age of higher education would have its own glories in ample quantity, including great teaching, but it would be a different age.

It seems clear that all but the youngest members of Falk’s audience in Sims Dining Hall sensed that his address amounted to their last hurrah. In applauding him they applauded the values that had sustained them in the dark days of national distress and personal sacrifice. The new age opened around them rapidly. Chancellor Tolley oversaw a transition between the old order and the new that preserved, perhaps as much as any university of its time could, a human spirit and a hope that undergraduate teaching might still count as a “great force.” But it was perhaps a measure of just how rapidly the new order took hold that in 1963, two years after Sawyer Falk’s death, the Chancellor discontinued his annual retirement dinner for the faculty.
The Sculpture of Harriet Whitney Frishmuth and New York Dance

BY JOSEPH G. DREISS

Syracuse University is a good place to study the life and work of Harriet Whitney Frishmuth. The University Art Collection harbors many of her sculptures, and her papers reside in the University Library’s Department of Special Collections. The following article draws extensively on the latter.

The Harriet Whitney Frishmuth collection contains hundreds of letters and newspaper clippings documenting Frishmuth’s career, as well as photographs of the artist’s original plaster compositions (which she generally destroyed to limit the editions of her sculptures). A lengthy interview with Frishmuth on audiotape is supplemented by a short movie of her discussing her art and career. There are numerous original works of art by Frishmuth, especially figure studies and a few examples of her sculpture. Other works on paper include ground plans and studies by the architects with whom she collaborated in the creation of her garden statuary and its settings.

Frishmuth was invited to give this collection to the Syracuse University Library on her eighty-fourth birthday, 17 September 1964.—J.G.D.

Abandoning herself to an upsurge of pure exuberance, a dancer unleashes the boundless energy of youth. Joy of the Waters (fig. 1) exemplifies the most significant period in the career of Harriet Whitney Frishmuth, an extraordinary and largely overlooked female sculptor of the early twentieth century. In what follows I will discuss Frishmuth’s career, and the influence of New York dance and dancers upon her sensual and dynamic sculptures.

Harriet Whitney Frishmuth (fig. 2) was born in Philadelphia on 17 September 1880 to Frank B. and Louise Berens Frishmuth. Her

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Fig. 1. *Joy of the Waters*. (All photos in this article are courtesy of Syracuse University Library.)
father, uncle, and grandfather were distinguished physicians, which may help explain Harriet’s long-standing interest in the human figure.

So much of Harriet’s youth was spent in Europe that it is fair to say she was raised and educated abroad. Her mother took Harriet and her two sisters to Europe early on, and they remained there for many years. Harriet attended private schools in Paris and Dresden, and the family spent the summers in Switzerland.

In Switzerland Harriet first began making sculpture:

While there I met a Mrs. Hinton who was a sculptor’s wife and I think she was a sculptor herself. She came up to me one evening and said, “What do you do? You look as though you ought to play the violin.” I laughed and said, “I don’t know one tune from another but I always had a yearning to model but have never had a chance to try it.” She replied, “Come on up to my room. I have some plasteline and we’ll see what you can do with it.” So I went up to her room and she handed me a lump of plasteline and I started playing with it and modeled from memory a relief of my mother who was downstairs in bed. Mrs. Hinton was very encouraging and decided to give me lessons. We wrote to Italy for some plasteline and I started a bust of my mother built up on a bottle. It turned out to be quite like her. I was very enthusiastic.¹

After this introduction to sculpture, Frishmuth moved to Paris at the age of nineteen to pursue further study. Initially, she enrolled in a class for women that was critiqued by Auguste Rodin twice a week. Then she enrolled in the Academie Colarossi, where she continued her studies under Henri Desiré Guaquie and Jean Antoine Injalbert.

Although Frishmuth’s contact with Rodin was brief, he seems to have exerted the strongest formative influence on the young artist. According to Frishmuth, Rodin taught her to “first always look at the silhouette of a subject and be guided by it; second, remember that movement is the transition from one attitude to another. It is a

bit of what was and a bit of what is to be.” Movement was basic to Rodin’s art. It was, he thought, the essence of life and the vital element in sculpture. Frequently he sketched models as they moved around his studio. Frishmuth’s best known and most important sculptures feature dancing or physically active figures with clear and forceful silhouettes.

After her Parisian studies, Frishmuth gained two years of experience in Berlin as an assistant to Professor Cuno von Euchtritz, with whom she worked on numerous sculptures for that city. Upon returning to New York, she enrolled in the Art Students League, taking up studies with Gutzon Borglum and Herman A. MacNeil. Frishmuth found Borglum an inspiring teacher who “gave me valuable aid and more inspiration for my work than I had ever before received.” She acquired even further training as an assistant to Karl Bitter and also by enrolling at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where for two years she studied anatomy by dissection.

Around 1908 she finally set up her first studio at 35 Park Avenue, the home of her uncle, Dr. T. Pasmore Berens. During this period she received her first major commission: a bronze bas-relief of Dr. Abraham Jacobi for the New York County Medical Society. She also made a number of small, decorative, utilitarian objects that feature human or animal motives. These objects, such as Girl and Frog Ashtray and Pushing Men Bookends, were no doubt done for commercial purposes. A number of these works were cast in large editions, and they continued to sell well for many years.

Frishmuth came into her own in 1913 when she and her mother purchased a house and studio at Sniffen Court, a cul-de-sac between East 35th and East 36th streets in New York City. A number of other sculptors, including Edward McCartan and Malvina Hoffman, lived and worked in the remodeled stables of this picturesque

2. [Schmavonian], “Frishtmuth,” 22.
3. “Philadelphia Girl's Art with Chisel,” undated, unidentified newspaper clipping, Harriet Whitney Frishmuth Papers, Department of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library.
artists’ enclave. Over the next twenty years, Frishmuth was to produce her most significant sculptures there.

Her first large-scale sculptures from this period, conceived as functional objects, have a serene and static quality. Saki: A Sundial of 1913, which won Honorable Mention at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, and The Globe Sundial are examples of this type. The seated pose of the figure in the latter work reflects none of the vivacious movement that would characterize her signature works of the 1920s.

It was at Sniffen Court that Frishmuth became deeply inspired by the art of dance and particularly of ballet; for at this time she met nineteen-year-old Desha Delteil, a dancer who was herself on the way to international success. A native of Yugoslavia, Desha had
come to the United States at the age of sixteen. She made her debut with the Helen Moeller Dancers in 1917. After being brought to the attention of Michel Fokine, she began dancing with the Fokine Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Then Hugo Risenfeld, manager of the Rivoli and Rialto theaters in New York, saw her and he immediately hired her. She won instant acclaim for her presentation of the "Bubble Dance," which she choreographed herself. Her dancing was also featured in the Paramount picture "Glorifying the American Girl."

Frishmuth recalls her first encounter with this creative spirit who was to inspire so much of her best work:

Desha was sent to me by Miss Frances Grimes, a sculptor whose work I admired. It was in 1916 that Desha knocked at my studio door in Sniffen Court and asked if I could use her. I liked her attitude right away but I didn't have time just then. I took her name and address and told her I would let her know when I could work her in. When we had finished our little chat she went out skipping, half dancing and singing through the courtyard to the street. That was the beginning of a very pleasant relationship between Desha and me. She posed for me for years and is the model in ninety percent of my more important work. At first I used her for my class of five or six pupils. Then one week I had her pose just for me and as neither of us knew exactly what we wanted I put a record on the victrola. It was L'Extase by Scriabin. Desha started dancing and one pose intrigued me. I carried it out and called the finished bronze Extase after the music.  

Although Frishmuth had studied and trained for years and had been earning her living as a professional sculptor before this meeting, she had yet to produce sculpture that showed any real originality. With Desha as her model, Frishmuth's art suddenly became filled with life and movement. Desha's lighthearted, spirited, and lyrical approach to dance touched a chord in the artist. Frishmuth must  

5. Undated, unidentified newspaper clipping, Harriet Whitney Frishmuth Papers, Department of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library.  
6. [Schmavonian], "Frishmuth," 23.
have identified closely with the dancer, for the sculptures that Frishmuth produced with Desha as her model seem the products of a shared sensibility.

*Extase* is the remarkable result of their collaboration. Compared to *Saki: A Sundial*, mentioned earlier, *Extase* introduces dynamic movement. Desha stands on her toes, her back arched and her hands joined high above. Her head is thrown back and her eyes closed: she is absorbed in physical ecstasy. The muscles and tendons of her lean, superbly fit body are stretched to the limit. She is poised between movements, in a stance expressing powerful and triumphant sensuality.

The arched pose of the figure allows Frishmuth to emphasize contour, one of the aspects of sculpture stressed by her teacher Rodin. The front of the figure, which describes a long, bow-like line, contrasts with the undulating contour of the back.

*The Vine* (fig. 3), perhaps Frishmuth’s best known and most successful sculpture, also emphasizes sweeping contours. Here Desha’s exaggerated pose is even more dynamic than that of *Extase*. The dancer bends backwards in complete abandon. Her left arm is thrust out in front of her while her left hand delicately holds one end of a grapevine, which forms a twisting arc beside her. The tense muscles, articulated with great knowledge and authority, are clearly visible beneath the skin.

Frishmuth talked about the origin of the initial, small version of *The Vine*:

The small Vine originated in my studio in a class I had. There were six pupils and Desha took the pose for them. It intrigued me very much so I started modeling along with the girls. I thought it would be a good thing for them to see me working a little bit too! So as I worked along with them I said, “I’m going to put my figure up on her toes and then I’m going to bend her back further, get a little more action into it, and I think I’ll put some grapevines in her hands because it’s exactly the composition I’ve seen so many times passing the vineyards along the Hudson.”

7. [Schmavonian], “Frishmuth,” 27.
Fig. 3. *The Vine* (1921).
The first small-scale version of *The Vine* was twelve and a half inches in height and proved tremendously popular with the public. In 1923 Frishmuth remodeled the sculpture at seven feet and two inches for an exhibition financed by Archer Milton Huntington, the wealthy philanthropist and scholar who later created Brookgreen Gardens, an extensive outdoor sculpture garden and nature preserve at Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. Casts of this larger version were acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Cincinnati Art Museum, and the Frank H. McClung Museum at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

In addition to their esthetic qualities, *The Vine* and other Frishmuth sculptures from this period reflect an important moment in the history of dance in America—especially that approach to dance espoused by Michel Fokine. Frishmuth knew Fokine’s work well, not only because she frequently employed his dancers as models, but also because she watched Fokine himself perform. Although Fokine’s choreography was grounded in classical ballet, he revolutionized this tradition by introducing freer and more spontaneous movements, especially of the upper body, which traditionally had been rigidly controlled by conventionalized movements. In a letter to the *London Times* written in 1914, Fokine expressed the fundamental ideas of his reform:

1. To create in each case a new form of movement corresponding to the subject matter, period and character of the music, instead of merely giving combinations of ready-made and established steps.
2. Dancing and mimetic gestures have no meaning in ballet unless they serve as an expression of dramatic action.
3. To admit the use of conventional gesture only when it is required by the style of the ballet, and in all other cases to replace the gesture of the hands by movements of the

8. Syracuse University Library’s Department of Special Collections contains papers of Archer Milton Huntington and of his wife, the sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington.
whole body. Man can and should be expressive from head to foot.  

*Joy of the Waters* (fig. 1) is an excellent example of how Frishmuth exploited the expressive potential of the entire human figure. Here the dancer leaps into the air with irrepressible enthusiasm. Contrast *Joy of the Waters* with the staid and static ballet dancers of Degas. His paintings and sculptures show ballerinas conventionally posed, resting between performances, or practicing regimented exercise routines. The relationship of Frishmuth’s work to that of Degas parallels the relationship of Fokine’s work to traditional ballet. In both instances the human figure has been liberated from repressive convention.

Frishmuth’s *Speed* (fig. 4) was directly inspired by the dance of Michel Fokine himself:

I was in a theater watching Michel Fokine dance. I was making a portrait of Fokine at the time. The big curtain was down and I saw this vision of a figure pass across the great screen and I could hardly wait to get back to the studio to model it. I made a sketch of it and then I got this very lovely English girl, Blanche Ostreham, to pose for it.

One of Frishmuth’s clients said of the work, “Your *Speed* represents better than anything else the culture and mode of America, its eagerness and its promise.”

Although atypical of Frishmuth’s work as a whole, *Speed* is the work for which she is often recognized by mainstream American art history. Its Art Deco stylization makes it acceptable as a work of twentieth-century modernism.

While the female nude was Frishmuth’s principal subject, she occasionally sculpted images of the male nude. *The Dancers* (fig. 5) was done at the suggestion of Leon Barte, a dancing partner of

11. Aronson, 130.
12. Ibid., 130.
Fig. 4. *Speed* (1922).

Fig. 5. *The Dancers* (1921).
Anna Pavlova. Desha and Barte eventually posed for the piece. In it Frishmuth has captured for the viewer a moment in which bacchic frenzy is controlled by two counterbalancing figures.

For years to come, Fokine’s dance aesthetic as practiced by his dancers, especially Desha, continued to influence Frishmuth’s best work, which embodies a fortuitous cross-fertilization of the arts of dance and sculpture.
Introduction: Remembering Leonard Brown

BY JOHN W. CROWLEY

LEONARD BROWN, a legendary figure in his own time, was still well remembered in 1970, a decade after his death, when I joined the English Department at Syracuse. His former colleagues used to talk about him, some with awe, and for a while there was a poetry prize named in his honor. But times changed, senior faculty passed on, memories dimmed, and funding for the prize dried up. For a while, Brown faded from view.

He had enjoyed a long career at Syracuse. Born 31 January 1904, in Belvidere, Nebraska, Leonard Stanley Brown graduated in 1924 from Cotner College and earned his M.A. a year later from the University of Nebraska. Only twenty-one when he arrived at Syracuse in the fall of 1925, Brown remained on the faculty for nearly thirty-five years, rising to the rank of assistant professor in 1930 and, after a very long wait, to associate professor in 1955. He died in his Euclid Avenue apartment on 5 January 1960, a month shy of his fifty-sixth birthday.

Except for a year’s graduate work at the University of Chicago, Brown never pursued the doctoral degree that was to become increasingly requisite to academic advancement. Nor did he publish the scholarly articles and monographs expected of English professors at large research institutions. Although a handful of his poems, stories, and critical essays did appear, mainly in the Sewanee Review, Brown was best known in print for the trio of anthologies he

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edited: Modern Short Stories (1929), A Quarto of Modern Literature (1936), and Literature for Our Time (1947). Like all such textbooks, these counted for little as “scholarship” at the time, and they have disappeared with the pedagogical moment that produced them.

Brown devoted his career to teaching, and his enduring reputation was that of an extraordinary teacher. I was reminded of his impact in 1988, when one of his students, Arthur J. Carr, wrote to the department about obtaining a copy of his master’s thesis from 1937. It was of value to him, he explained, in part because Brown had supervised it; and in recalling the Syracuse of the late 1930s, Carr asserted that the “most remarkable member of the Department in those years was, surely, Leonard Brown.”

These sentiments were echoed a few years later, when another of Brown’s students, Karl Korstad, sent me an essay he had written about his experience as a graduate student instructor at Syracuse from 1937 to 1942. Korstad also testified to Brown’s catalytic effect and charismatic force as a mentor and intellectual examplar:

Many of us attended his courses, sometimes more than once, for they were different each year, reflecting the thinking and evaluating he had done in the interim. . . . He was the stimulant and the guide we needed.

Leonard, like many other American intellectuals and writers in the thirties, had sought to explore the implications of the ideas of Freud, of Jung, of Darwin, of Marx, of the “functionalist” anthropologists, and of Einstein’s theory of relativity and Heisenberg’s theory of indeterminacy.

The importation of these ideas to the undergraduate classroom was Brown’s special project in those days. He instigated an innovative approach to Freshman English, one in which students were challenged with supplemental readings from Berkeley, Darwin, Marx, Freud, Einstein, and such anthropologists as Malinowski, Boas, and Mead. Korstad remembered that some instructors, with Brown’s encouragement, went as far as to teach grammar along functionalist lines: “We classified parts of speech not for what they were, but for what they did.”

This was in the fall of 1939, and the ferment continued for a
couple of years during which the freshman course was radically overhauled. Then a reaction set in as the new-fangled ideas met resistance from inside and outside the department, and the curriculum reverted to its former emphasis on grammar, rhetoric, and Western world literature. Brown was deeply discouraged by these developments. “I doubt that much we are interested in will be at all possible in education henceforth,” he gloomily wrote to Korstad, then in the wartime Army Medical Corps. “We have reached the Imperial Days when the country will button rigidly down, and one of the first things to be buttoned fast will be the educational system.”

It was during the time when many American intellectuals were marching to a Marxist drum that Brown wrote his lecture on “Dialectical Materialism and Proletarian Literature.” The piece, which dates most likely from 1937 or 1938, is reflective of the brief era of good feelings that prevailed on the political left between 1935 and 1939; that is, between the institution of the Popular Front, the softer Communist Party line meant to support alliances among anti-Fascists of all stripes, and the unexpected signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, which sowed discord and prompted an exodus from party ranks. Brown was never a member; and although he moved as far to the left as he ever would during the 1930s, he stayed fundamentally “liberal” in his suspicion of doctrinal rigidities (including those of what he called “Pseudo-Marxists”) and his commitment to the free play of conflicting ideas.

Intended for a general audience and written with pristine clarity and argumentative precision, “Dialectical Materialism and Proletarian Literature” addressed a topic once of great moment to those seeking portents of revolution in American writing of the 1930s. Brown alludes, for example, to Granville Hicks, whose Marxist literary history, *The Great Tradition* (1935), scanned the literary horizon for any sign of rising proletarian consciousness. Brown, in fact, offers nothing in the way of leftist literary cheerleading. He admires Marx and Engels less as systematic thinkers than as exponents of the same philosophical relativism that he was attempting to bring to the freshman curriculum at Syracuse.

Published here for the first time, “Dialectical Materialism and Proletarian Literature” is part of a larger collection of Leonard
Brown’s papers that will soon become available in the Syracuse University Archives. These papers, which consist mainly of syllabi, detailed course outlines, lecture notes, and other course-related material, suggest his immense devotion to teaching. Teaching is an evanescent art—a thing of words and silences, gestures and stillnesses that literally vanish (but not without a trace) into the thin air that is their medium. The fullness of a great teacher’s gift eludes capture in even the best of his writings. Such an occasional piece as “Dialectical Materialism and Proletarian Literature” certainly gives some hint of Brown’s powers of mind. But he attained his highest voltage in class, and his true legacy was the inspiration he so freely gave to his many devoted students.

Dialectical Materialism and Proletarian Literature

1

Since proletarian literature avows an alliance with dialectical materialism, we ought to understand the theory before attempting to evaluate the claims of the literature. And we ought to understand the theory at its source. Marx and Engels, that is, as the major apologists of dialectical materialism, ought to be asked to stand only upon what they said, rather than upon what their enthusiastic friends and enemies assert they said. Accordingly we take our first step toward an understanding of dialectical materialism by removing two misunderstandings of it that are popular or current.

Dialectical materialism is sometimes misconceived as only another of the many varieties of nineteenth-century absolute determinism. Now the postulate of determinism is simply that everything is governed by law. So far so good. But now occurs the troublesome question: If everything is governed by law, who or what is or are the governor or governors, the governing cause or causes? Who or what makes the law? Many answers have been made to this question. But any one answer will tend in one of two general directions: It will tend to say either that man has a governing part in determining how things shall go, or that he has not. The last answer, that man
Leonard Brown (ca. 1937). (Courtesy of Jacqueline Brown.)
has nothing whatever to say about his destiny, is the essentially fa-
talistic answer of the absolute determinist. But this is no answer at
all. For the real question remains: If man is not, then what is the
determining cause or causes? Ultimately the absolute determinist
simply says, in effect, that nobody knows. That is why man is help-
less, and his destiny determined.

During the nineteenth century, Marx’s century, this essentially
fatalistic determinism had a great vogue, and followed two lines of
development. One was explicitly pessimistic. In the unprofessional
language of the average man it asserted that things were going from
bad to worse and nothing could be done about it. In the symbolic
language of the decadent poets it appeared as an imagery of tombs,
graves, gaols and seasons in hell. In the professional language of
philosophers of history, e.g. Spengler, it declared that Western Civ-
ilization was moving toward annihilation, from which all man’s
effort was powerless to withhold it. This was the pessimistic line of
development.

Now if one can turn this pessimistic determinism upside down,
deciding just as fatalistically that things are getting better rather than
worse, one emerges as an optimistic determinist. This second atti-
tude appeared among the world’s citizenry several years ago in the
sweet guise of Couéism—“day by day in every way I am getting
better and better.” It had emerged earlier in poetry, as in Browning’s
“God’s in His Heaven; all’s right with the world.” Comte,
Herbert Spencer and even Darwin represent this position in the
realm of theory. And a good deal of our linear and evolutionary
writing of history has assumed this bent, the most ambitious of re-
cent examples being perhaps Sorokin’s three volume work entitled
Social and Cultural Dynamics, which concludes: “The oblique ray of
the sun still illumines the glory of the passing epoch. . . . Beyond it,
however, the dawn of a new great . . . culture is probably waiting to
greet the men of the future.” This is the optimistic line of develop-
ment followed by absolute determinism during the last century.

Our purpose here is not especially to quarrel with either the pes-
simistic or optimistic view as described above, but only to notice
that both are merely varieties of absolute determinism, that both
are essentially fatalistic. Things have gradually through the cen-
turies got better or worse, or have failed to get better or worse, in spite of everything that everybody did. If things have got better it is because of God, or some other extra-human cause; if they have got worse, it is similarly because of the devil, or another agent of evil, also extra-human. In either case we are confronted with absolute determinism; our destiny is unalterable. We have got to go on getting better or worse, suffering the whims of Thomas Hardy’s President of the Immortals or the beneficence of Tennyson’s “one increasing purpose,” whether we like it or not.

Now dialectical materialism, as we said at the beginning, is sometimes misconceived as only the economic brand of this absolute determinism. But there are certain significant exceptions.

In the first place, Marx and Engels, as philosophers of history, never said that things are getting better, or worse; they said only that things are changing, have always changed, and will always change. They believed it was futile to talk about some inhuman abstraction known as historical change, because there is no history without people. Accordingly they preferred to discuss a particular change, the French Revolution for example. For an analysis of a particular change enabled one to decide whether it was good or bad and for whom. Consequently they were never prophetically cocksure of either a pessimistic or an optimistic future, as are respectively Spengler and Sorokin. They saw no good or bad bogey swimming down the stream of history.

In the second place, Marx and Engels contended that human history is made, not by extra-human agents—mystical, supernatural or otherwise—which are outside man’s control, but by man himself. Man determines his own destiny.

