

## **Wisconsin Academy review. Volume 39, Number 2 Spring 1993**

Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Spring 1993

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/M7VWMQPYN447R8P>

<http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC/1.0/>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.



# *Wisconsin Academy Review*

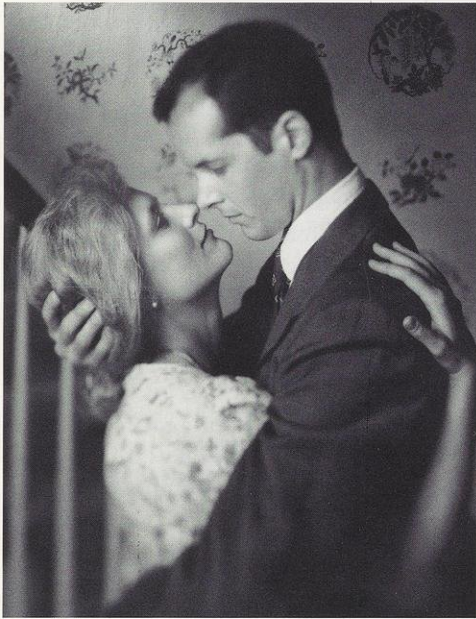
A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE











Scene from *It's a Wonderful Life*, American Inside Theatre, Genesee Depot, Wisconsin.

COVER: "I play chess with Thomas Mann. I lose. He autographs *Death in Venice*" (detail). From *My German Trip* by Warrington Colescott. Etching, 11 x 14 inches. Vermillion: University of South Dakota, 1992.

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* (ISSN0512-1175) is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53705. All correspondence, orders, manuscripts, and change of address information should be sent to this address. The *Wisconsin Academy Review* is distributed to annual members as part of their \$35 dues. It is available by subscription for \$15 per year (four issues). Individual copies are available for \$4 plus \$1 postage from the Academy. (Please remit in U.S. currency.)

Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Copyright © 1993 by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Second class postage is paid at Madison.

LeRoy R. Lee, Publisher  
Faith B. Miracle, Editor  
Designed by University Publications  
Printed by American Printing Company

<b>The Quest for Perfection: Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, and the American Theater</b> <i>by Jared Brown</i>	4
--	---

<b>GALLERIA: My German Trip</b> <i>by Warrington Colescott</i>	10
---	----

<b>A Salute That Failed: The German-American Bund in Milwaukee</b> <i>by David L. Lake</i>	14
---	----

<b>Beyond Roots: Transcending Ethnicity</b> <i>by Jean Feraca</i>	19
--	----

<b>Poems from <i>Crossing the Great Divide</i></b> by Jean Feraca	22
<i>Cat Lady in the Villa Borghese</i>	
<i>Nadia in Black Among the Cuttlefish</i>	
<i>Heart Attack</i>	
<i>Waking Early After Heavy Snow</i>	
<i>Botanical Gardens</i>	

<b>To the New World and "From the New World": On the Centennial of Antonin Dvořák's Sojourn in America</b> <i>by Roger Ruggeri</i>	24
---	----

<b>Excerpts from <i>Idle Curiosity</i></b> (a novel) <i>by Martha Bergland</i>	29
---	----

<b>Planes, Cones, and Toruses—and More! The Supercomputer as Educator</b> <i>by Ruth Blodgett</i>	34
--	----

<b>POETRY</b>	37
---------------	----

<b>One Spring Dawn on the Apostle Islands</b> <i>by Dick Theis</i>	
<b>This April</b> <i>by Lowell Jaeger</i>	
<b>Shawn at the A&amp;W</b> <i>by Steve Miller</i>	
<b>The Game Warden</b> <i>by Steve Miller</i>	
<b>Omaha Beach—1982</b> <i>by C. D. Spain</i>	
<b>Morning Sky Song</b> <i>by Sprague Vonier</i>	
<b>Midnight in Italy</b> <i>by Antonio Re</i>	

<b>REVIEWS</b>	39
----------------	----

<b>INSIDE THE ACADEMY</b> Soaring With Halley's Comet: Project 2061 in Wisconsin	43
---	----

<b>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b>	47
------------------------------	----





A number of years ago, in a forgotten shop, I found an old 78 rpm album titled *The White Cliffs of Dover*, a long narrative poem by Alice Duer Miller recorded in Hollywood by Lynn Fontanne in 1941. When I first played it, I was immediately engaged by her expressive voice. I found myself listening to the album again and again, patiently changing the three brittle platters until I had heard all six sides. Today the poem is looked upon as pre-World War II British propaganda, an emotional plea for America to join the fight against Germany. But no matter if the poem is manipulative—there are times when the messenger upstages the message! Later a friend with fine equipment re-recorded the reading for me so I now have the poem—and, best of all, Lynn Fontanne's voice—on cassette tape.

What a delightful surprise to learn that the remarkable Lynn Fontanne of the exquisite style and melodious voice lived right here in Wisconsin! And it is indeed a pleasure to feature an article by Jared Brown, biographer of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, in this issue of the *Review*.

Incidentally, Jared Brown mentions in his book *The Fabulous Lunts* that *Stage* magazine gave special awards in 1938 to "four theatrical personalities who had dominated the Broadway scene" that season: Orson Welles, Thornton Wilder, Alfred Lunt, and Lynn Fontanne" (p. 259). It is interesting to note that all four were from Wisconsin—Welles was born in Kenosha in 1915, Wilder was born in Madison in 1897, and the Lunts, of course, maintained a home in Genesee Depot.

Today, ethnicity is a word with many meanings, from the richness of tradition to the divisiveness of nationalism. We touch on some of these aspects in this issue. Given that recent census figures reveal that more than 53 percent of Wisconsin citizens claim German ancestry (myself included), it seems appropriate that two of these articles focus on German culture: one offers an appreciation of German art, the other centers on a small but strident group of German-Americans who organized in Milwaukee in the 1930s.

We begin with Warrington Colescott's fantasy trip to Germany, a mixture of thoughtful reflection and impish irreverence, illustrated with his own distinctive etchings. Warrington, a fellow of the Academy, has contributed Galleria essays on the work of other artists in the past. I felt he should tell us something about the process of his own creativity.

Warrington Colescott's words and art lead in to a serious look at the activities of the German-American Bund movement in Milwaukee prior to World War II. David Lake relates ways in which some citizens were attracted to Nazi ideology and how the local movement ultimately failed.

Jean Feraca takes us beyond cultural differences, while still valuing those differences, as she explores her own Italian/American feelings through prose and poetry. She connects with universal life experiences that foster harmony rather than discord.

Continuing on a high note with regard to cultural diversity, we take a look at Antonin Dvořák's brief but productive hiatus in America and the possible influence this experience had on the composer. It was exactly a century ago that he spent the summer in a small village in the Midwest and wrote some of his best-loved music. For years Roger Ruggeri has interpreted music on stage with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra as well as in print in the orchestra's program notes. He performs under the baton of Dvořák's compatriot, Zdenek Macal—and probably no conductor in the United States approaches a score by Dvořák with more sympathy and understanding than Maestro Macal of Milwaukee.

I expect I will not be the only pilgrim this summer to pack a supply of Dvořák's music on tape (preferably recorded by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra) and head west across the Great River to the little town of Spillville, Iowa, to try to conjure up the place as Dvořák saw it during the summer of 1893. Roger Ruggeri has set the stage for us in an objective, scholarly way. Readers interested in a romanticized version of the Dvořák experience (and why not?) also may want to read *Dvořák in Love*, the novel by Josef Skvorecky, translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson in 1986. My copy is a soft-cover edition published by Norton (Shoreline Books) in 1988.

During the coming year the Wisconsin Academy will focus on the critical matter of science, mathematics, and technology education in Wisconsin. In this issue of the *Review* we address this important topic in two articles, one relating to the use of supercomputers as teaching tools and the other relating to the exciting new teaching concept, Project 2061, described in Inside the Academy.

*Continued on page 48*



Lynn Fontanne, 1933. Courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.



## CONTRIBUTORS

- ▶ Martha Bergland teaches writing and literature at the Milwaukee Area Technical College. She received the 1987 Pushcart prize for short fiction and was listed in *Best American Short Stories 1987*. Her poems and fiction have been widely published, and her novel *A Farm Under a Lake* (Graywolf, 1989) was published in 1991 in paperback by Vintage Contemporaries and in England by Bloomsbury Press. A Swedish edition appeared in 1992. She has been on the *Wisconsin Academy Review* editorial committee since 1991.
- ▶ Ruth Blodgett holds degrees in English and technical writing from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has taught high school English at Rice Lake and Altoona. She is presently working for the National Business Institute in Eau Claire, a provider of continuing education opportunities, principally for attorneys.
- ▶ Jared Brown is director of the School of Theatre Arts at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. He has contributed articles on the history of theater to leading journals, written eight plays, and directed more than sixty productions. He is the author *The Fabulous Lunts* (Atheneum, 1986), a major biography of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, and *Zero Mostel: A Biography* (Atheneum, 1989).
- ▶ Warrington Colescott is emeritus professor of art, University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work is widely exhibited and can be found in collections in such institutions as the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; and the Library of Congress. His collection of etchings, *My German Trip*, recently was published by University of South Dakota at Vermillion.
- ▶ Jean Feraca, award-winning Wisconsin Public Radio producer and talk-show host, has received numerous awards for her poetry, including the 1975 Discovery Award, and has been published in major periodicals throughout the country. She grew up in New York, and after graduate work at the University of California-Berkeley, she lived and taught in Rome. Her most recent collection of poems, *Crossing the Great Divide*, was published by the Wisconsin Academy in 1992.
- ▶ Lowell Jaeger was born in Wausau and attended the University of Wisconsin. He holds degrees from the University of Iowa and Northern Arizona University. He teaches English at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana, and lectures for the Montana Committee for the Humanities. His poems and articles have been published in numerous journals and he is the author of five books. He has a special interest in American Indian literature.
- ▶ David Lake holds degrees from Moorhead and St. Cloud universities in Minnesota and taught history at Wisconsin Dells High School for twenty-eight years before retirement. He now sells used and rare books through his stores, Ravenswood Books, in Wisconsin Dells, Montello, and at the General Store in Spring Green.
- ▶ Stephen M. Miller is journals manager for the University of Wisconsin Press in Madison. His poetry appears in *Rolling Stone* magazine and in two chapbooks, *The Last Camp in America* and *Backwaters*. He received a literary fellowship award from the Wisconsin Arts Board.
- ▶ Antonio Re was born in Bologna, Italy, and came to the United States with his parents in 1966. He holds degrees from SUNY Buffalo in biology, Italian, and education. He finds his life and poetry to be "very hybrid, meaning I exist on two cultural plains simultaneously: Italian and American . . . embodying the sensitivities and uniqueness of both cultures." He teaches in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- ▶ Roger Ruggeri is principal bassist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He graduated from the Eastman School of Music and performed with the Rochester Philharmonic and the Dallas Symphony before coming to Milwaukee. He has been a featured soloist and composer with a number of organizations and is a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
- ▶ C. D. Spain (Clarence De Spain) is a psychologist and consultant for the Wisconsin Heights School District. In addition to writing poetry and short fiction, he is at work on a novel and is active in Writers Inc., a playwriting group in Madison. He lives in Black Earth.
- ▶ Dick Theis moved to Wisconsin in 1974 after getting an undergraduate degree in English from the University of Pittsburg. In 1992 he received an M.F.A. in creative writing from Wichita State University. He has work forthcoming in the *Tampa Review*. He now lives in Clarksville, Tennessee.
- ▶ Suzanne Vinmans is an art major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has also studied in Florida. Since childhood she has been fascinated with the grain in wood and sees "images so strong that I want to pull them out of the grain and give life to them." Her work has been widely exhibited and is found in public and private collections.
- ▶ Sprague Vonier lives in Milwaukee and on a farm in the northern Kettle Moraine area. For many years he worked in television—writing, producing, directing, managing. He now teaches broadcast writing as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His poems have appeared in journals, and he is the author of *Edward R. Murrow*, published by Gareth Stevens for young readers.





# The Quest for Perfection:

## *Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, and the American Theater*

by Jared Brown

The Lunts were my friends. They were my idols, my teachers, my mentors. I think of all the lucky things that happened to me in my life in the theatre, the Lunts were the luckiest.

Helen Hayes

**A**lfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. The names are familiar to many—the Lunts dominated the American theater for four decades. The names especially may be familiar in Wisconsin, for the Lunts maintained a home, Ten Chimneys, near Genesee Depot for more than half a century.

Few theater artists have so brilliantly realized their potential as actors, directors, and producers. As professionals, the Lunts refused to allow commercialism to dictate the course of their careers, even though they functioned within a commercial framework. All too often, the New York theater, which must appeal to a large number of people if it is to survive, tends to reduce the contributions of its artists to a level which appeals to the least demanding portion of its audience. It's the disease that also afflicts commercial television. But the Lunts viewed the art form in which they worked in idealistic terms. They were aware of the necessity of paying some attention to box office receipts, of course, but their goal was to balance pragmatism and idealism, and they dedicated themselves to furthering that vision. They deserve to be remembered and appreciated.

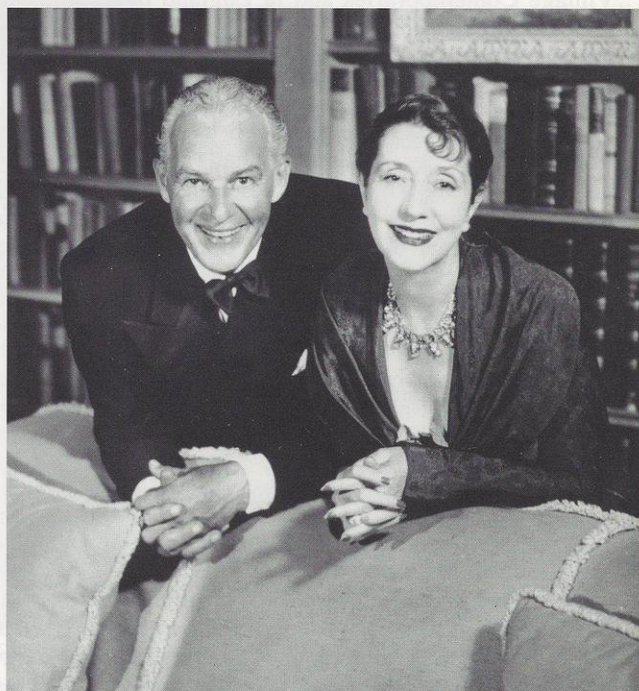
Lynn Fontanne was born in England, probably in 1887, and was fortunate to receive personal instruction from Ellen Terry, England's most prominent actress during the nineteenth century. Fontanne emigrated to America before 1920 and acted in Laurette Taylor's company in New York for several years. She gained respect as a fine actress but always, in those early years, played supporting roles.

Alfred Lunt was born in Milwaukee in 1892 at 1701 Grand Avenue (now Wisconsin Avenue) and was educated at Carroll College in Waukesha. He began his professional acting

career in a Boston stock company in 1912 and from there he moved on to vaudeville, then to Broadway.

In 1919, when they were both hired to perform a season of summer productions, Lunt and Fontanne met and fell in love. They were married on May 27, 1922. In the first two years of their married life, they occasionally appeared in the same play, but for the most part their acting careers remained separate.

That changed in 1924, when both of the Lunts were hired by the Theatre Guild, America's foremost "art theatre"—an organization that played on Broadway but defied Broadway



Alfred Lunt (1892-1977) and Lynn Fontanne (1887-1983).

WHI(x3)48315



conventions by offering serious and innovative plays, the kinds of plays that were regularly rejected by commercial managements—the kinds of plays the Lunts longed to appear in. They acted together in *The Guardsman* that season, prompting critic Brooks Atkinson to write that their performance “had the lightness of a dance and the virtuosity of a serenade.” Thus early on they established themselves as brilliant light comedians.

Subsequent productions for the Theatre Guild demonstrated that they also were remarkably versatile, as capable of playing intense drama as sophisticated comedy. Furthermore, when they appeared together in the same production, observers noted that their styles complemented one another. Then, in 1928, they made it a condition of their employment with the Theatre Guild that they must *always* act together in every production. It was the beginning of a joint acting career which, as Atkinson put it, “became matchless in America and perhaps throughout the world.” Neither ever appeared separately on the stage again. Only in her very last performance on television, in 1967, did Lynn Fontanne appear in a production without her husband. In all, the Lunts appeared as a team in twenty-six plays, three films, and four television programs, winning Tony awards for their stage presentations, Emmys for their television performances, and Oscar nominations for their only sound film.

The Lunts were dedicated performers whether they were on Broadway, in Topeka, or in San Antonio. No effort was too great, no rehearsal too long, no detail too small in their unceasing attempt to do their best on every occasion. They brought undiminished enthusiasm to the stage whether they were giving the first performance of a play or the 300th. This attitude was exemplified by Fontanne’s remark on the Lunts’ closing day in Noel Coward’s *Design for Living* in 1933: The play had been running for months in New York when time came for the last two performances on Saturday afternoon and evening. During the matinee, Fontanne managed to get a laugh she had been striving for since the play opened. She came offstage flushed with victory, thrilled at having finally achieved the desired effect. Noel Coward, who was co-starring in the play, was puzzled at the extent of her enthusiasm and asked her if it weren’t a bit late to be experimenting. “Why, *no!*”, she answered, “There’s still tonight, isn’t there?”

A similar event occurred in the 1940s, during the tour of *O Mistress Mine*, a play in which the Lunts acted for nearly four years—in London, on Broadway, and throughout the United States. The play’s tour finally came to an end in Seattle, where, after the next-to-last performance, Lunt, who was directing, astounded the company by calling a rehearsal for the next after-



Lynn Fontanne, Noel Coward, and Alfred Lunt in a scene from *Design for Living*, 1933.

noon. In many cases, no rehearsals will be called during the run of a play, on the assumption that the performances are firmly set and cannot be significantly improved. But with the Lunts it was taken for granted that improvements could always be made. That elusive goal—a perfect performance—might never be attained, but it was always to be sought after. Regardless of how good today’s performance had been, tomorrow’s might be better, which explains why Lunt would call a rehearsal of a play in which his company had been acting for years, with only one performance remaining.

The Lunts never failed to take that extra time, even when they were in opposition to the rules of Equity, the actors’ union. Equity insisted upon an eight-hour work day (and, of course, Equity was justified in attempting to win favorable working conditions for performers), but the Lunts could not be bound by union restrictions. Because they were married to one another and in one another’s company continually, they used their off-stage hours to perfect what they hoped to accomplish on-stage, rehearsing endlessly while riding in taxis, while walking, while eating their meals together.

There was the illusion of effortlessness in their performances. In truth, immense effort was required. Their method was to try out hundreds of ideas for their characterizations, then select only those that showed the most promise and rehearse them painstakingly until the whole process seemed to the viewer to be effortless. One actor in the Lunts’ repertory company watched them work out the details of a single entrance for more than six hours, during which they subtly varied each detail until they found precisely the mood, the tone, the attitudes they





Ten Chimneys, Genesee Depot.

wanted to convey. Perfectionism, then, is perhaps their most significant legacy, but it is hardly the only one.

The Lunts are not as well remembered as they ought to be precisely because their dedication was to the theater rather than to movies or television. We tend to equate stardom with the electronic media, and the same thing was true to a lesser degree in the 1930s and 1940s, when the Lunts were at their peak. But the Lunts loved the excitement that only the theater could provide: the personal contact with the audience; the thrill—and the danger—of acting before an audience which could be deeply moved to laughter or to tears or both, but from whom mistakes could not be concealed. The theater provided the Lunts with far greater satisfaction than they derived from appearing in the movies or from acting on the radio or, late in their careers, performing on television.

Still, actors who work exclusively (or nearly exclusively) in the theater pay a price: They not only forgo the greater financial rewards that movies and television can bring, they also risk being forgotten by later generations, for their performances only live in the memories of those who saw them. And if the Lunts haven't been entirely forgotten, the sad truth is that their greatness is remembered by all too few. By the time of Lynn Fontanne's death in 1983, at age ninety-five, television news people, who had obviously never heard of her, reported the death of Lynn Fontaine on various stations throughout the country.

In fact, the public's knowledge of the Lunts' place in history had faded at least a decade before that. In the 1970s Harold

Clurman said that half the graduate students in his theater class at Hunter College looked at him blankly when he included Alfred Lunt as one of America's foremost twentieth-century actors. Other teachers of theater have had similar discouraging experiences. *The Guardsman*, their only sound film, made in 1931, is a comic masterpiece but, unfortunately, is rarely shown in movie theaters or on television.

Lunt's career as an actor spanned fifty-three years, from 1912 until 1965. Fontanne was active for a remarkable sixty-two years. They began their careers on Broadway before John F. Kennedy was born, were regarded as America's greatest acting couple before *The Jazz Singer* became the first talking picture in 1927, and maintained that position until the mid-1960s.

Why did their careers last so long, and why were their performances eagerly awaited by audiences in America and in England, year in and year out? For one thing, they so often appeared in outstanding plays: *The Guardsman*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Sea Gull*, *The Doctor's*

*Dilemma*, *Volpone*, *Design for Living*, *Amphitryon 38*, and their culminating triumph, *The Visit*. Toward the end of their careers, they appeared in plays of less distinction, but even then they brought wit, style, and grace to every performance.

When a roster of great new theatrical names, such as Montgomery Clift and Julie Harris, gained prominence after World War II, the Lunts became their mentors. Clift was in their production of *There Shall Be No Night*, and Harris appeared with Fontanne in the television version of *Anastasia*. Uta Hagen, whose attitude toward her profession was profoundly affected when she appeared in *The Sea Gull* with the Lunts in 1938, continues to this day as one of the foremost teachers of acting in New York, sharing with her students the discipline and craft she learned from the Lunts. Their techniques, passed on to the current generation of performers, continue in use, although few young actors are aware of their origins.

Thanks to the Lunts, actors now are free to experiment with techniques once considered too risky to attempt: overlapping dialogue, for example, or turning one's back to the audience at a strategic moment. The Lunts perfected the use of overlapping dialogue, improving on a technique that Lynn Fontanne had begun to explore in her performances with Laurette Taylor. Today the technique doesn't seem revolutionary, for other performers have adopted it. Some presentations—the film *M\*A\*S\*H* is perhaps the best example—use it to great effect in nearly every scene. When Alfred Lunt was beginning his professional career in the theater, turning one's back to the audience



was unheard of. But Lunt believed that, under certain circumstances, an actor could communicate feeling and emotion as effectively with his back as with his facial expressions. Eventually, he proved it, to the benefit of actors and audiences today.

