



LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Number 36, Spring/Summer 1998

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Photos of Jack Fry by
Greg Anderson

From the president

As I write this column, I am deeply impressed by the support you have shown to the UW-Madison libraries. When one realizes that in the past five years library budgets at UW-Madison have been stagnant while other Big Ten libraries have seen budget increases of 5 to 10 percent each year (see accompanying chart), it becomes quite clear how important the Friends truly are to the libraries' future.

In the past few years, the Friends have:

- provided twenty grants for visiting scholars to conduct research in campus libraries;
- helped create a volunteer program that supports ongoing programs;
- funded nearly \$33,000 (more than \$15,000 this semester alone) in direct grants to campus libraries for special projects or purchases not covered by annual budgets; and
- sponsored an annual lecture series which has included historian Gerda Lerner, novelist Anne Lamott, Oxford University Library Director David Vaisey, and this year, author Marianna De Marco Torgovnick.

As you can tell by this list of achievements, our book sales and increased membership enable us to assist campus libraries with direct grants, often of a very practical nature, while our distinguished lecture series has given us new visibility within the academic community. Both the lecture series and the book sales were inaugurated during the presidency of Frank Horlbeck, a longtime member of the Friends board of directors and a fervent supporter of the libraries.

The Friends are now known to be a lively and vital organization. The strong support of GLS Director Ken Frazier is extraordinary and is greatly appreciated. Deborah Reilly works hard to keep us on track and out of trouble. The board members show very strong devotion, and Development Specialist John Tortorice is unparalleled in his expertise and service to the Friends.

I am always grateful for the commitment and guidance of our vivacious Vice-President Trudy Barash. It is a great pleasure to know that in the fiftieth year of its existence the Friends will continue to shine brightly as an outstanding resource of our extraordinary libraries and of our great university. My sincere thanks to you all.

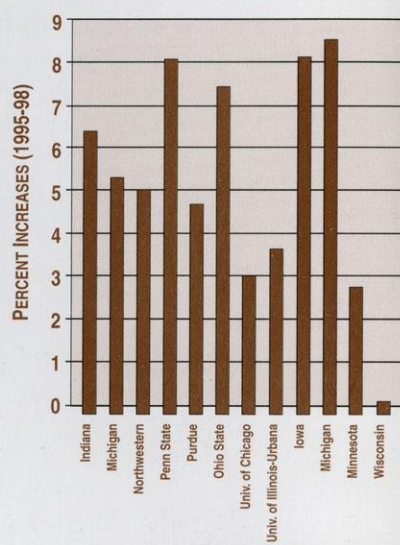
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President

Friends of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLECTION
BUDGETS: 3-YEAR AVERAGE



Contents



Cover story: A life of serendipity 5

Jack Fry, who spent a lifetime as a physicist, has been described by colleagues as a Renaissance scientist. With insatiable curiosity, he pursues the secrets of violins and the stories of ordinary people.



Sparking alternative journal publishing 11

The global system of scholarly communication may encounter a sea change in the coming decade, sparked by a growing coalition of academic libraries following an idea from the UW-Madison.



Friends award grants to campus library programs 13

The Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries have awarded nearly twenty grants totaling more than \$15,000. The record amount is possible through highly successful semiannual book sales.



The art of translation 14

The work of a nineteenth-century naturalist, who is also Iceland's most famous poet, is suddenly accessible to the world. The project is also a creative new model for scholarly publishing.



Writer's Page: Dr. Dolittle and the acquisitive life 20

Marianna DeMarco Torgovnick, an English professor at Duke University and the author of *Crossing Ocean Parkway*, describes a happy rediscovery of Dr. Dolittle. She is the 1998 Friends annual lecturer.



The 'artists of fire' and the Duveen Collection 23

Alchemists, the "artists of fire," and their laboratories were an object of fascination for centuries. Their symbolism impressed Carl Jung, William Blake, and William Butler Yeats.



The *Electronic Reader* opens a window to the past 25

Firsthand accounts lead the curious on a happy exploration through the *Wisconsin Electronic Reader*. This exciting new library Web site offers stories, poems, essays, letters, and more than 2000 images.

1997 Honor Roll

More than 700 gave money, materials, and time to the UW-Madison libraries last year.



A life of serendipity

by Don Johnson

Finding the answers to profound secrets in music, history, or physics has been a lifelong quest for William “Jack” Fry.

“The joy of serendipity . . . of discovery,” says Fry, is a powerful force.

It has driven him to scour the backrooms of junk dealers in Italy for what invariably turns out to be valuable manuscripts, books, and artifacts that can be preserved in the campus libraries.

It is what led him to the top of Mount Haleakala in Hawaii to study gamma rays emanating from space.

And it is also what drives his insatiable curiosity about what imparts “soul” to the sound of the great violins of Stradivari and Guarneri.

To the uninitiated, these ventures seem like Quixotic windmill tilting or trying to scale an iceberg. Yet, Fry has had remarkable successes in all of them, enough perhaps that any one of these achievements would be enough for a lifetime.