In the third place, dialectical materialism was never claimed by either Marx or Engels as a blanket theory of history, that is, as an explanation of everything, past, present and future. This futile claim is the rock which wrecks most systems of absolute determinism. For absolute determinism has to begin, unavoidably, with an arbitrary assumption, a hypothesis—for example, that things are getting better or worse with time, or that history moves in cycles. Then, once this initial assumption is made, the absolute determinist is inescapably and logically committed to an explanation of history
in terms of the hypothesis; he has to write his history to fit, for if something does not fit, the arbitrary hypothesis with which he began is obviously no good, and consequently neither is the architecture of history he has so laboriously erected upon the nonexistent foundations of his arbitrary hypothesis. Of course things can be warped to fit; the medieval Church’s distortion of the classics is a case in point. But this is dangerous business, for sooner or later some enterprising soul discovers the trick, as the Revival of Learning discovered the real classics, and so demolishes the whole edifice. The cyclical systems of absolute determinism, which contend that all cultures pass through exactly the same stages and those stages in the same order, are now being destroyed by the discovery of facts that cannot be made to fit into the cyclical theory.1

The distinction, then, between absolute determinism and dialectical materialism is that the latter does not begin with an arbitrary hypothesis that commits it to a uniform explanation of all details of history; it does not fall, in short into the fatalistic trap. “This is what has happened,” says the absolute determinist; “hence, this is what will happen.” “Not so,” replies Marx or Engels. “This is what has happened, and this is what will happen if all conditions are right.” That little “if” makes all the difference. And dialectical materialism insists that man controls the “if.”

We have tried to correct the confusion of dialectical materialism with absolute determinism. We shall now try briefly to correct its confusion with mechanical materialism.

Materialism is as old as Democritus, who assured us that nothing exists save the motion of atoms in an empty void; all else is delusion. The soul itself consists of fine smooth atoms, whose motion produces the phenomena we call life. Epicurus took over this atomic doctrine and added the denial that purposive acts from without can ever interfere with the natural course of atoms. Ethics

1. The Peruvians, for example, did not pass through the nomad and pastoral stages for the simple reason that they had no cattle. Or again, matriarchal forms of society have not always preceded patriarchal forms, as has been claimed by certain absolute determinists, because they have not done so among the tribes of British Columbia.
then became, as for some of the stoics, a problem really in physics—the good life was the life perfectly attuned to the natural dance of the atoms.

These old doctrines crop up again in the nineteenth century. By the time we reach Haeckel, he is dismissing free-will, the dualistic idea of a personal God, and the soul as delusions, and is accounting for all known phenomena—material, mental and spiritual (including consciousness)—by matter and force alone. Matter and force: this is mechanical materialism. As in an earlier materialist, Lucretius, the nature of things is what it is, and since man is part of the nature of things, he is what he is. "Let him submit in silence, then, to nature’s mandates, which nothing can alter." (Holbach.)

Now Marx and Engels attacked this mechanical materialism because they believed that it begged, like absolute determinism, the fundamental question: Why does human history change? Or to exemplify this question in particular terms: Why did the thirteenth century, for instance, build gothic cathedrals, but the twentieth skyscrapers?

To this kind of question the mechanical materialist could only trot out his blanket answer: Matter and force. We readily grant, replied the dialectical materialist, the existence of matter and force in the thirteenth century, and their existence in the twentieth. But this tells us nothing that we want to know. What made matter and force so alter their modes of activity as to relinquish the human habits of the thirteenth century for those of the twentieth? What changes human habits? That is what we want to know. Pinned down finally in this way, the mechanical materialist could only say what the absolute determinist said: Nobody knows.

Marx and Engels’ major effort, then, was to construct a philosophy which would answer the question that neither mechanical materialism nor absolute determinism could answer. And despite the formidable sound of the phrase "dialectical materialism," it constitutes basically a very simple answer: Human history changes because men change it. This is the first fundamental tenet of Marxism.

We have now tried to correct two misconceptions of dialectical materialism, namely, that it is on the one hand a variety of absolute determinism or on the other of mechanical materialism. Accord-
ingly, with those two systems of thought identified and out of the way, we turn to dialectical materialism itself.

II

We begin with the fundamental tenet already mentioned: Human history changes because man changes it. Why does he change it? Because certain needs, of which he becomes conscious from time to time, create in him certain desires. He then acts to satisfy his needs by fulfilling his desires. The result of his actions is historical change. Marx then moves one step further to ask the all-important question: What creates the human needs which lead to the human desires which lead to the human actions which change history? The basis of the historical process, it will be seen, is the unknown which first creates the human needs.

Marx identified this unknown as the economic system of ownership, production and distribution of material goods which characterizes any given society. As Engels said: “Marx discovered the simple fact that human beings must have food, drink, clothing and shelter first of all, before they can interest themselves in politics, science, art, religion and the like. This implies that the production of the immediately requisite material means of subsistence, and therewith the existing phase of development of a nation or an epoch, constitutes the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal outlooks, the artistic and even the religious ideas are built up. It implies that these latter must be explained out of the former, whereas the former have usually been explained as issuing from the latter.” From this material source, then, arise the human needs. That is why Marx called his system dialectical materialism.

But just how does an economic system create human needs? Here we must turn to an examination of the word “dialectical.”

Originally, in Greece, dialectic simply meant the process of getting at the truth through a debate carried on by opposing sides. One side concerned itself with the defense of a supposedly established thesis, and was known, I need not say, as the thesis side. The other side did its best to destroy the supposedly established thesis, and accordingly was known as the antithesis side. The two sides then clashed or debated, and from the debate finally emerged a new
conception of the truth, which resembled wholly neither the thesis nor the antithesis point of view, but rather a compromise, or, in technical terminology, a synthesis of the thesis and antithesis. This synthesis then obviously became a new and supposedly established thesis, but it immediately provoked a new antithesis, which rose to challenge it. A second debate occurred, from which emerged a still newer compromise or synthesis. This then became, in its turn, still another supposedly established thesis, provoked its own antithesis; they clashed—and so ad infinitum. Thesis-antithesis-synthesis: thesis-antithesis-synthesis:—to the end of time. This process is dialectic.

The notion of dialectic passed naturally into philosophy, and in the nineteenth century we find Marx borrowing it from Hegel and giving it a peculiarly materialistic cast. Briefly, he believed that the social process is like the logical process just described, that it is dialectical. And since he believed that the basis of society, for reasons already given, is economic or material, it followed that the economic process is necessarily dialectical.

Society, always and at any given moment, then, operates dialectically, and the fundamental area of dialectical operation is the economic or material sphere. One side of a given society, that is, will be the thesis side, the group that owns the material means of production—land, factories, or whatever it may be; this group will be primarily concerned with its own preservation and the unhampered continuation of its characteristic economic activities. But its very economic pursuits will unavoidably call into existence its antithesis, another group that has no material stake in the economic organization, does not own the material means of production, but is necessary, as workers or otherwise, to the continuance of the established economy. As the thesis or established or owning side of this society continues to expand and amplify its activities, it naturally increases the numbers and therefore the eventual strength of the antithesis group, until finally this second group, strong enough now to defy the first, emerges into the open, forcibly rebels, and wins or loses a social revolution. This is the class struggle. But win or lose, the new social order will wholly resemble neither of the older two; instead it will be a synthesis or compromise of both. This new social order now becomes the established one, the new
thesis, and will have its own peculiar economic organization. But
now its economic activities in turn provoke a new antithesis, a new
group of have-nots, who gradually grow in numbers, emerge into
the open, forcibly rebel, etc.

Applied to particular societies, the dialectic affords analyses
somewhat like the following (these are admittedly very sketchy,
and are meant to be only illustrative): Land was the fundamental
economic means of production in the Roman State. The Roman
patrician, in order to get more land, had to dispossess, by taxation
or otherwise, his weaker brother, the plebeian. The more land the
patrician appropriated in this way, the greater the number of those
he dispossessed. Soon there were a great many of these landless
men, the Christians and others. Being many, they dared to com­
plain, and their numbers got them a hearing. Eventually the Roman
emperors were forced to recognize them and their Christianity as
the state religion. When Rome, as we say, “fell,” these strongly
organized rebels, the Church, having no material stake in the old
society, naturally did not fall with it; they continued, struck up an
alliance with the Franks under Charlemagne, and became the new
thesis or established order, Christian feudalism.

Under Christian feudalism land was again the economic means
of production. Accordingly the old Roman story repeated itself.
Land holdings gradually became centralized in the hands of the
dominant class, the Church and the feudal nobles. Dispossessed and
propertyless serfs and handicraftsmen, the have-nots, grew in num­
bers, and finally emerged openly as burghers and traders. Eventu­
ally they rebelled against the medieval Church in the Protestant
Reformation, and against the feudal nobles in the constitution of
the prince, the modern monarch obedient to the House of Commons.
So capitalism, the new order, the new thesis, was born.

In this new capitalistic society money displaces land as the eco­
nomic focus. But as capital develops itself in an effort to make
money, it has perforce to develop its antithesis, a body of property­
less men to do the work of capitalism, the proletariat or modern
working-class. Capitalism cannot get along without them. But this
proletariat can live only so long as it can find work, and it can find
work only so long as its labor increases capital, that is, makes profits.
When capital, through failure of its markets to expand continuously, runs into depressions, shuts down its factories, refuses to make goods (for the very good reason that nobody can buy them), destroys food and plows under crops in the name of overproduction, and throws men out of work, who, be it remembered, can live only so long as they do work, restlessness and rebellion, John L. Lewis and the C.I.O. naturally occur. That is, the have-nots clearly have no interest in maintaining an economic system that behaves in the way just described, for it fails to provide them with the immediate material means of subsistence.

These are the workings of the dialectic in history.

And so we come to the immediate principles that lead directly to the proletarian writer.

We have already heard dialectical materialism contending that the economic or material is the true basis of social structures. We now turn to a second contention, namely, that upon its economic base any society will and does erect its ideological superstructures—laws, political forms, arts, religions, etc., in short, its schema of ideas and relationships. We now turn to a third contention, which is, that since the economic system does not exist in vacuo, but rather in the hands of its owners, the dominant class, those owners will naturally encourage that kind of superstructure or schema which they favor or can afford to ignore, and will discourage, forcibly if necessary, those which they do not agree with or find dangerous to their self-preservation. That is, Socrates was put to death by the state because he taught people how to call things into question. The Middle Ages built cathedrals because the Church dominated the society of the period. We build skyscrapers because business needs them. Early capitalism discouraged the use of Roman numerals and encouraged Arabic because commercial accounting found the latter more desirable. Don Quixote satirized chivalry because the growing middle-class society of his time made chivalry anachronistic. Hitler discourages all older views of Shakespeare, who now emerges in recent German scholarship as a true Aryan mystic, none other. Pennsylvania bans films of the Spanish War be-
cause Loyalist economics does not square with the economics of United States Steel. In short, the ideas, habits, customs, arts, beliefs and practices encouraged and countenanced in any society are likely to be those favored by the established or owning class of that society, and since that class is dominant only because it owns the economic means of material production, Marx and Engels could say that the ideological superstructures are reared upon the foundations of the economic substructure.

Now we add a corollary to this. Any economic system produces its disaffected, its have-nots, who wish to become the haves. What of them? They will have their ideologies too, superstructures erected upon the economic foundations not of reality but of what they hope will become reality, that is, the economic system they want. Their ideas, schema and representations will reflect, Marx contends, their economic desires. Fear of retaliation by the ruling class may lead revolutionary writers to disguise their ideas, in the innocent garments of allegory for example, but underneath the symbolism the revolutionary point of view will persist. Usually these ideologies of the have-nots are confused and chaotic, naive and crude, to begin with, because underneath them is not yet any real economic organization, only wishful thinking. They are likely, therefore, not to seem to have any material roots, or as we say, to be "grounded in reality," reality being for most of us, we should remember, what we already know. Thus the economic desires of the rebellious will naturally tend to give to their ideological work definite characteristics. The owning or ruling class, against whom they are rebelling, will tend to furnish them with villains, and their own class with heroes. The class struggle itself will furnish them plots and themes simply because that struggle seems the most important thing in the world to them; upon its outcome hangs their destiny. What could be more natural, therefore, than that they should portray it in their work?

IV

From the disaffected group in capitalistic society, consequently, have come the ideologies of our proletarian writers, most of whom, curiously, are of middle-class origins. To date only a very
little of proletarian literature has been good; most of it is very bad. In this it seems to equal bourgeois writing. But I believe it is possible to decide in a general way why some of it is bad, what its vulgar errors are. And since most of it relies, or thinks it relies, upon dialectical materialism for its analytical method, we are here forced to return to Marx and Engels for a moment.

Earlier we said that neither Marx nor Engels urged dialectical materialism as a blanket theory of history, that is, as an explanation of everything past, present and future. They insisted, rather, that history is full of accidents—fires, famines, plagues, floods, earthquakes, and especially that mysterious thing human personality—none of which can be anticipated or is anticipatable by any theory of history. Accordingly nobody but an idiot will attempt to prophesy the future lock, stock and barrel. All dialectical materialism can possibly do is to say that any given system of society will throw off its discontents, that they will multiply and eventually rebel. And here we come to the crucial point: Marxism does not say that revolutions are always won; they may be either won or lost, won as in France and Russia, lost as in Germany to Hitler. Everything depends on conditions at the time of rebellion, on leadership, material resources, strategy, etc. Now a number of earnest proletarian writers have conveniently forgotten these express stipulations of dialectical materialism, which are merely scientific caution, and have blissfully entered the old seventh heaven of the absolute determinists. They seem to believe, in other words, that some good bogey inhabits the present class struggle, that some beneficent Santa Claus will soon drop the world they desire into their stockings without their lifting a finger. Consequently they write what William Empson excellently calls, in his book *Some Versions of Pastoral*, the proletarian pastoral,—idyllic pictures of a proletarian Eden, sprung like Minerva from the head of Jove. Evidently there has been more of this writing done in England that in the United States. This kind of thing is what I should call one of the vulgar errors of proletarian writing. Certainly it is not based on either a true understanding of present social conditions, which supposedly is its subject matter, or on a true understanding of dialectical materialism, which supposedly is its method.
Another mistake of some proletarian writers is their very evident belief that all capitalists are villains and all workers heroes. Marx and Engels expressly warned against this error. They have a number of passages on what they call the lumpen-proletariat, that is, the scum, the dregs, the no-goods who inhabit the lower class as they do any other. The simple device of saying that a man is heroic because he is of the lower class is therefore silly. Similarly it is just as silly to say, as many proletarian writers do, that all characteristics of the proletariat are heroic characteristics. You will find any number of proletarian writers making a great point of the rough, tough and nasty worker, the hero who swears a blue streak, smashes all the windows and knows all the girls. He is the contemporary equivalent of the cheap Italianate swashbuckler who took the fancy of fifth-rate Renaissance writers, but whose pretensions were sharply satirized by competent men like Shakespeare. Or again, the proletarian writer naively assumes that since the proletariat is rebelling against capitalism, all capitalists are villains, have fat stomachs, with dollar signs embroidered on their vests, and wear silk hats. And of course all wives and daughters of capitalists are either soured on life, or have no morals and live like the beasts of the fields. This easy and false simplification of human nature is nothing new in literature; it appears whenever the writer relies on a hard and fast ethical ideology, in other words, whenever ethical values seem to be sure and unquestionable. Consequently this kind of simplification is observable in medieval literature, in the chivalric romances and the morality plays. In just this way the tenets of communism are affording the proletarian writer certain hard and fast ethical values at the present time, which enable him to simplify human nature. But this is another vulgar error, even from the point of view of dialectical materialism, as we shall see below.

Still another is the tendency of the proletarian writer to believe that there is, always has been, and always will be only one reputable subject matter for literary treatment, namely, the class struggle itself. In other words, they believe that any work not immediately and directly conditioned by the class struggle is therefore bad literature. Granville Hicks is not free from this error in his study of
American literature, The Great Tradition. But this is not Marxism: Marx's own words tell us so: "... certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and skeleton structure of its organization."

The last vulgar error I shall mention is the contention of some that you can't write good literature unless you are on the revolutionary side of the class struggle. This belief is widely held; you will even find it enunciated in the work of one of the very best Marxist literary critics—Plekhanov. But do you not see that this is the old fatalistic trap of the arbitrary hypothesis again? Once you assume this, you must justify not only our contemporary proletarian writing, but also the literature of all past history. Consequently Smirnov and others have been doing their best to remodel Shakespeare, Cervantes and other great writers in the revolutionary image of their respective days, I need not say, with scant success. This futile practice resembles nothing so much as it does Hitler's attempt to disparage Goethe as a great writer because he wasn't an Aryan mystic.

Now my point is that these vulgar errors are the errors of pseudo-Marxists, people who either don't understand dialectical materialism or willfully distort it. And this is unfortunate because their silly practices come to stand with the rest of us as dialectical materialism. That is why I said at the very beginning of this paper that we ought to understand this theory at its source. It is always well to remember that Marx openly avowed Aeschylus, Shakespeare and the legitimist Balzac as his favorite writers, rather than the revolutionary literati who hung onto the skirts of the 1848 revolution; that Lenin heretically preferred the work of Pushkin to that of the revolutionary poet Miakowski; that Stalin has told some of his too-earnest communist authors that they can do worse than give up their present revolutionary simplifications, and return to Shakespeare in order to learn how to write. That is, men who really understand dialectical materialism never commit these vulgar errors. All the true Marxist asks of any writer is that he be sincere, that he describe what he knows, feels and sees. If he does this the haves and have-nots, that is, the real texture of this writer's society,
will explicitly or implicitly get into his work, as they got into Chaucer’s prologue, or Shelley’s “Prometheus Unbound,” or Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.”

In conclusion, I might add very briefly what I think is the major reason for the various misunderstandings of dialectical materialism. And I can do this best by comparing it with one of the statistical sciences known as the theory of probability. This kind of statistician deals with what he calls macro- rather than micro-magnitudes, that is, masses of fact rather than an individual fact. A life-insurance table is a good example. These tables tell us that approximately so many men will die at the age of 30, so many at 40, so many at 50, and so on; and to this end these tables are fairly accurate. But they are absolutely valueless as prophecies of when any one individual man will die. That depends entirely on data not accessible to the theorist of probability, for example accidents of all kinds. As one of these statisticians puts it: “For individuals there are no statistics. And for statistics there are no individuals.” Accordingly no one but a fool would try to forecast any individual’s destiny by means of a life-insurance table.

Now dialectical materialism, like these theories of probability, deals only with macro- rather than micro-magnitudes, that is, the great sweeping movements and mass changes in the social fabric. Dialectical materialism may prophesy, with fair accuracy, the revolt of the have-nots against the have, but it cannot possibly prophesy what John Doe or Richard Roe will do. Dialectical materialism may indicate that because of class interests—family, education, religion, property holding, upbringing, political affiliations, friendships, etc.—an individual will be more likely to stand on one side of the class struggle than the other, just as life-insurance tables indicate that any individual who lives to the age of six will probably live beyond ten; but this is tentative indication only, and not hard fact. Pseudo-Marxists have tried to make it hard fact. This fundamental confusion of mass-action with individual-action is the chief source, I believe, of most misunderstandings of dialectical materialism.

As my only footnote of the evening, I urge anyone, finally, who is interested either in dialectical materialism as a method of historical analysis, or in contemporary proletarian writing, to read Marx.
and Engels and our contemporary writers, rather than listen to pa-
pers like this. For that man is doomed who listens only to others, as
Othello might tell you, if he were here.
The Moment of “Three Women Eating”: Completing the Story of You Have Seen Their Faces

BY ROBERT L. MCDONALD

In 1936 Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White merged their respective talents to produce one of the great documents of Depression-era America, the photo-text study You Have Seen Their Faces. There have been several accounts of the circumstances under which Caldwell and Bourke-White agreed to collaborate on this project, including their own autobiographical recollections.1 Missing from each of these accounts, however, is any mention of an early goodwill gesture from Bourke-White that must have finally convinced a dubious Caldwell that he had indeed found a partner capable of understanding what he wanted this new book to be, and a photographer capable of imaging its spirit.

By 1936, of course, Bourke-White was highly respected as one of America’s foremost industrial and commercial photographers. In 1929 Henry Luce had recruited her as the first staff photographer for Fortune, and during the next few years, at home and abroad, her advertising work and photo essays on iron- and steelworks, meat

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processing plants, construction sites, the automobile industry, and the like defined and celebrated the age of the machine. She was, as she would recall, “rapturously” drawn “to the beauty of industrial shapes.” Given Bourke-White’s stature and the mood of the nation, it was no surprise in 1936 when Luce selected her now-famous photograph of Montana’s spectacular New Deal work project, the colossal Fort Peck Dam, for the first cover of his newest publication, simply titled Life.

Two years earlier, however, while covering the Dust Bowl drought of 1934 for Fortune, Bourke-White had begun something of an artistic awakening. From the Dakotas southward to Texas, she remarked upon faces engraved with the very paralysis of despair:

I had never seen people caught helpless like this in total tragedy. They had no defense. They had no plan. They were numbed like their own dumb animals, and many of these animals were choking and dying in drifting soil. I was deeply moved by the suffering I saw and touched particularly by the bewilderment of the farmers. I think this was the beginning of my awareness of people in a human, sympathetic sense as subject for the camera . . .

Back in her studio, Bourke-White understandably found it difficult to resume her usual work, especially the inane advertising assignments she found herself compelled to accept in order to pay ever-mounting bills.

One afternoon, while setting up a routine tire advertisement for the Saturday Evening Post, Bourke-White says she experienced the epiphany of her young career. As usual, the assignment was to make her photographs “capture the very soul of the tire, its footprints on the sands of time”—but to do so not by photographing the tire itself, but by photographing the “plump” loveliness of a handmade rubber dummy-tire and the deep, perfect impressions made by a specially carved wooden track-maker. The photographer’s assistant made what Bourke-White then and later considered “a

2. Bourke-White, Portrait of Myself, 110.
3. Ibid., 110.
courageous and revolutionary proposal”: “Let’s photograph a real tire.” Suddenly she was struck by the absurdity of this work. She recognized this incident as “the turning point” of her career, and she longed for a world “where things did not have to look convincing, they just had to be true.”

Bourke-White committed herself, then, to her redefined purpose—a purpose that merged the political with the professional and the personal. Responsibility became her theme. As she wrote in a 1936 piece for The Nation, “Photographing This World”:

As echoes of the old debate—is photography an art?—die away, a new and infinitely more important question arises. To what extent are photographers becoming aware of the social scene and how significantly are their photographs portraying it? . . . The major control is the photographer’s point of view. How alive is he? Does he know what is happening in the world? How sensitive has he become during the course of his own photographic development to the world-shaking changes in the social scene about him?

These were hard questions, and ones that she had only recently found a voice to articulate and the conviction to answer for herself.