Some of the other contributions the Lunts made to the theater should be briefly noted. Their eminence as actors had the almost inevitable result of leading them into directing. As a director Lunt was considered one of the best in America. And, as the Lunts extended their concern from their own performances to the performances of all the actors with whom they were working, they became eager to assume the producer's function as well: to select the members of their companies, choose and shape the plays in which they would appear, and determine where, when, and under what conditions they would perform.

During their careers the Lunts kept alive a long-standing tradition in the theater, that of the actor-manager, a tradition that dates back at least to the sixteenth century, when wandering troupes of *Commedia dell'Arte* performers in Italy were generally headed by the troupes' foremost actors. These individuals served not only as the companies' leading players, they also assembled the members of the companies, saw to their economic well-being, selected the dramatic materials they would play, and, because they had attained positions of such power and importance, were able to exert artistic control over the productions. The roster of actor-managers includes such historic names as Molière, David Garrick, John Philip Kemble, Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, Edwin Booth, Constantin

## Ten Chimneys Today

The gently rolling, wooded landscape where young Alfred Lunt built his home in 1914 once again is a scene of activity, creativity, and vision projected by the founders and supporters of a recently-established theater company, American Inside Theatre. The group was formed in Milwaukee in 1988 and now maintains offices in the Lunts' home at Genesee Depot. In 1990 the company became the resident professional theater of Carroll College in Waukesha, Lunt's alma mater. Under the leadership of its co-founders, artistic director Morrigan Hurt and producer Mark Simpson, the company is committed to producing, exclusively, American drama encompassing a wide variety of plays from the classics to the works of developing playwrights.

Recent productions include the non-musical world premier of the stage version of *It's a Wonderful Life*, which will be an annual holiday offering. On May 20-23 at the Pabst Theatre in Milwaukee, the company will present the Neil Simon play *Broadway Bound* starring John Randolph, who performed in *The Visit* with the Lunts at the opening of the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York in May 1958. On May 16 at Genesee Depot there will be an

opportunity to meet John Randolph and other actors who were influenced by the Lunts at a special event which will include brunch and a tour of Ten Chimneys.

American Inside Theatre soon will realize its dream. Plans are in place to establish a theatrical cultural center on the grounds of the Lunt-Fontanne estate. Twenty-one acres will be transformed to include an intimate outdoor theater, an indoor performing area, a theater internship program, and a theatrical museum in the Lunts' home. The dream also includes a shaded spot to sit outdoors and sip coffee or tea, a bed-and-breakfast, a restaurant, and a gift shop.

For additional information on American Inside Theatre's development plans, performance schedule, and special events call (414) 968-4770.



The Lunts at dinner at Genesee Depot.



Stanislavski, and Henry Irving, all of them revered for their many contributions to shaping the theatrical milieu of their time. Lunt and Fontanne were part of that tradition and inspired the same reverence.

The Lunts' achievements as actors induced dramatists to craft plays especially for them—such plays as Noel Coward's *Design for Living*, Robert E. Sherwood's *There Shall Be No Night*, and S. N. Behrman's *The Second Man*, among others. Thus the Lunts created opportunities for playwrights who might never have written those plays had they not had the great acting couple in mind. The theater cannot survive as a significant medium without new plays, and the Lunts did their part to stimulate playwriting.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne fought valiantly to re-establish repertory as a viable theatrical system in New York. This is the system of alternating productions under which the companies of Shakespeare and Molière operated so successfully hundreds of years ago (and which is alive and well in Wisconsin today). At the time, their attempt was unsuccessful—it clashed *too* jarringly with the commercial necessities of Broadway—but it did have an impact, nevertheless, for the Lunts played *The Sea Gull*, *Amphitryon 38*, and *Idiot's Delight* in repertory on tour throughout the United States in the late 1930s. They also wished to maintain an ensemble company—a group of the same actors, who would remain with the Lunts play after play, season after season, thus assuring a unity of performance that could not be matched by actors unfamiliar with one another's idiosyncracies. In this they were successful for years, despite the fact that the ensemble system is complex and expensive—often much more so than a system in which a new company is assembled for every play.

Surely one of their most significant accomplishments was their successful struggle to maintain the interest of audiences outside New York City in the legitimate theater. The Lunts invariably toured the country in the productions in which they had achieved fame in New York. Often they did so by playing in high school gymnasiums and other ill-equipped structures as well as in lavishly furnished theaters. Certainly their devotion to touring was physically and emotionally wearing and brought no greater financial reward than playing in New York would

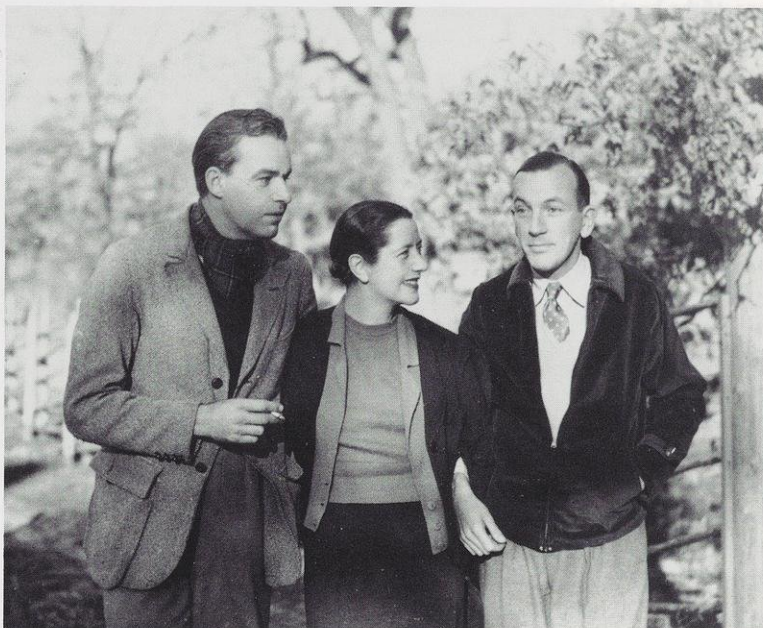
have done. But the Lunts toured because they felt a responsibility to the playwrights to keep their works and the underlying themes of their plays before the public for as long as possible. More importantly, they felt a responsibility to theatergoers outside New York, believing that the residents of Seattle or Houston or Minneapolis had as much right to see first-rate theater as those who happened to live in (or could afford to travel to) New York.

It may be reasonably argued that the decentralization of American theater today owes much to the efforts of the Lunts and a handful of other actors, such as Helen Hayes and Katharine Cornell, who refused to limit their appearances to New York. Had not these actors maintained the interest of audiences outside New York at a time when movies had replaced live theater as the nation's most popular entertainment medium and theater buildings around the country were being trans-

formed or demolished at an alarming rate, the interest of the American public in the legitimate theater might have been extinguished. Instead, America is now experiencing a renaissance of the live theater, in regional companies and first-rate academic groups throughout the country.

In so many ways, then, the Lunts' contribution to the theater of their time—and of our time—was enormously significant. It may be that no other American theatrical figures of the twentieth century influenced theater so profoundly. Yet the Lunts' eminence as actors did not warp their personalities. They did not behave as if they were "stars," and they were noted for their fundamental decency. They were married to one another for fifty-five years, and there is every reason to believe that their marriage was a remarkably close and supportive one. They were known for their integrity, their compassion, and their dignity in the face of adversity and serious illness.

The Lunts were cosmopolitans who spent most of their time in New York and in other major cities, but they valued rural life at least in equal measure. They returned nearly every summer to their Wisconsin estate, Ten Chimneys at Genesee Depot, for relaxation and renewal. For Alfred, Ten Chimneys was *home* for most of his adult life—he bought the property in 1913 with a small inheritance when he was twenty-one. Over



The Lunts and Noel Coward at Genesee Depot in the 1930s.



the years an amazing group of celebrities—Noel Coward, Helen Hayes, Sir Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Katharine Cornell, Alexander Woollcott, Robert E. Sherwood—enjoyed the hospitality of the Lunts' Wisconsin farm, and Lunt's talent, which transcended theater, found expression there. He was an amateur architect, interior designer, gentleman farmer, gourmet cook, artist, and accomplished musician.

In September 1972 the Lunts decided to make their retirement complete. They elected to sell the New York town house they had owned for twenty-three years, along with most of its furnishings. Books and a number of china tea sets were shipped to Genesee Depot. In January of the following year, in an auction at Sotheby Parke Bernet, the Lunts sold many of their precious antiques. Unsentimentally and with determination, they severed the last tie that bound them to New York and the professional theater. They would spend the rest of their lives in pleasant and fulfilling retirement in southeastern Wisconsin.

In Genesee Depot the Lunts spent their time reading, gardening, and playing Scrabble. Lunt kept busy in the greenhouse ("The greenhouse is a lovely sight and I have done over 400 pots in the last two weeks") and cooking. In earlier years Lunt had donated food to the Waukesha fair—cookies, currant jelly, vichyssoise, Swedish meat pastries, veal-and-ham pie—to benefit the Waukesha Symphony Orchestra, and during their retirement both Lunts became even more involved in the activities of Genesee Depot. Fontanne said, "The best thing in a way about our marriage was retirement: after all those years of work we had a long, marvelously peaceful time in the garden."

Eventually their idyllic life was marred by Lunt's ill health. He suffered from an incredible array of diseases, culminating with the cancer that took his life. An avid reader, his eyesight failed in his later years. Fontanne had to read to him: "I can hardly complain," he said, "since my reader is the world's greatest actress." On August 3, 1977, Lunt died and was buried at Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee. At 7:55 on the evening of August 5, the lights of all Broadway theater marquees but one were extinguished for one minute. The exception was the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, whose lights continued to blaze in Lunt's honor. At the same moment Fontanne was dining with

a small gathering of close friends at Genesee Depot. When told that New York's theaters had just been darkened, the guests observed a moment of silence which was broken when Fontanne raised her glass, "To Alfred."

On December 6, 1980, Fontanne celebrated her ninety-third birthday in especially festive style as one of five recipients

of honors bestowed by the John F. Kennedy Center for lifetime achievements in the performing arts. Jason Robards and Beverly Sills led an audience of more than 2,000 in singing "Happy Birthday" to her. She died at Ten Chimneys in July 1983.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne demonstrated that success is possible in the volatile world of theater without undue temperament or ambition so great that it overrides all human considerations. We are fortunate to have had them as examples of everything that artists in the theater can and should be.



*A picnic on the farm at Genesee Depot.*

*Editor's note: A special Citation of Merit was presented to Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne by the Wisconsin Academy at its 1966 annual conference at Lawrence University in Appleton.*

*Photos courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.*

*The opening quote by Helen Hayes is taken from her foreword to The Fabulous Lunts, p. ix.*

#### For further reading

Jared Brown, *The Fabulous Lunts: A Biography of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne*. New York: Atheneum, 1986.

Carolyn Every, "Home Life of the Lunts," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Spring 1983.

Ellen Langill, *Carroll College: The First Century*. Waukesha: Carroll College Press, 1980.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

Phillip M. Runkel, *Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne: A Bibliography*. Waukesha: Carroll College Press, 1978.

Maurice Zolotow, *Stagestruck: The Romance of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965.





# My German Trip

by Warrington Colescott

*In the spring of 1991, at the Chicago Art Expo, I ran into Lloyd Menard, printmaker and art professor at the University of South Dakota. The one thing Lloyd and I share is a love of the portfolio print, where an idea in one print remains alive when the print is finished, insisting that an additional print be created to complete the statement, and possibly another, and another, until you have a narrative. Lloyd said, among other things, "Why don't you work up a group of prints, maybe with some text, come up to Ver-million, and we will print them, make boxes, and publish a portfolio."*

It seemed like a good idea. Over the next few months I began to think in related images. In the fall one of the University of Wisconsin-Madison art department professors asked me to go with her to Germany for three weeks. She rolled her eyes. Since she was my wife I had to consider it. Well, why not a group of prints on German subjects?

There was that German thing again. My love-hate relationship with the Germanic tribes had a long history. My father fought the Germans in World War I, and as a child I was never allowed to forget it. His division was one of the first to go to France, it remained in the trenches throughout the war, and returned only after the surrender. In our basement he kept his uniform, his gas mask, his bayonet, his steel helmet with the dent in it. My playthings.

The culture of the thirties reflected, to a surprising extent, military values and ideas. My boy scout troop earned a silver cup for close order drill. In high school I was Colonel of the ROTC unit, and I am the world's last human who can demonstrate the sabre manual of arms, which I do every New Year's Eve. In college I was a member of the Pershing Rifles, a select ROTC company. The knowledge prevailed, somehow, that our immediate future was war, and that the enemy would again be Germany.

On the other hand, I studied German grammar, read *The Magic Mountain*, admired Albrecht Dürer and Franz Marc; my favorite art professor was Eugene Neuhaus, with his heavy humor and accent. Worth Ryder and Erle Loran, my painting instructors, had studied in Germany and were responsible for bringing Hans Hoffmann to Berkeley. A typical university day for me could start with a lecture on fifteenth-century Bavarian woodcuts, then I would go on to my studio in Eschleman Hall where I cut linoleum blocks of Hitler bombing helpless Spanish civilians (for the university paper), then I would quickly change

to my ROTC uniform and report for drill with the 81 mm mortar. Two months after graduation I was in the army. The enemy was Germany.



After the war I returned to Berkeley for graduate work. The university had become noticeably more German, represented by the refugees from the Nazis: Jews and non-Jews, politicals, scholars, writers, artists—intellectuals who had sought asylum in American institutions of higher learning.

My wife was secretary to Dr. Erwin Rosenthal, art historian, antiquarian, formerly *Book Seller to the Kaiser* (his letterhead stated). In the doctor's library I was introduced to French and German artists' books, lavish volumes of the most beautiful typography, original poetry illustrated by hand-printed etchings and lithographs bound with exquisite craftsmanship. At the doctor's house I also met refugee scholars who had important positions in the university: the medievalist Ernst Kantorowicz; Arthur Schnitzler, Jr., director of the university theater and son of the great Austrian playwright; the gestalt art educator Henri Schaeffer-Simmern; art historian Walter Horn, who had been a member of the OSS unit that had nosed out Hitler's cache of stolen art treasures.

I went along with the doctor on a trip to Los Angeles where he was buying original manuscripts from refugee writers and musicians. At the home of Thomas Mann I was in attendance as the doctor bargained with the writer and his daughter Erika. It was an image that has stayed in my mind.

On the same trip we visited Alma Mahler-Werfel in her Hollywood bungalow. She was the widow of Gustave Mahler, had been the mistress of Oscar Kokoschka, the mother of Walter Gropius's child, a brief amorata of Gustav Klimt, something of a fly in the ointment for Sigmund Freud, and was now the wife of Franz Werfel. A substantial resume. I remembered



the nude portraits that Kokoschka had painted, but the reality was a little disappointing. Age had not treated Madame Mahler-Werfel kindly, and she had fleshed out considerably since the Vienna days. No matter. There were many admirers, and the room rang with excited talk in German, French, and, to a lesser degree, English. (I assumed that the conversation was brilliant, inasmuch as I didn't catch too much of it.)

Following my graduate study I taught in the Los Angeles area for two years, and opportunities for exposure to Germanic art were many, as the large and creative German exile colony ensured performances, plays, concerts, readings, and exhibitions that were determinedly avant-garde. Arnold Schoenberg was in residence at UCLA and very influential. *Lieder* was big. I remember the low-cut velvet gowns and the bosoms of the *lieder* singers. I was told (by a German friend) that the greatest *lieder* singers are women, so watch the movement of the line between their gown and the breast—breath control makes the art.

Leaving Los Angeles and coming to Madison was a shock, but the quality of my new colleagues was formidable. German culture was a general interest among the artists on the University of Wisconsin faculty, notably so in the case of Alfred Sessler and John Wilde, whose work showed its influence.

In the fifties and sixties I visited Europe a number of times for long periods, working in Britain, France, and Italy. I realized my avoidance of Germany was deliberate.

Back to my wife's question, "Do you want to take a German trip?" I said yes, I would like to experience the new Germany, where the contemporary arts are the most exciting in Europe. I thought of the old Germany of the print, of the book, of Johannes Gutenberg and his wonderful press, of Senefelder and his magic stones. I thought of those artists closest to my own obsessions, the printmakers, who spent a large part of their creative output carving matrix material to enable the presses to make pictures, and to repeat those pictures again and again.

So the little series of prints for Vermillion was beginning to evolve, a mix of tribute and commentary. It happened that our trip had to be postponed, but I decided to take *My German Trip* anyway, in my fancy. This is how it turned out.



*Lunch with Albrecht Dürer, Agnes, and the happy apprentices wearing AD T-shirts. Etching, 11 x 14 inches.*

The first visit was to Albrecht Dürer in Nürnberg, interviewing that prodigious artist in his workshop. I recently read Jane Hutchison's book on Dürer, showing him as an industrious man of the world, setting high standards for his many apprentices. I take lunch in the shop with Dürer, joined by his good



*Joining the march in The Weavers Revolt. Colescott: "There is a lot of anger here. What about binding arbitration?" Kollwitz: "Crap. They are dead men." Etching, 8 x 12 inches.*





*In the trenches with Otto Dix. Colescott: "Dad! It's me!" Etching, 11 x 14 inches.*

wife Agnes. The apprentices are full of enthusiasm for their work. They like their boss and happily wear T-shirts of his manufacture.

...

The next print stop is with a beloved artist, Käthe Kollwitz. She sought out themes that addressed social concerns and was the champion of the peasants, women, the poor, the laboring classes. While her husband, a doctor, ministered to the sick, Käthe, with her art, fought for their practical betterment. Her portfolio of prints, *The Weavers Revolt*, won an important prize and made her reputation, and it is fitting that I enter that scene and march with her and the weavers, to talk of politics, reform of the workplace and labor relations. I know her answers will be blunt.

...

The man who showed Germany the reality of war was Otto Dix, and when World War I ended he continued to describe the horrors left in its wake. I see in his collection of etchings *Bellum* the greatest tract against war that any artist has ever made. In the killing field of the Western front he was there, all the way through, leading a machine gun squad. It is possible that my father was in a trench twenty-five yards or so west of Dix, trying his best to kill him. The Nazis burned many of Dix's works, exhibited his paintings jeeringly in the

exhibition of "degenerate art." He was removed from his position in the Dresden Academy and put under house arrest. I would be proud to go into the trenches with Otto Dix, even with my father shooting at us.

...

George Grosz drew for Berlin newspapers and magazines in the period between the wars, detailing the corruption, misery, and violence fomented by Germany's rulers, the military aristocracy and the industrial powers. His vision was savage and compelling. As Hitler rose to power, Grosz was targeted as a prime enemy. The irony for Grosz is that he escaped to New York and found many of the same scarifying images that he had left in Berlin, but there was no public willing to see them. The Americans would not admit to an underclass. In the Berlin of the twenties, what better guide to escort you through cafe life than George Grosz, who helped fashion the satiric bite of the revues along

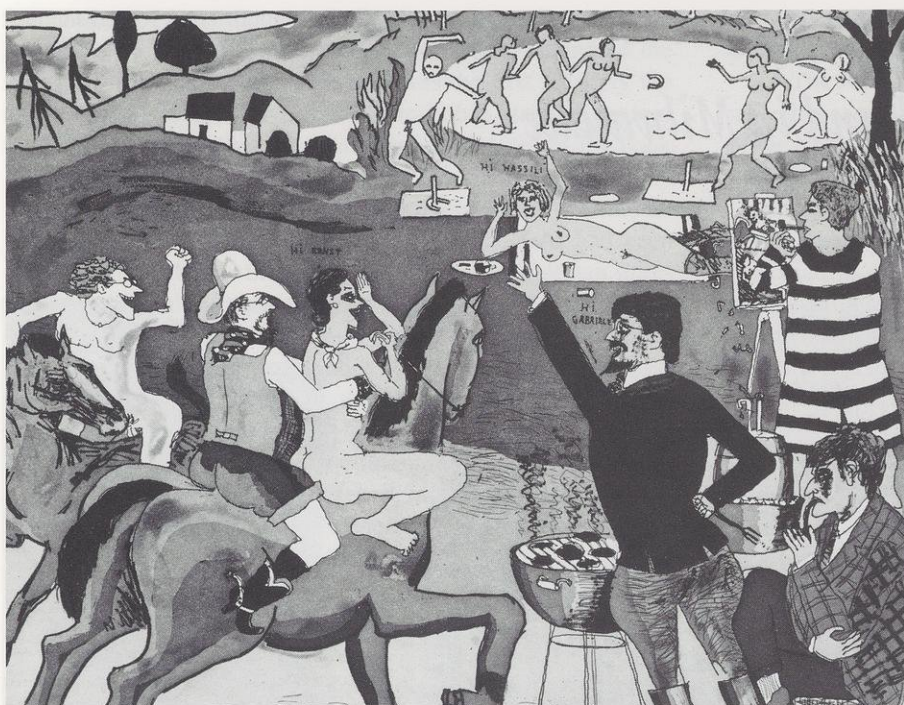
the Ku'damm where sexuality and politics were raucously linked, where Madonna would be a headliner, as she is today, and as George and I applauded her in my imagination at the Kafe DePrave.

...



*At the Kafe De Prave with George Grosz. Grosz: "Ja, gutt stuff, Madonna." Colescott: "George, this is depraved, even gross!" Etching, 9 x 12 inches.*





Sharing a blue horse with Gabriele Münter. "Hi Ernst." "Hi Wassili." "Hi Gabriele."  
Etching, 11 x 14 inches.

In Munich, why not drop in on the Thomas Mann family, as I did in Westwood so long ago? How better to sample this complex writer's mind than in an elaborate jousting over the chess board? (See cover.)

...  
In another section of Munich I am invited to mount a blue horse and go for a gallop to a picnic with The Bridge (*Der Brücke*), the rival expressionist group. Franz Marc, leader of the Blue Riders, is one of many fine young artists who will die in World War I. My horse has been designed by him. I share a saddle with Gabriele Münter, one of Munich's leading painters, the companion of Wassili Kandinsky, who rides his blue horse in the Russian manner, standing straight in the stirrups. The group's commonality is youth, a wildness of style influenced by a suspi-

cion that their life will be brief. They celebrated, in painting and prints, their aborted youth, the beauty of nature, and the human body. What a fine group to ride with.