Perhaps Bourke-White’s most effective vehicle for passing into this new phase of her career was the unlikely figure of Erskine Caldwell, the Georgia-born writer who, following roughly the same pattern as Bourke-White, had published his first story in 1929 and now, in 1936, found himself at a crossroads. Early in his career Caldwell had committed himself to a precise goal. With no “philosophical truths to dispense, no evangelistic urge to change the course of human destiny,” he nevertheless wanted “to be a writer of fiction that revealed with all my might the inner spirit of men and women as they responded to the joys of life and reacted to the sorrows of existence.” To date, his best successes in working to-

4. Ibid., 111, 112.
5. Quoted in Goldberg, Margaret Bourke-White, 156–57.
6. Caldwell, Call It Experience, 132; With All My Might, 330. Similarly, in his (unsuccessful) 1931 application for a Guggenheim fellowship, when he was planning God’s Little Acre, Caldwell claimed realism as his mode: “There has already
ward this end had been three volumes of superb short fiction and his stark, shocking novels of debauchery and despair in the poverty-stricken, rural South, *Tobacco Road* (1932) and *God's Little Acre* (1933).

Caldwell had, however, attracted some severe criticism for his portrayals of Southerners, especially for what his critics cited as unfair distortions and exaggerations of life among the region's tenant farmers. On the floor of the United States House of Representatives, Georgia Congressman Braswell Deen denounced Caldwell and his "fiction," censuring the enormously popular dramatic version of *Tobacco Road* as a "most infamous, wicked and damnable play." Newspaper editors across the South—examples of a class Caldwell derided as "the professional Southerner"—lambasted him for creating characters such as Jeeter Lester and Ty Ty Walden, branding him as yet another native son who had sold out his homeland for Yankee dollars and attention during an age when, as Malcolm Cowley has described it, American writers were being swept along in "a daydream of revolutionary brotherhood."

While all writers are subject to various critical tempers, the kind of criticism he received was particularly unpalatable for Caldwell, who saw himself, unpretentiously, as a storyteller. To his detractors were calling lies the stories he always maintained were artistic truths, "inventions" shaped by his creative powers so that they conveyed "the forceful illusion of [life]." There was nothing, Cald-
well emphatically declared, sensationalized about his material, and his only interest in "revolution" was maybe an impulse to "shame" us all into acknowledging some of the less-discussed aspects of contemporary Southern "civilization," or life among the denizens of Tobacco Road. ¹¹

Musing on all this, Caldwell took some time deciding what to do in defense of his art—and himself. In 1935 he had contributed to the New York Post a four-part exposé of sharecropper life in Georgia, which had caused such an uproar that the Augusta [Georgia] Chronicle launched its own investigation to weigh against Caldwell's portrait. ¹² But by April 1936, after a fair consideration of all the "ideas for books . . . clamoring for attention," a still determined Caldwell had settled on a more substantial rebuttal. He had formulated a project that he felt must take precedence over any others, a work that would by design "vindicate [his] writings about the South." He imagined it would be "a factual study of people in the cotton states living in economic stress," written with the specific "intention to show that my fiction was as realistic as life itself in the contemporary South." And "[t]he title of the book," he recalls in With All My Might, "had already been selected. It was to be called You Have Seen Their Faces." ¹³

Documentary literature of the kind Caldwell envisioned remains among the most accessible and interesting work produced during the 1930s, when the fiction of proletarian writers—like Josephine Johnson, Clara Weatherwax, Edward Dahlberg, or even Jack Conroy—fired emotions en masse, but too briefly to be remembered. Documentaries, on the other hand, retain their power because, in part, of their generic intent: to reveal what James Agee once called "a portion of unimagined existence." ¹⁴ And this, Caldwell knew, words alone could not accomplish. If the book were to have the

¹³. Caldwell, Call It Experience, 163; With All My Might, 145.
impact he imagined, if it were to be “authentic,” he knew it would have to be his first collaborative work: it “would have to be thoroughly documented with photographs taken on the scene by a perceptive photographer.”¹⁵

Thus the opening for Margaret Bourke-White, who was casting about for some serious, book-length project that would begin to satisfy her “great need to understand my fellow Americans better”—a job that would extend her own “aliveness” as it revealed to her native “worlds about which I knew almost nothing.” Bourke-White felt it was “a miracle” that she happened “to hear of an author in search of a photographer . . . someone with receptivity and an open mind, someone who would be as interested as he was in American people, everyday people.” It was Caldwell, “a writer whose work,” Bourke-White thought, “had extraordinary vitality, an almost savage power”; it was he who “wanted to take the camera to Tobacco Road.”¹⁶

Vicki Goldberg explains that the photographer, with her typical bravura, proposed the association: “At a cocktail party in January of ’36, she swooped down excitedly on Maxim Lieber, Erskine Caldwell’s agent, to say how much she’d like to meet the author and work with him.” Soon, Goldberg summarizes, the two artists “met and agreed to join their talents to a cause,”¹⁷ an account which roughly matches Caldwell’s own. In his first autobiography, Call It Experience, he says that Lieber arranged a meeting with Bourke-White, whom Caldwell found “a spirited woman with an engaging personality” and who he knew “had published a highly regarded volume of industrial photographs” as well as “a volume of photographs of Russian industrial and agricultural operations.” Caldwell concludes his account, though, with the too-simple recollection that “Margaret agreed to take the pictures for the book.”¹⁸ In fact, items in the Erskine Caldwell Collection at Syracuse, as well as Bourke-White’s and Caldwell’s later accounts, all indicate that

¹⁵. Caldwell, With All My Might, 145.
¹⁷. Goldberg, Margaret Bourke-White, 161, 162.
¹⁸. Caldwell, Call It Experience, 163.
Bourke-White did not so much “agree to take the pictures” as she found herself—then perhaps the most famous photographer in the world—pleading her abilities for the chance to work on the project.

Caldwell, it seems, had at least two objections to accepting Bourke-White as his collaborator. In *With All My Might* he implies that his foremost objection was to her gender: “I was not fully convinced that the work I had in mind would be suitable for a female photographer to perform.” What exactly he meant by “suitable” is unclear, unless the word reflected a genteel (and sexist) presumption that a woman couldn’t or shouldn’t be interested in participating in a six- to eight-week trek across the Deep South during a sweltering post-drought July. Caldwell was very wrong on this point, however. Although he would later admit that nothing of the experience “daunted [her] spirits,” he had initially underestimated the stamina and resolve of a woman with a résumé like that of Margaret Bourke-White.19

The most interesting reason for Caldwell’s objection to Bourke-White, though, had nothing to do with her sex and everything to do with his perception of her as an artist. For he was determined to employ what he called “a perceptive photographer” who could “show that my fiction was as realistic as life itself in the contemporary South.”20 Based on his knowledge of the work that had made her famous, Caldwell seemed predisposed to believe that Bourke-White was neither terribly perceptive nor up to capturing the “life” of anything human. Again, he knew her only as a respected photographer of “industrial machines” and “Russian industrial and agricultural operations.”

Apparently, in their earliest conversations Max Lieber had confided in Bourke-White something of Caldwell’s opinion of her

19. Caldwell, *With All My Might*, 145. In his biography of Caldwell, Klevar reports another possible concern over Bourke-White’s gender: rumors that she “was not to be trusted around married men” (p. 172).

20. Caldwell, *With All My Might*, 145. Sylvia Jenkins Cook maintains that *You Have Seen Their Faces* was more than just an effort to “vindicate” his fiction; it represented for Caldwell another “[attempt], in a different medium, to explore those aspects of the South that most moved and enraged him” (*Erskine Caldwell and the Fiction of Poverty* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991], 232).
work. According to Goldberg, “Margaret . . . told a reporter that Caldwell ‘didn’t want a woman to do his pictures, most of all he didn’t want me for he thought I didn’t catch the spirit of what he wanted done.’” Bourke-White says she knew, even after the groundwork had been laid for them to collaborate, that Caldwell “did not particularly like my photographs.” But typical of a strong mind set on new challenges, Bourke-White dismissed those concerns: “Well, that didn’t bother me. There were a lot of my pictures that I didn’t like either.”

She could not, however, completely disregard Caldwell’s opinion of her. While the partnership had been agreed upon, she did not want to begin with even the slightest lack of confidence on Caldwell’s part; it was too important, personally and professionally, that the work be meaningful and productive to begin at any such deficit. She decided that the way to change Caldwell’s mind was to offer up evidence that she was indeed both capable of the job as he envisioned it and committed to its potential impact; on 20 February 1936, Bourke-White took the first step toward doing just that. She placed an order for a reprint of one of her earlier photographs that she did like, with instructions that it be prepared as “A gift from MBW” for “Mr. Erskine Caldwell” (then on an extended vacation with his family in California) and be held for her to sign it and write a “card.”

The photograph was a domestic portrait that Bourke-White had taken in 1931 during the second of her three trips to document industrializing Russia, or the effects of the so-called Five-Year Plan, for Fortune. Bourke-White says that during these trips she “felt the story of a nation trying to industrialize overnight,” and that most of the photographs she brought back—although they included powerful portraits of Russian workers, peasants, and even Stalin’s great-aunt, as well as landmarks like the Kremlin—finally revealed her subconscious prejudice that “politics was colorless beside the drama of the machine.”

21. Goldberg, Margaret Bourke-White, 166; Bourke-White, Portrait of Myself, 115.
22. Order form, 20 February 1936, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Syracuse University Library.
Now, however, contemplating her work with Caldwell, among these photographs she found one that seemed particularly capable of conveying her new artistic interests— a quiet study entitled “Three Women Eating,” taken in Russian Georgia and published first (as far as I can tell) in her 1934 limited-edition Photographs of the U.S.S.R. In her introduction to that oversize portfolio—significantly, issued the same year of her awakening while chronicling the midwestern drought—Bourke-White writes, “I first went to Soviet Russia because it was the new land of the machine.” Gradually, she says, she came to understand that “it is more than a land of windswept steppes, villages gathered into collective farms, rising factories and growing power dams. Behind the machines stand men and women.”24 Designing a package to secure Caldwell’s confidence, Bourke-White must have hoped that this photograph—

not one of dams or bridges or even the machinists—would serve as an implicit statement of her ability to take the kind of pictures he wanted. The accompanying note would explicitly affirm her enthusiasm for the project:

Dear Mr. Caldwell:

This is just to tell you that I am happier about the book I am to do with you than anything I have had a chance to work on for the last two years. I have felt keenly for some time that I was turning my camera too often to advertising subjects and too little in the direction of something that might have some social significance.

I am happier about this than I can say! If I had a chance to choose from every living writer in America I would choose you first as the person I would like to do such a book with. And to have you drop out of the clear sky—just when I have decided that I want to take pictures that are closer to life—seems almost too good to be true.

And again—I am looking forward to it so much!

Sincerely,

Margaret Bourke-White

It was a masterful maneuver. The photograph could not have more perfectly represented the ethos Caldwell knew the images in the new book would have to communicate: serious, humane, and absolutely without melodrama. In addition, the picture’s theme—community and sharing as a means of survival—was certainly in line with Caldwell’s vision of how the impoverished South, and the nation, would best live through the Depression. The writer’s response was formal and very brief, a typically qualified thank you:

25. Bourke-White to Caldwell (unsigned copy), 9 March 1936, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Syracuse University Library.

26. A few years earlier, while working as a contract writer at MGM, Caldwell wrote his wife Helen about a sound technician’s strike: “I’m siding with the strikers, of course; but I also realize that the individual in the present constituted society has to fight for existance [sic]. If he doesn’t do it, there’s no one just yet to fight for the individual collectively.” Erskine Caldwell to Helen Caldwell, 24 July 1933, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Baker Library, Dartmouth College.
Dear Margaret Bourke-White:

Merely a note to thank you for the picture you were so good to send to me. It happens to be the first example of your work I have seen that is not a reproduction, and I am more than ever impressed by your style.

Best wishes—
Sincerely,
Erskine Caldwell

Her “style,” after all, would be fine.

“Three Women Eating” foreshadows the photographs in You Have Seen Their Faces as well as much of Bourke-White’s later work. She took what Vicki Goldberg calls a “kind of posed candid shot in which she retained her own control but gave her subjects leave to let theirs go.” Aside from its reflection of another side of life in the industrializing Soviet Union, “Three Women Eating” is

27. Caldwell to Bourke-White, 25 March 1936, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Syracuse University Library.
28. Goldberg, Margaret Bourke-White, 169.
significant historically because it cleared doubts and opened the door to a working relationship with Erskine Caldwell during the year Bourke-White later described as “unlike any year I have ever lived through.”29 In their collaboration—which led, of course, to their ill-fated celebrity marriage—Bourke-White credits Caldwell with “introducing [her] to a whole new way of working”:

He had a very quiet, completely receptive approach. He was interested not only in the words a person spoke, but in the mood in which they were spoken. He would wait pa-

29. Bourke-White, Portrait of Myself, 117.
tiently until the subject had revealed his personality, rather than impose his own personality on the subject, which many of us have a way of doing.

Ironically, her “introduction” to this new way of working was enabled by a portrait taken during a time when she was possessed by the spirit of the machine. Presented to Caldwell as evidence of her heightened consciousness as a photographer, “Three Women Eating” secured Margaret Bourke-White’s transition into the most remarkable phase yet of her career—of a life newly keyed to humanity. As she later put it,

Here with the sharecroppers, I was learning that to understand another human being you must gain some insight into the conditions which made him what he is. . . . I realized that any photographer who tries to portray human be-

From You Have Seen Their Faces (reproduced with permission of the Estate of Margaret Bourke-White).
ings in a penetrating way must put more heart and mind into his preparation than will ever show in any photograph.\textsuperscript{30}

The Punctator’s World: A Discursion

BY GWEN G. ROBINSON

PART EIGHT

CLIMACTIC YEARS: 1850 TO 1900

In Queen Victoria’s time, commas, colons, and all the accessory devices for breaking up text were familiar to (if not applied by) all her literate subjects. The stabilizing values of the points and the ease with which the public could now handle words on the page allowed writers to extend the boundaries of their craft, which was, and is, the reduction of the mind’s contents to words that can be comprehended visually.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, England had more or less followed Continental example and drawn the line between elocutionary and syntactic pointing. Elocutionary puncts\(^1\) are oral aids. They mark pauses for the ear and impart meaning by gathering words the way voices do, by rhythm, emphasis, and intonation. Syntactical\(^2\) puncts inform the eye. Less prone to whim or variation, they mark out grammatical structures and indicate degrees of dominance among the sentence parts.

Though Huntington’s work (see Part Seven of “The Punctator’s World”) had essentially persuaded scholars toward a bias against elocutionary divisions, in the end it was the practical John Wilson who pushed the public to pointing syntactically. For his highly influential Treatise on Grammatical Punctuation (1844), Wilson drew copiously and candidly from his predecessor Lindley Murray (see Part Six), with whose work the public was already familiar. Wilson’s Treatise was a bestseller. It sailed through repeated editions, well into the decades of our concern, and eventually (though it would

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1. Known also as ‘euphuistic’ or ‘rhetorical’ puncts (or points or stops).
2. Known also as ‘grammatical’ or ‘logical’ puncts (or points or stops).
take time) cleared the stage of the few, still bleating, elocutionary
loiterers. The art of punctuation, the affable Wilson declared, was
to be “founded more on a grammatical than on a rhetorical basis”.
This unremarkable statement, so mildly favoring the eye over the
ear, and logic over instinct, took its inspiration from the rational
conservatism that was permeating intellectual circles of the time.
Because Wilson’s opinion was so perfectly unstartling, the public
swallowed it without a cough. Except in poetry,\(^3\) syntactical point­
ing—that is, the use of the puncts to elucidate grammatical entities
(phrases, clauses) within the word-string of an English sentence—
maintained the advantage throughout the century and beyond.

With norms established both theoretically and practically, punctu­
tation’s next victory was to stretch those norms as far as they
would go, indeed to a degree whereat the points might transub­
stantiate into \textit{integral factors in written sentence formulation}. ‘Proper
punctuation’ (of textbook dullness) had already succeeded in con­
voying a measure of \textit{true meaning}—to which, in time, were added
dabs of \textit{nuance}. But now, suddenly, punctuation claimed a higher
summit yet. By controlling both movement and emphasis, it came
to be viewed as mysteriously privy to an author’s intent—indeed,
\textit{the telling feature} of his style and personality.\(^4\) With the stage so set,
enter at last the experimentalist aesthetes, with their untiring pens.
To secure meaning from their long, complex sentences for a public
whose analytical prowess was not always up to it, they set the
puncts to arduous labors. In this way did written words push into
new terrain.

\textbf{A BRIEF PREVIEW OF HOW THE PUNCTS PROGRESSED
THROUGH THE REIGN OF VICTORIA}

Before enlarging on the pointing habits of specific Victorian
writers, let us reel at speed through the latter half of the century to
acquaint ourselves with the background against which those writ­
ers worked. We shall touch upon the doings of schoolmasters, and

\(^3\) And drama, which being conversation anyway, does not count.
\(^4\) E. L. Thorndike, “The Psychology of Punctuation”, \textit{The American Journal of
Psychology} 61 (2 April 1948): 222–28 is interesting on this score.
then upon the swelling applause of professional grammarians, who were beginning to recognize the conspicuous glamor of a well pointed page. We shall as well take note of what the public was learning to tolerate in print.

One should understand that throughout the entire nineteenth century, classroom instruction remained grimly inflexible. Before indulging in ‘artistic effects’, young scholars had first to be herded through the gates of civilized literary tradition, for which purpose instruction books abounded. School lessons dealt with spelling, capitals, points, the placement of quotation marks, paragraphing, diction, and all the controversial and ‘correct’ applications of the written English language. If “childrens” is wrong, then is “chickens” a legitimate plural? Should one say “I need not have troubled myself”; or “I should not have needed to trouble myself”? And why do young writers not get it straight that “sanitary” comes from *sanitas* (appertaining to health) and “sanitory” from *sano* (to cure)?

For drill, there were exercises galore. Thus, please fix:

> when did miss white return to baltimore

Nothing escaped the pedagogical lens.

Meanwhile, on tertiary levels, grammarians were recording a steady rise in the fortunes of syntactical punctuation. In 1850, after carefully citing both the logical and rhetorical styles of pointing in his *English Grammar*, W. C. Fowler, professor of rhetoric at Amherst College, had only this to say:

> Current practice is generally more in accordance with the rhetorical. Still, there is diversity among authors and printers in their application.

But by 1863, George P. Marsh, the renowned American lecturer on the English language, had burrowed more deeply into the specifics of the situation. Because the relations of its constituent

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words are not determined by inflection (as is the case with Latin) but rather by position, written English language (said Marsh) has very obvious punctuational needs. Unpointed English sentences of any length tend to be obscure. However, chopping them up is not the answer. Why? Because a diet of short sentences, unattached phrases, and floating clauses will diminish our intellectual powers. In Marsh's own words:

The use of commas, semicolons and brackets, supplies the place of inflections, and enables us to introduce, without danger of equivocation, qualifications, illustrations and parenthetical limitations, which, with our English syntax would render a long period almost unintelligible, unless its members were divided by marks of punctuation. Without this auxiliary, we should be obliged to make our written style much more disjointed than it now is, the sentences would be cut up into a multitude of distinct propositions, and the leading thought consequently often separated from its incidents and its adjuncts. The practice of thus framing our written style cannot but materially influence our use of language as a medium of unspoken thought, and, of course, our habits of intellectual conception and ratiocination. It is an advantage of no mean importance to be able to grasp in one grammatical expression a general truth, with the necessary limitations, qualifications and conditions, which its practical application requires, and the habitual omission of which characterizes the shallow thinker; and hence the involution and concentration of thought and style, which punctuation facilitates, is valuable as an antidote to the many distracting influences of modern social life. (Italics added)\(^8\)

Do not laugh, dear reader. Others than Marsh have noted the possible effect of written words upon the cerebral cortex. Socrates himself predicted that the ubiquitousness of writing would cause

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8. George P. Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1860), 414–15. These lectures were first delivered in 1858–59 at Columbia University and were vastly admired and influential on both sides of the Atlantic.
human memory to atrophy. And he was right. Who now can say the *Iliad* through without a stumble? As for the “shallow thinker”, that dreaded being has multiplied in this “modern social life”. He and his kind are like rabbits on the green—evidence aplenty that Marsh’s Law still richly applies. What could be shallower, more wondrously inane, than the following example of popular modern writing? which was, alas, randomly plucked from the various “distracting influences” that make up our daily breakfast reading matter. These innocent paragraphs on the marvels to be experienced along the Great Ocean Road come from the Tourism Victoria Offices (Australia), with authorship unclaimed. Ungoverned by any conceptual focus, the ideas fly out like shrapnel. Hear, then, this:

**NURSERY FOR THE SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE.**

On the shores of Lady Bay, is the city of Warrnambool. Originally a sealing and whaling port, more than twenty ships were lost in Lady Bay alone. No wonder it’s called the Shipwreck Coast. The Southern Right Whale comes in to calve in the shallows. You can watch these gentle giants from a viewing platform at Logan’s Beach. Today the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum brings to life Warrnambool’s colorful maritime history and that of The Shipwreck Coast. You could spend a whole day here, reliving the past. Ten minutes from Warrnambool is the Tower Hill Game Reserve. Here you can drive through a real volcano. But don’t worry, it’s been extinct for years. On the way to Port Fairy you pass the town of Killarney. The rolling green fields that surround you are like Irish Meadows. That’s why the Irish settled here. It reminded them of home.

9. As will have been appreciated, this rare comma marks off a dangling modifier.
It is with some sense of relief that we revert to Marsh, who sanely carries on:

On the other hand the principles of punctuation are subtle, and an exact logical training is requisite for the just application of them . . . for it is as true in our days as it was in Chaucer's, that—

A reader that pointeth ill
A good sentence may oft spill.

Though it might seem that Marsh (and Chaucer) had placed the final laurel, subsequent thinkers for the remainder of the century continued to gild the image of the punct. In 1884 Paul Allardyce, English author of the briskly selling handbook "Stops" or How to Punctuate, incited the stops to more presumptions. Stops were, he said,

intimately connected with style. As forms of thought are infinite in number, so are the modes of expression; and punctuation, adapting itself to these, is an instrument capable of manipulation in a thousand ways.\(^\text{10}\)

Although the decades progressed with praise of intensifying grandiloquence, punctuation's syntactical capability would remain its firmest asset. Indicative of this fundamental view are the opening remarks of John Hart in Punctuation (1886):

It should not be forgotten that the first and the main end of the points is to mark grammatical divisions.\(^\text{11}\)

But over that sober opinion the buildup of approbation persisted, increasingly enhanced by terms like 'science' and 'artistry' and 'delicacy'. In 1893, Webster Edgerly prefaced his American One Hundred Lessons as follows:

Probably the science and art of Punctuation involve more

\(^{10}\) Paul Allardyce, "Stops" or How to Punctuate (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1884), 12.
departments of learning than any other one branch of study.\textsuperscript{12}

By 1900 punctuation was quite prepared for the crowning honor bestowed upon it by William Chauncey Genung (another Professor of Rhetoric at Amherst College). With his statement of commendation, punctuation arrived at the climax of its career. Writers, said Genung, had begun to use the points for special effects.

Accordingly we find that in modern writing punctuation is a much more flexible thing, and more open to individuality of style, than was formerly the case. . . . It is this skillful employment of punctuation as a flexible, living, artistic thing which makes it so truly a cardinal factor in the organism of the sentence.\textsuperscript{13} (Italics added)

In a mere fifty years, how immodest the puncts had become!

Now back to 1850 once more, for a look at the printing side of the scene. By that time of course, England’s reading public had long been accustomed to text divided into chapters and paragraphs; to sentences introduced by capital letters and terminated by full stops fortified by extra spacing; to all the sentential divisions signaled by parentheses, colons, semicolons, commas, dashes, question marks, and exclamation marks—that is, all the marks (commonly called ‘stops’) that separate meaningful word groups; and finally, to the characterization of speech by inverted commas, and to hyphenation, underlining, and italics—that is, all the various graphic devices (usually included in the overall concept of punctuation) that assist in clarifying the written message but have nothing to do with signifying cadences. Thomas Browne’s immensely involved sentences (see Part Four) had been delighting educated minds for two centuries. More recent writers (William Hazlitt, for example) had on occasion enjoyed dazzling their elite literary audiences with crescendoing locutions, in which batteries of puncts separated, classified, and


rendered digestible piled-up clauses and interjectory remarks. By 1859 Charles Dickens’s publishers could confidently accept his famous opening sentence for The Tale of Two Cities: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . .”, knowing that even the commonest of commoners, drilled in school on one thousand exercises (“the fair will be held on Wednesday Fred”), could thrill to its somber, continuing beat.

Another interesting facet of mid-century punctuation is that the graphic devices (the nonpausal marks) were also pushing out the boundaries of writing efficiency. Charlotte Brontë in her best-selling Jane Eyre (1847), a novel very definitely aimed at the middlebrow public, was able to rely on quotation marks alone to engage her readers en scène in the heat of vocal exchange.

“Ah! Jane. But I want a wife.”
“Do you, sir?”
“Yes; is it news to you?”
“Of course; you said nothing about it before.”
“Is it unwelcome news?”
“That depends on circumstances, sir—on your choice.”
“Which you shall make for me, Jane. I will abide by your decision.”
“Choose then, sir—her who loves you best.”
“I will at least choose—her I love best. Jane, will you marry me?”
“Yes, sir.”
“A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand?”
“Yes, sir.”
“A crippled man twenty years older than you, whom you will have to wait on?”
“Yes, sir.”
“Truly, Jane?”

“Most truly, sir.”
“Oh my darling! God bless you and reward you!”

Thanks to a stabilized pointing convention, the Victorian *hoi polloi* could safely tingle to all manner of excitement.

**POETIC PUNCTUATION**

As has been mentioned previously (in Part Four), poets of earlier centuries had a penchant for pointing their verses at each line’s end. This, they deemed, gave shape to their product and invited the incantatory spell traditionally associated with poetic effusion. But as logic, nourished by the printing press, more and more invaded the page, those harsh and interruptive line-end pauses lost their appeal, and obliged poets to reconsider what they wished their pause marks to indicate.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), whose aesthetic mannerisms and interest in song might well have encouraged a more antiquated set of habits, nevertheless showed respect for the underlying grammar of his lines—even in manuscript. In print, he was helped (if that is the word) by his publisher Chatto and Windus, not only with stronger pointing but with a stanzaic layout of lines (a feature which, by breaking up the shape of the poem for visual satisfaction, must be included in the concept of punctuation). Of course, it is hard to know what went on between printer and poet—what conferences of persuasion, exasperation, or threat—in the interim between the initial scrawl and final printed version. But clearly, something almost always did, for one sees again and again the implantation of change between pen-ink and press-ink versions of the same lines, with the usual effect of firming the boundaries of interpretation.

Swinburne’s “A Ballad of Life” offers a good example of printerly intrusion. The following lines are from his manuscript in Syracuse University’s Department of Special Collections:

16. It is still a convention today to begin each new line of verse with a capital letter.
Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms
Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms,
And girdled in thy golden singing-coat
Come thou before my lady and say this:
"Borgia, thy gold hair's colour burns in me,
Thy mouth makes heat my blood in fervorish rhymes;
Therefore, so many as these roses be,
Kiss me so many times."
Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop herself none otherwise
Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And kiss thee with soft laughing on thine eyes,
Ballad, and on thy mouth.17

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17. Algernon Charles Swinburne Collection, Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collections.
The vocatively pointed “Forth, ballad”; the comma after “harms” (though, alas, not after the “girdled” clause); the use of the colon before the quoted message; the semicolon succeeded by “Therefore”, itself followed by a comma; the quotation marks; the comma-ed off participial “seeing how sweet she is”; the absence of a stop after “otherwise”—all these doings smack of a syntactical orientation that seeks to disambiguate meaning. Nevertheless—tamper, the printer would.

Here follow the same lines as printed in the first printing of the poem in 1866. The most striking change is to be seen in the format, whose uneven indentations do little to aid interpretation. But there are punctuational changes as well, and they at least are interesting.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms, [comma added]

Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms; [semicolon for comma]

And girdled in thy golden singing-coat, [comma added]

Come thou before my lady and say this; [semicolon for colon]

Borgia, thy gold hair’s colour burns in me, [quotation marks, strangely left out]

Thy mouth makes heat my blood in feverish rhymes; [the spelling of “feverish” has been changed]

Therefore, so many as these roses be,

Kiss me so many times. [quotation marks left out]

Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,

That she will stoop herself none otherwise

Than a blown vine-branch doth,

And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes, ['laughter' instead of 'laughing']

Ballad, and on thy mouth.18

Meanwhile other poets of this era were straining to break away from pure syntactic prescriptions and to reach for the quarter tones of nuance in the way that speech does. For this, writers with sensitive ears had always been willing (or at least would have been, if

they had known what they were about) to vitiate the clarity of their syntax by additions of elocutionary points—most notably, in the form of commas and dashes. The manuscripts of Robert Browning (1806–1861), particularly those of the highly rhetorical dramatic monologues, show an abundant and unorthodox use of the comma and dash. The poetic manuscripts of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) are profuse with dashes—the dash being notoriously (though not necessarily) a rhetorical instrument—many of which were removed by the printer. But particularly interesting in respect to artistic punctuation was Emily Dickinson’s (1830–1886) persistent and multifaceted use of the dash.

In dealing with this poet it should be remembered that she never herself prepared manuscripts for a printer and that her own long-hand produced ‘fair copies’ of frequently varied punctuation as well as numerous idiosyncrasies of line arrangement, spelling, and capitalization. All of these ‘aberrations’ were regularized, of course, by printers, until the 1955 Harvard edition, edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Johnson broke precedent by instructing The Belknap Press to reproduce to the best of its printerly ability those multitudes of oddly positioned short and long dashes, off-the-line marks, curves, and slants that so distinguished Emily Dickinson’s manuscript pages and about which her reading admirers had heretofore known nothing. Although the comma (usually a slant, but occasionally a forward curve) appeared along with other conventional punctuating marks (i.e., the full stop, the exclamation, and question mark), her pointing was distinctive both in its peculiar reliance on the dash and its striking absence of the colons and semicolons that we find, say, in the manuscripts of Swinburne. In general, critics of the Harvard edition were more baffled by, than ecstatic over, revelations of Dickinson’s actual pointing. Concerning her ubiquitous

21. Or in the published products of Robert Browning, whom Emily Dickinson very much admired.
dash, Johnson himself noted that she used it capriciously, often in substitution for a period—indeed, it may in fact have been a hasty, lengthened dot intended for one. On occasion her dashes and commas are indistinguishable. Says Johnson:

Within lines she uses dashes with no grammatical function whatsoever. They frequently become visual representations of a musical beat.

To this, of course, others have added their say. All Dickinson stress marks and dividing verticals, elongated periods and dashes have been listed, discussed, and argued over for their sometimes inexplicable, often grammatically intrusive presence. The numerous variations between the standard dash and the elongated period appear, we are told, at three different levels on the line, each indicating a musical direction (a rise or cadence in voice sound) that slightly adjusts the significance of phrasing. Others have submitted that the curious dashes were expressive of the way her mind worked—in impressionistic spurts, tentatively, breathlessly. Dashes are in fact present to an extreme in the verses of her most critical year, 1861, when she was thirty-one. Dickinson’s manuscript poem about marriage contains no other punctuation marks than thirty dashes and an ending exclamation point. It is a song giving vent to emotion, and though controlled in its artistry, its energy derives more from her need to cry out than to be heard. There is no time for conceptual governances or strings of logically descending modifiers. The pauses must be frequent. They must measure her word gush to the pulse of her physiological stress. The delicacy with which Dickinson was able to achieve these effects owed much to the indecisiveness of the dash.

Critics have again and again noted the extreme effort required to


24. See Lindberg-Seyersted, Emily Dickinson’s Punctuation, n.3., p. 12.
divine the intended purpose of each Dickinsonian dash. Might it be there to indicate “the pause of anticipation of suspense”? Is it “equivalent to the phrasing marks of music”? or indicative of “the stress of italics”? The overall effect of her dashes seems “either to reproduce pauses in her own reading of the poems or to render the clauses and phrases in a fluidity of transition lost by a rigid system”. Since Dickinson’s employment of the puncts was so inconsistent and ambiguous, it has even been recommended that future editors of her poetry “omit . . . all punctuation, or all save that of the period”.25

What were the influences that encouraged this reserved lady poet from puritan Amherst to experiment so wildly with the points? Since books were her pleasure, let us look there for the source of her inspiration. Notable amongst the Dickinson family’s library books was Lord Kames’s Elements of Criticism, a textbook used both at the Amherst Academy (1839–40)26 and at Amherst College (1835–49). The Elements was an eminent book, whose contents Dickinson must have known well. Of particular interest to us is this excerpt:

Language would have no great power, were it confined to the natural order of ideas. I shall soon have an opportunity to make it evident, that by inversion a thousand beauties may be compassed, which must be relinquished in a natural arrangement.27

How appealing to her sensitivities must have been that invitation to invert the “natural order of ideas”.

Also of likely impact was Samuel P. Newman’s A Practical System of Rhetoric, from which we find the following statement:

It should ever be impressed on the student, that, in forming

26. Emily Dickinson attended the Academy from 1840 to 1847.
27. Lord Henry Home Kames, Elements of Criticism (New York: Collins & Hannay, 1830), 254. I was guided to this reference and to all the following books that might have influenced Dickinson by Carlton Lowenberg’s alphabetically listed Emily Dickinson’s Textbooks (Lafayette, Calif., 1986).
a style, he is to acquire a manner of writing to some extent, peculiarly his own, and which is to be the index to the modes of his thinking—the development of his intellectual traits and feelings.  

In dealing with Dickinson’s punctuational quirks, one should especially remember the educational interest of her time in rhetorical delivery. It was a subject for which school books were provided at the Amherst Academy during her enrollment there. Because her pointing reflexes are so obviously responsive to the principles of nineteenth-century elocution, scholarly theory suggests that Dickinson used derivatives of her school texts’ rhetoric rules for both the standard grammatical stops (that is, the comma, semicolon, colon, etc.) and the rhetorical marks for maintaining monotone (—) or for falling (‘) and rising (’) inflections. The traditional hymnbook use of the dash to denote “an expressive suspension” was very familiar to her and undoubtedly played some part in her profuse reliance upon dashes to break up her own sequences. Whatever the truth might be, her variable dashes evince no detectable system of longer or shorter pause, and in general her punctuation remained always unconventional and private.

It is startling to see how the strong punctuation of the early publications could destroy the supra-linguistic subtleness of a Dickinson poem. To illustrate the sad discrepancy let us look at two versions of the opening verse of her poem “I heard a fly buzz when

28. Samuel P. Newman, A Practical System of Rhetoric, or the Principles and Rules of Style, Inferred from Examples of Writing . . . (Andover: Gould and Newman, 1839), 80. This book, which went through more than sixty editions, was in use at Mt. Holyoke Seminary during Emily Dickinson’s year there, and available on the Amherst College library shelves before then. The author was an eminent professor of Greek and Latin at Bowdoin College and the brother of Emily Dickinson’s uncle. It would seem impossible that Emily Dickinson was not acquainted with his thinking.

29. For example, Ebenezer Porter’s The Rhetorical Reader; Consisting of Instructions for Regulating the Voice, with a Rhetorical Notation . . . (New York: Dayton & Saxton, 1841). This book in its various forms went through more than a hundred editions.

30. Lindberg-Seyersted, Emily Dickinson’s Punctuation, 16, 17.
I died—": first, as it appeared in the attempted manuscript-facsimile of the Harvard edition; and second, in an earlier (1924) printed form.

THE HARVARD VERSION

I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air—
Between the Heaves of Storm—

A 1924 RENDERING

I Heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness round my form
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

Brita Lindberg-Seyersted’s very complete study of Emily Dickinson’s manuscript version of this poem brings her to the following conclusion:

The lack of periods, and other strong pace-stopping marks, makes of the poem a continuum, appropriate to its theme and situation: the dying moment of the poetic persona, performing her last acts and observing the scene as from a distance of death. The final dash (in the manuscript definitely a dash, not a lengthened dot), substituting for the normal period, is especially felicitous: a gradual blurring of the vision of the one dying, not a sharp, definite darkness descending upon her, is paralleled by the ‘open’ dash.

In the 1924 rendering of this poem, the semicolon at the end of the first line after ‘died’ alters the tone of the poem entirely. Dickinson’s original opening is both matter-of-fact and suggestive. The

33. Lindberg-Seyersted, Emily Dickinson’s Punctuation, 13–14.
dashes evoke an offhandedness, a something more and other than a realistic description. They define the mood and control the tone of a racing, impressionistic mind.

Despite her apparent casualness, Emily Dickinson is known from a manuscript letter in the Boston Public Library to have been very upset by the punctuation—the insertion of a question mark—in the third line of an unauthorized publication of her poem “A narrow Fellow in the Grass”, which *The Springfield Republican* printed in this way:

    You may have met him—did you not?
    His notice instant is,

Whereas two extant manuscript copies read as follows.

A

A narrow Fellow in the Grass
Occasionally rides—
You may have met Him—did you not
His notice sudden is—

B

A narrow Fellow in the Grass
Occasionally rides—
You may have met him? Did you not
His notice instant is—

In her letter to a friend Dickinson complained that “the third and fourth [lines] were one” and so, she had been “defeated too of the third line by the punctuation”. Says Lindberg-Seyersted:

Emily Dickinson’s intention in leaving out every punctuation mark after the question “did you not” was obviously to avoid a pedantic emphasis on this sentence, which, in its turn, is a question syntactically, but whose rhetorical function is that of a tagged-on conversational phrase, a “question

34. Ibid., 22, 23. Often, the different printed versions of a Dickinson poem will vary slightly.
tag”, as identified in modern phonetics. A question mark would overdo the pause which naturally occurs at the line-end, and, semantically, make too much out of this unobtrusive insertion, which serves to emphasize the informal tone, and the direct address to a second person, a fellow-observer of nature’s lesser inhabitants.35 (Italics added)

To which we would add that the line break following “did you not” is an example of colometric sense division, discussed in Part One. The elocutionary wait that it commands is sufficient for the sense of query to emerge.

That Emily Dickinson sometimes wavered between variations of punctuation in copying out duplicates of her poems would seem to indicate that her pointing was less a matter of consistent system than “a conscious, but impressionistic method of stressing and arranging the rhythmical units of her verse”, indeed, a search to add delicate touches of meaning to the linguistic units. Her points are creations of the moment, seldom deliberated, but inherent nevertheless in her vision.

It is significant that when she made her semi-final or final copies of the penciled rough drafts, she did not discard the dashes as belonging only to an experimental initial stage, but retained them as essential for the poem. There are also cases where the rough draft lacks punctuation marks, added in the fair copy.36

Students of Victorian pointing (if there be such people) will remember that it was a time when handwritten punctuation was still more chaotically confused than the printers allowed the public to witness. The dash was a prominent feature of manuscript poetry and letter writing. Its calligraphed presence gives an air of spontaneity and intimacy. Reproduction in print almost always disfavors it, for the reason that the type’s heavy black bar tends to destroy its potential for delicacy. The thin scratch of a well placed pen-dash can elicit a myriad of sensations. Out of hesitant breathlessness it

36. Ibid., 24.
allows an easy change of pace. It enhances semantic meanings in a highly suppressed syntax, while hinting of unclaimed significance, of unfulfilled expectancy. Its message of indecision suggests a dithering over time, an agitation of thinking, and frustration at the ineffability of a matter that is bursting to be told. When there was not room in her lines for subject or predicate, Emily Dickinson used the rhetorical dash syntactically to complete the sense of elliptical phrases and fill in the grammatical vacuum. While the puncts of prose and the printed puncts of all literature were becoming more fixed and more logical in orientation, Emily Dickinson never abandoned her own idiosyncratic application of elocutionary pointing. It was part and parcel of what she wished to say.37

THE EXPERIMENTAL AESTHETES: PUNCTUATION’S NOBLE ACHIEVEMENT

By the middle of the nineteenth century Science had usurped from Literature its traditional jurisdiction over cultural knowledge. Stung by their loss of status, Victorian literaries turned to Art—Art for Art’s sake—which was impervious to laboratory rules and the distracting disclosures of The Royal Society. Writers now strove to empower written language to deal with the elaborate output of their imaginations.

Of all the blows that Science dealt to the humanistic organism perhaps the most bruising was the new scientific philology. In the space of a few years this cadet discipline brought to ruin the age-old mystique of words. One could no longer maintain that the English language was derived from the grandeur of English civilization, let alone from the god-given logos of the Bible. Where the Church had persistently taught that speech (particularly when preserved in one or another of the classical languages) was the divine indication of human primacy, French neogrammarian logic and German phonetic studies were demonstrating that all language, no matter how literary or civilized, owed its formulation to the negligence of successive speakers throughout the history of mankind. Thus, ultimately, did the articulate lips of Victorian gentlemen receive their

37. Ibid., 6, 29.
instruction from the undoubtedly not so clean ones of their early
barbarian ancestors. This unsavory prospect played havoc with the
'sanctity' of all the ancient languages, but most notably, Latin.
Where English scholars had once thought Latin to represent most
fully the logical forms and operations underlying all thought (if not
reality itself), it was now proved as inglorious as any vernacular.
Victorian civilization, hitherto proud of its imperial powers and
culture—both of which it associated with those of Rome—was
correspondingly undermined.

Nevertheless, writers would find solace within this collapsed
structure of national beliefs. Ebulliently resilient, as it befits young
authors to be, the new generation seized the chance to remodel the
written language and to disengage it from the rigidities of logic
(which was not their meat). Though schoolmasters persisted in say­
ing their piece, they could not say away the delicious flamboyance
of style exhorted and exhibited by the young up-comers. And so,
while conventions of syntax and the laws of grammatical pointing
continued to guide those whose feet liked the feel of clay, Icarian
efforts were stirring the air overhead, signaling fresh attempts at lit­
erary fame.

To appreciate the faults and achievements of the fin de siècle
writer, we will need to backstep briefly into the preneophilology
years of the early nineteenth century, a time when English literaries
were avidly attending the debate of William Wordsworth and
Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the essential virtues of written lan­
guage. Both poets, neither one conventionally religious, accepted
the divine nature of logos with its unity of inward idea with out­
ward sign, and simply transferred its heritage of spirituality to their
own literary goals. 38 We see in the Wordsworth and Coleridge
conflict a reemergence of the paired, always dilemmaic principles
of written language use: simple directness (usually more ear-oriented)

38. Linda Dowling, Decadence and the Fin de Siècle Literature (Princeton:
Princeton University Press), 25–41. Also consulted for the Wordsworth-Co­
leridge controversy were: The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex
630; William Wordsworth's Preface (1800) to the Lyrical Ballads; and chapters
14–22 of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Biographia Literaria.
versus ornate artistry (usually more eye-oriented); or, to resurrect
the classical terms, Atticism versus Asianism (see Parts One and
Four). Which of the two styles would more graciously befit Eng­
lish Literature? Wordsworth thumped for the former, for linguistic
immediacy and the transparency, best found, he claimed, in the
speaking voices of simple folk living on the glebe. Their untutored
verbalizations, coming direct from the wrangles of the heart, allowed
a closer interplay of sensation with expression. Such directness Words­
worth endeavored to transmit to his poetry. Taking his cues from
the writings of John Locke and from the democratized atmosphere
following the American and French revolutions, Wordsworth gen­
erally mistrusted slick words with their baggage of ungovernable
associations.

In the opposite camp Coleridge upheld complexity, with all the
refinements of thought that inspire word-crafting for the page. He
was convinced that the English language had an intrinsic beauty, a
numinous vitality of its own, and that its literature could express
the unique inner life of the English people, as Latin and its literature
had done for the Romans. Languages, said Coleridge, were organic
wholes, possessing history and capable of growth and decline. Eng­
lish, if nurtured by a clerisy of poets, philosophers, and guardians,
might well be made the world’s lingua communis, a language so arti­
culate and responsive, exact and powerful, that it would give access
to the communion of universal ideas. Whereas the spoken word
was but transitive and casual, the written word could be made to be
without accident. It could raise man above his partial, bumbling life
and place him in a larger historical and cultural context.

For a time Coleridge’s vision elevated the written word to a rank
above speech. Writers, influenced by him, continued for a number
of decades to accept the biblical aura of logos with all its implications
for the God-given supremacy of man. But, as we have seen, the
growth of science worked against such a faith. Facts verifying the
vulgar, hybrid past of English were furiously multiplying. The mid­
century decades saw the Philological Society busily organizing a
dictionary to augment the work of Samuel Johnson and uncover
the chronicle of our language. So unprescriptive of ‘correct’ usage
and ‘good’ taste did considerations grow to be that J.A.H. Murray,
the eminent and driving editor of the Philological Society’s new *Oxford English Dictionary*, would shortly present his sponsors with the belief that the English language was best understood “as a center without a circumference”. In order to recover the true linguistic story of English—its vanishing technical vocabulary, dialect, and slang—he had already (in 1879) broadened the instructions to his literary army of specimen gatherers: that they should supply quotations for “every word that strikes you as rare, obsolete, old-fashioned, new, peculiar, or used in a peculiar way”. In its spirit of historical discovery, this mandate repudiated absolutely the principles of Coleridge’s autocratic clerisy. For the first time, English words (including provincial words, archaicisms, and idioms) were to be authoritatively and indiscriminately listed regardless of ‘accepted’ practice. The objective of the Oxford compilation was to be as methodically inclusive as possible: to expand the list without bias so that the words of all the English language might be recorded as they were, and not how they ought to be. What schoolmasters, scholars, church, or aristocracy approved was mattering less and less.