...  
My bundle of small plates was complete, etched, proofed in color. I made a prologue, tongue in cheek, of a fictional NEA grant, which necessitates an interrogation at NEA headquarters, followed by orientation and the issuance of clearance for exposure to foreign ideas. End of fantasy.

In May 1992 we finally began our *actual* trip to Germany. Editions of the prints discussed here already had been brought out, the portfolio published by the University of South Dakota. No matter. I don't think I would have changed a thing, under any circumstance.



At the NEA High Corrective Research Headquarters, where I must undergo testing and orientation. I am certified for exposure to foreign ideas. Etching, 11 x 14 inches.



# A Salute that Failed:

## *The German-American Bund in Milwaukee*

by David L. Lake

*Most Americans do not dwell on the fact that this "one nation indivisible" basically consists of people from other countries and their descendants. We usually think of our neighbors as plain, unhyphenated Americans. However, with America's entry into World War I, suspicion of Germans and all things German sprang up almost overnight. The Committee of Public Information was established to stir up patriotic sentiments and support for the war effort among the American people, and the lives of German-Americans were made miserable. Teaching and even speaking German became an offense. German music and books were banned, German measles was renamed, and at times anti-German sentiment reached hysterical proportions.*



Milwaukee, about 1917.

The strong German strain in Wisconsin's population, along with Senator Robert LaFollette's pacifism, all helped to mark Wisconsin, in the national mind, as a seat of disloyalty and pro-Germanism during World War I. Americans of German descent in Wisconsin were victimized by "yellow paint brigades" which defaced homes suspected of harboring pro-Germans. The *Socialist Leader*, published in Milwaukee (a city under suspicion as both a German-American and a Socialist center), was denied mailing privileges by the postmaster general. There is little question that civil liberties were frequently violated.

After World War I this exaggerated hatred died down, and ethnic organizations once again resumed cultural meetings and celebrations. During the early twenties, however, a German society emerged which, after several changes in leadership and name, finally became the German-Ameri-

can Bund; and with the rise of Adolph Hitler in Germany, the Bund became more and more outspoken in its pro-Nazi statements and policies. It also should be noted that Wisconsin's membership in the Ku Klux Klan numbered approximately 50,000 by 1926 (Austin, p.151).

The fact that the German Nazi party stressed pan-Germanism, racism, anti-British feeling, anti-Semitism, and anti-communism in its effort to obtain eventual control over Germany and gain adherents from Germans everywhere is well established. In exploring the background of the Bund and the *Deutsches Auslands-Institut* (DAI), it is apparent that predisposition for this thinking goes back long before Hitler and, in fact, there is a *Deutschtum* of sorts going back to the time of the Protestant Reformation. Hegel, Treitschke, Nietzsche, and Spengler all made contributions to the



foundations of Nazi thought. DeGobineau in his *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, published in 1853, attempted the scientific formulation of racism and was the first to apply the term "Aryan" to the fair-haired Teuton, thus starting modern racism on its way. Stewart Chamberlain in 1899 in his book *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* contributed to racism by identifying the German peoples collectively with the Teutonic Master Race (Strausz-Haupe, pp. 12, 13). The DAI had been organized in 1917 for the purpose of furthering German interests by maintaining contacts with all persons of German extraction abroad and by counteracting French and English propaganda during World War I. Under Hitler, this pan-Germanism and the propaganda work of the DAI was encouraged and expanded.

The concept of the racial community was the fundamental principle upon which the Nazi program for proselytizing foreign Germans was based. The people of German descent were *not* hot beds of espionage for the Nazi cause, and this was not the assigned task of the DAI. The task was to secure a tight grip on Germans everywhere and to transform an unorganized mass into organized shock troops for the Third Reich. Activities of the DAI in America included maintaining files on as many Germans (in the United States) as was possible, distributing Nazi propaganda, recruiting laborers, training leaders, bringing speakers and teachers to America, and providing for visits of German-Americans to Germany (Smith, pp. 26-58). These policies in the United States were definitely affected by the personal attitudes and ideas of their *Fuehrer*, Adolph Hitler.

### The Bund in Milwaukee

Nothing seemed to excite the American people quite like the public activities of an apparently Hitler-sponsored organization in the United States. The reactions to the discovery of a Nazi group on American soil tended to run from one extreme to the other, a situation which helped to obscure an accurate evaluation. Actually, most people were probably unaware that the German-American Bund, which gained such a nefarious reputation in the later 1930s, had antecedents in two other Nazi-inspired organizations in this country (Smith, p. 59).

In October 1924, while Adolph Hitler was languishing in prison obsessed with his literary thoughts and political ambitions, some of his followers in Chicago, including Fritz and Peter Gissibl, organized the Free Society of Teutonia. These organizers in America were members of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). The aims of the Teutonia group were to unite all Germans with nationalistic leanings, convince them that Hitler was the leader of Germans *everywhere*, and advance his political ideology and personal ambitions. In 1926 the name of the society was changed to National Socialist Society of Teutonia. Its aims remained unchanged, and its organizational struc-

ture was patterned after that of the National Socialist Party in Germany ("Appellee's Brief," pp. 101, 102).

The Nationalist Society of Teutonia continued until 1932, when it was replaced by two organizations: an American branch of the Nazi party with various locals; and an affiliate, Friends of the Hitler Movement, for American citizens of German origin. During a convention in Chicago in July 1933, Nazi party members in the United States and their sympathizers organized the Association of the Friends of the New Germany. The basic qualifications for membership were that the applicant be of Aryan descent (free from Jewish or Negro blood), be a believer in the leadership principle, and be an adherent to the German socialist world philosophy.

The Milwaukee unit of the Friends of the New Germany was organized in 1933, but from 1936 until its dissolution after Pearl Harbor, the organization was known as the German-American Bund. George Froboese, appointed by Fritz Gissibl of Chicago, was the leader of the unit during its existence in Milwaukee. The unit's operating procedures and activities were much the same as other units throughout the country. *Bundesbefehles*, or commands, were received from national headquarters about once a month and read to members at meetings. The unit customarily closed meetings by singing the *Horst Wessel* song, during which the members stood at attention with outstretched arms in a gesture identical to the Nazi salute.

The Nazi flag was displayed at their meetings along with the American flag. About seventy-five to one hundred members purchased the 1937 and 1938 yearbooks, and the proceeds were remitted to the Bund national headquarters. National Bund leaders and prominent Nazis from time to time delivered speeches to the Milwaukee unit. Motion pictures were shown at



Milwaukee, about 1940.



Bund meetings depicting the progress of the new Germany under Hitler. German propaganda, including speeches by Hitler and Goebbels, was customarily on sale at local unit meetings.

The local Bund unit had uniformed storm troops, *Ordnungs Dienst* (OD), whose principal purpose was to protect members at meetings. Its color guard displayed both the American flag and the Bund flag (which bore the swastika emblem). The unit also maintained a youth group, *Jugendschaft*, organized in 1935, which consisted of boys and girls whose ages ranged from eight to sixteen years. The children wore uniforms similar to those worn by the Hitler youth; their flag, with the symbol of the "blitz," was similar to the flag of the Nazi youth; they sang the *Horst Wessel* song and gave the Nazi salute. They were required to attend large meetings of the Bund at the Milwaukee Auditorium.

Representatives from Milwaukee attended various district and national Bund conventions. In July 1936 Milwaukee leader George Froboese participated in a trip of Bund members to Germany. He described his meeting with Hitler in the Bund's 1937 yearbook:

Just as we are about to enter the Chancery, we are told: "The *Fuehrer* will receive the leaders of the Bund." No more waiting. We stand before the Chancellor, the *Fuehrer* of Germany. He shakes hands with each of us, looks us straight in the eye, lays his hand on the shoulder of our Bund leader and speaks to us of Germany that is restored. He asks us about our comrades of German blood across the sea, thanks us for our strong opposi-

tion to an immoral press and its infamous lies, and inquires in detail about the future plans of the Bund for the excursion through Germany. When the Bund leader Kuhn mentions the coming visit to Munich, the *Fuehrer* immediately takes steps to ensure a warm welcome for the Bund in the city where our movement had its beginning (*German Report*, pp. 119, 120).

.....

*By 1937 it was evident to Nazi officials that the activities of the German-American Bund were creating real hostility in the press throughout the United States, including in Milwaukee.*

.....

By 1937 it was evident to Nazi officials that the activities of the German-American Bund were creating real hostility in the press throughout the United States, including in Milwaukee. The German ambassador to the United States, Hans Dieckhoff, was prompted to write the foreign ministry that one of the major problems in German-American relations was the widespread belief in America that the Bund was operating under orders from Berlin. "Nothing has resulted in so much hostility toward us in the last few months as the stupid

and noisy activities of a handful of German-Americans. I am referring to the efforts of the German-American Bund," he wrote. He added, "I know that the *Auslandsorganization* has clearly disassociated itself from the German-American Bund; but I am not so sure that all the agencies in Berlin that have anything to do with foreign countries are observing a similar restraint" (Smith, p. 95).

In 1939 the Milwaukee Bund leaders established an organization through which they could control and operate Camp Hindenberg at Grafton, Wisconsin, and for this purpose they incorporated the Grafton Settlement League, a non-profit holding company for the camp. Froboese withdrew \$2,900 from the Bund bank account to make a payment on the property, which became the site of military drills by the OD (the storm troops), and also was regularly used as a meeting place for the Milwaukee youth group.

The Milwaukee unit was an aggressive branch of the national organization of the Bund. Outsiders made attempts to break up several gatherings, resulting in physical violence and disturbances. At times a number of OD from the Chicago unit were sent to Milwaukee to assist the local OD in preserving order, and the uniformed troops were stationed throughout the halls at the meeting sites as a protective measure. As a result of these disturbances and because of the prevailing Nazi sym-



*The Milwaukee Auditorium, about 1935-40, one of the meeting sites for the German-American Bund.*



bolism—uniforms, arm bands with emblems, swastika flags, Nazi salutes—the Bund acquired an unfavorable reputation in Milwaukee and was often rebuked by the local press. As a result, some members disassociated themselves from the organization; others were unmoved (“Appellee’s Brief,” pp. 125-130).

The Milwaukee unit used the Forst Keller and the Highland Cafe as meeting places in 1938 through 1940. After a police investigation and a hearing before a committee of the Milwaukee Common Council, the tavern license of the Highland Cafe was revoked and the place was closed.

It is well known that during this era there were many American groups and individuals who openly and freely were expressing ideas very similar to the Nazi philosophy and with whom the Bund cooperated. For example, the leadership of the Ku Klux Klan in 1939 observed that Hitler’s program was appealing to the same part of American society that made up the potential Klan membership and steered the Klan within flirting distance of the Nazi group. It required no severe adjustment of Klan ideals, and the flirtation came very close to marriage. The severe economic problems brought on by the Great Depression, of course, provided the atmosphere in which racism could thrive in the United States as it had in Germany. As in the present, it was a very sensitive and complex matter to distinguish threats to democracy and still retain protection of individual rights and freedom of expression.

At the German-American Bund’s Camp Nordland in rural New Jersey on the night of August 18, 1940, Klansmen joined the Bund members in a great meeting to stress “true Americanism.” They burned a cross forty feet high, sang Nazi marching songs, and attracted a great deal of attention. The New Jersey legislature, after hearing the report of a state police investigation, ordered the closing of Camp Nordland (Randel, p. 130).

Troubles deepened for the Bund. In June 1942 George Froboese, head of the Milwaukee unit, committed suicide by placing his head on railway tracks under a moving train in Waterloo, Indiana. He was on his way to New York City to testify before a Federal Grand Jury investigating Bund activities (*The Milwaukee Journal*, September 22, 1943, p. 1). There had been previous investigations by the FBI and by a congressional committee established to look into aspects of subversive activity in the United States.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942, the Bund was officially dissolved. Its pro-Nazi policies, however, were



*Camp Siegfried, Long Island, New York, a boys' camp which held activities similar to those held at Camp Hindenberg in Grafton.*

not forgotten by the public, particularly the press. Many of the nation’s leading newspapers continued the crusade against what remained of the Bund, its activities, and its members. They warned Americans, already alarmed by Japan’s attack, against possible sabotage and espionage by this group. They hinted darkly of the presence of a fifth column in the shape of militarily-trained bundists (*New York Journal American*, June 29, 1942, p. 1). It appears, however, that these attacks were not directed against all, or even the majority of, German-Americans; only Bund members and other individuals and organizations suspected of pro-Nazi sympathies were singled out for attack.

It was popularly believed that there was a well-planned and highly organized conspiracy designed to subvert and overthrow national governments everywhere at the proper moment in the Nazi program of world conquest. It appears, however, that this was not the case with regard to the United States. It probably is more accurate to say that Nazi foreign policy toward the United States reflected Hitler’s personality and the power struggles within the Nazi hierarchy. Hitler was European-oriented, and he exhibited an ignorance about America and an apparent inability to focus his concern on the United States. His spoken and written comments on America were vague and ill-informed. The criteria for national greatness seemed to Hitler to be entirely lacking in the United States.

Hitler seemed convinced that a weak and divided America would remain isolationist, and it appears that this would be one of the aims of his policy. The Nazis wanted to promote the old-time pan-Germanism as perverted by them, combat British propaganda, and keep America out of the war.



These purposes, however, worked against each other. Through Nazi propaganda, the German government gained a few staunch supporters, but their actions created hostility toward their cause on the part of most of the American people who became fearful of subversion and/or an international conspiracy for German world conquest.

O. John Rogge gives this evaluation of the German-American Bund and its activity in the United States:

The Bund as such never made much headway in this country. Most Americans of German descent were not in sympathy with the Nazi regime, which was the source of considerable disappointment to the Nazis in Germany in the early years of the Third Reich. . . . Many representatives were dispatched to the United States and German-Americans were belabored with literature, speeches, and films. It soon became obvious, however, that a majority of German-Americans were utterly out of sympathy with the Nazi regime (p. 129).

Hans L. Trefousse in his analysis of German intelligence services in the United States concludes that:

Since the end of World War II it has become increasingly apparent that the vaunted Nazi Secret Service was singularly ineffi-

cient in the United States (p. 84). . . . The German Intelligence Service in America neither contributed materially to Hitler's power nor seriously impaired the contribution made by the United States in bringing about his destruction (p. 100).

#### Sources

"Appellee's Brief," United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Case No. 8676.

H. Russell Austin, *The Wisconsin Story*. Milwaukee: The Journal Company, 1964.

"Federal Bureau of Investigation File 100-6000-35A."

*The Milwaukee Journal*, September 22, 1943

*New York Journal American*, June 28 and 29, 1942.

William Pierce Randel, *The Ku Klux Klan*. Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1965.

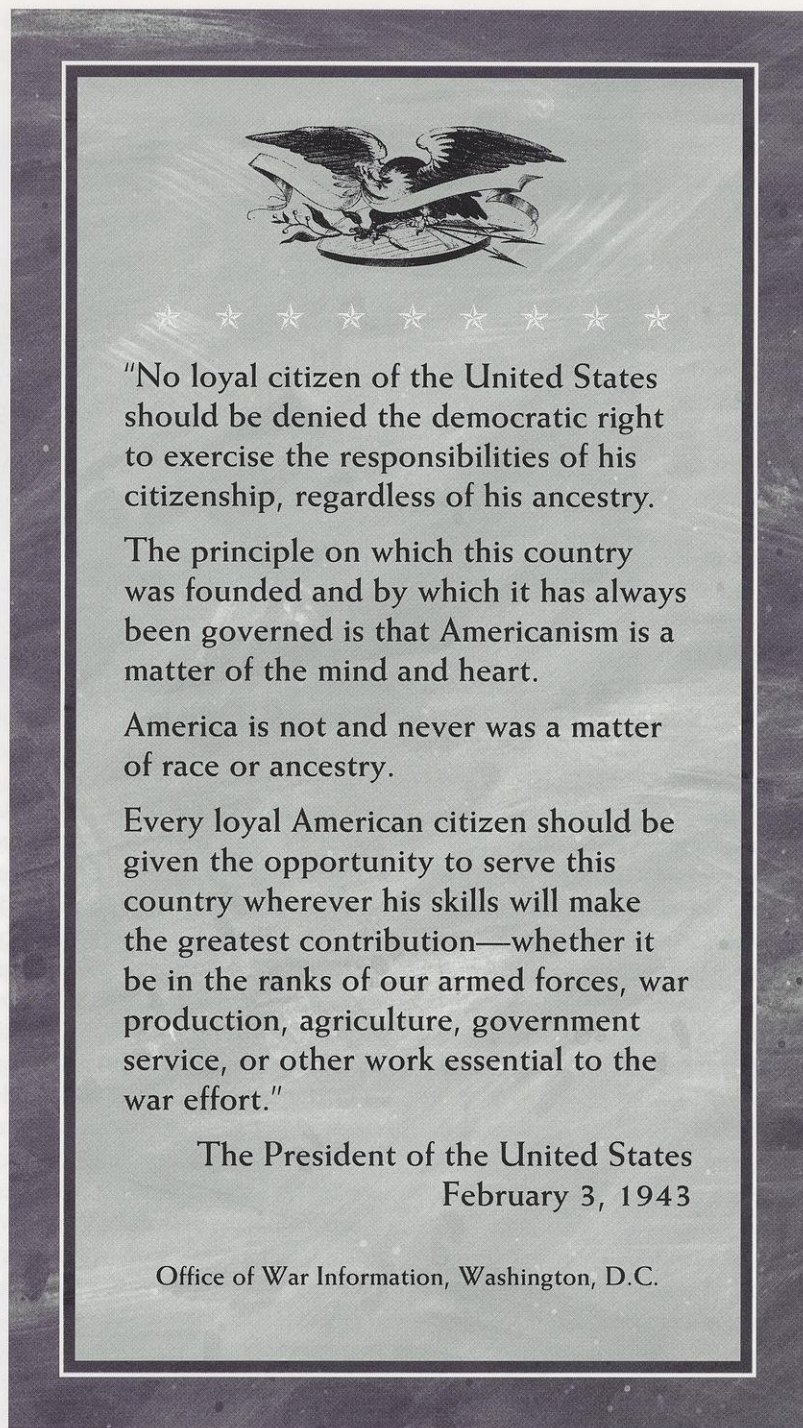
O. John Rogge, *The Official German Report*. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961.

Arthur L. Smith, Jr., *The Deutschtum of Nazi Germany and the United States*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965.

Robert Strausz-Haupe, *Axis America*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941.

Hans L. Trefousse, "Failure of German Intelligence in the United States, 1935-1945," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, June 1955.

*Photos and OWI document courtesy the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.*





# Beyond Roots: Transcending Ethnicity

by Jean Feraca

*I*t is difficult to be an American. According to Alasdair MacIntyre, professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt University, it is more difficult to be an American than to be anything else. For Americans, the struggle to define identity is doubled. "One has to have two identities . . . one, that of an American, sharing the common life and contributing to it, and the other that of one's own particular ethnic background," writes MacIntyre in his essay "How to be a North American." He goes on to say that one has to understand oneself, "at one and the same time, in terms of both . . . and this means that you cannot be an American without a certain tension" relating to "which stories are one's own stories." MacIntyre includes New England Protestant, along with European Jew, Spanish Catholic, Irish, Black African, North American Indian, etc., in his list.

Properly managed, this tension can convert into creative conflict, like sugar into starch. It can serve as a tremendous source of energy. It can lead to a larger sense of possibility "peculiarly American" like a man from Kansas filling up a room. But improperly managed, it can lead to frustration and destructiveness. It can take us along with our cable televisions and automobiles and mail order catalogs and even our poetry trade journals into a society made up of increasingly fragmented splinter groups that define themselves along fault lines more and more narrowly drawn.

When I began writing the poems in *Crossing the Great Divide* back in the early seventies there was no such thing as ethnic poetry. "Ethnic" was a term just coming into use. It began as a euphemism, a way of elevating and sanitizing the immigrant experience. We all knew what it meant to be called "kike" or "spic" or "wop," and how to react. My own grandmother had thrown Casey Stengel down an excavation pit as a girl because he called her a "ginny." Now, suddenly, we were "ethnics." Did that make us more American, or less?



Jean Feraca

In the iconoclastic years that have intervened, years in which the statues of saints have been systematically removed from Catholic churches, who could have predicted that in the nave of poetry ethnicity would come to be enshrined and we would light our votive candles before such side altars as Chicano, Asian, Native American? "If we do not recover and identify with the particularities of our own community," writes Alasdair MacIntyre, "then we shall lose what we have to contribute to the common culture . . . But if each of us dwells too much, or even exclusively, upon his or her own ethnic particularity, then we are in danger of fragmenting and even destroying the common life."

Back in the Bronx of my childhood, there was no common life, no larger story. None, anyway, that we would ever admit to. We were clannish, insular, and tribal. We defined ourselves against each other and carefully cultivated our mutual hatreds which we needed to stay alive. If we celebrated ourselves, to paraphrase Whitman, if we sang ourselves, you can be sure whatever we assumed nobody else would dare to



assume. And every atom we claimed belonged to us, and us alone.

It was snug, growing up in that tight neighborhood where everyone had a place. On Broadway, criss-crossed with trolley tracks, the Chinaman was wedged into his steamy laundry between the bookie and the baker, the pizzas stretched and twirled like tops all day on top of somebody's hairy arm in the corner window of the pizzeria, the monkey grinder's monkey danced and doffed his cap, the gypsies begged and stole from everybody and, in spring, the ragman's unintelligible wail lifted like a sail over us all. I played under those endless elms and oaks of Riverdale and slept under the roof of a stout little Cape Cod house my father had built on the crest of a hill and was happy, happy, happy. Then, abruptly, at ten, it was all over. We moved "up" to Scarsdale, and paradise was lost.

We were the first Italian family, the gatecrashers of "the Crane Berkeley," made to feel unwelcome before we even moved in. Helen Barolini explains that basic Italian values are antithetical to mainstream American life. She writes, "Imagine Italians in a Currier and Ives world, sleighing up for Christmas to a cold and isolated farm on a forest's edge instead of strolling through a village where houses are all snuggled one against the other, to mingle in a piazza thick with people and human exchange" (p. 20). Riverdale had been a piazza thick with people and human exchange. Scarsdale, on the other hand, was that cold and desolate farmhouse where we learned to hate ourselves. We learned the shame of garlic and smelly sardine sandwiches, of laundry on the line, and, even worse, of dangling ourselves on the front steps. Scarsdale was the grindstone of suburban life in the fifties which would have abraded all our differences. In Scarsdale there was only one way to be American, and it wasn't ethnic.