If all members of cognate word groups were held to be of equal historical interest on grounds of having once, somewhere, sometime, been spoken, then a rupture between the spoken and written forms of the language was inevitable. In the opinion of the belletrists, speech was too all permissive, too variegated. Vocalized forms tended to wander off the mark. They thrived in provincial pockets. By approving equal values amongst varying word forms, philologists were irresponsibly encouraging independence from a communicable norm. England would become a literary Tower of Babel. Its noble literature would disintegrate under a future burden of “brooks” from the south, “becks” from the north, “burns” from Scotland, “creeks” or “branches” from America, “billabongs” from Australia,


41. It is interesting to note how eminent and popular writers—Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, to name a few—had long since accepted substandard dialect speech as viable artistic material.
and who knows what from India? From such madness only ignorance and confusion could ensue. Speech, so volatile and off-the-cuff, was an untrustworthy animal.

Nevertheless, voice sounds are seductive. Compared to them, the language of ink seems coldly contrived, limited, unregenerative, and inanimate, its silence suggestive of death. The consuming eye necessarily deals with print from a distance. Eyes do that. They measure the space between us and what they see, whereas the ears hit home with their news. Because voice sounds were particularly favored in the de-regulated mid-century literary environment, popular speech à la mode de Wordsworth gradually gained an ascendancy of intellectual prestige over the formal constraints of previous literary language. Speech again was praised for its natural pureness. Writing, conversely, was considered to falsify. Even the slowness of setting it down was seen to detract from the transparency required of passing a thought from one mind to another. Orthography, too, was perceived to distort words. Why, for example, should a northerner’s short ‘a’ pronunciation of *bath* be written in the same way as the very different long ‘a’ of the southerner’s? Furthermore, the durability of paper—the probability of text being reproduced multitudinously—tended to exaggerate the lifespan of vogue words and constructions. Of all these faults was writing deemed guilty. The more ornate and literary it was, the more it betrayed the true communication of speech.42 Such carping, incited and abetted by science, did not serve the cultivated literary artist, let alone his ambition of a *lingua communis*. The time had come to reverse the pendulum’s swing.

**THE GRAND MASTER OF PROSE STYLE**

In simple terms, this was the state of affairs out of which Walter Pater, classicist, art critic, and master of English prose, would attempt to remodel and rescue Coleridge’s hopes for literary perfection. True to his times, Pater did not scorn the findings of neophilology. Instead, he sought to dissolve the antagonism between literature

and science by finding a new objective for writers. He advised them to become philologists in their own right so that they could write English more fastidiously and in more scholarly fashion give etymological significance to the words they chose. He urged them to strive for a new aesthetic that would reflect the heterogeneity of nature so recently exposed by biologists; and specifically to that end, to exploit the variety of picturesque idioms now available in the enlarged word horde of acceptable English, including as well those words, however exotic, that they might find lively from elsewhere. Furthermore, he said, they should take pride in the inherited strains of Teutonic and Romantic languages, for it was that very mix that ensured the likelihood of English becoming “the universal medium for communication”—a true lingua communis. In his own publications, Pater himself treated mongrel English with the same literary care that Apuleius had applied to vulgar Latin—and proved thereby how richly expressive it could indeed be made to be.43

English, being the most linear and analytic of all the European languages, is, as we have already seen, particularly prone to scatter into small bits. A reader of English must hang on to his rope (so to speak) and gather up meaning hand over hand in the order in which the words are presented within the phrases, and the phrases within the clauses. The placement of words is everything. Latin, by way of comparison, is architectured.44 It permits a more arbitrary order of words. Its inflections (of which English has hardly any) allow it to bind distant words together, to intermingle words from different phrases, to amass in the end a dominating thought that makes of its heterogeneous fragments a homogeneous whole, a texture that does not so easily break apart. In seeking the same classical coherence for English, Pater restructured his syntax to simulate the multilayered effect of a fully rounded Latin period. He broke the progress of cognitive sequences to “catch at any exquisite passion”,45 so that his

43. Dowling, Decadence, 46, 121–30, passim.
44. Latin, though it no longer carried sacred overtones, was still a language with implications of privilege.
45. Dowling, Decadence, 90, 110.
language might emulate as closely as possible man’s internal, always adjusting response to outside reality, and in that way allow objective and subjective impulses to blend. It was Pater’s goal to expose, as though with the plate of a camera, the thinking mind with all its accompanying apparatus of fine emotion.\(^4^6\) Believing that the contemplation of art offered good exercise for the contemplation of life, that the human intellect was restive, alert, and wired to feeling, Pater spun out his elaborate sentences to suggest a total and synchronous human response to the stimulus of vision. In this way might language be taught to perpetuate the transitory and give exemption from the flux and sprawl of consciousness.\(^4^7\)

In order to compact the agglomerative ramble of English and make it more Latin-like in its architecture, that is, more accommodating of small ideas within the full-blown thought,\(^4^8\) Pater loaded the conventional sentence with the weight of a paragraph. Minutiae became magnified. Words sparkled independently from phrases, as did phrases from clauses, and clauses from sentences. With its host of interruptive stops to mirror the hops and skips of the mind, Pater’s writing gave the appearance of being fractionary; and yet the faltering starts and interjectory qualifications, the irregularities of juxtaposition that disbalanced the reader’s expectation, were all the time ingeniously driven towards an integrated view. Amply qualified as a scholar-artist to amend the language for his new *lingua communis*, Pater also broke the customs of verb tense usage, and shifted clausal and phrasal word groups like the pieces of a puzzle into unconventional rhythms that were insistently surprising and demanding of attention. At the same time he used vocabularies from science, technology, dialects, and the spoken vernacular. He coined new words both to shortcut tedium and to startle.\(^4^9\) In justification of his own unorthodoxies, he advised the aspiring writer to show his intelligence of the rules of language in his freedoms

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\(^{47}\) Dowling, *Decadence*, 113, 132.

\(^{48}\) *A la mode de* Marsh.

With this strange use of the exclamation mark (not at all an unusual feature in Pater’s texts) we are brought up sharp to face our underlying subject. How soundless, in fact, is Pater’s writing! And how dependent on punctuation!

Pater, indeed, wrote for the page, and what he wrote was a learnèd language, full of verbal arabesques and studied posturings. He was said to have arranged his notes on slips of paper. Once these had been ordered by topic, he wrote out his chapters in longhand on the alternate lines of ruled paper, inserting into the spaces new clauses, words, and rephrasings. He repeated this procedure, which again required crossings-out and interlinear corrections. At this stage he frequently hired a typesetter to print out a draft in order that he might better judge the effect. This process would continue until the product in its full grace and harmoniousness satisfied him. And so close was his attention to the form he was constructing that the words he set up in his early drafts to choose from for difficult concepts were sometimes quite varied in meaning. His grandest sentences were too multifaceted and commodious of detail to be taken in without study, or appreciated without concentration. They required the eye. And the eye required punctuation. There, on the page, and free from the exigencies of time, the eye could follow the twists and turns of reason’s thread as signaled by the points, and so, leisurely disentangle the elaborate weave. In the chapter entitled “Style” in his early book *Appreciations* (1889), Pater speaks of the complexity of his art, whose goal was

> to bring a highly qualified matter into compass at one view.

For the literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning,

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but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities, surprises, and after-thoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being sub-sumed under the unity of the whole.\textsuperscript{52}

What is this "whole"? There is an achievable aesthetic unity of conceptual opposites, Pater thought, which man is morally obliged to seek. For example, as life reflects death, so each of a seemingly antagonistic pair will suggest its partner: thus, light suggests shadow; male, female; past, present; imagination, reality; artistic involvement, critical detachment; and so on. The writer's task is to translate the wholeness of his thinking experience with its full resonance of associations and mystique of circumstance into language (necessarily a visual language). He must seek to evoke simultaneously for his reader both feeling and thought.\textsuperscript{53} In short, the ambitions of Paterean prose were very demanding. Though in many ways imitative of spontaneity, a verbal composition developed with so much in mind to accomplish could scarcely be called spontaneous. Nevertheless, all that self-conscious crafting made a high moment for punctuation. By keeping order amidst this silent verbosity of the page, the punct achieved its highest distinction. Literary artists embraced it for the flexibility, \textit{animus}, and subtlety that it allowed. They appreciated the way it could regulate the flow and disambiguate complexities. Because punctuation was now so well established a feature of both reading and writing, it was quite up to maintaining comprehensibility in this its most challenging enterprise.

To examine the action, we will now focus on the following single sentence from Pater's novel \textit{Marius the Epicurean} (published in 1885), in which he discusses and illustrates his stylistic theories:

His [Flavian's] dilettantism, his assiduous preoccupation with what might seem but the details of mere form or manner, was, after all, bent upon the function of bringing to the surface, sincerely and in their integrity, certain strong personal

\textsuperscript{52} Pater, \textit{Appreciations}, 14.
intuitions, certain visions or apprehensions of things as being, with important results, in this way rather than in that—apprehensions which the artistic or literary expression was called upon to follow, with the exactness of wax or clay, clothing the model within it.54

We see in the first three lines the basic sentence: namely “dil­letantism was bent”. Around that core, the ancillary remnants vibrate. The first two commas interject a definitive elaboration of “dil­letantism” with their implanted, authorial hesitancies “but” and “or”. The second pair of commas, marking off “after all”, give us a quick glimpse of the author as he sees beyond the appearances to the fact, for no matter how truthful a historian wishes to be, he inserts himself by his selection of facts. It was a part of Pater’s vision that the expositor’s viewpoint remain a palpable part of the state­ment. Continuing: two commas isolate “sincerely and in their integrity”, which act as a group to define what follows, a task which is indicated by “their”. With this, the movement is thrown forward to “intuitions”, which is itself marked off to be defined with the paired words “visions” and “apprehensions”, joined again by the author’s hesitant “or”. Then, once more, the authorial voice inserts itself, sweeping omnisciently into the future: “with impor­tant results”. Finally, the fearful, hesitating word “apprehensions” (the most vibrant of the triad) is again taken up, after a dash–pause that demands a sharp specificity of attention. The final two commas introduce two modifications for “follow”: the action of “follow” must be done with the exactness of wax, ah! or clay; and be done so that it clothes the model within it. In a statement of such high preci­sion, “clothes” might have benefitted by some auxiliary detail—a clause or two to suggest the clinging fit of a satin gown as opposed to the loose bulk of a tweed cape. For why stop now?

With his highly influential Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873) and his novel Marius the Epicurean (1885), Pater had bravely and earnestly (and even, it could be said, patriotically) set out to lead the way into a new writing style, a style that he hoped would inject

the passive page with the vibrancy of living matter and portray, by the evidence of its energies, the writer’s own cerebral and sensual energies in contest. Yet, in forcing English to such an effort, Pater made style too much the focus. Though meaning could be followed (most easily in good clear print), his elaborate syntax contradicted the measure of voice rhythms, and so, despite its claim to vibrancy, seemed dead. Nevertheless, Pater’s work stretched the capabilities of what written English could do. Its representations of scattered mental responses to stimuli undoubtedly eased the way for subsequent writers to deal with fictional streams of consciousness. Though in some sense he can be seen as rescuing for English literature that mystical aura that science had ‘destroyed’, it would appear (even in his own early and ambitious terms) that Pater was struggling for a prize that English could not give. His need of so much punctuation, however imaginatively and artistically he applied it, demonstrates a failure, of which he himself seems sensible.

Say what you have to say, what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no surplusage:—there, is the justification of the sentence so fortunately born, “entire, smooth, round,” that it needs no punctuation, and also (that is the point!) of the most elaborate period, if it be right in its elaboration. 55

English cannot deal with labyrinthine prose in the manner so zealously prescribed by Pater, nor will the most sophisticated artistry suffice to help it do so. However magnificent, Pater’s own writing style lacked the fire that comes from a cry of the heart; for cries of the heart are necessarily both terse and sonorous. Oscar Wilde, one of Pater’s most admiring disciples, regretted the master’s disposition to compose for the printed page. In “The Critic as Artist” Wilde wrote:

Since the introduction of printing, and the fatal development of the habit of reading amongst the middle and lower classes of this country, there has been a tendency in litera-

55. Pater, Appreciations, 23.
ture to appeal more and more to the eye, and less and less to the ear which is really the sense which, from the standpoint of pure art, it should seek to please, and by whose canons of pleasure it should abide always. Even the work of Mr. Pater, who is, on the whole, the most perfect master of English prose now creating amongst us, is often far more like a piece of mosaic than a passage in music, and seems, here and there, to lack the true rhythmical life of words. 56

While incarcerated in the Reading Gaol (1895–97), the deeply humiliated Oscar Wilde came well to understand how elaborations that please the eye are not so closely allied to the heart. The artifice demanded by any literary form or style plainly impairs the candor of emotion. The following excerpt comes from Wilde’s long prison letter to Lord Alfred Douglas (“Bosie”).

I cannot reconstruct my letter, or rewrite it. You must take it as it stands, blotted in many places with tears, in some with the signs of passion or pain, and make it out as best you can, blots, corrections, and all. As for the corrections and errata, I have made them in order that my words should be an absolute expression of my thoughts, and err neither through surplusage nor through being inadequate. Language requires to be tuned, like a violin: and just as too many or too few vibrations in the voice of the singer or the trembling of the string will make the note false, so too much or too little in words will spoil the message. As it stands, at any rate, my letter has its definite meaning behind every phrase. There is in it nothing of rhetoric. Wherever there is erasion or substitution, however slight, however elaborate, it is because I am seeking to render my real impression, to find for my mood its exact equivalent. Whatever is just in feeling, comes always last in form. (Italics added) 57

(Additional Ms. 50141A, f. 37v in the British Library)

57. From Oscar Wilde’s Reading Gaol letter to Lord Alfred Douglas. The man-
Though Pater may have failed of pure sublimity in the art of crafting written words, he greatly revitalized literary aspirations in his own lifetime. His critical philosophy and his own admired prose came to affect profoundly the sensitivities of subsequent writers: not only Oscar Wilde, but Robert Louis Stevenson, William Butler Yeats, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, James Joyce, to mention an eminent few. Despite Pater's avowed preference for straightforward syntax in prose, his own acrobatic example had exercised punctuation well. Though heavily reliant on "those stigmata of written vernacular languages", he extended (as he had proposed to do in the first place) the boundaries of what could be said on paper. Again and again, he achieved lines of breathtaking beauty.

Nevertheless, as the century ended, the pendulum had already begun its inevitable swing back, away from the grand formalities of an all-incorporative statement. Humans do not really crave completeness. Once again, the literary landscape began to fill with experimenting scribblers in search of simplicity, directness, and a convincing sincerity. With the advance of new fashions, the puncts—despite the requirements of Pater's vast and verbose following—would be obliged to restrain themselves a little.

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uscript (on forty foolscap folios), later bowdlerized, became famous under the published title De Profundis.

The First Editions of Stephen Crane’s *The Black Riders and Other Lines* and *War Is Kind*

**BY DONALD VANOUSE**

The synthesis of poetry and book design in the first editions of Stephen Crane’s *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899) exemplifies the collaborative daring and ambition of American artists and craftsmen at the end of the nineteenth century. They had learned, from such British designers as William Morris, that literature, the visual arts, and the craftsmanship of printing and bookbinding could be unified to challenge the intellectual timidity and shoddy commercial values of what Mark Twain had labeled the “Gilded Age.”

Stephen Crane’s poems offered a particularly appropriate vehicle for such a challenge. Unconventional in form and startling in content, the poems strenuously engage cultural and religious issues. They interrogate sacred texts and rituals as well as poetic conventions and the influence of the popular press. Furthermore, Crane’s poems expose structures of arrogance, violence, and self-deception.

Although the first editions of *The Black Riders* and *War Is Kind* are remarkable achievements in book design, subsequent editions of Crane’s poetry, by Amy Lowell, Joseph Katz, and James B. Colvert, have not included facsimile page reproductions or acknowledged the distinctive successes of these first editions. Recent studies of modernist texts, such as Jerome McGann’s *Black Riders: The Visual Language of Modernism* and Cary Nelson’s *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory 1910–1945*, suggest, however, that critical appreciation of these volumes can contribute to our understanding of both the creative ambition of the period and the cultural impact of Stephen Crane’s verse.

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The publication of *The Black Riders* was promoted by John D. Barry, an assistant editor of *Forum* magazine. Barry first attracted critical attention to the poems by reading from Crane’s manuscript at the April 1894 meeting of the Uncut Leaves Society. Most important, Barry arranged for Crane to send the manuscript to Barry’s friends from his college days at Harvard University, the avant-garde Boston publishers Copeland and Day.

Although Herbert Copeland and Frederick Holland Day had just formed their publishing company in 1893, they were already respected as leaders in American Arts and Crafts publishing. Like Morris’s Kelmscott Press, Copeland and Day printed hand-set antique typefaces upon thick, handmade or laid paper. But much of their work was done in the Aesthetic Style rather than the medieval Arts and Crafts Style favored by the Kelmscott Press. The Aesthetic Style, the inspiration for their edition of *The Black Riders*, is lighter and more open in format. It was derived from early Italian Renaissance printing rather than illuminated medieval manuscripts.

Copeland and Day were shocked by some of the subject matter addressed in Crane’s verse collection. They proposed—and Crane ultimately accepted—the deletion of seven poems. For his part, Crane feared that the volume would be printed in an unreadable “old English type.” However, the publishers were intending to use a modern font to produce a volume “more severely classic than any book yet issued in America.” In the end, the poet approved of their decisions regarding both typography and design.

The resulting volume has been praised for its “modern boldness

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1. Of the seven poems excluded from this edition, two were published four years later in *War Is Kind*: “To the maiden” and “There was a man with tongue of wood.” Two of the excluded poems were not published until 1957, in Daniel Hoffman, *The Poetry of Stephen Crane* (New York: Columbia University Press). Three of the excluded poems appear to have been lost. For a discussion, see Fredson Bowers, “The Text: History and Analysis,” in vol. 10, *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 193–96.


3. Ibid., 77.
of design." The layout of the title page is startlingly unconventional, with closely spaced capital letters placed high on the page, and the author's name, "STE-PHEN," hyphenated (see fig. 1). Copeland and Day continued this format by printing the poems themselves entirely in capital letters at the top of the page. Individual poems are identified by roman numerals rather than titles.

In the twentieth century, we have become accustomed to such experiments in the use of print case from reading E. E. Cummings, the Dadaists, and works of concrete poetry, and from seeing the bold elegance of Jenny Holzer's print messages and LED environments. In his recent biography of Crane, Christopher Benfey reprints several of the poems from The Black Riders in the original capitals. He astutely suggests the possible influence of newspaper headlines and telegram print—which convey urgency and emphasis—upon this choice of capitals.

Such conventions as printing initial capitals to begin a line of poetry are never neutral. The use of capitals for nouns implies a hierarchy like that implied by the words God and human. (Consider that the scribes of the strictly ordered world of medieval monasticism devoted vast energy to the illumination of their initial capitals.) The use of capitals to begin lines of poetry affirms the value of formal structures, in this case beginnings, recurrences, and endings. Crane challenges such conventions of precedence and hierarchy. In addition to choosing innovative and startling poetic forms, he explicitly questions the authority of gods, sages, and sacred texts. In poem XII, for example, he uses an epigraph based upon Exodus 20:5 to rebuke both the Biblical text and the deity:

5. See Michael Auping, "Reading Holzer or Speaking in Tongues," in Jenny Holzer: The Venice Installation (Buffalo: Albright-Knox Gallery, 1990), 25–37. Holzer's language-art and Crane's poetry may both reflect the influence of their Methodist upbringings. She says, "I was always attracted to dire warnings and visions of ecstasy—writings that described extreme or altered states."
AND THE SINS OF THE FATHERS SHALL 
BE VISITED ON THE HEADS OF THE CHIL- 
DREN, EVEN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH 
GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME. 
WELL, THEN, I HATE THEE, UNRIGHTEOUS 
PICTURE; 
WICKED IMAGE, I HATE THEE; 
SO, STRIKE WITH THY VENGEANCE 
THE HEADS OF THOSE LITTLE MEN 
WHO COME BLINDLY. 
IT WILL BE A BRAVE THING.

By printing the poems in The Black Riders entirely in capitals, Copeland and Day seem to have acknowledged Crane’s challenging of poetic, intellectual, and religious hierarchies throughout his experimental verse.7

The use of roman numerals rather than titles to identify individual poems imposes further stress upon literary conventions. Like the title of a painting or a musical composition, the title of a poem defines the subject or asserts the purpose of the work. It tells us where we are going. Without a title to frame it, the work floats edgeless upon the page. Crane’s verses, like many of his prose works, frequently end without narrative or thematic closure. The lack of beginnings and endings tends to heighten the interconnections among the lines, an effect even further compounded in this case by the deliberate omission of a table of contents. (Several critics have observed that the questions raised in the first poem resonate until we reach the last lines of the collection.) Susan Otis Thompson states that the publishers chose a “format as bizarre for its time as the poetry itself,”8 but we might better say that Copeland and Day’s format for The Black Riders and Other Lines is an appropriate ac-

7. Earlier in 1894, in a much more luxuriously decorated volume, Copeland and Day had joined with Elkin Matthews and John Lane at the Bodley Head in London in printing Oscar Wilde’s The Sphinx in roman capitals. Although more erotic in its subject, Wilde’s poem is like Crane’s The Black Riders in the questioning of religious values and hierarchies.
8. Thompson, American Book Design, 49.
knowledgment of the edgeless, orphic dilemmas of perception and consciousness imposed by Crane’s verse.

Literary scholars have been inattentive to the appropriateness of the typography, format, and cover design of this first edition. In fact, the recent ten-volume edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* includes neither a facsimile page nor a reproduction of Frederick Gordon’s cover design from Copeland and Day’s edition of *The Black Riders and Other Lines*. Such omissions are a form of cultural amnesia. They suppress the particular historical document, and force this bold achievement in publishing to disappear within the realm of the polite, homogenous texts that Crane and his publishers sought to rebuke.

Amy Lowell’s introduction to volume six of *The Work of Stephen Crane* (1925) may have introduced this modernist desire to distance Crane from the Copeland and Day edition. Lowell presents Crane’s verse as an anticipation of the twentieth-century Imagist movement, and she discredits the format of the first edition as evidence of Crane’s connection to the art of the 1890s. “The supreme irony,” she insists, was that *The Black Riders* had been “issued as an aesthetic knick knack and its author hailed as an affected ass.”

There were, in fact, some hostile reviews of *The Black Riders*, but Robert W. Stallman quotes from several positive reviews of the volume and blames Elbert Hubbard, editor of *The Philistine*, for creating a fictional history of critical abuse. Hubbard probably was seeking to advertise his own critical acumen in publishing Crane’s poems in *The Philistine* and *The Roycroft Quarterly*. Perhaps Lowell’s criticism was influenced by Hubbard’s bluster. It is certain that she was outraged by the first edition’s cover design by Crane’s friend Frederick Gordon. She insisted that “the silly orchid which straggled over the cover [was] disgracefully out of place.”

A letter that Gordon wrote to Copeland and Day does place the iconography of the cover in Aubrey Beardsley’s garden of Art Nouveau extravagance:

The orchid with its strange habits, extraordinary forms and curious properties, seemed to me the most appropriate floral motive [i.e. “motif”], an idea in which Mr. Crane concurred before he left New York.12

Perhaps Crane felt more respect for Beardsleyesque achievements in black and white than Lowell, writing in the 1920s, could be expected to share; but she might have been more attentive to the intellectual history of the subject matter of Gordon’s design. A botanist’s preface to a publication of Alfred Eisenstadt’s photographs of orchids identifies the Darwinian basis for interest in this floral subject:

12. Wertheim and Sorrentino, Correspondence, 89.
Orchids are the vegetative counterpart to man. As man is a biped at the highest level of animal development, orchids represent a peak of evolution in the world of plants. . . . Observations of the complex structure of orchid flowers strongly influenced Charles Darwin in his theory of evolution by natural selection. ¹³

The title of Darwin's major study of these plants, *The Various Contrivances by Which Orchids are Fertilized by Insects* (1862) indicates his interest in the complexity of their reproductive adaptations to their environments. Gordon's decision to use the orchid motif is very likely a reflection of the Darwinian significance of the "strange habits, extraordinary forms and curious properties" of these highly evolved plants. Crane himself had annotated copies of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) with a social Darwinist comment on the power of "environment" in shaping human lives. ¹⁴ It seems likely from the cover drawing that both Gordon and Crane saw Crane's verse as the product of an artistic evolution comparable to the emergence of new and strange plant forms through natural selection. For this wedding of art and craftsmanship, then, Darwin seems to have supplied the flowers.

Three years later, Crane was not involved in editorial decisions regarding the heavily decorated first edition of *War Is Kind* (1899), his second volume of verse. He was living in England, quite desperate for money, when he sent the first thirty "lines" to his agent on 1 March 1898. Before sending the remaining poems, Crane left England for the Caribbean where he wrote newspaper dispatches concerning the Spanish-American War. After hostilities ended in mid-August, he returned, inexplicably, to Havana, Cuba, where he completed the "Intrigue" sequence that concludes *War Is Kind*. It is difficult to ascertain whether some of Crane's "uncollected poems" might have been intended for this volume. He directed his agent, Paul Revere Reynolds, to find the poem "War Is Kind" for the volume, but he may have been uncertain about which of his other poems were in Reynolds's possession. In fact, *War Is Kind* includes

¹⁴. Wertheim and Sorrentino, *Correspondence*, 52–53.
what seems to be an inadvertent reprinting of a slightly revised version of “THERE WAS ONE I MET UPON THE ROAD,” in *The Black Riders and Other Lines*.

The Frederick A. Stokes Company of New York published *War Is Kind* in April 1899, in an eclectic Arts and Crafts format, with cover, decorations, and illustrations by the noted American designer Will Bradley. Born in 1868, two years before Crane, Bradley had begun his career at age twelve by working as a printer’s helper in Ishpeming, Michigan. While still in his teens, he moved to Chicago where he worked as a wood engraver and commercial designer. By the mid-1890s, Bradley’s achievements as a designer and illustrator had brought him to international prominence. He was a major figure in the development of the poster in America, for example, and, in his work for the *Inland Printer*, he was the first to design original covers for successive issues of a monthly magazine. In 1895 he designed one of his most ambitious Arts and Crafts books, R. D. Blackmore’s *Fringilla*, which was printed on handmade paper by John Wilson. Also during 1895, the very year Crane published *The Black Riders and Other Lines*, Bradley contributed an effective, Morris-inspired title page for Copeland and Day’s edition of Richard LeGallicenne’s *Robert Louis Stevenson: An Elegy and Other Poems Mainly Personal*. It seems very likely that Bradley developed an interest in Crane’s verse during this period.

The designer’s responsiveness to the poems in *War Is Kind* was noted in a prepublication comment on the edition. *Publisher’s Weekly* of 11 March 1899 observed that Bradley had “found the poems suggestive and did his work on them with enthusiasm.”

The drawings reflect both the curvilinear lines of Aubrey Beardsley and the rectilinear framing of the designer Charles Ricketts, but the variety in stylistic and structural devices gives the volume an abrasive visual texture.

Influenced, perhaps, by the Copeland and Day edition of *The Black Riders and Other Lines*, Bradley presented most of the poems without individual titles. Only in the previously published title

poem “War Is Kind” and in heading the “Intrigue” section did he include titles. His least understandable deviation from Art Nouveau practice was the printing of the poems on grey paper. Thick, often handmade, paper was characteristic of high-quality printing at the time, of course, but there also was a commitment to very white paper as an element in presenting heavily-inked typefonts. Thompson observes that the light Caslon type that Bradley used “is too thin for the heavy, dark paper,” but she adds, “This is the only jarring note in what is otherwise a monument to American Art Nouveau bookmaking.” Thompson concludes by observing, “It is a strong, harsh book, one not for all tastes.”

Amy Lowell approved of the rather conventional decorations used in the volume, but she found the illustrations “perfectly unreasonable.” In her evaluation of the book, she did not discuss the pertinence of Bradley’s designs to Crane’s poems. She simply concluded that “no man could be taken seriously who perpetrated a book which looked like this.” In fact, Bradley’s numerous illustrations and decorations indicate an appreciation of the “strong, harsh” qualities of Crane’s verse. He designed a book of an appropriate, strenuous originality. Even in the illustration for “Fast rode the knight,” which Lowell described as “the worst of these ghastly pictures,” Bradley acknowledges the harshness of Crane’s rebuke of a romantic fantasy. Perhaps, having seen the dying horse at the center of the carnage in Picasso’s Guernica (1937), we are more able to appreciate the iconic juxtapositionings in this woodcut-inspired drawing (fig. 3). Certainly the illustration is pertinent to Crane’s collapsing of the ending of a fairy tale rescue into the image of a horse, dead and “forgotten at foot of castle wall.” The flower-like castle suggests the organic forms in the architecture of Antonio Gaudi and in the stained-glass designs of the Tiffany Studio. It is very likely that Bradley had a sense of ironies and tensions in such forms, which critics sometimes have blurred with a supercilious attitude toward the “decorative” concerns of Art Nouveau. Such

18. Ibid., xxvii.
Fig. 3. Illustration for “Fast rode the knight,” from *War Is Kind*. 
softened, organic architectural forms imply that geometric rigidity
is an arrogant presumption or a delusion. Even in the pastoral
sweetness of the landscape, Bradley parallels the theme of the
indifference of nature, which is found in the poems of War Is Kind,
such as “A man said to the universe,” and in many of Crane’s prose
works.

Other, more visually complex, illustrations also acknowledge
the intellectual texture of Crane’s verse. The design for the book
cover (fig. 4) introduces many of the images developed in the vol­
ume. It juxtaposes organic forms (trees, flowers, and curvilinear
leaves) with firmer, more geometric shapes (the lyre, urn, sword,
and vase). Furthermore, the vertical and horizontal framing lines
impose spatial tensions, not only in presenting depth, but in pre­
senting the relation of interior to exterior spaces. This complex
visual surface parallels the juxtaposed, often contradictory, statements
that occur throughout Crane’s poems. The drawing also anticipates
the profound problematizing of space that occurs in Cubist painting.
Most important is Bradley’s complex rendering of the relationship
between the somewhat androgynous female figure and the organic
and cultural objects that surround her. Her feet are bound by what
is, perhaps, her own encircling hair, and she is decentered, nearly
bisected, by the vertical panel border. The hilt of the leaning sword
is held tentatively in her left hand. The relationship between the
decentered human figure and the surrounding objects provides a
compelling visual equivalent to an issue raised in many of Crane’s
poems: the natural world and the artifacts of human achievement
surround and enclose us, but the possibilities for consciousness and
action are severely restricted. Poems such as “A slant of sun” and
“A newspaper is a collection of half-injustices” illustrate this theme.

The title poem, “War Is Kind,” begins as follows:

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands
toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.
Fig. 4. Cover illustration for *War Is Kind*. 
Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Bradley’s drawing for the poem (see *Courier* cover) employs more delicate lines and open, unshaded forms. The two vertical panels do not impose spatial tensions so much as they allow two parallel statements. In the narrower panel on the right, the three doves hovering over the three descending arrows refer to the three relationships—of lover, child, and mother—to the soldiers in Crane’s poem. Doves are conventional symbols of love and peace. The arrows are symbols of war. In the left panel, the angelic female profile, bodiless and wearing a crest of flowers, floats above the clouds. She holds a sword and, with closed eyes, kisses the delicate blade. This drawing lacks the harshness of Crane’s images of “hoarse, booming drums” and his grim “field where a thousand corpses lie.” Nevertheless, the drawing identifies the major tension in the poetic refrain: “Do not weep. / War is kind.” The refrain at once contrasts and creates a junction between the love relationships and the glamorous violence and suffering of war. Bradley suggests the need for a vantage point above the clouds, beyond the human, to see this convergence.

Throughout the volume, Bradley’s decisions elucidate thematic and structural issues of the verse. Some early reviewers disapproved of his spacing—many pages have only a few lines—and modern editors, for aesthetic or economic reasons, have not repeated this format. In commenting on the first edition of Hart Crane’s *The Bridge*, however, Cary Nelson argues that “a spacious format . . . suggests the scale of [the poem’s] cultural ambition.” 19 In these terms,

Bradley’s spacing of Stephen Crane’s poems can be seen to emphasize the “cultural ambition” of the works and indicate their cosmic scale. In one example, Bradley’s spacing of the four verse-paragraphs of “In the night” upon four pages emphasizes a subject extending across long periods of terrestrial time. Each of the four verse-paragraphs presents a moment in this vast history. The desires of the mountains to praise God are answered by the appearance of the people and the lights in the little cities of the valleys. In the last verse, however, the cities have disappeared: “Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys, / And the peaks looked toward God alone.” Below this last verse, four candle holders with burning tapers reiterate the four-part structure of the poem. The candles also represent the cities’ “tiny lights,” which Crane defines synaesthetically as song “to the sun.” The two disks in this end-design suggest the relationship between the sun or a planet and its satellite. Bradley’s spacious format and his decorations emphasize the scale of Crane’s poetic speculation upon mysterious interdependencies of nature and culture (fig. 5).

Candles are conventional in Art Nouveau designs, of course, but in this book Bradley includes only two other burning tapers among the numerous page decorations. One drawing of a taper on a columnar stand appears beneath these lines:

You tell me this is God?
I tell you this is a printed list,
A burning candle and an ass. (fig. 6)

Bradley’s illustration gives emphasis to Crane’s imagery, and it also makes a visual allusion to the drawing of the candle on the title page. Such recurrent, interconnecting imagery strengthens the coherence of the volume. Together, the verbal and the visual statements exemplify the period’s critical reconsideration of cultural icons.

Many of the other page decorations provide similar commentaries upon the poems or serve to strengthen patterns of association across the volume. Sword images are central to the cover drawing and to the illustration for the title poem, for example, and a sword also appears toward the end of the volume in a decoration for the “Intrigue” sequence. Bedecked with roses that echo other floral
motifs, this sword appears under a verse paragraph in which a lover beseeches God for “medals” and “honors.” The lover states to his lady that he wishes to “strut” with his decorations.

And be worthy of—
The love I bear you.

Bradley’s drawing of the sword associates this speaker’s displacement of desire with the interpenetrations of love and martial violence in “War Is Kind.” This speaker does not pray for fulfillment of desire or even to be worthy of his idealized beloved. He prays for medals to be worthy of his own disembodied devotion. Bradley’s sword imagery implies that the “Intrigue” sequence is not unrelated “filler” for the volume, as critics have sometimes proposed. The verses of “Intrigue” depict a variety of instances in which sexual desire is expressed as anxiety, self-sacrifice, and even terrorism.

We see such an “intrigue” in his story “The Clan of No Name,” which was also written in Havana during this period. This story’s linking of desire, cultural repressions, sexual possessiveness, and military insurgency presents emotional snarls which are parallel to those found in “Intrigue.” Crane’s observations of the Spanish-
God give me medals,
God give me loud honors,
That I may strut before you, sweetheart,
And be worthy of—
The love I bear you.
American War may have intensified his awareness of relationships between the transgressions and sacrifices of war and cultural suppressions of desire. In discussing the blurring of inner and outer arenas of being in *The Red Badge of Courage*, Mark Seltzer has argued that the novel addresses “male hysteria and the renegotiation of bodily and sexual boundaries and identities.” Such issues of male hysteria are explicit in the compressed emotional diagrams of “Intrigue.”

Such a reading of the “Intrigue” sequence also suggests that the *War Is Kind* volume has a thematic coherence comparable to that observed in *The Black Riders and Other Lines*. Negotiations of desire with nature and culture extend throughout the volume. In helping to emphasize such coherence, this first edition validates the esthetics of Arts and Crafts book design. Even Bradley’s exasperating choice of grey “cartridge paper” contributes to the coherence of the volume by calling to mind the subject matter of war, and by reinforcing visually the recurrent greys and blacks of Crane’s imagery. The following lines are particularly startling in this first edition:

> When the prophet, a complacent fat man, 
> Arrived at the mountain top, 
> He cried, “Woe to my knowledge! 
> “I intended to see good white lands 
> “And bad black lands, 
> “But the scene is grey.”

After these lines, the grey page provides a disturbing vista. It seems likely that the paper and typeface chosen for the volume are Bradley’s acknowledgments of the color imagery in the poems (such as the “grey robes,” “dead grey walls,” “greyer night,” and the “grey heavy clouds”) as well as his daring visualization of the subject matter of war and the themes of moral and perceptual uncertainty.

The texts and the values of the dominant culture were under a profound scrutiny in the avant-garde art of this period. Artists sought to expose interrelated problems of consciousness in the religious, sexual, artistic, and economic values of the Gilded Age. In their creative challenges to conventional modes of perception and understanding, these writers, artists, and craftsmen sought to redefine their own relationship to the culture of the past and to expose the unacknowledged demands upon consciousness made by the emerging modern world. The efforts of these artists included a self-reflective irony. They knew that their creative daring could cause outrage as well as provoke appreciation and insight.

The first editions of Stephen Crane's poems allow us to encounter two quite divergent solutions to the problem of achieving brashness and beauty in such collaborative works. *The Black Riders and Other Lines* is a sternly modernist example of the Aesthetic Style; *War Is Kind* is an eclectic extension of the Arts and Crafts style. Even in the stylistic divergences of these two volumes, however, we can feel the creative energy in the art of this period. In evolutionary terms, these books present images of conflicts in the cultural environment and insist that formal innovation is a necessary characteristic of adaptation and survival.
Stephen Crane at Syracuse University: New Findings

BY THOMAS A. GULLASON

More than a hundred years have passed since Stephen Crane attended Syracuse University (January to June 1891). Yet even at this late date it is possible to correct long-standing “facts,” add information, and suggest areas for further study of one of the most original and intense figures in American literary history.

To begin with a minor finding, Stephen Crane’s arrival at Syracuse is still given as 6 January 1891, the opening day of the Winter Term. But Crane was already playing “truant.” On 6 and 7 January he was visiting his former preparatory school, Claverack College and Hudson River Institute, leaving the impression that he was returning to Lafayette College to finish his freshman year, when in fact he had already transferred to Syracuse University as a “special student.”

The generally accepted reasons for Crane’s transfer from Lafa-
yet to Syracuse do not tell the whole story. No doubt, he was ill-suited as a mining-engineering student, and his poor grades proved it. He may have left Lafayette "without censure," his professors having encouraged a "change of climate." Moreover, his mother, Mary Helen Peck Crane, did feel that he was "deserving" of a scholarship at Syracuse University because he was the grand nephew of the Reverend Bishop Jesse Truesdell Peck, one of the school's founders and the first president of its board of trustees.

The hidden but overriding reason for Mrs. Crane's decision to have her son transfer, however, was the recurrence of his problems with hazing. In late 1887 he had left Pennington Seminary (where he had been prior to attending Claverack) outraged by the charge of "hazer" leveled against him. At Lafayette College in September 1890, he was reportedly a victim of hazing. Even if his mother did not know all the particulars of her son's hazing at East Hall, she had reason to be concerned: earlier that same month a hazing with baseball bats at South College had resulted in a severe head concussion. The incident was widely reported in the Eastern press. As a seasoned shore correspondent for the New York Tribune, Mrs. Crane could not have missed the long-lasting furor over the "tradition" of hazings and rowdyism at science-oriented, Presbyterian Lafayette.

In contrast, Syracuse was a safe ministerial haven—and Methodist.

In attending Syracuse Crane was, in a sense, coming home to his


Syracuse was not immune from hazing and rowdyism, but clearly not on a level with that at Lafayette. Two early cases of hazing at Syracuse occurred in 1873 and 1881. Several took place during Chancellor Sims's tenure, though no dates are available. See W. Freeman Galpin, Syracuse University: The Pioneer Days (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952), 1:186–87.

idyllic school days at Claverack College, which he remembered in 1896 as “the happiest period of my life.” For Claverack was one of several Methodist seminaries with ties to Syracuse University as a “gymnasium.” This meant that its students were “admitted to the University without further examination upon certificates of having satisfactorily accomplished the required preparatory studies.” As principal of “Gymnasium A,” Claverack’s president and colonel of the military department, the Reverend Arthur H. Flack, served as an ex-officio member of the Syracuse University faculty. Under the Reverend Flack’s command in the military department Crane had risen rapidly in rank, first to captain, then to adjutant.

Most likely, Crane was well disposed toward Syracuse, which enjoyed an excellent reputation at Claverack. For example, in the Claverack student magazine, The Vidette, Otto Goebel, a Claverack alumnus and a member of the class of 1892 at Syracuse, had stated: “Syracuse University, still in its infancy, has become, on account of its rapid growth, one of the foremost and best known universities in the United States, and of late years its fame has spread over the civilized world.”

It has been said that only baseball interested Crane at both Lafayette and Syracuse. However, the twin arts of music and painting—so much a part of his family heritage—were well represented at Syracuse, with its “Music Hall” and large collection of portraits, with every “style of engraving and etching”; and the school’s courses in “painting, vocal and instrumental music.”

Besides Goebel there were other Claverack alumni at Syracuse. Two of them—Lincoln Travis and Sanford Brusie—were Crane’s former classmates. It was not long before Crane joined the Alumni Association of Claverack College and Hudson River Institute at Syracuse as its secretary and treasurer. Along with Goebel, Travis belonged to the school’s literary society, The Athenaeum.

6. Correspondence 1:212.
7. Annual, 10, 14.
8. The Vidette 1 (May 1890): 8–9 (the Goebel quotation occurs on page 8).
10. Onondagan, 118.
cause the records of the society are no longer available, it is not clear whether Crane was a member; however, he must have been aware of the literary efforts of his fellow students.

Also familiar to Crane was the Chancellor of Syracuse University, the Reverend Charles N. Sims, who had lectured at Claverack, when Crane was a student there, on one of the “greater” questions, that is, how to live: “You will never come to know the true value of life unless you learn how to make the distinction between the great and the small, the false and the true.” Sims added that “the true value of the things you are striving for in this world, lies more in the discipline that comes from a right and honorable way of getting them, than from the things themselves.”

While young Stephen Crane, as the offspring of a Methodist minister, was already jaded with such moral wisdoms and may not have been receptive to the Reverend Sims’s fatherly advice, he would in his own way come to grips with these matters in his ironic and nihilistic volumes of poetry, *The Black Riders and Other Lines* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899).

It was probably no accident that Chancellor Sims, who also served as professor of English literature, was Crane’s only “official” teacher at Syracuse. The textbook Sims used was Welch’s *English Literature and Language*, volume 1. Over the years, it has been

11. *The Vidette* 1 (December 1889): 12; also 1 (January 1890): 9. Even before this lecture at Claverack, Reverend Sims had been familiar to the Crane family. He won the admiration of Crane’s older sister and surrogate mother Agnes in 1873 (see Paul Sorrentino, “Newly Discovered Writings of Mary Helen Peck Crane and Agnes Elizabeth Crane,” *Courier* 21 [Spring 1986]: 115–17, 119). Also, Sims was a lecturer at Centenary Collegiate Institute when Crane’s father, the Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane, was a member of its board of trustees (see the *Third Annual Catalogue of the Centenary Collegiate Institute of the Newark Conference, 1876–7* [Hackettstown, N.J., 1877], 7; and *Seventh Annual Catalogue of the Centenary Collegiate Institute of the Newark Conference, 1880–81* [Hackettstown, N.J., 1881], 7). In 1876 the Reverend Bishop Jesse Peck had been a lecturer along with the Reverend Sims at Centenary. The Reverend Sims must have left a strong impression on both Bishop Peck and the Reverend Crane, for he lectured at Centenary as late as 1880. This was probably a key factor in his appointment as Chancellor of Syracuse University in 1881.

12. No copy of this textbook exists, nor is there any record of Welch’s first
assumed that Crane’s grade for the course was an A. But recent evidence indicates that no grades were given at the time, and that Crane’s “grade” was in fact the year of his enrollment—91—followed by the + symbol (91+).13

The one teacher whom Crane was known to have openly admired at Syracuse—he was, it seems, admired by everyone—was Dr. Charles J. Little, professor of history and logic. There is now strong evidence that Crane attended Professor Little’s course, The French Revolution, as a free-lance student. Crane owned what must have been a textbook for the course, Bertha M. Gardiner’s The French Revolution, 1789–1795 (his name was inscribed in a copy dated 13 January 1891). To Dr. Little, in a letter of 1899, Crane mentioned “a certain examination in the French Revolution.”14 This corroborates that he was enrolled in the course and suggests his keen interest in history—which was not, as many believe, restricted solely to the Civil War as reflected in The Red Badge of Courage.15

Crane had always had an ambivalent attitude toward his Methodist heritage and religion in general. He had never been comfortable with the “thou shalt not” rules against smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, and profanity at Pennington, Claverack, Lafayette, and Syracuse. Inevitably Crane would find the religious observances more demanding and more closely monitored at Syracuse than at Lafayette, because a goodly number of Syracuse students were preparing to enter the ministry.16 As he had done at Claverack, Crane probably found a way to deal with the religious name, but the contents of the book included works of St. Bede, Beowulf, and The Canterbury Tales. See Mansfield J. French, “Stephen Crane, Ball Player,” Syracuse University Alumni News 15 (January 1934): 1.

13. Crane Log, 60.


15. His Delta Upsilon brother at Syracuse, Clarence Peaslee, once noted: “His favorite subject was history, and his reading in this branch of instruction has been considerable.” See Peaslee’s “Stephen Crane’s College Days,” The Monthly Illustrator and Home and Country 13 (August 1896): 28. Hereafter Peaslee.

observances on his own terms. A former choirboy, however, Crane was comfortable with choir singing. He attended St. Paul's Church in the city specifically to hear its choir.