My father would appear in the kitchen of that house on Saturday mornings, his battered, leather-bound copy of *The Golden Treasury* tucked under his arm. And he would stand there in the middle of that huge room filled with sunlight from nine windows and read to us. My mother, never one to be upstaged, punctuated his performance from her corner with her incessant critique. His repertoire was always the same: "The Highwayman," Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture," Leeyoo vaihr teeyooour, my mother, the French teacher, would correct. My father would look up, scowling, and fire his shot. "Can't you shut up?" Then his face would relax again into the look of love. "Day," he would resume, announcing this time an obscure little

gem of a poem by Robert Browning. "Faster and more fast/o'er night cup's brim/Day boils at last/Boils pure gold," his voice heating and gathering speed.

Oh, yes, it was gold, all right. Here was the son of immigrants, only one generation away from illiteracy on his mother's side, passing on to his children his great love for the English language. He had learned to love poetry and to write it in college, courting my mother with lines he chalked by night all over the sidewalks where she would walk to school the next

morning. He signed them "Alter Ego." Alter Ego. The Other I. My Altered Self. The Other Me Who Loves What I Am Not.

But this was gold with a peculiar Italianate twist. He always would end the ritual in the same way, quoting his beloved Daniel Webster from the famous "Reply to Hayne." By this time he was spread all over the kitchen "in characters of living light," drawing deeply on "that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart,—liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable." He would snap the book shut, look up, and pronounce, always in the same magisterial way, "Now *that's* beautiful language." Dramatic pause. "And we understand this language. Because this is language that comes from the heart. And *we* are people of the heart." Another pause. Coda. "Not like these yankee doodles." And he would sweep his arm around, taking in the neighbors.

It took me thirty-five years and three trips to Italy to untangle that twisted code. After all, it wasn't Dante he was passing on. It was Tennyson and Webster and Bridges—all pure yankee doodle. I made three pilgrimages back to the ancestral motherland, impelled by my father's message, in search of my roots and "the people of the heart," my people, who were not like these "yankee doodles." Geography was, indeed, a great teacher. But language was a much greater teacher. The truth of who I was, of what an American is, is much more complicated and ambiguous than geography will ever let on. What I found at the end of the journey was a deeper maze. The heart is indivisible, but it is not one. It is two. Two and inseparable.

If poets are the caretakers of language, as Alasdair MacIntyre contends, and if "every language offers an idiosyncratic vision of the world," then it is our responsibility as poets, each of us, to develop our own idiosyncratic sense of English in the telling of our own story. My own tension with English lies in understanding that I am working at odds with the same cultural norms I



The author's father, Steven E. Feraca, Class of 1928, Manhattan College.



also honor and adhere to. When I am writing well, it is with a sense of deliberate transgression of the Anglo-conformist aesthetic I have inherited. But I have arrived at this posture not through defiance, but by having passed through a holy fire of chastening and assimilation as well as contradiction.

In the graduate seminar at the University of Michigan where I studied poetry with Donald Hall, there was only one way to write poetry. I was constantly chastised for what was described as my tendency toward melodrama, my lack of restraint. I could never bring myself to restrict and select my images. I preferred instead to pile them up and let them spill over. Again and again, I had to be reminded of Hemingway's iceberg. The strength of the writing had to come from what was held in check, locked below the surface, glimpsed at, sensed. Even in language, so it seemed, there was only one way to be an American. I struggled mightily to conform, and the lesson went deep. But, alas, my condition was incurable, genetic. Again, I felt shame. What was being taught, I learned many years later from Helen Barolini, was conformity to an Anglo-American aesthetic.

My experience in Italy taught me a different set of lessons. Coming upon "The Wedding Cake" in Rome, that preposterous monument to Victor Emmanuel II which seemed to embarrass even the guide books, I laughed out loud. In the fifty-foot colonnade, the massive steps, the golden horse, the endless pinnacles and flags, I could see where my own path of excess might lead, if left unchecked. And melodrama was everywhere in the streets of Rome: fired off in the cannon that daily marked the hour of noon; smiling up in delicious insouciance from every roasted pig's head; immortalized in the arch-rivalry between Bernini and Boromino, the two great Renaissance architects of Piazza Navona. Here, carved in stone, was the double image of my own split self: Bernini below, his famous fountain with its rivergod flinging up an arm as if to shield him from the church façade; Boromino above, having the last word, all his neo-classic disdain for the vulgar baroque summoned up in the single figure of a woman gazing off into the distance. He set her on a stone balustrade. She was the epitome of all that was detached and understated.

But in the baroque and rococo churches all over Italy, especially in Sicily, there was nothing at all understated. Forget the saints and their excesses; here it was marble that was tormented. It was a kind of Italian joke. In the rapture, passionate excess, and sheer exuberance of Italian marble, "folded, draped, scalloped," as Barbara Grizzuti Harrison describes it in *The Islands of Italy*, occasionally painted to look like wood, heaped again and again upon itself, I found a radically different aesthetic. The message came clear: "Invention is everything. Leave no void. What is unadorned is uncivilized." Here, at last, I had found a powerful antidote to the tyranny of the pristine,

white New England church steeple on the village green to which, according to Helen Barolini, we had conformed our taste, and to which we also adhered. What a dilemma, to be part Emily Dickinson, part Catherine of Siena.



I don't think it's enough that we come to speak and tell stories in our own idiom. If we stop there, there will be no common story, no manifest multicultural destiny. Language is the braided river that carries us forward, each of us the confluence that swells and extends it and influences its course, to borrow a magnificent metaphor from Kathleen Neils Conzen. We are all



... moving in the same direction, constrained by the same bluffs . . . borne along by the same deep currents . . . The occasional side channel disappears in a slough . . . while yet another might break away. But all are part of the same river. Anyone who tries to bridge them knows that the side channels cannot be ignored, that taken together they may well carry more water than the mainstream itself (p. 16).

Taken together. That's the key. "We were always about becoming, not being," says Lewis Lapham in "Who and What is American" (*Harper's*, January 1992). "What joins the Americans to one another is not a common nationality, language, race, or ancestry . . . but rather their complicity in a shared work of the imagination . . . The narrative was always plural, not one but many stories."

I have a friend in Racine, Thanh Lam, who has enlarged my thinking and moved me by her story. She is Vietnamese by birth, but her primary attachment is to Cambodia where she grew up. She came to this country as a political refugee in 1975; she has survived a war, two marriages, her rupture with her past, her loss of language and culture. She now is writing poetry in language that is eloquent in its simplicity. She dreams of her childhood and her mother:

Mother, will you wait for me?  
You were buried in the spring.  
  
Were you cold?  
I was told spring water filled up your grave . . .

In another poem, the voice of her mother responds:

I can whisper to you,  
my child  
I am proud of you.  
Remember,  
life without pain  
is river without rapids.



It is, after all, the suffering, the wound that makes us people of the heart, people of language. It is the sense of deep predicament and universal search which we share that makes us kin and not clan to one another. Difference, in the end, can be understood as what unites us, not as what tears us apart.

I have a recurring dream. In the dream there is a meadow. In the meadow a lion is lying down beside a lamb. But this is no peaceable kingdom. This is a frightening place. The very air seems electric, the very grass seems greener because of the tension between these two beasts who are such mortal enemies. At any moment there could be mayhem. But the lion stays curled in his place, as does the lamb. What keeps them there, trembling with tension, is the shepherd boy who is seated between them, stroking a lyre and singing. They are in thrall, the three of them, altered and attached through the deep enchantment of their music.

I do not know if it is true that shepherds play on lyres. What I do know is that shepherds are poets. I feel humbled by the challenge to language which our current historical and cultural circumstances, both here at home and in the world at large, hold up for us. I have never felt more convinced that the personal voice may be where we begin as poets, but it cannot be where we finish. The little self leads to the larger self just as the private



story becomes the family story becomes the ancestral story becomes the epic story becomes the global story. And that's where I hope our language, *our languages*, by nature and by instinct, by cultural imperative, are leading us.

#### Sources

Helen Barolini, *The Dream Book*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.

Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Fall 1991, Volume 2, No. 1, pp. 5-20. New Brunswick: Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University. Published version of Conzen's presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the Immigration History Society.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, *The Islands of Italy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Alasdair MacIntyre, "How to be a North American." Washington, D.C.: Federation of State Humanities Councils, 1988. Originally presented as a lecture to the national conference of the Federation of State Humanities Councils in Chicago on November 14, 1987.

Lewis Lapham, "Who and What is American," *Harper's*, January 1992.

*This article was adapted from a presentation given at The Writers' Place, Madison, in 1991.*

## Poems from *Crossing the Great Divide*

### Cat Lady in the Villa Borghese

Bunched, misery-linked, they sit together on a green bench:  
A hag and two cats. Each back carries its hump.  
The cats doze after the feast.  
She reads her paper through a glass  
pouch-eyed walnut face soaking in the sun.  
At last she sighs, scatters the cats like crumbs.

She drags the gravel paths between the curbs  
umbrella trailing in the dust, past the summerhouse  
and the swans, indifferent as a blight.  
Past Venus, babies, newlyweds, Savonarola and the stone boar.  
She picks the garden like a scab.

Between the black, rain-streaked acacia trunks she moves  
in her flame-blue scarf, steady as a shuttle  
through a loom, weaving sun to shade,  
and the sack she carries  
swells by her side;  
I follow her everywhere, gathering all afternoon.

She works until the sun snags in a far hedge.  
Lovers thin, the whirl of doves;  
The park grows dank.  
Inside the walls, she pauses under sweet Lorenzo's  
stone-eyed gaze to count her take.  
Then I lose her in the crowd disappearing through an iron gate.

"Nadia in Black Among the Cuttlefish" previously appeared in *Adena* and *Isthmus*; "Heart Attack" in *Kentucky Renaissance* and *The Nation*; "Waking Early After Heavy Snow" in *The Iowa Review* and *Kentucky Renaissance*; and "Botanical Gardens" in *American Poetry Review*, *Two Decades of New Poets*, and *Wisconsin Poetry*.



---

## Nadia in Black Among the Cuttlefish

picks her way through bones  
nosed in sand as if they skidded into death;  
high up where beachgrass flicks  
the wind spits salt  
her hands fly up, she calls  
headed toward that spur  
where gulls  
converge

*"Gabbiani, gabbiani!"*

Just so  
the heart beats up  
clamorous, summoning its several parts  
that flock until the whole  
lifts off  
throws its reins like a rider lost  
far out on the sea's neck  
risks all.

## Heart Attack

You greet me from the sunken box  
of the old chair. Arms  
slack on the cracked leather.  
Rags of your face strung on lines,  
drying. Owls  
in round caves of your eyes.

Father, I know you: You dream,  
staring into a ditch that  
fills with mud and slow water,  
your trousers dangle,  
shredded from the waist, the pockets  
slashed, the money gone.

I want to bite my hands and tear  
my cheeks,  
to be fifteen and lie facedown  
in the darkest corner of my room,  
shuddering at every thud  
below of oak

chairs knocked to their knees, flung  
against the wall.  
I want you back again, tyrant.  
I want to watch you foam again  
in the climb up the hard tide  
that all but killed us both.

## Waking Early After Heavy Snow

While we slept, the snow  
fell and pinned us to the bed, sealing  
our eyes  
shut, filling up  
the dreaming holes of our mouths.

Waking numb, we find our bodies  
tangled  
like wet rope, dense  
as bushes deep in the ravine,  
each twig  
thick as a thumb.

We wait. Slugs of light  
slide through the venetian blind,  
assemble slowly  
on the rug, lengthen, grow fat.

At last we stagger, tug up the window  
lids, letting in the white  
eyes of day. The woods  
sway and start to fall apart, piece  
by white piece.

We fumble with spoons, bowls, eggs  
and struggle, like those crocuses  
that let their saw-teeth part  
too soon, and have to fight  
all day to hold up  
heavy yellow cups half-filled with snow.

## Botanical Gardens

Beyond the steaming glass and the massed  
leaves, alone  
in the sunken room, I am serene.  
Orchids sway toward me out of the Chinese vases  
and here above the blue  
seas of the carpet, I still sail  
in your wake; I close my eyes and find  
the whole garden floating up, an island  
rising inside me.

Each time I find you, all the sorrows  
rush out of me like rain  
from wet pine. I feel huge  
and light, like the elm balancing  
on one leg, dancing  
like Shiva—  
all her great ecstatic arms wheeling and furling  
in the air, obedient to each impulse,  
at home with desire.



# To the New World and "From the New World": On the Centennial of Antonin Dvořák's Sojourn in America

by Roger Ruggeri

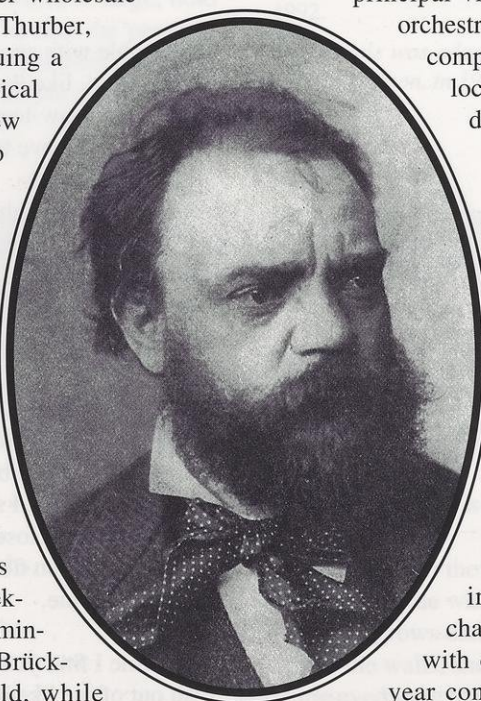
**C**onstantly challenged by the rigors of life in a new world, generations of immigrants to America, largely impelled by philosophy and necessity, limited their attentions to basic and immediate needs. The material success of these pioneer attitudes contributed to the establishment of a "no-nonsense" American tradition, a tradition only marginally comfortable with artistic and intellectual pursuits. Evolving as a natural and vital part of these American traditions, the arts and particularly music have periodically aspired to the status of a nationalistic art form. It was essentially this quest that brought the Bohemian composer Antonin Dvořák to America between September 1892 and April 1895.

The most ambitious American music school of the late nineteenth century was New York City's National Conservatory of Music in America, founded in 1885 by Jeannette Meyer Thurber (1850-1946) and financed by her wholesale grocery-tycoon husband, Francis Beatty Thurber, and a circle of wealthy supporters. Pursuing a dream of creating a viable American musical culture, the school expanded within a few years from its original vocal curriculum to include instrumental, theoretical, and compositional study. Admission to this progressive school was free to those under the age of twenty-four who demonstrated adequate talent, though young people who lacked prior musical training, including students who were disabled, were invited to attend, as well. Mrs. Thurber also actively sought the enrollment of interested American Indians and African-Americans.

During the school's fifth year, Mrs. Thurber began searching for a world-class composer for the position of director. Seeking more of a figurehead than an actual administrator, she apparently dismissed Verdi, Brückner, Brahms, and Saint-Saëns as too old, while Richard Strauss, Debussy, Mahler, and Puccini seemed too young. She ultimately settled upon the forty-nine-year-old Dvořák as being the man for her job.

Born in a small village a dozen miles north of Prague, Dvořák was the eldest child in a butcher's family. Through the financial aid of an uncle, he

was able to study at the Prague Organ School; before long he was independently teaching piano and playing viola with various theater orchestras in Prague. For nearly a decade he played principal viola in Prague's new Provisional Theater orchestra. Dvořák became increasingly active as a composer, although he might have remained a local phenomenon had not Johannes Brahms decided to champion Dvořák's music in 1877. Brahms recommended Dvořák's compositions to Fritz Simrock, his Berlin publisher. A successful (but often tempestuous) relationship between Simrock and Dvořák developed, contributing to the composer's burgeoning international reputation. In January 1891, Dvořák finally accepted an offer to join the Prague Conservatory as a professor of composition.



Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Four months later, he received his first cablegram from Mrs. Thurber offering him the directorship of her school. Dvořák initially demurred, but Mrs. Thurber was characteristically persistent. Bombarding him with cablegrams, she ultimately offered a two-year contract at an annual \$15,000 (nearly thirty times his salary in Prague) to head the school for eight months of the year. A devoted family man, Dvořák did not travel easily, but nevertheless agreed to take the American post for two years starting October 1, 1892.

In January 1892, Dvořák took a leave from his professorship at the Prague Conservatory, for he needed time in which to compose and



present a series of farewell concerts. After five rather hectic months, he went to his beloved country hideaway in Vysok. Dvořák's work on his D Major Mass was interrupted by another cablegram from Mrs. Thurber. Realizing that Dvořák would arrive in New York City just two weeks before the quarter-centenary of Columbus's landing, she suggested that Dvořák write a cantata on *The American Flag*, a text by Joseph Rodman Drake (1795-1820). When the promised text failed to arrive on time, Dvořák made a setting of the fourth-century prose hymn *Te Deum laudamus*, convinced that it was the highest tribute that he could pay to Columbus and the land of his "discovery." (Dvořák ultimately received the Drake text and began setting it in August.) On September 15, 1892, Dvořák set forth from Prague for America with his wife, Anna, their daughter Otilie (age fourteen), and their son Antonin (age nine); four younger children were left in the care of the composer's mother-in-law, Klotilda Cermakova. Traveling with the family was Josef Jan Kovařík (1870-1951), an American-born cello student at the Prague Conservatory. Although he was not one of Dvořák's own students, the composer offered him a position as a personal secretary and translator; Kovařík, who always referred to Dvořák with reverence as "the Master," was delighted to accept.

A portion of the Atlantic crossing was stormy; on a number of occasions the hearty Dvořák was the only passenger able to join the crew at meals. The Dvořák party disembarked at Hoboken on September 26 and went to the Clarendon Hotel, near the National Conservatory at 126-8 East 17th Street. Before long the Dvořáks took up residence on the lower two floors of a brownstone at 327 East 17th Street. (On the verge of being razed and converted to an AIDS center, this house was granted at least a momentary reprieve upon gaining landmark designation in 1991.) To a friend in Prague, the frugal composer wrote, "We live four minutes from my school in a very pleasant house. Mr. Steinway sent me a piano, free, so we have one good piece of furniture in the parlor. The rent is \$80 a month, a lot for us, but a normal price here."

In a yet unpublished anthology, *Dvořák in America* (Amadeus Press), Dr. Jarmil Burghauser mentions a manuscript written by Dvořák in his first weeks in New York City. An unfinished anthem of slightly more than twenty measures, it is the composer's setting of the text of "America" (My Country 'Tis of Thee . . .). The professor from Prague mentions that the materials of this previously unknown anthem are echoed in such famous products of Dvořák's American years as the Sym-



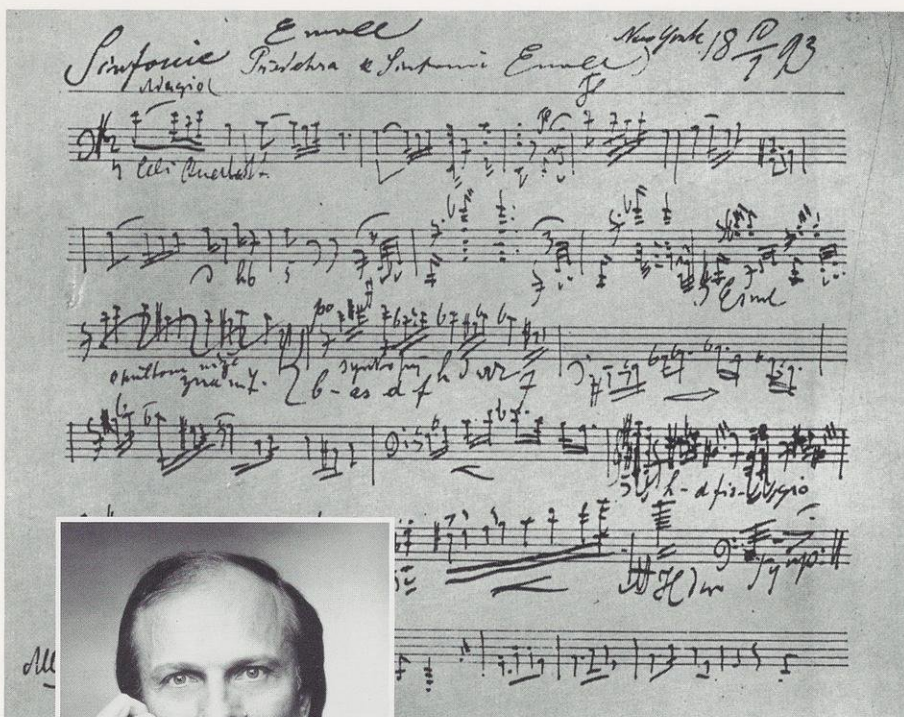
*Dvořák and his family lived upstairs in this tinsmith's shop during the summer of 1893. The composer wrote two of his chamber music scores here. Built in the 1850s, the building now houses a clock exhibition. The plaque above the front door reads, "Antonin Dvořák, the great composer, lived here during the summer of 1893." Courtesy the State Historical Society of Iowa.*

phony no. 9, *From the New World*, and appears as the second theme of the "Larghetto" in the E-flat String Quintet, opus 97.

Dvořák began his activities at the school, composing, conducting, teaching, and generally absorbing American life. Although he was somewhat uncomfortable in this bustling urban setting, he found New York to be a marvelous place to indulge his life-long fascination with trains. He enjoyed communing with the pigeons in Central Park and developed a new interest in watching shipping activities at New York's docks. Musically, Dvořák developed an admiration for the expressive qualities of African-American and American Indian music that he heard from students and visitors at the school. Notable among these was Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949), a black student at the school who later gained respect as a composer and singer. (Burleigh is perhaps most immediately recognized as the arranger of the moving spiritual "Deep River.")

Dvořák's composition students at the conservatory were generally sincere and dedicated, but modestly talented (see Table 1). The conservatory orchestra was much more problematic. In addition to the school's disadvantaged students with scholarships, there was another layer of privileged students whose families were paying full tuition. When Dvořák arrived, attendance at the school's orchestra rehearsals was voluntary and thus spotty. Profoundly dismayed by such lackadaisical





*Facsimile of a page from the sketch for the Symphony From the New World.*

*LEFT: Zdenek Macal, music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and distinguished interpreter of Antonin Dvořák's music.*

attitudes, the composer imposed mandatory attendance with stern disciplinary consequences for infractions. On the basis of their children's reports, some parents complained that this "uncouth Bohemian" was unfit to head the school; fortunately, Jeannette Thurber supported Dvořák's convictions. The quality of the orchestra improved. Confidence in Dvořák and his methods was restored.