Crane needed little incentive to follow new trends in the arts, especially painting, and Syracuse was a good place to develop the sensibilities that led to his inimitable literary impressionism. It is well known that in his room at the Delta Upsilon fraternity his “walls were hung with pictures . . . and pen-drawings,” with “some of the pictures being particularly good, for Mr. Crane has always been an ardent admirer of fine paintings.”

He may well have developed an interest in Luella Stewart’s lecture “Color,” which was reprinted in the campus journal The Syracusan a few weeks before his arrival on campus. In this lecture Miss Stewart observed: “A modern writer on art advances the theory that great painters are men who have unusually keen vision—eyes more sensitive to form and color than the eyes of people around them. So the painter is as deeply interested in this idea of visual development as is the man of science; for the progress is not in one direction only: it relates not alone to the perception of objects but to the idea of color.” Miss Stewart pointed to the six primary colors of the physicist (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet); noted that the painter recognized three as primary colors (red, yellow, and blue); and divided colors into classes—warm colors (with red or yellow predominating), cold colors (with blue or black dominating), and the color gray (a mixture of the three primary colors). Perspective was “represented first by outline, second by quality of outline,” and the third “by color.”

Crane was definitely concerned with the philosophy and psy-

17. At Claverack Crane “volunteered” to pump the chapel organ, which “kept him reasonably busy and made it unnecessary for him to sit out front and listen to the sermon.” See Vincent Starrett, “Stephen Crane at Claverack,” The Stephen Crane Newsletter 2 (Fall 1967): 4.
19. Peaslee, 27.
chology of color. Following the publication of *The Red Badge* in 1895, he conceded his debt to Goethe’s *Theory of Colors* to his Delta Upsilon brother Frank Noxon, who recalled: “After the book appeared he and I had somewhere a talk about color in literature. He told me that a passage in Goethe analyzed the effect which the several colors have on the human mind. Upon Crane that had made a profound impression and he had utilized the idea to produce his effects.”

During the period of his enrollment at Syracuse, references were made in *The Syracusan* to Crane’s arrival from Lafayette and his exploits on the Syracuse baseball team. In that journal he would have seen three parts of an essay on the poet Sidney Lanier, which stressed the importance of music in poetry. Music helped to free Crane from “the burden of realism,” drawing him closer to the Unknown and to the Infinite, and reading Lanier’s essay may have sparked his interest in writing tonal poems.

Crane found time for fun at Syracuse. His numerous fraternity activities have often been noted: being captain of the Cricket Club, and a member of both the Coasting Club (the Nut-Brown Maiden) and the Tooth Pick Club (an eating society); visiting a girl’s sorority, Gamma Phi Beta; smoking a water-pipe, or hookah, of his own making; and fitting out the cupola of his fraternity house with “exotic draperies” and “cushions.”

The serious and extensive literary, cultural, and intellectual activities at Crane’s fraternity have been little noted. The name Delta Upsilon, translated from the Greek *Dikaia Upotheke*, means “Justice, Our Foundation.” Crane served this motto with a vengeance in

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24. I wish to thank Steven J. Gerber, former executive director of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity, for supplying me with *The Cornerstone* (a history of the frater-
The Boys From Syracuse

THIS PICTURE was taken at the Syracuse Delta Upsilon Chapter House on Ostrom Avenue in the Spring of 1891.

In the top row, left to right, were three devoted friends Clarence N. Goodwin, Syracuse '94; LL.B., Harvard, 1910 and LL.D. Syracuse, 1928, a former Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court and now practicing law in Washington, D.C.; Frank Wright Noxon, Syracuse '94, a writer of distinction and the son of a noted justice of the New York Supreme Court; and the late Stephen Crane, Lafayette and Syracuse '94, author of "The Red Badge of Courage," and other stories.

These three last met in Cambridge when Crane was reporting a Carlisle Indian-Harvard football game, Goodwin was finishing his course at the Harvard Law School and Noxon was engaged in newspaper work.

Frontispiece from January 1945 Delta Upsilon Quarterly (vol. 63, no. 1).

his two known reports at chapter meetings on 30 January and 8 May.25

His report of 30 January to his fraternity brothers was "an essay ... on some serious political subject related to Russia." In all likeli-

nity). I also thank Jo Ellen Walden and Barbara Harness at the national headquarters of Delta Upsilon for locating the photograph "The Boys from Syracuse." Probably one reason why Crane joined Delta Upsilon was that it was an open, nonsecret society.

hood this was "A Foreign Policy, in Three Glimpses," in the form of playlets, giving ironic and sardonic pictures of Great Britain and her imperialistic designs. While slight and sophomoric, they revealed Crane's early ability to get to the nub of things; make adept use of any environment (a key to much of his success as a fiction writer); capture a wide range of voices (from cockney to dignified English, to the speech of a noble savage, as well as sudden torrents of crude and colloquial Americanisms); create grotesque, absurd comedy; incorporate facts from contemporary newspapers; and show his grasp of history and international affairs. Mansfield French, his battery mate on the Syracuse baseball team, once recalled: "Steve read newspapers greedily and he always looked first to the sports pages, then to international news. He certainly talked about those foreign explosions." 26

Crane's second report may have been "The King's Favor," a fictional sketch that he published in his fraternity's newspaper, *The University Herald*, in May 1891. Not as sardonic and unrelenting in its satire of British imperialism in Africa, it merged a comic foreground (the visiting concert singer Albert Thies desperately tries to find a diplomatic way to turn down the gift of one of King Cetewayo's wives) and a serious background (where King Cetewayo tries to enlist Thies and America's aid to overthrow the British in an insurrection scheme). Already in these reports at Syracuse, Crane was preparing for his dual career as journalist and creative writer, using current events and dressing them up as entertaining fictions.

Crane was doing this and much more in his feature story turned playful hoax, "Great Bugs in Onondaga," originally published on 1 June 1891 and rediscovered in 1963. His only known report as the New York *Tribune*'s Syracuse correspondent, "Great Bugs" was an early exercise in the willing suspension of disbelief, which would resurface on a grander scale in *The Red Badge*. Crane wrote "realistically" and "truly" of a swarm of bugs that blocked the progress of a locomotive between Jamesville and Syracuse. This hoax was an

26. See my article, "Stephen Crane: Anti-Imperialist," *American Literature* 30 (May 1958): 238. This interview with French was arranged by Lester G. Wells, the late curator of the Stephen Crane Collection at Syracuse University Library. Crane's essay on Russia is mentioned in Noxon, p. 4.
 ironic prelude to his report on the Junior Order of United American Mechanics parade of 21 August 1892 at Asbury Park in New Jersey, which cost him his job. Carried away by both his idealism and his realism, he made heavy-handed, satiric attacks on the well-to-do Asbury Parkers, and the marching working men, whom he called “probably . . . the most awkward, ungainly, uncut and uncarved procession that ever raised clouds of dust on sun-beaten streets.”

Sometime during 1891, Crane was already probing the New York City slum world of Maggie: A Girl of the Streets in his most vigorous and extended crusade for justice on native American grounds. Although critics have argued that Crane began Maggie in New York City, his fraternity brothers said they read portions of it while Crane was still at Syracuse. Part of an early version of Maggie—“Where ‘De Gang’ Hears the Band Play”—first appeared anonymously in the New York Herald in July 1891, only a month after he left Syracuse. The existence of this part, recovered by the late Melvin Schoberlin, affirms the claim of Crane’s fraternity brothers that he began the novel at Syracuse.

The early version of Maggie was a sampling of Crane’s daring and atypical craft. A “new” literary naturalist, he could write vividly and realistically, drawing on a modicum of experience and observation. But he collected enough to explore and expose the grim depths of city life. At Syracuse he haunted the Central Railroad Station, observing the working people and the vagabonds; and the police court, where he observed the trials of criminals and prostitutes. He frequented a “music hall,” where “pretty girls sang and danced on the stage daringly clad in low neck waists and skirts just above the knees.”

28. Peaslee, 29; Noxon, 5.
29. This early version of Maggie was first reprinted in my essay, “The ‘Lost’ Newspaper Writings of Stephen Crane,” Courier 21 (Spring 1986): 69–73.
31. See Paul Sorrentino, “New Evidence on Stephen Crane at Syracuse,” Re-
Earlier, as a summer shore correspondent for the Tribune at Asbury Park and Ocean Grove—bastions of godliness and good works—he had been well aware of sins and sinners: gambling and alcoholism, an alleged disorderly house, speakeasies, petty robberies, pickpockets, card sharks, a confidence man, a case of forgery and embezzlement, an attempted rape, and a murder. All were usable in Maggie.

Along with Crane, two of his fraternity brothers, Frank Noxon and Clarence Loomis Peaslee, enriched the literary climate at Syracuse University. Noxon was the Class of 1894 poet. In the early 1890s he published a satiric essay, two stories, and many poems in The University Herald. His poems also appeared in the city paper, The Syracuse Standard. In the mid-1890s Peasley published poems and stories in The University Forum and in the American Agriculturist.

Crane’s one “course” in the spring term was baseball, and this has led everyone, including Crane himself, to assume that he had “learned” and “experienced” little else in college, when all the evidence proves otherwise. To the reporter John Northern Hilliard he stated: “I found mining-engineering not at all to my taste. I preferred base-ball. Later I attended Syracuse University where I attempted to study literature but found base ball [sic] again much more to my taste.”

No one has speculated how the roguish Crane might have met the official training rules enforced by the baseball team manager, E. F. Shepherd. The following rule would have spoiled Crane’s “signature”—a cigarette in his yellowed fingers: “From this date [4 February] until close of season candidates shall abstain from use of tobacco in any form, and of spirituous or malt liquor.”

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33. Correspondence 1:166–67.
rule, that players must retire by 10:30 p.m., would have seriously cramped Crane’s style: his “day” usually began after nightfall.

Although he had been there only six months, Crane did not forget Syracuse University, nor did Syracuse forget him. Both of the school newspapers, *The University Herald* and *The University Forum*, followed his literary career with pride. Professional biographers and academic critics have made many references to his writings and his movements at Syracuse, but they missed two of the most perceptive and sensitive articles to appear in the 1890s—in *The University Forum*. One is a full-scale review and assessment of *The Red Badge* by an alumni editor, John T. Roberts (Class of 1876); the other is a brief, broad-ranging study of Crane as man and artist, by the Forum’s managing editor, Howard Hunt Reynolds.

In his lengthy review of *The Red Badge*, Roberts offers some shrewd observations, writing, in part:

“The Red Badge of Courage” is a story of the American civil war. And now, having made this characterization, it becomes necessary straightway to recall the statement; for the work has few of the elements of a story, being without beginning or ending, its personnel being almost anonymous and its geography and calendar reduced to a scrap of unimportance. While it deals plenteously in details of battle there is not the slightest attempt to outline a field or explain a movement, nor is a single term of military technique employed. A true characterization would be rather than a story, a psychological study of an untoughened soldier under fire. . . . It is as he [the hero] were a patient upon the operating table of a college hospital, the face always veiled; not the personal identity but the disease being the important con-

34. *The University Herald* 19 (16 February 1891): 84–85. Practice sessions ran from 9 February to 15 April.

35. For the references to Crane in *The University Herald*, see vols. 21 (23 December 1892): 63; 23 (1 January 1895): 69; 23 (1 May 1895): 131; 24 (1 February 1896): 95; 25 (December 1896): 54; 25 (January 1897): 74; 26 (October 1897): 4–6; 28 (June 1900): 269–70.

sideration. So exhaustively are the young man’s emotions analyzed and depicted that the experience of a bare half-dozen days is enough to fill the volume.\textsuperscript{36}

In his review-estimate, Reynolds makes an amazingly accurate forecast of Crane’s place in literature:

Stephen Crane is unquestionably a force in modern fiction. . . . He is a force from his mastery of the deep secrets of human emotion. He is a force from his startling powers of portrayal. Whether he has enough of the ideal to be called “a great novelist” may be questioned. Men will not christen as “great” one who does not set up ideals high enough for themselves to follow. And Crane’s men are too common, their actions too selfish to be ideal. Yet his descriptions and his psychological analyses, in an introspective age, will not fail to make him a leader of a certain, and a considerable branch of modern fiction.\textsuperscript{37}

Presently, at least two areas linked to Crane’s Syracuse experience and to his personal and literary life remain unresolved. One concerns his older brother Townley’s letter to Chancellor James R. Day regarding his youngest brother’s status at the University. To this letter, on 18 November 1899, Chancellor Day responded: “Mr. Stephen Crane was not expelled from this University,” adding that “the story . . . he was expelled may have arisen from the fact that the Dean, after admonishing him several times, suggested that it would be better for him not to return another year unless he expected to improve his scholarship and standing.”\textsuperscript{38}

What was Townley’s motive in writing his letter? Was it empathy, revenge, or both? Or was the letter a sign of his depressed and

\textsuperscript{36} The University Forum 1 (10 March 1896): 272–74. A university-sponsored newspaper, the Forum began as a weekly on 2 September 1895 and ceased publication on 15 June 1900. Its “literary qualities were high,” as the historian W. Freeman Galpin noted in Syracuse University: The Growing Years (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1960), 2:306.

\textsuperscript{37} The University Forum 2 (29 September 1896): 17.

\textsuperscript{38} The entire letter is in the Crane Collection.
confused state of mind? Townley had been considered the leading journalist at the Jersey Shore, until Crane wrote that ill-tempered 1892 Asbury Park report. Both brothers were then fired by the New York Tribune for the incident; and though Townley was later rehired, he never regained his lustrous reputation. By November 1899 Crane was desperately ill; he died in June 1900. During 1899 and 1900, Townley was in and out of the Binghamton, New York, Hospital for the Chronic Insane. He did not attend his brother’s funeral.\textsuperscript{39}

Another area—of literary importance—also remains unresolved. What did Crane publish in \textit{The Syracuse Standard}, the \textit{Detroit Free Press}, and elsewhere while he was the university correspondent for the New York Tribune? Thus far, nothing has been uncovered beyond “Great Bugs in Onondaga.”

Through its Stephen Crane holdings, significantly augmented in 1984 by the Melvin Schoberlin Collection of Crane letters and other documents, Syracuse University continues its longtime commitment to completing the portrait of an original genius, whose fame remains worldwide.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} This information is drawn from the talk “Family Matters: Stephen Crane’s Brother, Wilbur,” given before the Stephen Crane Society, 29 May 1992, by Dr. Robert Kellogg Crane, whose grandfather was Wilbur Crane. This talk will be published in \textit{Stephen Crane Studies}.

\textsuperscript{40} I wish to thank Mark Weimer and the staff of the Department of Special Collections at Syracuse University in helping me update the areas discussed in this essay.

I owe special thanks to the editor of the \textit{Courier}, Mary Beth Hinton, for her thoughtful questions and recommendations.

As always, I am grateful to Mrs. Vicki Burnett, head of the Interlibrary Loan Department at the University of Rhode Island, for all her tireless help in gathering materials used in this essay.

Many thanks are due my wife Betty for her sensitive and sound criticisms.
Hats, Heels, and High Ideals: The Student Dean Program at Syracuse University, 1931–1960

BY THALIA M. MULVIHILL

What you are lives on in the lives of your students.¹

M. Eunice Hilton

The Student Dean Program at Syracuse University was designed to prepare women for personnel positions in higher and secondary education. Between 1931 and 1960 some 800 women went through the program, thence to become deans of women, residence hall directors, and high school guidance counselors. Graduates in later years held more specific titles such as director of activities, director of housing for women, and director of placement. Some became senior vice presidents of students services, directors of institutional research, and at least one became president of a college. These women were known as the “Hilton Elite,” perhaps because Dean M. Eunice Hilton (1899–1975), the prime mover of the Student Dean Program, had such high aspirations for them.²

The beginnings of the program coincide with Hilton’s arrival at Syracuse University in 1931 as a graduate student pursuing a doctorate in education. Iva Peters, then dean of women, was developing a new academic program she referred to as Personnel Work for Women. She was not alone. A few other universities, such as

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1. Marion Meyer and other student deans remember that Hilton often recited this aphorism.

2. Hilton was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, attended Cotner College (1917–18), received an A.B. (1922) and a master’s degree (1926) in education from the University of Nebraska, and taught English and history while serving as dean of women at McCook Junior College in Lincoln, Nebraska (1926–31).
Columbia and Indiana, were simultaneously developing such programs. But the one at Syracuse was unique because it combined practical experience with theoretical studies.\(^3\)

It was Eugenie Leonard, the next dean of women, who actually launched the program by turning a need into an opportunity. As a residential university, Syracuse had to provide supervision for the undergraduate students who lived on campus. Prior to 1931, live-in chaperons, female graduate students, looked after the female undergraduates. However, the chaperons often had trouble balancing their supervisory and academic duties. The University decided to draw on its housing budget to offer twelve (later sixteen) assistantships each year that would provide free room, board, and tuition to student deans. For these graduate students, supervising the undergraduates was part of their two-year training program in personnel work.\(^4\) Student deans were responsible for orienting the younger women to the University and for helping them with personal, academic, social, and vocational concerns. They also enforced rules about curfews, calling hours, and confining male visitors to public areas of the cottages.

Leonard organized a course called Student Personnel Adminis-

\(^3\). For additional information on the development of the program in the early years, see Syracuse University Student Dean Commemorative Seminar: 60th Anniversary Reunion Student Dean Program, June 27–30, 1991, 11–12, Syracuse University Archives. Claire M. Olds, a member of the student dean class of 1955, prepared the historical summary of the Student Dean Program included therein.

\(^4\). This program was the first to be funded from an institution's housing budget, by which means Syracuse, which lacked a strong endowment, was able to survive financially. The administration of the men's housing system at Syracuse, however, was not attached to an academic program. In 1935 Chancellor Charles Wesley Flint established the Council on Men’s Affairs and named Arthur Blair Knapp, an instructor in the Maxwell School, as the head. Knapp developed the Resident Adviser Program, and in 1940 became the first dean of men at Syracuse. Resident advisers were male graduate students selected from a variety of graduate programs. They also were given room, board, and tuition for their work. See Richard Wilson, W. Freeman Galpin, Oscar T. Barck, Jr., Syracuse University: The Critical Years (Syracuse University, 1984), 244–47. The author wishes to thank David Tatham, who was dean of men from 1966 to 1971, for information about the dean of men's office.
tration in which the student deans could discuss and solve their problems of practice. By the late thirties other courses were added, such as a Seminar for Advisers of Girls and Deans of Women, Philosophy and Techniques of Student Personnel Work, and Problems in Educational Research. The program would eventually include courses in psychology, counseling, administrative operations, sociology of education, and history of education.

In 1932 Eugenie Leonard invited Eunice Hilton to become assistant dean of women. While maintaining this position, Hilton worked on her doctorate, and in April 1934 she became the first woman to receive a Ph.D. from Syracuse University's School of Education.\(^5\) Leonard encouraged Hilton to remain at Syracuse and become not only the next dean of women and a faculty member, but also director of the Student Dean Program, responsible for making all decisions regarding admissions, curriculum, assistantship placements, and the program's policies and procedures.

Hilton accepted the offer and remained in that position until 1949, assisted, from 1935 on, by Marjorie C. Smith. In 1949 Hilton became dean of the School of Home Economics, although she continued as director of the Student Dean Program until 1959. During her tenure with the program Hilton enlarged the scope of the office of dean of women and brought national recognition to Syracuse University through the Student Dean Program.

The students whom Hilton accepted into the program had to have above average scholastic ability, good health, leadership qualities, an interest in counseling, and an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university. Many were required to have a personal interview with Dean Hilton herself, an experience many student deans can remember vividly even today. She was

> a "role model" of professionalism, with a dramatic flair and superb ability to communicate . . . by gesture, joke, or inflection. She was always direct . . . firm, but kind. She could prod, cajole, dictate or persuade . . . be a loving disciplinar-

\(^5\) Hilton’s dissertation was entitled “The Dean of Women in the Public Co-ed. Junior College.”
ian who always had time for one of her flock needing a helping hand. 6

The program enrolled women from every state in the country, and some from other countries as well. Most were white, middle-class, and Protestant. 7 According to one former student dean, "The occasional woman of color was more likely to be from another country than from the U.S." 8 Many had been school teachers. However, all shared a strong interest in the coursework, practical job training—and the graduate stipend that covered their expenses. 9

Hilton encouraged the student deans to integrate the "Personnel Point of View"—often referred to as the PPV—into all their activities. The PPV was an official statement of philosophy that was issued by the American Council on Education in 1938 and embraced whole-heartedly by Eunice Hilton:

The student personnel point of view encompasses the student as a whole. The concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student’s well-rounded development—physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually, as well as intellectually. The student is thought of as a responsible participant in his own development and not as a passive re-

6. 60th Anniversary Reunion Program, 3. Margaret Anderson Telian, Bess Templeton Christman, Claire M. Olds, and Jean Crawford collaborated in writing this dedication page.

7. Further details can be found in “Student Dean Questionnaire Summary, 1990-1991,” in the 60th Anniversary Reunion Program. Barbara Wood Cook, dean of students emerita at Purdue University and a member of the student dean class of 1954, designed an eight-page questionnaire that was mailed to every student dean on the alumnae mailing list compiled by Marion Meyer, chairperson of the Reunion Committee. Cook reported that 297 student deans responded to this questionnaire out of a possible 394, a 75 percent return rate. The questionnaire asked them about their “Home Background,” “Educational Background,” “Syracuse Experience,” “Employment,” and “Personal Data.” Dr. Cook compiled the results and presented a summary of the findings at the “Hats, Heels, and High Ideals” Reunion Luncheon.


9. Ibid., 5.
M. Eunice Hilton (Syracuse University Archives).

recipient of an imprinted economic, political, or religious doctrine, or vocational skill.\(^\text{10}\)

In the tradition of the PPV, Hilton spouted words of wisdom, affectionately referred to by the student deans as “Hiltonisms.”

They were “life’s little instructions,” some adapted from common aphorisms:11

Little minds talk about people. Average minds talk about things. Great minds talk about ideas.
Learn to say no!
Be in love out of sight.
Nothing but the best is expected of student deans.
In your professional relationships with men, don’t trade on being a woman; win your point by logic—not wheedling.
When counseling, be personal in manner, but impersonal in interest.
If you are to be collegiate—be one shade smarter and one shade more expensive.
If Student Personnel Work is the Fifth Wheel, that’s fine as long as it’s the Steering Wheel.
There is no either/or for women. It has to be and. [That is, women can be more than wives and mothers.]