During his first winter in New York, Dvořák conducted concerts of his music in New York and Boston. Between January and May of 1893, he largely penned his final symphony and his most famous "American" work, the Symphony no. 9, *From the New World*. Many romantic myths have swirled around this piece, including the notion that it was a sort of rhapsody on American Indian and African-American motives. These concepts were strongly rebuffed by Dvořák, who wrote: "Omit the nonsense about my having made use of 'Indian' and 'American' motives. That is a lie. I tried to write only in the spirit of those national American melodies." Although the work arose from his own Bohemian muse, however, it was undeniably influenced by his life in this country. In a letter to Bohemia

written during the composition of the work, Dvořák said: "I should never have written the symphony like I have, if I hadn't seen America."

One American influence upon this symphony was of a literary nature. Mrs. Thurber wanted Dvořák to write a composition on Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Although this specific project never developed beyond several preliminary sketches, the composer wrote in December 1893, "I first became acquainted with it about thirty years ago through the medium of a Bohemian translation. It appealed very strongly to my imagination at that time, and the impression has only been strengthened by my residence here." Dvořák later acknowledged that the famed "Largo" second movement of his Ninth Symphony was inspired by a passage known as "Funeral in the Forest," a description of the death and burial of Hiawatha's lovely wife, Minnehaha. The next movement, "Scherzo," was said to have reflected a reading of "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast, in which the Indians dance." It is interesting that those two middle movements, the most "American" in inspiration, are also movements that poignantly exude a sense of Dvořák's longing for his native land.

"The Americans expect great things from me," wrote Dvořák to a friend in Prague, "the main thing is, so they say, to show them to the promised land and the kingdom of a new and independent art, in short to create a national music. . . ." Rising to this challenge, the composer provided a newspaper interview in which he said:

I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States . . . These are the folk songs of America, and your composers must turn to them . . . (New York Herald, May 21, 1893).

A gamut of reactions greeted Dvořák's proclamation. As usual, dissenters were most vocal. In subsequent interviews, Dvořák broadened his recommendation to include the music of Native Americans, and still later to any folk music.

After only eight months in this country, Dvořák was evidently unaware that Boston composer George Whiting had suggested a similar course of action more than eight years earlier. Further, he neither realized that Louis Moreau Gottschalk had already written many works on Creole music sources, nor that



Edward MacDowell was working at the time on his *Indian Suite* (Suite no. 2, opus 48). With his suggestions for American music Dvořák was providing a personal solution to the challenges of musical creativity. His infusion of Czech folk elements into traditional European musical concepts imbued his expression with an attractive and recognizable musical identity that greatly contributed to his compositional success. He obviously thought that a similar approach would be fruitful for Americans. Despite the intrinsic merit of various ethnic American musics, the solutions that worked for Dvořák were never fated to gain wide and lasting consensus in this land of constantly evolving cultural diversity.

By the end of the first school year, Josef Kovařík, Dvořák's young aide, had persuaded the composer that his hometown of Spillville was a little piece of Bohemia transplanted to Iowa. Rather than following his original plan of returning to Vysoka for his 1893 summer holiday, Dvořák decided to send for his remaining four children (Anna, Magda, Otakar, and Aloisie) and spend the summer in that Czech colony in the northeastern corner of Iowa. The composer, his wife, their six children, his wife's sister, a maid, and the young Kovařík set forth on a train and two days later found themselves amid the bucolic delights of Spillville, about thirty-five miles northwest of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The Dvořáks settled

into four rooms on the second floor of what is now the Bily Clock building.

Josef Kovařík's father, the Spillville schoolmaster, wrote a charming account of Dvořák's visit:

One bright day, 5th June 1893, found the Dvořák *ménage* in the little town. Not only did the natural scenic beauty of the place appeal to the great composer, but also the fact that he was among his own countrymen reminded him of his mother country and he felt he was at home. But he barely got settled when his creative genius was at work, and on 8th June, three days after his arrival, he was at work on the first movement of his new composition, the string Quartet in F. He completed this movement in the early hours of the next morning and at once started the second movement, and even started the third in the evening of the same day. The next day he did the fourth movement, so that by 10th June the entire quartet was completed with a clear conscience and with much satisfaction he put a notation below the last line of the last movement: "Thank God. I am satisfied. It went quickly."

He went to work on the score, which he finished in a short time, writing each movement in about three days, so that the entire score was finished by 23rd June. Dvořák was so pleased that his new work was accomplished in so short a time that he felt a desire to hear it played, and so he formed a quartet of himself and members of my family, he playing first violin; myself, second violin; my daughter Cecilia, viola; and my son Josef, cello.

Dvořák was a very plain man, and a great lover of nature. During this visit at Spillville a morning walk through the groves and along the banks of the river was on his daily program, and he particularly enjoyed the warbling of the birds, in fact he admitted that the first day he was out for a walk, an odd-looking bird, red plumaged, only the wings black, attracted his attention, and its [an Iowa scarlet tanager] warbling inspired the theme of the third movement of his string quartet . . .

You ask whether I ever heard Dvořák talk of the source of the material he used in his "New World" Symphony. I must say that Dvořák was very reticent in regard to his compositions. He gave one the impression that he did not like to discuss them, and I never gathered enough courage to ask him directly about them and cannot therefore make any authentic statement. I can say, however, that Dvořák was greatly interested in the Indians, and one day while he was still at Spillville a band of Indians came to town selling medicinal herbs. We were told they were the "Kickapoo," and belonged to the Iroquois tribe. Every evening they gave a little performance of their music and dancing and Dvořák was so interested that he made it a point always to be present . . . (Robertson, pp. 83, 84).

Dvořák had a wonderful and productive time in Spillville, surrounded by loving family and adoring countrymen; yet he was once moved to write poignantly of the landscape, "It is very wild here and sometimes very sad, sad to despair."

**TABLE 1:  
DVOŘÁK'S AMERICAN COMPOSITION STUDENTS**

Rubin Goldmark (1872-1931) The most famous of the Czech master's students, Goldmark was a considerable composer who gained his largest fame as the teacher of many American composers, including Aaron Copland and George Gershwin.

Harvey Worthington Loomis (1865-1930) Recalled as one of Dvořák's favorite students. A prolific composer, sometimes using Native American melodies, Loomis was particularly successful in the realm of theater music.

William Arms Fisher (1861-1948) Ultimately a music editor and writer, Fisher was among the first to celebrate the merits of 18th- and early 19th-century American music. He also set the words "Goin' home" to the Largo movement melody of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony.

Harry Rowe Shelley (1858-1947) Highly regarded for his melodic writing, this organist and composer produced an enormous amount of music that was very popular in his day.

Will Marion Cook (1869-1944) Having studied violin in Germany with the famed Joseph Joachim, Cook worked with Dvořák and later became a prominent figure in black musical theater.

Camille Zeckwer (1875-1924) A composer and pianist, Zeckwer succeeded his father in 1917 as director of the Musical Academy in Philadelphia.



**TABLE 2: DVOŘÁK'S COMPOSITIONS IN AMERICA**

**Orchestral**

Symphony no. 9 in E Minor (*From the New World*), opus 95  
 Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in B Minor, opus 104  
*American Suite*, opus 98b (orchestration of opus 98)

**Cantata**

*The American Flag*, for solo alto, tenor, and bass; chorus; and orchestra, opus 102

**Chamber music**

String Quartet no. 12 in F Major (*The American*), opus 96  
 String Quintet in E-flat Major (*The American*), opus 97  
 Sonatina for Violin and Piano in G Major, opus 100

**Solo Piano**

Suite in A Major, opus 98  
*Humoresques* (8), opus 101

**Voice and Piano**

*Biblical Songs*, opus 99

**Arrangements**

"Old Folks at Home" by Stephen Foster, arranged for soprano, bass, chorus, and orchestra (1893-94).

**Note:** Opus 103 is the *Te Deum*, a work premiered in America, but written in Bohemia during the summer before Dvořák's arrival.

Even during that summer he traveled. On August 12, Dvořák led a concert of his music in Chicago at the World's Columbian Exposition. In the following month, he attended a banquet in his honor in Omaha, then traveled to a similar function in St. Paul. He returned to New York through Niagara Falls and Buffalo, then resumed his duties at the National Conservatory.

The Symphony *From the New World* had a triumphant first performance at Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic Society. Anton Seidl led that premiere on December 16, 1893. Dvořák later explained that his famed symphony's subtitle simply signified "Impressions and greeting from the New World." During this general period, Mrs. Thurber was pressing Dvořák to sign a new contract for another two-year period. The composer had growing doubts about the financial health of the school, for the economic crisis of 1893 had brought Mr. Thurber to the brink of bankruptcy. As a result, Dvořák's salary was in arrears. However, with a promissory note, he signed a second two-year contract in April 1894, then returned to Bohemia for the summer.

Despite the fact that he still had not received all of his salary from Mrs. Thurber, Dvořák returned to the National Conservatory in November 1894. That winter, he wrote his Cello Concerto. It was to be his last work completed in the

United States. On April 16, 1895, Dvořák returned to his homeland. In August, he wrote to Mrs. Thurber expressing regrets that family reasons made it impossible for him to fulfill the final year of his contract, making no mention of the fact that she still owed him money.



Following Dvořák's tenure, the National Conservatory continued along under the direction of New York Philharmonic conductors Emil Pauer (Philharmonic music director from 1898 to 1902) and Vassily Safonov (Philharmonic music director from 1906 to 1909). Wearied by years of struggle, Mrs. Thurber retired in 1915. Without her indefatigable drive, the school ultimately dwindled out of existence by the late 1920s.

Although Dvořák's American experiences may have seemed in his time like a series of muted victories, the passage of a century reveals that his presence was an epoch for American music. On a personal level, Dvořák was at the peak of his creative powers during his American years; the works of that period are among his finest (see Table 2).

Despite negative reaction to Dvořák's prescription for an American national music, there were a number of American composers who rallied to his call. Among the most notable was Arthur Farwell, who in 1901 founded the Wa-Wan Press, aiming to "launch a progressive movement for American music, including a definite acceptance of Dvořák's challenge to go after our folk music." Within its decade of existence, the press published the works of thirty-six composers (including nine women). The venture was ultimately acquired by G. Schirmer, a New York music publisher. Dvořák's influence on the American scene also had a profound effect on our country's advanced musical training. Before Dvořák's arrival, virtually all aspiring American musicians felt they had to have the credential of European training. The fact that a great European composer came to head a school in New York changed that perception and within the past century has led to the rise of many fine American schools of music.

Within recent years, Dvořák's reputation has burgeoned in America. A part of this expanding appreciation of his music emanates from Wisconsin, for since Czech-born Zdenek Macal became the music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra in 1986, he and the orchestra have joined with the Milwaukee-based Koss Classics label in a series of recordings of Dvořák's orchestral works. A measure of the orchestra's reputation with this repertoire is reflected by the fact that it was asked to perform *From the New World* on numerous occasions during their tour of Japan in October 1992.

As its turbulent saga continues to unfold, we look back with renewed respect to Dvořák's brief but formative role in the emergence of American music.

*Quote by the Spillville schoolmaster is taken from Chapter 9 of Dvořák by Alec Robertson. New York: Collier Books, 1962. First published by Farrar Straus and Cudahy in 1943.*



# Idle Curiosity (A Novel)

by Martha Bergland

## PART I

### "Florida"

She could smell the last couple of days on him—the greasy plastics factory where he worked, the sweat he'd sweated, beers he'd drunk and pissed, cigarettes he'd smoked. He was in front of her like the trunk of a tree. At either side of his shoulders the bare room and the Gulf air and the new walls seemed bland to Vickie, seemed to have inhaled a breath and held it, seemed to wait, and, worst of all, seemed to have turned away. She had seen so god-damned many people whose faces bore the expression that the room seemed to hold. She was so tired of it all. As she sagged there against the wall, it seemed that she'd always been right here and Bo had always been right there in front of her like a big tree and for all she cared she could wait until some time in the next century when he would be struck by lightening. For a moment she had a very clear picture of a tree on Papa Check's farm that had grown around a barbed wire fence; the wire passed through the wood; the wood engulfed the wire. She didn't know what kind of tree it was, but it wasn't one of these spooky live oaks. She looked at the room on either side of him, but not at him, not at his face: The inside of his mouth would be bright shiny red almost like the embarrassing orange around some of those gulls' beaks. She looked now and then at his breast pocket. The design on the pocket—some kind of tropical fruits printed on turquoise—didn't match up with the design on his shirt. It was a cheap shirt which was a small satisfaction until she remembered it was one she'd bought him. He held her shoulders pinned against the wall, pressed his weight on his two big hands.

He was screaming something at her but she didn't really hear, not the words; she felt them on her face, felt his words as rough and sharp scraping at her face. Beyond him through the sliding door she could see a pelican veer slowly across the blank square of sky, and she wondered again why pelicans didn't give everyone the creeps. They look like pterodactyls, for

heaven's sake; didn't anyone see that but her? The whole place was scary and cheap. This building had a pool, but every place in Florida had a pool. Here the balconies fell off now and then. One woman had broken her back, she'd heard when they first moved in. This woman had stepped out on her third floor balcony and it fell off with her on it. She was paralyzed, they'd said. Vickie wondered for a moment what that woman's life was like, but that took too much effort and made her realize how much effort it was taking to not hear him. And she realized, too, that she was sliding down the wall, that her feet were in an awkward position, not really supporting her because the groceries she had just put down on the floor when she had come in were behind her heels, between her heels and the wall. She was held up by Bo's hands pressing her shoulders against the wall, by his words hitting her face like grit. He had never hit her. She just had to wait until it was over. She could wait, but how long?



She thought about trying to move her feet back so they would be under her, but even the smallest motion was stopped by a solid bag of groceries at her heel. What was in that bag, she wondered. There were two bags here, two more were down in the car, the car was at the back door of the building with the trunk open and the flashers on. The keys were in one hand, warm and oily, and her purse was wrapped tight around the other. The frozen french fries were in the bag at her left heel and the ice cream and a gallon of milk and his beer. She tried to get her heel between the two bags so she could get her legs beneath her and stand up straighter, but when she couldn't she laughed at herself. Here you are: Bo is throwing the biggest fit ever, your life is completely out of control, and you are trying to make yourself more comfortable!

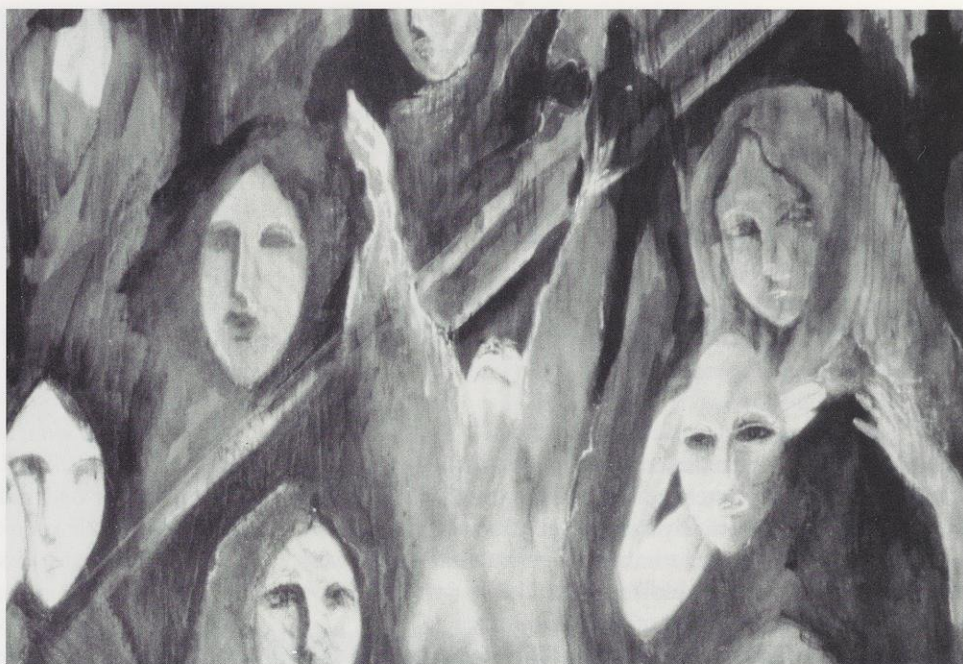
The laugh showed on her face, and he hit her. She didn't feel his fist hit her face, but the light in the room flashed and she heard the back of her head hit the wall. She could hear him screaming now, about how it was *his* too and he didn't want it and what were they going to do with a kid. Thousands of women a day get rid of pregnancies, and what did she think that *was* in her now, anyway? She heard it, but she had heard it before. He had hit her this time, and he had never hit her before;



if he hit her once, he would do it again. She didn't think, she just made her face take on the expression of the air and the room. Bland and quiet. And she said in a voice that surprised her, "Honey, you put the beer and ice cream away. I'll get the other stuff out of the car." He released her. "I'm sorry," he said. "Vickie, I'm sorry."

"I know," she said from the doorway, "but remember that now my name is Lisa."

It wasn't until the beer was put away and he was halfway through the second one that Bo realized that she and his car and the groceries were gone. She was on the interstate heading north. Later, when he was sober, he would write it off as experience: She was knocked up and the Toyota needed a valve job anyway.



## PART II

### "Mississippi"

Vickie was perched on a sawed-off telephone pole at the edge of the parking lot of a catfish restaurant in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was nearly the end of June. She had been here early every morning for almost a week. At first she told the people who asked what she was doing here—the manager of the restaurant, and a cop, and the women who came to clean the restaurant—that she was just looking at the river, she liked the river, but that hadn't seemed enough reason for them after awhile, so she had told them she was a bird watcher, but that a lot of people thought bird watchers were crazy, that's why she didn't tell them right off. "Then where's your binoculars, honey?" one of the big cleaning women had asked. "Stolen out of my car in downtown Pensacola," she said. And then they'd talked about how you couldn't leave anything in your car anywhere these days and wasn't it a shame. "I don't remember when it *wasn't* like that," Vickie had told the women, and they felt bad for her youth.

She told them her name was Lisa and that she'd heard from her mother who was also a bird watcher that this was a real good place to come because there weren't many places where you could watch birds from above like you can here. And then they'd all three stood there at the edge of the bluff and looked down a few moments at the treetops that the rising sun had not yet gotten to below the bluffs of Vicksburg. It was true. Besides the great bend in the brown river and the flat, forested land beyond and the two bridges—silver and black—you could

see birds flashing out of the dark forest below. And you could hear more birds than you could see; it was raucous down there and it sounded like their singing was coming from inside a big room, out the windows of a room in which bird song echoed. But now and then one or two would wheel up and over the tree tops below and flash—no color that you could see, just silver like the river and the bridge. "Mighty pretty," one of the women had said and then they both sighed and went in to clean.

The next day, one of them brought her a pair of binoculars. "I got no use for them, baby, and my son don't neither, where he's gone, so you take 'em." Then the two women looked at each other and Vickie could tell they had agreed what they would say to her. The one who brought her the binoculars said, "It ain't none of my business, honey, but I'm going to say it anyway. Whatever trouble you're in, you just go on back to your people. They got to understand. They the ones who got to understand." Vickie could see that they meant to be kind, but she didn't dare take it in. The other one said, "If you're expecting company pretty soon, you ought to be with your mama. Where is she, baby?" "I don't know," Vickie said. "Lord!" the woman said. "There's sure a lot of that going around—people lost their people. Or else you ain't telling us the truth." As they turned away, one of the women said to Vickie, "You could stay with us for a time, but even if this is 1988, it's still Mississippi."

She thought the binoculars might help her watch for her mother. It was the motel across the road from the restaurant that she was there to watch, not the birds. But when she put the binoculars up to her eyes and looked around, she became nauseated like she had been in the third month, and that was two months ago. She didn't know if looking for her mother was what got her out here so early in the morning or if she just couldn't stand the stale air in the car. As soon as there was a lit-



tle bit of light, she would come out here, even though she knew she wouldn't find her mother here now, but it was the only place she knew to look and she couldn't show up at her father's and say she hadn't looked for her mother.

Vicksburg was the last place she'd seen her mother and that was three years ago. It was an accident, their getting separated, and Vickie hadn't believed that it would last; it couldn't. There had been a ruckus over at the motel, but she knew none of the people would remember her, if they were even the same people. Three years ago when she was sixteen she had been skinny and she had long straight light brown hair. Now she was still skinny in the arms and legs but all around the middle of her was thick and heavy, and her hair was blond and short and spiky. Or it was spiky when she had styling gel. In the drugstore in Pensacola, she had everything she needed, but the idiot manager had cut Bo's credit card in half in front of her eyes. Those scissors had flashed right in front of her face like those birds down below and she could tell from the hate in the man's face that he wanted to cut her eyes out, so she just swore at him and left. Luckily, that time the car started right up. She didn't have her styling gel or gas or anything else until she had worked a week at a Burger King outside of Mobile.

Her food, what little she'd wanted, she got in the Burger King, and out back of there is where she found the box that made sleeping in the car so much better. The car was a hatch back and the weather was warm so she ought to have been comfortable before the box, but she was always waking up and someone was looking at her sleep or else she *thought* someone was, and then she'd have to start the car and move. She chose places several times a night: She'd start out in a place that was lighted and safe, but someone always came and looked in. So she would find a dark place on a street or a road where no one could see in and watch her sleep, but then she couldn't sleep because she didn't know who or what was out there. One time possums had dropped onto the hood of her car from a tree and another time in a park she had looked out to see that the car was surrounded by little boys watching her. But the worst time of all was the man who scratched and scratched at the door like a man in a horror movie, though she could tell from his eyes that he knew he would never get in. That didn't stop her from screaming. But nothing happened. He just wandered away. It was the homeless people who scared her most. You never knew who they might be or what they might do. Now she knew that the best place to sleep in your car was the parking lot of a small factory that had night shifts. There weren't usually guards or attendants in the lot, the cars were in the same shape as hers, and no one thought it was weird to see someone asleep in their car.

Now that she had the box she was fine at night, for the time being. She was pretty sure Bo didn't report the car as stolen right away because he wouldn't want to have to explain the bruise on her face, but just in case, she had taken the plates off and thrown them in a canal and at the Burger King she had taken some cardboard and a marker and made License Applied For signs instead of plates. The car was so old and in such bad shape she figured no one was going to give it much notice or make much of a fuss over it.

The box made it even better. It fit into the back of Bo's Toyota when the back seat was down, and it was big enough to sleep in. Now at night she just parked some place that looked safe, in neighborhoods or next to factories where people parked all night, then, when she was sure no one was looking, she just crawled over the seat into the open end of the carton and went to sleep. It didn't look like a girl was sleeping in a car; it looked like somebody was hauling something. The Toyota wasn't so beat up yet that it drew attention to itself, though it was red and had some rust on it.

Vickie knew she had enough money for two more days, but she figured that it would take the police only one more day to get too curious about her being here in this parking lot every morning watching the birds down there and the motel across the street.

The Mississippi River below, the curve of it, was like music to Vickie; it was something that she should have nothing to

do with until the baby was born because it caused her too much ache and made her lose her nerve when she looked south at where the river was going and north to where it had been.

Vickie had a lot to do before she could go to Half Moon where her father was. She knew that this would be a big thing for him, for anyone, to deal with, his nineteen-year-old daughter who he probably wouldn't recognize showing up pregnant and single. Before she could get on Interstate 55 and drive the two days north, she had made herself a list of things she had to do to make herself presentable to her father, to make the shock of all this easier to take:

- wait for bruise to clear up
- get \$100 in cash plus gas money
- let roots grow out, cut off blond
- clean out car
- get two outfits and a suitcase
- think of new name and ones for the baby
- figure out story

Now and then she tried to tell herself that her father was an old man and she tried to picture him as an old man or even think of the real possibility that he was dead, but all she could do was see him at the farm and see herself as five or six watching him



come into the back porch before supper and unbutton his coveralls and—he was always very tired—slowly step out of them. A cloud of dust always rose up and made her sneeze, which made him laugh. Then there he was in his blue work clothes which were clean under his coveralls, and she followed him into the bathroom where he washed his hands and face and the black dirt ran into the sink in little rivers. She couldn't really see his face. All she knew was that he was her father and he had loved her in the best way she had ever been loved, and that as bad as things got with her mother, even when she was at her meanest and drunk-est, she had always told Vickie that her father was a good man and that he loved her. But thinking like that was like the music and she looked down at the flashing birds over the forest and she could bear that sharpness much better than she could bear the slow curve of the river.

She was moving toward a picture in her head. Every ounce of energy and sense she had she was using to carry herself toward making that picture real. The picture was a simple one, and one that was not filled in any detail: It's the back yard of the farm house. She and her father each sit on lawn chairs. The sun is going down. Sometimes in the picture the baby sits on her father's lap; sometimes it sits on hers. There are birds on the wires and in the trees.

She wants to get the eyes of the man with the scissors out of her mind. How could he hate her so much when he didn't even know her? Vickie was sure he would feel differently if he knew the story, but that was the problem; most people did not want to hear your story or else, if they did, how did you tell it and what story did you tell when half the time you didn't know the right names for things? Like those birds. She didn't know the names of any of those birds though she was pretty sure that the loudest ones were blue jays.

Most of the time she knew people didn't want to hear what really happened. They wanted to know a story that made things easy on them—easy for them to hate you or easy for them to like you or use you or walk away. The real story was something that everybody was real careful to step around, real careful not to step in. She knew by now that all you had to do was give people a few hints of the story they could make up about you. She knew that waitresses, men in bars, kids—everyone who was first a stranger—would fill in the rest around your carefully chosen details, your first line. When a waitress would

ask, "Where y'all from?" in response to her funny accent, Vickie would explain that she was an army brat and moved around a lot. Then she could watch the waitress's face as the story filled in behind it. When men in bars asked why she was there all by herself, she always said she was there looking for her brother Jim who Mama was worried about. Did they know him? He had dark hair and was so tall and when he was drunk

sometimes he would cry. They always knew him, in every bar, and then they always talked about themselves and each other and described the ways that they got drunk so that sometimes she picked out one who didn't hit people and lived close and was likely to pass out. She had gotten showers and a place to sleep that way. Before she had stopped going to high school, when she and her mother would get to a new place, she would just work out the first few lines that made her newness acceptable: My parents just got a divorce; my mother's company was moved here to Dallas; my mother was promoted—anything but my mother is a drunk who takes up with drunks and we always leave towns at night.

She had sent her father a few lines four or five times a year since she was a girl. A postcard or a Valentine or Christmas card and on each one was enough that would let him tell a pretty story to himself about herself and her mother, Marlene. His address she could not forget because it was not really an address: Mr. Edward Check, R.R. #1, Half Moon, Illinois. The zip code she did forget but it was a small place and she figured the letters still got to him. Now and then she sent a photograph of herself if she had one or if she liked it. Sometimes she put return addresses on the cards and sometimes she didn't, but she'd never

gotten one back from him though she knew that did not mean he hadn't sent one.

The sun was now angling down into the forest below her so that when a bird would fly over the trees she could see the color of it. She wished she could go down into that forest and stand in the middle of it with someone who knew the names of every bird and plant and tree and that person would tell her all the names, tell her nothing but the names of things and she would remember them all. When she put the binoculars to her eyes, she saw some blue flash by but she couldn't find it again and it made her sick to try to look.





She turned away from the forest and the river and looked at the motel across the street. She and her mother had come to Vicksburg that time three years ago because of the name of the town. Her mother had thought that would please her—going off the interstate out of their way just to stay in a town “that was named after you.” They were leaving New Orleans because Marlene had broken up with her boyfriend, of course, and they were going to Memphis because that’s where Marlene’s sister was with her new husband and her kids. “Your cousins,” Marlene said to Vickie. That did please Vickie, more than she could let on, and she wished she had been interested enough in the new husband of her aunt to find out his last name so she could later on find them all.

Vickie had liked New Orleans and wanted to stay there, but her mother said No, and Vickie came home from school one day to find their stuff packed and in the car and her mother standing by the car smoking. Not a word would she say except, “Get in,” and that time Vickie had thrown a real fit, one that made the neighbors come to their windows and threaten Marlene. So Vickie got in the car and they left, but neither one spoke until they were in Vicksburg, and Vickie had asked, “What are we doing here? It’s not on the way to Memphis!”

“This place was named after you. I wanted to have a look at it.” Then Vickie hadn’t wanted to but she cried like a baby while they got off the interstate, and then her mother had pulled the car over right on the off-ramp and there at the edge of a field she had held Vickie in her arms while Vickie cried like a baby, really cried like a baby, bawling and sniffing and calling Mama. Marlene rocked her in her arms in the car while the people in the cars that went by stared, and then Marlene had cried too.

They had checked into the motel across the way and then they’d taken baths and cleaned up and gone to dinner in the cat-fish restaurant. Looking over the silver bridge and the black one, Marlene said things would be different now. She would cut down on her drinking and they would have a fresh start. Everything felt fresh and clean and new for them after so much crying, and Vickie let herself believe her mother, but when they got back to the motel, Marlene had said she was going down the street just for a nightcap, just to get the highway jangles out of her arms.

Vickie didn’t throw a fit this time. She just said, “Mother, if you walk out that door now, I won’t be here when you get back.” Marlene laughed. “I mean it,” Vickie said.

“Maybe you do, but where would you go and with whose money?” And Marlene had left.

Then Vickie had gotten dressed again and walked toward the town and went into a pizza place where she stood at the door a few minutes and looked at who was there. There were only four tables of people and one was a table of two high school boys, so she walked up to their table and pulled up a chair and sat down. She smiled. They couldn’t believe their luck.

Much of the rest of the night Vickie doesn’t remember because of the drinking, but she woke up with one those boys on a back porch in Jackson, Mississippi, and it took her two days to get someone to take her back to Vicksburg, and she

couldn’t call because she didn’t remember the name of the motel. It is the Vicksburg Motel. So when she got back her mother was gone. She had left the day before. Vickie had made a scene in the motel lobby. She insisted to the manager that her mother would have left word where she was going and that she wouldn’t just abandon her like this. “Where is the note?” she screamed into the man’s face. “Where is the goddamned letter she left?”

The manager had just laughed at her tantrum while his wife called the police. “Listen, here, Little Bit,” he said. “Not only did your mama leave you no note, she didn’t even leave me no money, so we are both screwed by that bitch and you are probably better off without her. Go home to your daddy who must be breathing easier with her out of the house.” Vickie had gone for the man’s face and was on top of him scratching at him and hammering with her fists when the police came and pulled her off.

They didn’t put her in jail. They turned her over to some church people who said they could straighten her out, and five days later she was hitchhiking on the interstate to Florida. That’s when she met Bo.

She found out she was expecting for sure just as she and Bo were leaving the house one day to go to his sister’s wedding. The phone rang and it was the clinic. She told Bo to go on to the car and she would be right there. He didn’t know she’d gone to the clinic.

“Miss Vickie Chick?” the woman from the clinic said.

“Check,” said Vickie.

“Miss Check, there is a pregnancy there. Is that good news or bad news?”

“We’ll see,” said Vickie. “Thanks.”

She went to the wedding and nobody, not even Bo, could tell a thing was wrong. In those minutes after the phone call, Vickie felt herself change; she felt herself shut down one system and start up another one. She could almost hear it. She could feel the fierce little baby inside of her forcing her to make a place for itself.

Sometimes at night when she was sleeping in the carton in the car, she cried for Calico, a cat they’d had on the farm when they still lived there with Papa. Because the box reminded her—the smell of the cardboard and her body’s heat, the towels she slept on—she remembered very clearly Calico and her litter of kittens in the cardboard box on the porch. Vickie would lie next to them and put her face close to them. She could still remember the warm smell of the cats like milk and dust, the squeaking of the kittens, the warm, warm sound of Calico purring as she nursed her blind babies with their sharp little claws like rats’.

*Illustrations by Suzanne Vinmans.*

*The Pain of Almost Leaving. Watercolor, pastels on wood, 23 x 24 1/2 inches. 1990.*

*The One Who Waits. India ink/watercolor on wood, 21 x 18 inches, 1989.*





# Planes, Cones, and Toruses—and More!

## *The Supercomputer as Educator*

by Ruth Blodgett

*During the last two decades educators have witnessed sweeping technological changes. Computers in the classroom, for instance, were nonexistent in 1973. By 1983 entire computer labs had become increasingly commonplace, and in 1993 students now have access to one of the fastest supercomputers in the world—the Cray X-MP, the only supercomputer dedicated to education, located at the National Energy Research Supercomputer Center (NERSC) at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.*

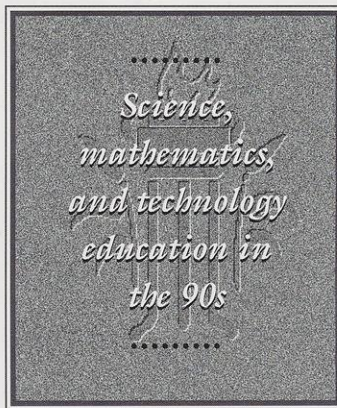
The National Education Supercomputer Program (NESP), funded by the United States Department of Energy, came into existence in January 1991 when the federal government decided that students and teachers needed to be revitalized in the areas of science and math. The perfect tool, they thought, would be a supercomputer, a machine that would allow students to experiment with scientific applications, develop problem-solving skills, and interact with real-life scientists. By increasing interest in science and math, officials hoped that the United States eventually would no longer lag behind other industrial countries in the world of science.

NESP's immediate mission is to spark interest in math and science, but it also is hoped that access to the supercomputer will provide teachers with a resource that can be incorporated into their classroom curriculums. Since the inception of the program two years ago, 350 schools throughout the United States have taken part in NESP. It is projected that by next year over 1,000 schools will be participating in the program. Approximately 500 teachers have been trained to use the supercomputer, and each year these teachers request accounts for an estimated 2,500 students. NESP program director Brian Lindow personally trains teachers through workshops and conferences which last anywhere from one day to two weeks. In 1992 Lindow conducted three workshops in California and traveled throughout the United States to work with interested teachers. Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa participated in the greatest number of events. Workshops for high school teachers were held in Iowa and Minnesota, and conferences and learning opportunities were offered in Wisconsin by such organizations as the Cray Academy, the Summer Science Institute, and the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth.

The cost to schools to take part in the program is minimal. The only tools schools supply are computers, either Macintosh LC or higher or IBM-clone 286 or better; modems; and interested teachers and students. NESP picks up the cost of time spent on the Cray supercomputer and required computer maintenance, and MCI has donated high-speed communication lines to access the supercomputer. The only cost to schools is the cost of a local call. The NESP budget is approximately \$600,000.

Any student or teacher who has access to the required hardware has access to the Cray X-MP. Although training is needed to work with the supercomputer, no specific math skills are required. As students work with the computer and the educational software, however, the math is bound to become second nature. Lindow has written specific software to be used with the supercomputer, and it can be as simple or as complex as the user wants it to be. Because it is the goal of NESP to interest students in computational science, all of the programs available to students are easy to use and open-ended.

The most popular program with students is the ray tracing program. This program allows students to create realistic looking images and animations using the supercomputer and wire-framing software called Wireman. Users create the images on their microcomputers and then send their projects, or "movies," to California to be processed. Movie files are usually back in less than thirty minutes, allowing for quick feedback. Students like to use this program, not only because the images are so realistic, but also because the creator can control the creation. Students have control over shapes of objects, light properties, color, reflectance and transparency, and motion. All of the images





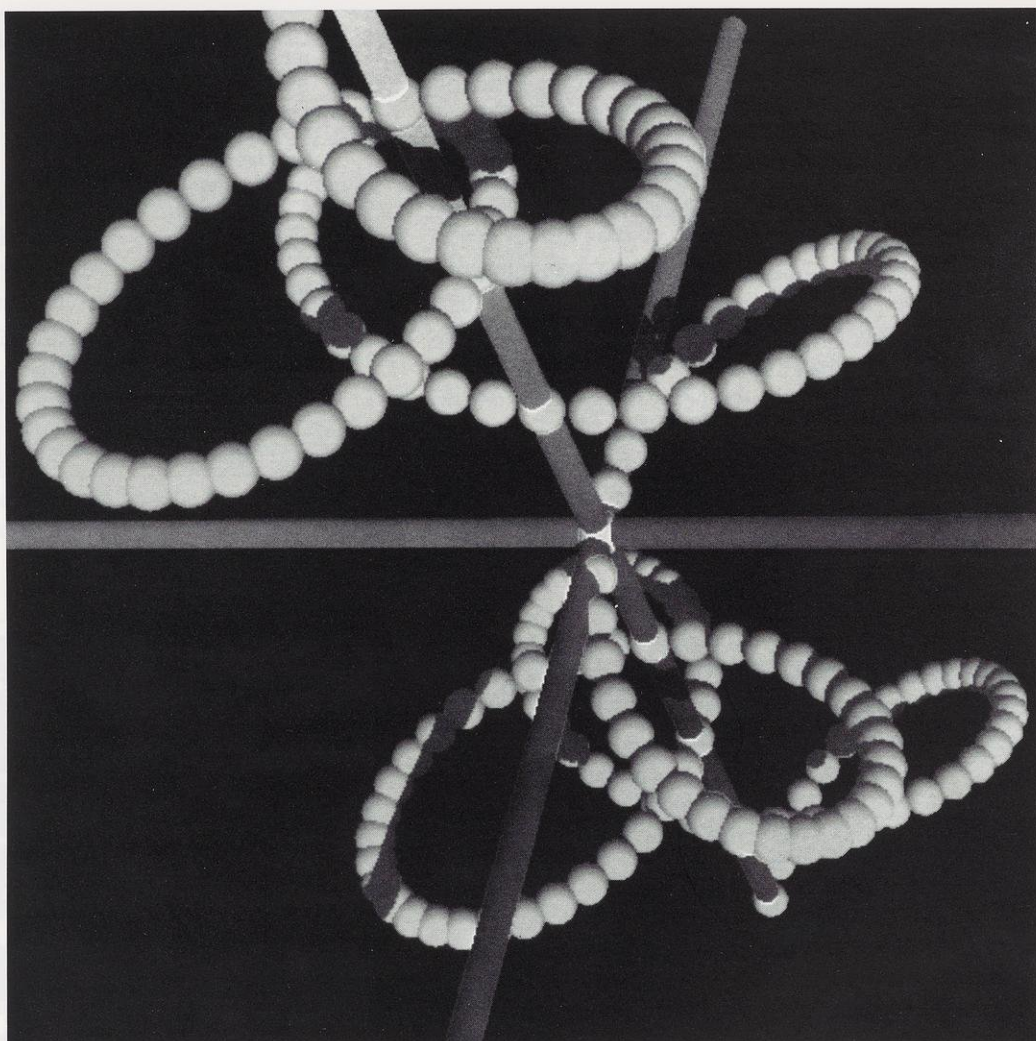
must be created with combinations of six basic objects: spheres, cubes, planes, toruses, cones, and height fields. Students must use extensive problem-solving skills to create objects in three dimensional space utilizing x, y, and z coordinates. The potential to use complex math skills is great, but advanced math ability is *not* required. Students also can create images simply by "feel," that is, they don't have to worry about what all the numbers mean, but can instead create images by trial and error. For most students, it doesn't take too much experience to realize that knowing math makes it *easier* to use the program, which is a good reason to learn more math.

The program most popular with teachers, although some students do it independently, is climate modeling. Teachers or students can ask a question about the environment, such as what are the effects of localized ozone depletion or deforestation or a myriad of other questions, and then see the answer to their question displayed graphically.

This program is a true scientific tool in that while the climate being questioned is being calculated, so is an undisturbed model of Earth, and the two models can be compared, also graphically. Like true scientific experiments, this program gives no answers. That is, the program requires the experimenters to interpret the data, instilling analytical skills. The lesson is not necessarily finished at this point, however; students then can contact an atmospheric scientist through the Internet connections associated with the supercomputer project to get the opinion of an expert.



The program LS-Man utilizes another topic important to science: fractal generation. With this program students can incorporate a variable string replacement technique called L-Systems to produce three dimensional plant images. With this program the student chooses an initial sequence of variables, each variable giving the program's turtle (the cursor) a specific command. The commands are similar to the commands given in LOGO programming; for example, adding a segment with a rel-



*An example of ray tracing.*

ative position to other segments. As each segment is replaced with a set of segments that look like the image as a whole, fractals are created. By using the LS-Man program, students learn high-level abstractions while generating self-similar objects.

Projects planned for the future include seismic studies, windmill design and application, car crash simulations, chemistry applications, super collider applications, and chaos and fractals. The possibilities for students to use analytical and problem-solving skills in science-related areas is growing tremendously, and the implications related to the use of the supercomputer in schools are staggering.



As students become more proficient on the supercomputer they can become eligible for the Superkids program. Each year the governor of each state chooses a student that has excelled academically to take part in the Superkids program. One student from each of the fifty states and students from Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Canada, Great Britain,



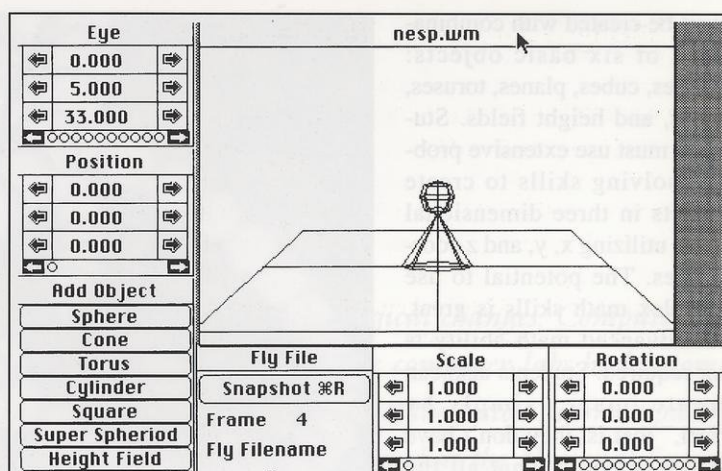
Italy, Japan, Germany, France, and Mexico are flown to California for an all-expense-paid, two-week visit to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Students attend workshops, work on projects, talk to scientists, and live with a scientist for two weeks. The Superkids program gives students on-hands experience in the world of practicing scientists. The 1992 Superkid from Wisconsin was Matt Smith of Sheboygan.

Through experimenting with applications on the supercomputer, a student can learn what it's like to be a scientist and how challenging and rewarding that experience can be. More than fifty schools in Wisconsin are participating in NESP, and participants range from students in math, science, and computer clubs to school programs for disadvantaged students, independent study groups, gifted student programs, and explorer scouts. As the partnerships between Department of Energy laboratories and educational institutions grow, students at both high school

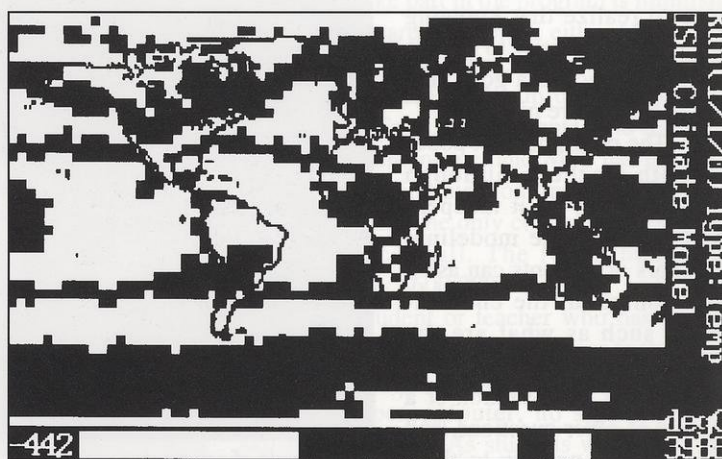
**BRIAN LINDOW** is director of the National Education Supercomputer Program. Lindow, who grew up in Clintonville, Wisconsin, received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in math and computer science from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and taught in the university's computer science department for three and one-half years. He also is certified to teach high school math and computer science. Lindow moved to Lawrence Livermore in 1989 and worked in the computer graphics group. When he learned that the Cray 1 supercomputer at Lawrence Livermore was going to be retired in 1991, he suggested that it be dedicated to education. Since then, the program has grown to its present form, and Cray Research has donated a different computer for use in education. As director of the program, Lindow is now in charge of all teacher training and software creation and maintenance.

In November 1992, Lindow traveled to Washington, D.C., to receive the Federal Leadership Award, given to thirty federal programs which have demonstrated an obvious benefit to society. The NESP was the only education program to receive the award and the only program sponsored by the Department of Energy.

In his spare time, Lindow teaches at the University of California at Berkeley and works on his Ph.D. at the University of California at Davis. Teachers interested in becoming involved with NESP can contact Brian Lindow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory at 510-294-5464 or at his e-mail address: lindow@nes.nersc.gov.