Perhaps the most popular Hiltonism of all was “hats, heels and high ideals.” Professional women, according to Hilton, should be dressed appropriately in “hats and heels,” and their “high ideals” should be just as visible. Anne Calder Piskor12 recalled becoming a student dean in 1938:

I was told that even to walk from Vernon Cottage, which is where Newhouse I is, up to the administration building I had to wear a hat, gloves, and carry a purse. And if I had ever gone downtown without them, that would be the sin of sins. I think this was a standard Eunice and Marjorie set because they wanted Student Deans to be a little bit apart.13

11. These Hiltonisms and others are printed in the 60th Anniversary Reunion Program, 25.
12. Anne Calder Piskor was a student dean from 1938 to 1940, then joined the dean of women’s staff until 1945. Her husband, Frank Piskor, was dean of men (1943–53) and vice president of Academic Affairs (1956–69). He later became the president of St. Lawrence University.
In keeping with the times, student deans were obliged to undertake “women’s tasks,” many of them tedious, such as filing in the dean of women’s office and counting linens for the cottages. They also put on luncheons for various campus groups and for themselves. In the process they received instruction in how best to organize a luncheon, down to the finest details of table setting, making favors and name tags, dressing appropriately, and making introductions.

The luncheons were often full of laughter, and singing on the part of “Hilton’s Chorus”—women who made up new lyrics to familiar songs. To the tune of “Shine Little Glow Worm,” they sang:

We are the girls of Hilton’s chorus;  
Hilton paid ten thousand for us.  
We were chosen as the best,  
From the Social Usage Test. . . .

Such shared experiences forged friendships that would be as important to these women as the courses they took.

In 1943 Hilton collaborated with Marguerite Fisher, a much admired Maxwell School professor, to create a course called Status of Women and Their Responsibilities. This was one of the first such courses in the country; at Syracuse it marked the beginning of a “Women’s Studies” curriculum. The course, which was open to all female graduate students on campus, emphasized that women could work in all fields, not just the traditional fields of nursing, teaching, and homemaking.

There could be no better demonstration of this truth than the dazzling array of guest lecturers who were recruited to speak in class or at gatherings of the student deans. Among them were Eleanor Roosevelt, Lillian Gilbreth, Esther Lloyd-Jones, Ruth Strang, Helen Hays, Margaret Meade, and Clare Booth Luce.

One guest lecturer was Mary Ritter Beard (1876–1958), the no-

\[ \text{14. This was a systematized needs-assessment instrument that was administered to the undergraduates. For examples of songs see } 60\text{th Anniversary Reunion Program, 28. Even after fifty years, the former student deans remembered the songs—perhaps because they spoke to the tensions the women felt while working to build a new profession for themselves on a university campus.} \]

\[ \text{15. Marguerite “Maggie” Fisher was a Maxwell faculty member from 1932 to 1971.} \]
table historian of women.16 After reviewing Beard’s *Woman as Force in History*, Hilton invited her to campus. We know from Beard’s published correspondence that she was impressed by the course. She wrote to Wilbur K. Jordan, president of Radcliffe College to tell him about it.17 To her publisher, a Mr. Cunningham at the Macmillan Company, she mentioned “the trend, started by Hilton and Fisher, for Deans of Women to establish women’s history courses.” She said, “There are many Deans of Women in colleges, one at the Univ. of Wisconsin for instance, who hope to get courses established on women in history . . . ”18

The Student Dean Program was a significant part of Syracuse University’s history, and an important contributor to the development of professional philosophies and practices of student personnel administration in American universities. However, the program itself, as it was in Eunice Hilton’s day, would not survive. The Student Dean Program succumbed to the upheavals of the 1960s, because its very content—the organization and administration of campus life—was in dispute.

16. Mary Beard’s husband was the controversial historian Charles Beard (1874–1948), the author of *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913) and co-author, with Mary Beard, of *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927).


18. Mary Beard to Mr. Cunningham of the Macmillan Company, 3 July 1945. Reprinted in Cott, *A Woman Making History*, 259. In the same letter to her publisher, Beard comments on her exchange with Chancellor William P. Tolley of Syracuse University regarding *Woman as Force in History*: “The Chancellor of Syracuse has not been convinced yet of my soundness but a course has been given there now for three years on Women in American History and it has been growing in attendance and enthusiasm as the men and women behind it have themselves learned more substance for effective teaching. In my book which you have on hand I have given the data on women philosophers with considerable precision with a view to convincing the Chancellor at Syracuse that women have demonstrated force as philosophers. Philosophy is his specialty but he insisted at an evening meeting at Syracuse last autumn, after my exposition of my general thesis, that women had never done anything in his ‘field.’ For a similar reason, in other circles, I must be convincing about the history of law, by giving its precise details at length—over a long period of time” (pp. 258–59).
After Hilton left in 1959, Marjorie Smith and Ellen Peterson Fairchild became codirectors of the program until 1963. That year Betty Cosby (a 1949 graduate of the Student Dean Program) became director of what was now called the Graduate Program in Student Personnel. Also in 1963, the program officially became coeducational, and the residency requirement ended. In 1966 Mary Dewey (a 1955 graduate of the Student Dean Program) became director of the new Graduate Program in Personnel. In 1970 the dean of women and dean of men's offices were abolished. The dean of women became vice president for Student Residential Life; the dean of men became dean of Student Services and Activities. In 1973 the program, barely recognizable now, became the Higher Education Program.

The personal and professional accomplishments of the student deans after they completed their graduate study is a resounding tribute to their mentors. Beyond filling a wide variety of personnel roles, the graduates served as military officers during the Second World War in all branches of the military, including the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services). They volunteered their time in the Red Cross, religious organizations, literacy projects, public school organizations, and correctional facilities, and most held leadership positions within these organizations. They chaired political committees and held political offices. They obtained doctoral degrees and honorary degrees. They became authors and artists, business owners and poets, religious leaders and faculty members, wives, mothers, and grandmothers.

The 60th Anniversary Reunion of the Student Dean Program was held in Syracuse from 27 to 30 June 1991. The event drew together over 200 women who had been associated with the program. They came to pay tribute to its founders, and to renew old

19. Here are just a few of the other dean of women staff members who were held in high esteem by women who were student deans between 1936 to 1973: Marjorie C. Smith, Maude Stewart, Margaret Wells, Ruth Haddock, Ellen Fairchild, Betty Cosby, and Mary Evelyn Dewey. All of these women were graduates of the Student Dean Program.

20. The Reunion also included a few of the men who had been admitted to the program in the 1960s. The participants' reminiscences were recorded during in-
friendships.\textsuperscript{21} Here are a few of their responses to a questionnaire about the impact of the Student Dean Program on their lives.\textsuperscript{22}

Impressed by thoroughness and emphasis on professional standards. I found my first year out as a neophyte Dean of Women in a small liberal arts co-ed. college that nearly every situation which occurred had either been discussed in class or included in our exam questions.

The quality of my classmates and the bonding as a community... Wonderful support of the Student Deans to assist each other. Great friendships made which still exist over the years.

The experience was excellent and had lasting impact on me personally and professionally. My closest friends are a result of the Syracuse University experience.

The emphasis on the PPV was really valuable... Nor will I forget after 30 years—wear girdle, have hair done every week, keep a green plant in your office.

I am forever indebted to the University and the women who were in the Student Dean program for taking me out of the world I was in and placing me on a far larger stage than I had ever known existed.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21} The relationships that developed among student deans were significant because they represent early examples of a female graduate student culture, and they should be studied more fully.  
\textsuperscript{22} Barbara Cook, “Student Dean Questionnaire Summary,” 6–9.
\end{flushright}

Note: the author wishes to thank Joan N. Burstyn for her continued guidance, and the members of the Student Dean Reunion Steering Committee: Marion Waterman Meyer, Claire M. Olds, Jean Crawford, Kae Emerson Brownell, and Barbara “Woody” Cook for providing her with a personal introduction to the Student Dean Program and its membership.
For Arthur J. Pulos

Arthur J. Pulos, internationally recognized designer, teacher, and historian, we honor you today for your unstinting dedication to the preservation of our nation's design heritage and for your contributions to the development of the distinguished industrial design collections in the Syracuse University Library.

You began your own education in design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and at the University of Oregon. After serving on the University of Illinois faculty, you joined the faculty of Syracuse University, first as coordinator of the Industrial Design Program and later as chair of the Department of Design. Generations of students remember you as "a fantastic teacher." Your two volumes of design history, The American Design Ethic and The American Design Adventure, remain basic texts.

In 1982 you were the recipient of the Syracuse University Chancellor's Citation for Distinguished Teaching, and in 1993 you received the Misha Black Award for outstanding design education—one of the most coveted international awards in design. Past president of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design and former chairman of the board of the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), you command respect around the globe.

Your designs have been diverse, resulting in electric hand-drills, aircraft, business machines, furniture, tableware, and diagnostic instruments—many of which have been displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Louvre.

Most important to us, you have been the driving force behind the establishment of the industrial design collections in the Syracuse University Library's Department of Special Collections. Since 1964, when work began on them, these collections have been
among the most important groupings in America of personal papers and original documents on industrial design. Researchers from Scotland, France, Japan, and other countries have traveled to Syracuse to study these records. Documents and artifacts of such innovators as Walter Dorwin Teague, John Vassos, Russel Wright, and Dave Chapman are currently on loan to the National Building Museum and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Further, you have worked with IDSA to create an Archives and History Committee to help educate the design profession and members of industry on the value of such historical records. In your words:

There still exists the eternal conflict between form and function, expression and utility, and art and service. Democracy continues to be an essential condition for manufactured products. Despite their transitory value, they are the true artifacts of our time, because in them civilizations to come will find an expressive record of our era, not perhaps, in the tombs of some future valley of the kings, but certainly in the landfills of the people.

—or, thanks to you, in our archival repositories. With gratitude for
your past and continuing contributions, we present to you the 1994 Post-Standard Award for Distinguished Service to the Syracuse University Library.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The William Safire Collection

William Safire, the well-known language commentator for the Sunday New York Times Magazine and political commentator for The New York Times, is contributing 10,000 volumes from his own collection to the Syracuse University Library. His important and historically significant gift is a source of great pride for the entire University. The first installment of 1,500 volumes arrived in August 1994. The books have been cataloged and are already available for student use.

Books on grammar, style, and the history of language comprise the largest portion of the Safire Collection. Of special note are numerous works by William Cobbett (1763?–1835), radical reformer and commentator on social and political life in the United States and Britain. There is a substantial assortment of books on Lincoln and the Civil War, and a complete set of Nixon impeachment documents. The collection includes many rare volumes, as well as hundreds of books inscribed to Safire by authors and statesmen. Finally, there are twenty-seven titles written or compiled by William Safire himself.

As a board member of the Charles A. Dana Foundation, Safire has directed Dana funds toward the Syracuse University Library. The initial funds have been used to create the William Safire Seminar Room, on the sixth floor of Bird Library, in the style of a traditional English library—a place where students can be reminded, in Safire’s words, “what books were like” as “the paper book begins to recede into publishing history,” replaced by tapes and electronic screens. In the years to come, additional Dana funds will support collection development, instruction, and scholarship, especially on the part of undergraduate students. Contributed by Mark F. Weimer, Curator of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library
Vishnu resting upon the waters, symbolic of the infinite ocean, the source of all things. He is protected by Shesha (the Endless), the seven-headed snake, and surrounded by his avatars.
The Smith Poster Archive

The gift of Syracuse University Professor Emeritus of Religion H. Daniel Smith, the Smith Poster Archive is a study collection of one genre of mass-produced color prints depicting Hindu gods, goddesses, saints, and sacred sites. The material represents a popular art form rarely seen outside of India, but still very much alive within that ancient culture. Similar prints are sold in every market in India.

To the Western eye the pictures seem strange—showing Vishnu, Rama, and Ganesha, among many others, often accompanied by their special animal or engaged in symbolic acts of cosmic heroism—yet they will reward study. These images, which may appear garish, highly stylized, and naive, derive from a mythology that has evolved over thousands of years, absorbing nuances of many faiths along the way, to become modern Hinduism. The archive will be of interest to anthropologists, art historians, and to scholars of religion and culture.

Most of the prints were produced in India between the 1950s and the late 1980s. There are more than 3500 design specimens, most of which have been reproduced on color slides; a card inventory file; and a number of books, photocopied articles, and other items relevant to research, including photographs and biographical sketches of many of the artists. The Smith Poster Archive is one of only three such collections in the world. Contributed by Terrance Keenan, Special Collections Librarian, Syracuse University Library

Additions to the Russel Wright Papers

The Department of Special Collections has received eight boxes of manuscript material to add to the Russel Wright Papers, which are among the most frequently used industrial design holdings at Syracuse University. Wright, who began his career as a theater set designer, is most well-known for his innovative work with plastics and ceramics. His designs have been shown at the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of Modern Art, and other major museums.

The recent acquisitions span Wright’s career from the 1930s through the 1960s, and include drawings, models, photographs,
templates, correspondence, and notations. The material comes to the Library courtesy of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum and of Anne Wright, Russel Wright’s daughter. Contributed by Terrance Keenan, Special Collections Librarian, Syracuse University Library

The Odell Cylinder Collection

L. Brevoort Odell, a lifelong collector of sound recordings, has given approximately 10,000 cylinder recordings to Syracuse University Library’s Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive.1 With this gift, the archive’s cylinder holdings have increased by eighty-five percent. Mr. Odell has been a longtime friend of Walter L. Welch, the first curator of the Audio Archive at Syracuse University, who encouraged him in his collecting of cylinders because of their significance in the history of recorded sound.

1. Odell has also contributed some 4000 discs.
The cylinder was the first sound recording format to be developed with mass production and distribution in mind. In his initial tests before 1877, Thomas Edison had used a heavy tinfoil surface to capture sound, but the quest was on for a more durable recording surface. For a time the recording industry settled on wax combined with various chemical and metallic ingredients for strength, but within about two decades switched to celluloid (plastic), normally with a core of either cardboard or plaster of paris. From 1888 to 1929 the Edison companies and other manufacturers here and in Europe produced cylinder records for the commercial market.

The phonograph, which appeared in 1888, was initially intended as a business machine. After correspondence had been recorded on blank wax cylinders and transcribed, the wax could be shaved off and reused. Within a few years individuals could purchase recording heads and blank waxes for consumer phonographs, which allowed for the creation of home recordings, much as tape recorders are used today. However, the majority of cylinders were prerecorded with popular and classical music, speeches, or vaudeville sketches, and sold commercially as a new form of entertainment.

The Odell collection includes commercial recordings from the very earliest years of the Edison Phonograph Company to its last phase of production, a span of forty years. Among other labels represented are Busy Bee, Columbia, Edison-Bell, Indestructible, Lambert, Leeds & Catlin, Pathé, Sterling, and U.S. Everlasting. There are also several rare and historically notable selections: two of the three titles recorded by Enrico Caruso for the Anglo-Italian Commerce Company; two North American wax cylinders recorded by Ada Jones several years before what was previously believed to be her first recording in 1905; another wax cylinder attributed to the opera singer Adelina Patti, dated 1890, or twenty-nine years into her performing career; and a short cylinder recording by the actor DeWolf Hopper, estimated to have been made before 1890.

Over half of the Odell cylinders are two-minute wax or four-minute celluloid Edisons, which, added to the archive’s previous
holdings, provide a fairly complete run of that company’s commercial output. Many of the cylinders contain alternative takes of a particular performance, illustrating the industry’s then-necessary practice of making several “masters” of one record from which to produce copies for commercial release; the more popular the record, the higher the number of takes.

The 22,000 cylinder recordings now in the Belfer Audio Archive constitute what may be the largest collection of this kind in the United States. Physically, it contains examples of the earliest efforts of the recording industry. Culturally, it reflects the social and ethnic attitudes, artistic performance standards, patriotic feelings, and political issues in the years between 1888 and 1929. As a resource for studying that era, it is invaluable: full of quirks and details about our history as reflected in our entertainments, in an age of invention when the world as we now know it was still, for the time being, a dream. Contributed by Susan Stinson, Collection Curator, Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive

Editor's note: Following is a special contribution from Robert Thompson, associate professor in the Department of Television, Radio, and Film at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Thompson has authored several books on television and is series editor of books in The Television Series, published by Syracuse University Press.

The Alan Rafkin Papers

When I was a kid, I watched a lot of TV. Concerned about this, my mother would occasionally send me to the one place where she knew I’d be free of television’s pervasive glow: the library. Throughout most of the last half of this century, the library has stood in many people’s minds as the guardian of culture. The belief that television programs are not only not a part of preservable culture, but in fact its enemy, still holds sway among many intellectuals.

Yet television is a prominent cultural phenomenon, and it is nothing short of scandalous for educational institutions such as libraries, universities, and museums, which purport to describe and understand the human condition, to ignore it. To be sure, there is no shortage of opinions about TV among thinking people. But if the shows themselves are not analyzed, from what authority can
such opinions spring? In a detailed press conference he gave rail-
ing against the effects of TV violence, for example, Senator Paul
Simon was asked what shows were especially worrisome to him.
He was unable to come up with a single title. Many academics
who blithely echo the cry that TV is trash brag that they them-
selves watch very little of it, and some claim as a point of pride
that they don’t even own a set. Would this state of affairs be tol-
erated in any other sector of the academy? Would we listen to a
person speak about the current state of the novel who proudly
admitted that he didn’t read books?

Art or trash, legitimate expressive medium or dangerous
toxin, television is important enough to merit careful scrutiny,
not gross generalization. Some may argue that television is abun-
dantly available right in the living room, that there is no need to
collect it elsewhere; and it is true that a decent cable package and
some creative use of the *TV Guide* will, in fact, provide access to
a first-class museum of broadcasting. But they won’t take the
place of a permanent collection.

A few excellent archives have been developing over the past
several years, including New York’s Museum of Television and
Radio, Chicago’s Museum of Broadcast Communications, and
the television collections at the University of California-Los An-
geles and the University of Wisconsin. For many important pro-
grams, however, the effort was too late. Crucial episodes, indeed
entire series, from the “Golden Age” of the 1940s and 1950s no
longer exist, having been tossed, for lack of storage space, by
networks, studios, and advertising agencies. The documents as-
associated with the production of television programs are even
more ephemeral.

With the acquisition of the Alan Rafkin Papers, Syracuse Uni-
versity has taken a major step toward the preservation of Ameri-
can television culture. Rafkin, a 1950 graduate of the University,
has directed and produced hundreds of TV series episodes, pi-
lots, and TV movies during a career that still continues after
more than thirty years. Like many other TV directors, Rafkin
spent part of his career as an itinerant laborer, moving from series
to series. Consequently, his complete oeuvre represents a cross
section of American prime-time television from the 1960s to the present.

The bulk of the collection consists of the scripts he used in shooting each of the episodes. These, along with his directorial notes, give a sense of the complexities of the production process. Among the scripts in the collection are episodes of such classic programs as *The Andy Griffith Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Odd Couple*, *The Bob Newhart Show*, *M*A*S*H*, and *Murphy Brown*. There is an extensive collection of 120 screenplays of *One Day at a Time*, the first TV series to feature a divorced woman as a leading character. Rafkin served as executive producer and director of *One Day At A Time*, which was created by TV pioneer Norman Lear.

In addition to the vintage television mentioned above, there is a fascinating assortment of other TV as well: series that did not receive as much acclaim or as many awards but that millions of viewers imbibed week after week. Episodes of shows like *That Girl*, *The Partridge Family*, *Love American Style*, *Laverne and Shirley*, *The Love Boat*, *Charles in Charge*, and even the critically disclaimed *Me and the Chimp* are all the more interesting because they so fully captured the American imagination while so profoundly defying traditional notions of "art." Shows like these can’t be ignored if we are ever fully to understand how art and commerce interact in the entertainment-industrial complex of American popular culture.

The collection contains just under two hundred items on videotape. Among these are talent tests, run throughs, rough cuts, final cuts, and other pieces of the production puzzle. Seen together, these show how the TV we see gets made. Most prominent among the videotapes are over forty episodes of the critically acclaimed—and hard to find—*It’s Garry Shandling’s Show*. Also included is a large collection of *Coach*, a series Mr. Rafkin continues to produce and direct.

Students and scholars can now go to the Syracuse University Library to watch an episode of *My Favorite Martian*. Some may see this as a final insult to civilization-as-we-know-it, but civilization-as-we-live-it has been deeply influenced by television,
and I can think of no better place than a library to begin to ex­
amine that influence. Generalizations about the medium come
from all corners, but responsible scholarship must begin with the
primary texts. To understand television, after all, you’ve got to
watch it.
PROGRAM FOR 1994–95

September 15, 1994
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

David Tatham
Professor of Fine Arts
Syracuse University
THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORIATE, 1870–1960: FOUR GRAND MASTERS IN THE ARTS

October 27–29, 1994
1916 Room, Bird Library

Book Sale
Co-sponsored by the Library Associates and the Syracuse University Library

November 8, 1994
Tuesday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie
Former Director
Bibliothèque Nationale
THE FRENCH NATIONAL LIBRARY A.D. 1000 TO A.D. 2000

December 1, 1994
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Dennis J. Connors
Executive Director,
Onondaga Historical Association
THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OF UNIVERSITY HILL

December 16, 1994
Friday, 5 p.m.
Faculty Center

Annual Holiday Reception

March 2, 1995
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

David H. Stam
University Librarian
Syracuse University
PEAKS OF JOY; VALLEYS OF DESPAIR: THE HISTORY OF THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY THROUGH 1942
April 6, 1995
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

John Robert Greene
Author of forthcoming volume of Syracuse University history
THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND THE TOLLEY YEARS

May 12, 1995
Friday, 12 noon
Goldstein Student Center
South Campus

Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting
Antje B. Lemke
Professor Emerita
Syracuse University

"ON THE HILL CLOSE TO THE STARS": IDEALISM AND REALISM IN 125 YEARS OF SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES, founded in 1953, is a society whose efforts are devoted to the enrichment of the Syracuse University Library and especially the rare book and manuscript collections. Library Associates makes it possible to strengthen these collections through the acquisition of unusual books, manuscripts, and other research materials that are rare and often of such value that the Library would not otherwise be able to acquire them.

Those with an interest in history, literature, book collecting, and the graphic arts are welcome to join the Associates. Perquisites of membership include general use of the Syracuse University Library’s facilities, as well as invitations to exhibitions, Associates-sponsored lectures, and special events of the University Library. Members at the patron level may borrow books. In addition, all members will receive our newsletter, *The Library Connection*, incidental publications, typographic keepsakes, and the *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*, an annual publication that contains articles related to unusual and interesting aspects of the Library’s holdings and, in particular, to rare books, manuscripts, and archival collections in the Department of Special Collections.

**SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS** are as follows: Benefactor, $500; Sustaining member, $200; Patron, $100; Individual member, $50; Faculty and Staff of Syracuse University, $35; Senior citizen, $25; Students, $15. Checks, made payable to Syracuse University Library Associates, should be sent to the Secretary, 600 Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. 13244-2010. For further information about the programs and activities of the Library Associates, telephone (315) 443-2697.

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