The Wireman interface for the Macintosh. The students use these windows to add and manipulate the objects for their moves.



The image created by the NES climate modeling program. The scale for interpreting the data is across the bottom of the image, while the description of the model is along the right border.

and community college levels are experiencing new technology that many people could only dream of. Even elementary students are using NESP programs to a certain extent, and the future certainly looks promising for them. Thanks to the dedicated support of Cray Research and the Department of Energy, education in math and science has become easily accessible and exciting for students.

The author wishes to thank NESP director Brian Lindow and Eau Claire Memorial High School math instructor/Supercomputer Club advisor James Blodgett for their insights into the technicalities of the National Education Supercomputer Program.



## One Spring Dawn on the Apostle Islands

With thaw comes the cracking of blue-gray ice  
and reminders of the glaciers:

fissures surface, wild flowers, and these  
islands—as close as the losses in my life

this morning, voice-prints that are hard  
to erase, filling the air like mist

hovering over the ice, over my body and as near  
as the sleeping hand withdrawn last night.

*Dick Theis*

## This April

First shirt-sleeve sunshine of the new year,  
and I'm outside my study when I should be in,  
just to lean against the south wall and press my face  
skyward. Just to inhale what the new buds  
breathe. And to watch the ice crust at my doorstep  
recede as drips and rivulets gather and stream.

And the loam sends up its smell; not the dust  
of old tomes encased for display under glass,  
or smothered in vaults dead to the touch  
of sexless intellectual analysis and dissection.  
More like healthy mold, living rot of books stacked  
and abandoned, bindings mushed and pages swollen

with seepage that trickles its way through cinder block  
and poured concrete basement walls. It's the scent  
I'd hope even these words become; all my life's work  
born of this earth and to the soil returned. Each word  
spit forth into the light for the long haul back down  
into that place before language, before tongues.

Before scribblers like myself pretended to this business  
of resurrection. Nothing any of us can pen will match  
the trumpet blast of green rising beneath his feet this April.  
Nor can he translate fragile shoots, tendrils. Nor flowers  
that break rocks and survive in the melting snows, naked.

*Lowell Jaeger*

## Shawn at the A&W

You take off your coat and prick  
your finger with a fishhook caught  
on your sleeve. A dull clam morning  
heavy with drops of water, no trout,  
and a hole in your car's muffler.  
Shawn's teeth white as cream,  
cheeks turning ketchup red.  
Mentholatum scent from her body.  
No menu tells you what to try.  
Here, green plants, bare legs  
rush the spring with cold  
determination. You turn outside,  
carrying a mug of black coffee  
and the first hot blush of May.

*Steve Miller*

## The Game Warden

paddles on the Mississippi  
ice sagging like glass  
beneath the bow.  
He's so far offshore  
the village looks  
like a postage stamp.  
He's self contained  
like a city poet  
watching dusk settle  
outside coffeehouse windows.

*Steve Miller*



## Omaha Beach—1982

I had come to Normandy to walk the beaches,  
to conjure landing craft disgorging troops,  
pieces rattling. Navy guns thumping sand and flesh  
indiscriminately; these things.

Along a pathway steep enough to take my breath,  
I saw among some rocks and litter  
a sea gull decomposing in the sun,  
its useless feathers fluttered by the wind.

Upon the parapet of the *cimetere militaire*  
among the crosses and an occasional Star of David,  
the grass was fine and so well-kept I walked  
tiptoe above the smashed and broken dead.

I looked away, outward, to where the sun  
seemed to dance upon the sea, the wind to blow  
a smell like life into me. And there I wept for  
all the names I had long since forgot.

C. D. Spain

## Morning Sky Song

I wait in the garden and watch  
a tulip open its carmine lips  
to swallow a mouth full of sky  
and hungrily lick the light.

The tulip opens its carmine lips  
to a bug small as needlepoint,  
balanced on a finger of light.  
He walks in his garden alone.

To a bug as small as needlepoint,  
the bloom soars like a cathedral dome  
as he walks in his garden alone,  
a starburst painted over his head.

The heavens soar like a cathedral dome  
as I wait in his garden to watch,  
a sunburst painted over my head.  
I am swallowed by a mouth full of sky.

Sprague Vonier

## Midnight in Italy

A warm glow  
issues from crackling pine embers,  
the radiance reminds me of the setting sun  
as it casts tranquil light,  
saturating me with comfort  
and thoughts of you, again.  
Will you see the sunset  
as I compose these words?  
Or will winter's clouds  
impede Helios's magic  
as it spills its waning light  
across Wisconsin's plains?

Earlier,  
I watched the sun slip  
behind Tuscan mountains,  
along even rows of pruned vineyards  
where in the shadows  
a sulking Bacchus looked melancholy  
upon the vines.  
But he, like I,  
found comfort in the faint pink light  
which faded quickly into winter's zenith;  
that intriguing light  
reminded me of you.

Antonio Re





**NATURE'S METROPOLIS: CHICAGO AND THE GREAT WEST** by William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991. 530 pp. \$27.50.

by Arnold Alanen

When one considers the many authors who have sought to capture and portray the characteristics and moods of various mid-western cities, no other metropolis even approaches the attention that has been given to Chicago. Included in the pantheon of Chicago's chroniclers are such literary lions as Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Studs Terkel, and Saul Bellow. Few writers, however, have attempted to explain Chicago from the perspective that William Cronon employs in *Nature's Metropolis*. Though the geographic locale is different, the book follows Cronon's previous work—*Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*—which established him as one of America's leading environmental historians. A native of Madison, and formerly a professor of history at Yale University, Cronon joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in July 1992.

Environmental history has been pursued by scholars for close to three decades, but *Changes in the Land* provided the field with new directions and broadened its public appeal. Likewise, *Nature's Metropolis* is an ambitious and pathbreaking effort that seeks to view a major nineteenth-century metropolis, and its huge hinterland, from the perspective of both nature and economics. When considering the economic aspects of the Lake Michigan city, Cronon gives special attention to the commodity flows that were established between Chicago and the nation's grain fields, cattle ranches, and white pine forests. In tracking these linkages, along with those of credit and capital, Cronon reveals a unique familiarity with the methodologies and approaches of other disciplines, especially historical and economic geography.

But the important feature of this book is the attention given to nature, although it must be pointed out that environmental history encompasses much more than discussions of the physical and natural features that characterize a city or region. Of greater significance are the explanations and assessments of the relationships and interactions that have occurred between humans and the environment. (Cronon considers both "first nature" and "second nature"; the former refers to original nature, the latter to the artificial nature that humans create upon first nature.) In considering Chicago's grain trade, for example, he demonstrates how the nation's plains and prairies first had to be transformed to grow the new, non-indigenous plants that were unlike any known to American Indians. The review of Chicago's stockyards not only reveals how this development influenced the city itself, but also illustrates the manner in which much of the entire American West felt such an astound-

ing impact: Massive buffalo herds were decimated, domesticated cattle were introduced, thousands of miles of barbed wire and other forms of fencing were strung across the landscape, and advances in refrigeration and other forms of technology led to unforeseen changes in towns and employment possibilities.

It is the chapter on Chicago's timber and lumber industry that probably will be of greatest interest to readers familiar with Wisconsin. The exploitation of Wisconsin's northern forests, along with those of Michigan and Minnesota, represented the transformation, and ultimately the permanent modification, of a natural treasury of ecosystems into capital. "The settlement of the countryside, the growth of the city, and the expansion of the market that linked them," Cronon relates, "all rested on the basic premise that people could and should exploit the wealth of nature to the utmost. In the process, some people might gain more than others certainly, but human gained over nonhuman most of all" (p. 150).



.....  
*... one's impression of  
 the city will never be  
 quite the same after  
 reading this book.*  
 .....

Cronon concludes *Nature's Metropolis* with a chapter on the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, followed by an Epilogue that summarizes Chicago's changing role in the national system of cities. Utilizing central place theory, one of economic geography's most powerful analytical tools, he notes how Chicago served as a gateway to the Great West during a key portion of the nineteenth century, but eventually evolved into a large-

scale version of the urban centers that emerged further to the west. "As other cities grew to dominate subregions within the original territory of the gateway, these cities captured more and more of its hinterland. . . . Gateway status was temporary, bound to the forces of market expansion, environmental degradation, and self-induced competition that first created and then destroyed the gateway's utility to the urban-rural system as a whole" (p. 377). Chicago, of course, survived as a great city, but during the twentieth century it would play a different role in the national hierarchy of metropolitan areas than it had during the past.

Whether Chicago is viewed as a city of endless attractions and delights or simply as a major barrier that must be circumvented when moving by automobile between the East and the Midwest, one's impression of the city will never be quite the same after reading this book. Whereas scholars and academics undoubtedly will appreciate Cronon's approach, interpretations, and thorough documentation of sources, those readers who have no interest in the varied methodological approaches that characterize contemporary historiography will enjoy the fresh and vivid interpretations of Chicago and the American West. It would indeed be fortunate if more books would appeal to such a broad range of the reading public.

*Arnold R. Alanen, professor of landscape architecture and natural resources at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has a special interest in the landscapes and settlements of the Lake Superior region.*



**TWO OCTOBER NIGHTS AND OTHER POEMS by Hazel F. Briggs. Whitewater: Windfall Prophets Press, 1991. 81 pp.**

by David Graham

It's hard to dislike a poet who cheerfully and confidently admits to her own amateurism:

I am not one to stick it out—  
not one to aim for the impossible  
and make perfection my goal—  
not unwilling to live with error.  
I have lived with error all my life  
and it has served me well.

The poetry of Hazel F. Briggs of Madison can be described in many attractive ways—words like *cheery*, *seasoned*, *sensitive*, *humble*, *simple*, *accessible*, and *friendly* spring immediately to mind—but she is perhaps most notable as a poet for her utter lack of posturing and self-glorification. She writes always as One of Us, with all the virtues implied thereby, and with most of the drawbacks, too.

*Two October Nights and Other Poems* contains a wealth of wry, sincere, mildly perceptive verse. At its best, her work achieves something of the directness and economy of classical oriental poetry, as in this haiku-like snapshot called "Old Shoes":

My shoes are old.  
They fold in wrinkled  
smiles around my feet  
and look so friendly.

The poetic voice here is so unassuming in its old-shoe friendliness that I fear it may seem churlish to point out what is lacking. If this poetry sends no shivers of emotion down the spine, it also "forks no lightning," in Dylan Thomas's phrase, when it comes to intellectual content. Just like old shoes, Hazel Briggs's poems are easy to like, but lacking in surprise and challenge.

Not that the person presented in these poems is some saintly grandmother without rough edges or harsh opinions. In fact, this poet tends to be at her best in her snappish moments, her times of sadness, her quite human irrationalities. "Bondage," for example, occurs in a group of character poems, and brings us up short with its vehemence:

For fifty years  
we shared one bed  
and I hated you.

Now you are dead.  
I am not sorry—  
why should I be  
remembering your jibes  
and your cruelty?

And yet so long  
have I been dead  
would I mind  
a corpse in bed?

If the book contained more poems with such bite, it would be a more memorable volume. As it stands, the best way to read this collection, I think, is not to examine the poems individually. Rather, readers might take this book as an autobiography of someone born "some ninety years ago," who has entrusted us with a notably honest, untroubled, humane record of a long life. The author's hope, expressed in her foreword, that the reader might "have a good time" with these poems, will be abundantly fulfilled.

David Graham, who chairs the Department of English at Ripon College, is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *Doggedness*.

**LETTERS FROM NEW FRANCE: THE UPPER COUNTRY, 1686-1783, translated and edited by Joseph L. Peyser. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 248 pp.**

by William Seno

"The rich French and Indian history of much of the pre-revolutionary United States territory has been covered with dust for too long." So writes Joseph Peyser in his preface to *Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783*.

Peyser has translated, edited, and compiled long-forgotten manuscripts from the French regime in the Great Lakes region. But while Peyser should be praised for his scholarly work in researching *Letters from New France*, the resulting collection may hold minimal interest for readers especially interested in early history about the area now known as Wisconsin, for Peyser's book centers on events that occurred at Fort Saint Joseph, a French outpost in what is now southwestern Michigan.

The strength of this book lies in the new insights it provides regarding the political, military, and economic struggles that took place between French factions, between the French and the English, and between the Indian nations that formed ever-shifting alliances with the Europeans. Unfortunately, however, there is little in the book that describes the wilderness itself or the Indian cultures that once existed in the region. Missing are the most vividly written chronicles from the French period of Great Lakes exploration—the narratives of Radisson, Hennepin, Marquette, and Dablon.

Also missing from Peyser's disjointed compilation is a coherent sense of regional history. The reader who seeks an overview of the period will do far better with a copy of *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, written in 1924 by Louise Phelps Kellogg of the University of Wisconsin.

One chapter of *Letters from New France* that will hold some interest for Wisconsin readers relates to the Fox wars, waged from 1712 to 1734 between the French and the Fox Indi-



ans, who lived in what is now southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Peyser forthrightly identifies French policy toward the Foxes as attempted "genocide." Peyser notes that the governor of New France in 1733 instructed his troops to "kill them without thinking of making a single prisoner, so as not to leave one of the race alive in the upper Country . . ." if the Foxes did not surrender to the French. Yet *Letters* does not include the most interesting of the manuscripts from the period of the Fox wars: Dubuisson's vivid account of the first battle in 1712, or Beauharnois's account of the French defeat at Green Bay in 1733, during which Sauk Indians came to the aid of the Foxes.

*Letters from New France* does provide newly-translated manuscripts, thus the book will be of particular interest to historians of the French colonial period.

William Seno is editor of *Up Country: Voices from the Great Lakes Wilderness* (Heartland Press, 1985) and is author of *Enemies: A Saga of the Great Lakes Wilderness* (Prairie Oak Press, 1993).

**ONCE UPON AN ISLE: THE STORY OF FISHING FAMILIES ON ISLE ROYALE** by Howard Sivertson. Mount Horeb: Wisconsin Folk Museum, 1992. 111 pp. \$20.95.

by Jerry Phillips

The fisherman's life, once the economic backbone of the Lake Superior region, comes to life in *Once Upon An Isle*. The title suggests a delightful tale of island life, and most of the narrative delivers just that, a chronicle of growing up during the 1930s and 40s

in the seasonal fishing camps on Isle Royale. But the story also signifies the end of a way of life for these hardy families who lived, loved, worked, and even played on and around the isle.

Howard "Bud" Sivertson, a painter now living in Grand Marais, Minnesota, broke a three-generation tradition by pursuing his passion for art rather than fishing. While seasickness dampened his desire to make fishing a career, Sivertson's detailed memories of his early life fill each page. "As the only survivor of the fishing culture with the training and desire to illustrate life on the island," he explains, "I felt the need to document my experiences."

*Once Upon An Isle* captures the breadth and soul of an era through forty of Sivertson's oil paintings. An accompanying story faces each of the full-page illustrations. The format makes it ideal to be read aloud, with the option to read one or several of the stories at one sitting.

The book is roughly arranged from early spring preparations for another season on the isle to December's return to the mainland. Each vignette is filled with memories and scenes

from daily life, as well as such extraordinary events as holidays and shipwrecks. There is also the underlying excitement and fear of Lake Superior's vast, frigid waters.

As one dives through the surface of the paintings and stories, the heartbeat of this island culture is revealed. Here are families, fiercely independent yet loyal—people truly in sync with their wilderness surrounding, in a world where "work always came first." During each season on the island, they lived in virtual isolation, developing out of necessity the knowledge to build, repair, mend, and heal.

Sivertson's "classic Scandinavian understatement" mentioned by Philip Martin in the preface permeates the paintings and text. Perilous scenes of small boats about to be swallowed by heavy seas are described stoically. Sivertson relates his own boyhood experience of handling his boat alone in a storm for the first time. Coming ashore he envisions a gala homecoming. Instead his father simply comments, "Kind of rough, huh?" before returning to the work at hand.

As rich and provocative as Howard's paintings and text are, this book would be far less powerful without the afterword by Timothy Cochran. Cochran became friends with Sivertson while working as a park ranger on Isle Royale. Now a folklorist, Dr. Cochran underscores the importance of Sivertson's work as a depiction of a disappearing folk culture. He notes Sivertson's attention to details, such as the chronicling of vernacular architecture eventually destroyed by conflicting park service management plans. This is poignantly illustrated in Sivertson's final painting, *Exiled*. As the family looks on, his father's homestead is burned "in order to transform the island into pristine wilderness."

Most important, Cochran puts forth a rational discourse for the re-examination of wilderness parks. These fishing families practiced a "form of stewardship that combines the best of human values with wilderness," Cochran asserts. Rather than banning their activities, might not this ethic have been combined with the park service model of wilderness preservation?

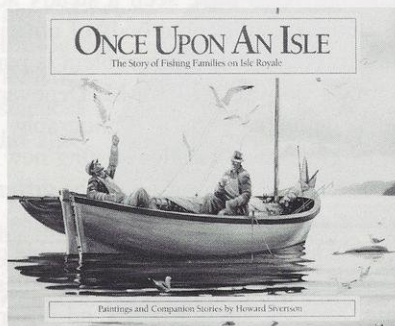
The Wisconsin Folk Museum published *Once Upon An Isle* as part of their goal to record folk traditions of the region. A non-profit educational organization, their express purpose is to help the public understand the rich diversity of our heritage.

Jerry Phillips lives on the shores of Lake Superior. He is on the board of curators of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and, with his wife, operates the Old Rittenhouse Inn in Bayfield.

**INFLUENCE AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN LITERARY HISTORY**, edited by Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. 349 pp. \$49.50 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

by James A. Gollata

There has been much critical debate on the importance of precursors, predecessors, history, environment, biography, intention, and other factors contributing to both the individual and collective shaping of literature. The creation of a "new" text





does not occur in a vacuum, and the formation of an original idea may well be impossible. But what are the origins of literary creative endeavors, and what is the role of the writer? The romantic image of the solitary penner of literature swiftly falls away when considered in the context of all the possible forces acting on the agent, both from without and from within. The critical notions of "influence" and "intertextuality" are attempts to explain the significance of some of these forces.

Perhaps influence can be seen as micro: the involuntary quasi-plagiaristic transference between, for example, authors, texts, backgrounds and/or traditions, while intertextuality is macro: the substitution or enlargement of authorial considerations in the context of psychic, subconscious, or collective socio-cultural influences. Intertextuality may be seen either as a building on or repudiation of the more individual or *personal* elements within influence. Arguments relative to these approaches have been waged during the past twenty years in a resurgence of interest in literary history, and this offering constitutes a collegial battle royal among members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison English department faculty. Editors Clayton and Rothstein set out the appropriate panoply in their "Figures in the Corpus" introduction by invoking major critics, Barthes, Bloom, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, et. al., as preface to the essays on theory and individual texts.

The theoretical section contains pieces on "The Alphabet of Suffering" in Hardy, Eliot, and Scott; intertextuality and "Reading/Writing"; "Oral Texts, Intertexts, and Intratexts" (Old English); and "Diversity and Change in Literary Histories." The selections in the final section examine influences or intertextualities relative to individual authors Joyce, Barth, Sitwell/Stein, Marianne Moore, Sidney/Spenser/Shakespeare, Margaret Fuller, and Rhys, and to "Inter(racial) textuality in Nineteenth-Century Southern Narrative." Besides the obvious diversity of subjects in these examinations, the essays included also consider the importance of gender in literary work.

There is no consensus to be found in this array of emphases and subject specialties, nor, perhaps, can there be, or should there be. In an academically interesting way, influence itself appears to survive not only as the precursor of intertextuality, but as a precursor whose past occupies the present. As the dialectics of literary analyses continue to evolve, this volume—by scholars, for scholars—presents well some of the richness of the debate.

*James A. Gollata, director of the library at the University of Wisconsin Center-Richland, is a published poet and short story writer.*

**THE NATIVE POPULATION OF THE AMERICAS IN 1492, SECOND EDITION, edited by William M. Denevan. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. 353 pp.**

*by Richard White*

During the Columbian quincentennial year, which rightfully focused attention on the consequences for Indian people of

Columbus's arrival, the University of Wisconsin Press reissued *The Native Population of the Americas in 1492*, edited by William M. Denevan, the Carl O. Sauer Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. First published in 1976, the book has played a central part in a debate over the population of the Americas at contact. Scholars have come to agree that the early demographic estimates were far too low and that disease played a critical role in drastically reducing Indian populations. They have disagreed, both in 1976 and at the present, about how high new population estimates when the first epidemics struck a given area should be, whether the first Europeans saw peak or already reduced populations, and on numerous other details upon which actual population estimates depend. The value of this collection in 1976 (and a value it still maintains) is that it provided a detailed examination of the sources and problems for population estimates for large portions of North America, South America, and Central America. The volume also continues to provide an idea of the spectrum of views on such matters. Angel Rosenblatt tended to give the lowest of modern estimates; Woodrow Borah's estimate is among the highest.

The problem with the reissue of the unrevised essays, however, is that they capture the debate as it stood in 1976. The ensuing years have seen a steady accumulation of literature, including a substantial body of criticism of a few of the essays in this collection. This problem is partially corrected by a new introduction by William M. Denevan. Denevan's essay, complete with a very useful bibliography, moves through the hemisphere, region by region, listing new studies, summarizing the central issues they raise and the differences among the authors, and giving new population estimates.

Denevan then compiles a table of his own population estimate based on these and older studies. The results are interesting, for they are not only (and unsurprisingly) well *under* the very large population figures given by Henry Dobyn's which have captured so much attention and criticism, but also *below* the original estimates of the 1976 volume. Denevan estimates 53,904,000 people inhabited the Western Hemisphere in 1492, down 3,396,000 from the earlier totals. He puts the figure for North America at 3,790,000, down 610,000. Denevan thinks the probable margin of error here is about 20 percent, giving a likely population range of 43 million to 65 million. These estimates still are still much higher, however, than the population figures given before this debate began.

Although the volume does not represent new work, it is, particularly with Denevan's essay, a useful collection for anyone interested in the debates over the demography of the Americas and the very large historical implications of the results of those debates.

*Richard White is a professor of history at the University of Washington at Seattle.*





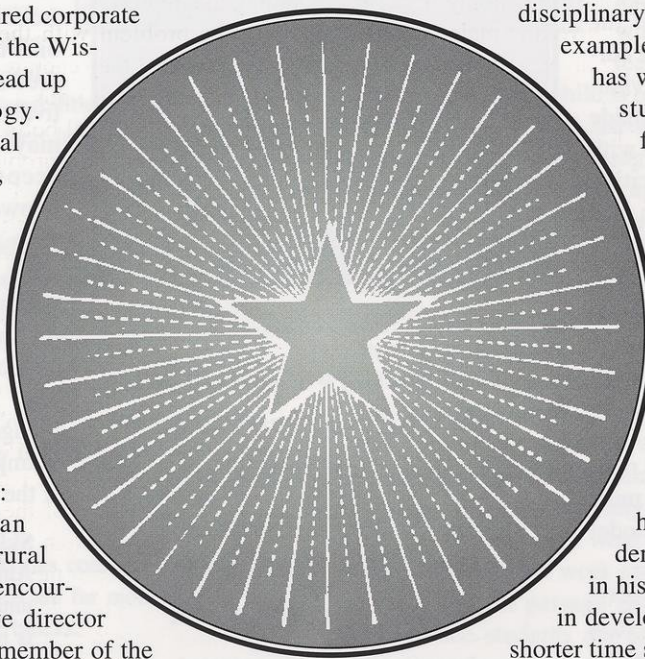
# Soaring With Comet Halley: Project 2061 in Wisconsin

**I**n 1985 the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) initiated a national study to explore the development of new literacy goals in science, mathematics, and technology. It happened to be the year when Comet Halley was in the vicinity of Earth, a coincidence which inspired the project's name when planners realized that children about to start school in 1985 would live to see the return of the comet in 2061.

A series of panels was convened to help the nation develop curricula which would prepare students for a future where science, mathematics, and technology skills would be critical.

James Johnson of River Falls, a retired corporate executive from 3M and a fellow of the Wisconsin Academy, was asked to head up the national panel on technology. Other panels addressed biological and health sciences, mathematics, physical and information sciences and engineering, and social and behavioral sciences.

The results of the study were published in 1989 by the AAAS in a report titled *Project 2061: Science for All Americans*. Initially, five sites around the country, *not* including Wisconsin, were targeted for the project: Philadelphia, San Francisco, San Diego, San Antonio, and three rural districts in Georgia. Through the encouragement of Le Roy Lee, executive director of the Wisconsin Academy and a member of the national site selection committee, additional money was raised to add one more site to the project—thus Wisconsin was included, and the program was placed at McFarland, just south of Madison. What follows is a description of the project as it is developing in Wisconsin.



ration, living organisms, Earth, and sky. Within each concept, students participate in broad experiences designed to investigate more traditional topics. These open-ended, cross-

disciplinary experiences are called vistas. For

example, the organizing concept on food has within it an experience in which the students design a garden and grow food. Within that vista they deal with concepts associated with science, mathematics, technology, language arts, social studies, art, music, and movement. How learners design their gardens depends upon their imaginations and previous experiences. Some learners may work in the most traditional sense of backyard gardening; others may employ intensive gardening or hydroponic strategies or grow gardens using seeds from earlier periods in history; other learners may be engaged in developing hybrids or plants that grow in shorter time spans.

Vistas provide the structural framework for organizing content. Each vista is built upon benchmarks for learning (levels of understanding) that are accessible to every learner. Each graduate is expected to understand these major ideas in order to be a literate citizen.

## The Concept

The Project 2061 model developed by the Wisconsin team is an educational approach organized around nine concepts that are of continuing concern. These organizing concepts include food, water, energy, communication, shelter/architecture, explo-

## Philosophy

When designing a new model, project team members imagine the ideal end state. In the case of this model, the end state—the graduates—are human beings who understand that learning is a lifelong process; they perceive of themselves as global citizens



who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to go forth into the world and make a difference. Making a difference includes expectations for employability, literacy, participation in the democracy, and an engagement in one's life.

Global citizens celebrate diversity and resist the apathy that often accompanies the complexity of today's problems. They understand the economic and ecological interdependence that characterizes life on Earth. They find meaning within their lives.

This model rests on an assumption that there are at least five human activities that are inherently meaningful. The first is stewardship, giving service and care to something beyond oneself. The second is creativity, an openness to imaginative approaches. The third is wonder, questioning how the world works and sometimes being awestruck by the magnificence of something that may appear simple on the surface. The fourth is an appreciation for the continuum of the human experience. (That suggests a curriculum that gives evidence of individuals throughout history who have made contributions. Making a connection with those who have gone before is exciting and tends to diminish the isolation that many children feel. It builds hope.) The final characteristic is perseverance—without remaining constant to a purpose, not much of value is likely to occur.

These five activities are woven throughout the curriculum. It is common for more than one characteristic at a time to be present when the experience is rich. If they are to be internalized, they must be practiced. The structure of this model is a framework for that practice.

Since life is an integrated experience, this curriculum is organized in a way that will help learners make connections. As part of that effort the project team has reorganized the way content has traditionally been arranged and scheduled time in much longer blocks than are usual in most school settings. This includes a common core of learning for all children as well as time for individuals to follow their own designs. Time for reflection has been built in, for it is in reflecting that students develop the insight that leads to maturity.

This work grows out of a belief that it is the purpose of education to challenge learners to make responsible choices, to design possible solutions to real problems, and to reach their potential.

## Cluster Groups

Cluster groups are designed to complement vistas by providing a setting which focuses primarily on the human need for a sense of belonging and continuity. They are intended to be small (generally not exceeding a ratio of twelve students per teacher) to allow personal attention. Cluster groups meet on a daily basis, and a student stays with his or her cluster teacher for several years. Children are grouped with similar-age mates. Flexible groups allow for movement based on a child's maturity. It is important, however, that a child spend a continuous time with one group in order to develop a supportive relationship with the teacher and peers.

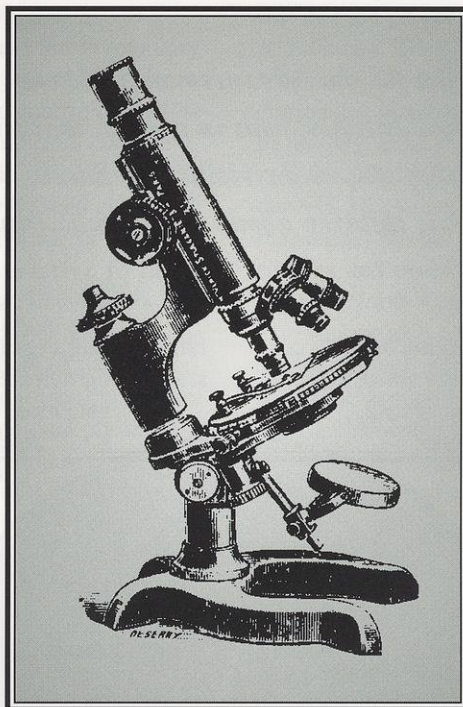
Clusters are the smallest group unit in this model. Five clusters, spanning all the ages (K-12), join together to form a house. A house has approximately sixty students, ranging in age from five to eighteen. Five houses combine to make a community of three hundred students and approximately twenty-five teachers. The size of a community may depend upon what a facility can accommodate, but it should not be allowed to become significantly larger than three hundred. If the facility is large, it should be divided into several communities. The reason for keeping communities relatively small is to allow for a true sense of community to develop.

The activity in a cluster group changes slightly as children develop. The examples cited below give an indication of the nature of the cluster experience.

### Skills

Although vistas provide ample opportunities to practice and apply skills, it is unlikely that a child would learn a beginning skill, such as reading, within a vista. A portion of cluster time is

used for acquiring beginning skills within a meaningful context, initiated from the desire or need to know from the vista experience. Children work in different ways, on different skills, with a plan tailored to meet their needs. It is the responsibility of the cluster teachers to monitor a student's skill acquisition over time and to help the student plan ways in which pertinent skills can be practiced in vistas. Monitoring of skills pertains to those which we normally associate with academic pursuits as well as those in the interpersonal and intrapersonal domain.



.....  
*The learners function within  
 the unifying context of  
 exploration, and it becomes the  
 focus for many activities—  
 the hub of the wheel with the  
 activities as the spoke.*  
 .....



### Extension

Clusters also provide time for indepth pursuit of a personal interest, either alone or in a group. All learners, regardless of age, are encouraged to follow their interests and build upon them. In some cases, groups of students come together and work with a teacher to formally study a topic, such as genetics, stoichiometry, astronomy, additional foreign languages, specific works of art, literature and music, a particular historical episode or event, formal geometry, trigonometry, and so on.

### Democratic Practices

Cluster groups represent the base unit for practicing pure democratic skills in a democratic environment. Clusters combine to form the house, which is also run democratically. The community of three hundred students is an excellent configuration for implementing representative democracy. The relationship across communities (district level) lends itself to something akin to a mini-United Nations. This practice is a student's primary source for learning about the system of American government, including the notions of law, constitutions, legal arbitration, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Students may also experiment within their house with additional forms of government.

### Cross-Age and Peer Tutoring

Tutoring is an opportunity for a student to learn by teaching. It also reinforces the emphasis this model places on stewardship. The K-12 cross-age configuration of the house makes it easy to schedule students to work with peers of other ages.

### Sharing and Listening

A small group which stays together over a continuous period of time offers an excellent opportunity for students to be listened to and to learn to listen.

### Community Service

Clusters, houses, and even communities combine to work on long-term community projects which are far more difficult to envision or complete in shorter time blocks.

### Decision-Making/Planning

The mission statement of this model compels graduates to be clear, rational decision-makers. As with vistas, when students are in clusters, they are given many opportunities to plan, assess, and make decisions. The cluster teacher is also an automatic member of a student's conference planning team.

### Music

A portion of each cluster period is devoted to sharing music by performing, practicing, or listening.

### Movement

A portion of each cluster period is devoted to stretching and a short period of physical activity.

### Self-Assessment/Reflection

Reflection is essential in the process of maturation. Through discussion, sharing responses to literature, keeping a journal, and other behaviors, reflection is valued and is consciously built into a child's day.

## Passages

On a quarterly basis, students have planning sessions with their conference planning team. The purpose of these conferences is twofold: 1) to plan appropriate future vistas for the learner and 2) to assess and monitor progress. When the conference planning team decides that a student is ready to move into the next cluster, a special event occurs, a *passage*. A student celebrates five passages in his or her K-12 experience.

The first passage is held prior to entering the system. The substance of this conference is welcoming the child and parent(s) to school, and assessing what skills, interests, and wishes the learner brings with him or her. From

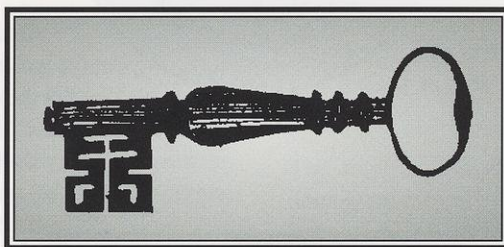
the beginning, the child is respected as a unique individual who has much to learn but also much to offer.

The next three passages occur when the child moves from one cluster to the next, at approximately ages eight, eleven and fourteen. A passage is different from a typical conference planning session in that it is more summative in nature. It is a time to reflect on progress over a three-to-four-year period and measure growth over the long-term. Formal assessments are made regarding skill competence, pacing through benchmarks, exposure to a variety of organizing concepts, and understanding of major themes, such as systems. These conferences are taken seriously by all who are involved but also are viewed as a celebration of what has been accomplished and a glimpse into what is ahead. Students typically cull their portfolios at this time and make decisions about what they want to keep as part of a representative record of work samples.

The fifth passage is a very personal graduation. In this conference students are asked to demonstrate a clear understanding of connections among the various organizing concepts and the interrelated nature among the themes. It is also an opportunity for the entire house to celebrate with them. Like the other passages, it is a performance—an opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned and share dreams for the future.

## Vistas

Vistas are open-ended, cross-disciplinary experiences. A vista is more than a traditional unit in that it cuts across all the disciplines and is tended as an immersion in related activities that are tied to that organizing concept. Specific activities change depending upon the learners who are involved in the vista.





The learners function within the unifying context of exploration, and it becomes the focus for many activities—the hub of the wheel with the activities as the spoke. Learners are challenged to explore perceived mental and/or physical limits and work to exceed these limits. They explore their own physiology, mental health, the role that predictions have played throughout history in exploration, and so on. A student generally works beneath the umbrella of one organizing concept for a period of forty-five days, although they may “import” appropriate general content statements from another organizing concept if it fits the vista they are planning. They may also continue to monitor studies begun in previous vistas.

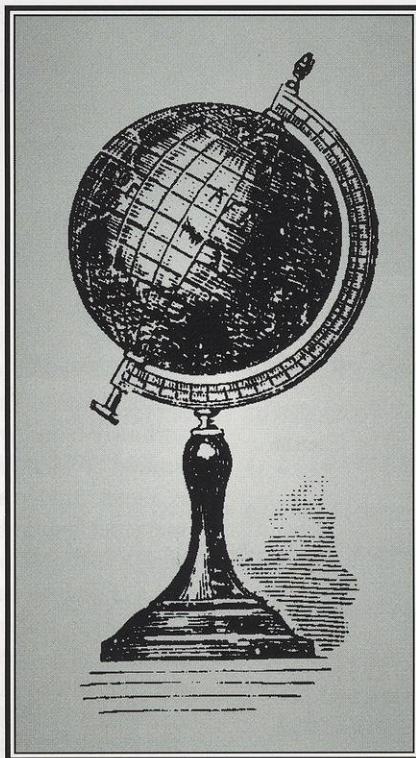
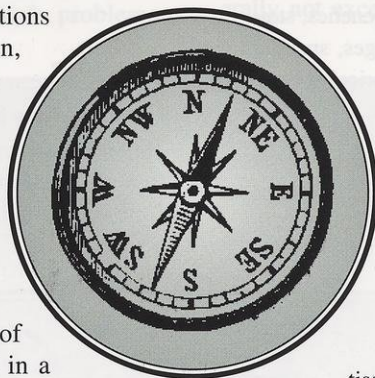
Within an organizing concept, learners of all ages and abilities work as individuals and in a variety of groups.

#### Accountability

Vistas are built upon benchmarks that each graduate is expected to understand in order to be a literate citizen. The activities within a vista become the vehicles for addressing the general content. Although learners are encouraged to engage in activities that interest them, they are obliged to demonstrate an understanding of the benchmarks. Learners are always encouraged to apply the specific concepts in the benchmarks in the following contexts: 1) How does it pertain to me? 2) To my community? 3) To my state or region? 4) To the nation? 5) To the world? A database is maintained for each learner, monitoring progress through the benchmarks, skills, and such selected themes as systems, models, patterns of change, and trade-offs.

#### Vista Selection

For each learner there is a conference group consisting of the learner, two educators (the current cluster teacher), and two other adults (parents, when possible). The primary purpose of this group is to help the learner plan which vistas would be most appropriate at a given time and to monitor progress across the years. The advantage of this group is that it remains stable over time and gives parents a real opportunity to be involved in their child's education. Young people who demonstrate responsibility are given a significant voice in choosing vistas. Those who are less responsible are given more guidance.



Each learner is expected to demonstrate an understanding of each core concept of the benchmarks before graduation.

In this model it is possible that some learners might stay in the system slightly longer than the typical thirteen years and that some might move through more quickly.

#### Staffing

A vista is staffed by a small team of teachers with a variety of expertise as well as community resources, older citizens, and others who lend expertise to the learning environment. Teachers work in collaborative ways with university students and staff and members of the business community.

Because of the cross-disciplinary nature of the vistas and the rich variety of the learning experiences, many teachers do not have the expertise or the training to work with all the concepts in any vista. The fact that teachers cannot guide the learning for something they do not understand themselves has often been

identified as a primary reason for students' misconceptions. This also accounts for students' lack of attention to certain subject areas, particularly science, in the elementary grades.

When vista teachers are working in an area in which they lack familiarity, the role of the teacher becomes that of co-learner. It is acknowledged that in this circumstance, teachers are not as likely to be able to raise questions that help students make connections. The trade-off is the genuine excitement that is experienced in learning and the modeling that the teachers provide. They, too, are life-long learners who are constantly enriching their own knowledge. And through their experience, they build the base necessary to work with learners in more effective ways.

The Wisconsin Academy serves as fiscal agent for the project in Wisconsin and also serves as the center for telecommunications among the participants, connecting the Wisconsin project with Washington, D.C., and the other five sites across the United States.

*This article was adapted from materials developed by the McFarland Project 2061 team, led by Deborah Larson. Larson, a curriculum specialist, is director of instruction for the McFarland schools and head of Project 2061 in Wisconsin.*



# Letters to the Editor

The winter issue of the *Review* is a beauty! It should win the academy many kudos from your readership.

I never dreamed Columbus and the *Seeds of Change* project would become so demanding. I have lived in airplanes for the past eighteen months—five trips to the Caribbean alone in 1992. When I recover my equilibrium I hope to write something about the Columbus experience. If I do, I will give the *Review* the right of first refusal.

Herman J. Viola  
National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C.

I wish to thank you for the thoughtful review which you gave my book *Lorine Niedecker: Solitary Plover*. When I presented the essay as a paper to the University of Wisconsin Women's Studies Conference, I was dismayed to learn how few of the women had ever heard of Niedecker. Thank you for helping the book find its intended audience through the *Review*.

Phyllis Walsh  
Richland Center, Wisconsin

I took three issues of the *Review* with me on my boat and read them from cover to cover. Excellent! As an historian, I especially enjoyed the article by Jack Stark, "A Case of Frontier Justice: The State of Wisconsin vs. Dubay." The mention of Portage in the 1850-60s was of special interest, because in my next book I hope to develop the history of the Fox/Wisconsin/Mississippi waterway.

George Nau Burrige  
Oneida, Wisconsin

The fall issue of the *Review* has arrived, and in the same mail Bill Camplin's schedule for the Cafe Carpe. Seldom does the mailman do so well. What really gave me a tingle was finding something of mine between the same covers with something of Ellen Hunnicutt's. I've read everything she has published . . . her pages just hum. I most certainly liked the way the "stiles" piece was presented, and your note gave it a nice international perspective.

Robert Hillebrand  
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

I read the winter issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* from cover to cover. The Catlin article is just fascinating—absorbing, really. And those wonderful art pieces!

Every time I read about and think about Wisconsin, I realize what a big chunk of me is imbedded there. I love the place and feel deeply grateful to have grown up in that part of the world. Too bad it's so far from Alaska.

We're having a very serious and beautiful winter here, lots and lots of snow, between spates of cold and clear conditions. The land is deeply buried in powder—a rare thing along the coast and not destined to last. If the snow does stay, we'll have starvation among the deer, I'm afraid. When they're stressed like this, you can get very close to them—on occasion you can walk to within five feet.

Richard Nelson  
Sitka, Alaska

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* is a beautiful magazine and does great credit to Catlin and his work. Such a presentation has been needed for a long time.

Wilson Hall  
Shorter College  
Rome, Georgia

I have just finished reading the entire winter issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. Your article on Catlin is excellent! The entire issue is full of fine essays and beautiful artwork. Congratulations!

Ronald N. Satz  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

I'm delighted with the Utpatel wood engravings that illustrated my story ["Eagle Days"] and the content and look of the magazine. This is a superb issue [winter], and I'm very pleased to appear in its colorful pages.

Larry Edgerton  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

I read the *Wisconsin Academy Review* cover to cover and really enjoy the magazine. I'm a Wisconsin native recently returned to teach in Wisconsin after three years in Alabama, and I'm thrilled to be driving through cow corn corridors to work again, rediscovering all the wonder in Wisconsin I've forgotten. The *Review* helps me do that.

Ronald J. Rindo  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh



## Continued from page 2

Award-winning author Martha Bergland is one of the most distinguished fiction writers in Wisconsin today. We have had the benefit of her expertise on the *Review* editorial committee during the past two years, and in this issue we present the first two chapters of her forthcoming novel, *Idle Curiosity*. The excerpts are enhanced by the art of Suzanne Kay Vinmans.

We are pleased to welcome new members to the *Wisconsin Academy Review* editorial committee: Susan Engberg, author, Milwaukee; Ellen Kort, poet and historian, Appleton; Dale Kushner, founder of The Writers' Place, Madison; William A. Linton, president and CEO, Promega Corp.; Kevin Lynch, arts and music critic, *The Capital Times*; and Curt Meine, International Crane Foundation (and Aldo Leopold biographer), Baraboo.

On April 21, 23, and 25 in Madison, Academy fellow Roland Johnson will conduct the world premiere of *The Shining Brow*, an opera based on the life of Frank Lloyd Wright. In connection with this gala event, the work of Wright's renowned photographer, Pedro Guerrero, will be exhibited in the Wisconsin Academy Gallery April 1-30. There will be an opportunity to meet Guerrero at a reception on April 22 at the Academy. For a complete schedule of related lectures, performances, programs, and tours, contact the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau, (608) 255-2537, or the Wisconsin Academy. For opera ticket information, call (608) 266-9055.



Frank Lloyd Wright, 1953. Photo by Pedro E. Guerrero, © 1975. Reprinted with permission.

### OFFICERS

Daniel H. Neviaser, President  
Robert P. Sorensen, President-Elect  
Julie Stafford, Past President  
Roger Grothaus, Vice President-Sciences  
Gerard McKenna, Vice President-Arts  
Denise Sweet, Vice President-Letters  
Gerd H. Zoller, Secretary/Treasurer

### COUNCILORS

Ody J. Fish, Pewaukee  
Harry W. Fry, Bristol  
Lee Halgren, Platteville  
James Haney, Madison  
Sheila Kaplan, Kenosha  
Mildred Larson, Eau Claire  
Nancy Parlin, New Richmond  
John Thomson, Mount Horeb  
Carl Weigell, Milwaukee

### REVIEW EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Susan Engberg, Milwaukee  
Ellen Kort, Appleton  
Dale Kushner, Madison  
William A. Linton, Madison  
Kevin Lynch, Madison  
Curt Meine, Baraboo  
Bud Hudson, Waukesha  
David Graham, Ripon  
Patrick Farrell, Milwaukee

### SUSTAINING MEMBERS/CONTRIBUTORS

Barbara Doty  
Harry W. Fry  
Ben and Ann Peckham  
Promega Corporation  
Science Outreach, University of  
Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
Verner Suomi  
John and Shirley Wilde

### PATRON MEMBERS/CONTRIBUTORS

Karl Andersen and Carolyn Heidemann  
Ira and Ineva Baldwin  
Exxon Corporation  
Terry Haller  
Heurikon Corporation  
Mrs. Rudolph Louis Kraemer  
Neviaser Investments  
Martha Peterson  
Julie Stafford  
Gerald and Marion Viste  
Wisconsin Power and Light







WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW  
1922 University Avenue  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Second Class Postage  
Paid at Madison, WI