Micro history

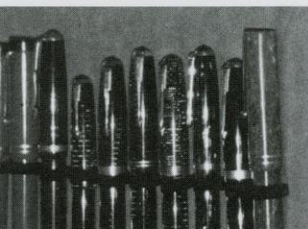
As he looks out over Lake Mendota from his west side home in Madison, Fry recalls a moment in his past, a bit of what he calls micro history that became a defining event in his life.

“As a kid I was more interested in music than anything else,” Fry says. He was talented enough as a high school junior to play in the Des Moines (Iowa) Symphony. When he entered Iowa State University in Ames, about 90 miles from where he was born, Fry enrolled in electrical engineering and music. His music professor, violinist/composer Ilza



Sash worn around the neck showing that someone had participated in the Fascists' march on Rome in 1922.

Opposite: Jack Fry and 1630 German Luther Bible with copper plate illustrations by Matthaeus Merian. The engravings are set in the German landscape rather than Jerusalem.



Jack Fry's fountain pens are one of his many collecting interests. He carries several with him to meetings and conferences.

Niemack, convinced him that music was not his true calling.

"She was frank and kind and said being a professional violinist was not in my future," he says. He settled instead on a major in electrical engineering and graduated in 1943. After a four-year stint as an electronics engineer in the U.S. Navy conducting rocket research, Fry returned to Iowa State to earn his doctorate in electrical engineering.

Physics

Fry's work as a graduate student on unstable fundamental particles given off in the decay process caught the eye of Enrico Fermi, winning him a post-doctoral fellowship at the Fermi Lab in Chicago. Fry, a member of the Physics Department faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1952, has been on the leading edge of physics research almost since his career began.

Not only did he achieve impressive results, but he was willing to take on tough questions in a great variety of subjects.

In addition to Fulbright and Guggenheim fellowships, Fry won a Hilldale Award the first year they were given. The Hilldale Award honors a single faculty member from each of the UW-Madison's four divisions: social sciences, biological sciences, humanities, and physical sciences.

"Jack is a scientist in almost the Renaissance manner," according to Jon Moline, a former UW-Madison philosophy professor, quoted in a local newspaper article about Fry. "He is analytical, scrupulous about measurement, an exemplar of clarity in expression and wholly undogmatic."

Fry's physics research falls into the highly complex area of fundamental particles produced in high-energy reactions. It has formed the basis for many contemporary advances in understanding subatomic matter.

He has pursued his research using a variety of methods. One is examining emulsions. The passage of charged subatomic particles is

recorded in the emulsion in the same way that ordinary black and white photographic film records a picture. This permanent record of the paths of charged particles may be observed through a microscope.

It explains his interest and ability to discuss film speeds, exposure, and depth of field easily with a photographer shooting pictures at his house.

After 1964 Fry pursued his research using bubble chambers. The chamber helps in measuring quantities and characteristics of particles produced by bombarding a substance with beams from an "atom smasher," or particle accelerator. It traces the tracks of bubbles formed by subatomic particles as they pass through superheated liquid hydrogen.

For example, when he described a new kind of atomic particle—a peculiar little relative of the electron and proton called the lambda hyperon—it required thousands of pictures of a trail of bubbles in its track. The work is much like photographing a stream of bubbles rising in a glass of beer, except that the hyperon is moving at about 11 million miles a minute.

The particles Fry was studying are unstable and undergo rapid transformation into lighter particles. Even though they live only one 10,000th of a second, they can travel as much as a few inches at the speed of light.

Fry's research also took him to the top of Mount Haleakala in Hawaii for high-altitude studies of cosmic radiation, particularly high energy gamma rays produced by celestial bodies.

His work has made Fry "a senior statesman in the high energy physics business," says H.T. Richards, former physics department chairman. Fry is credited with being founder and principal investigator of the Wisconsin High Energy Physics Group, recognized as one of the strongest university-based research operations in the field. It encompasses the research of more than one-third of the UW-Madison physics faculty.

Fry recalls that when he was starting the High Energy Physics Group at the UW-Madison, he applied for a \$5000 grant to fund a microscope to look at nuclear emulsions. The agency to which he applied denied the grant.

"They did not want to duplicate the work of a guy done earlier in Chicago, which happened to be me." Until his retirement, he was senior advisor of the same program, which now commands \$6.5 million in support.

Collecting

It was during his first years at Madison that Fry discovered Italian culture and history. On a Fulbright grant he was lecturing on particle physics to colleagues at the universities of Padua and Milan. The University of Padua is the second oldest university in the world.

"This was a period of great awakening," says Fry about this period of collaboration. "I had no prior contact with a foreign culture. I was moved by the aesthetic appreciation of the Italians, their art, their music." Fry also taught in the Florence program from Wisconsin several times. He describes Padua as a lively university town like Madison.

Fry began to collect old books in 1957 about the time he started his collaboration with Italian colleagues.

"They were cheap; they were beautiful. And I had never seen centuries-old books before. I was so happy. As a child I had few books; I grew up in a rural community on a farm. The local school had no library. This was a new world for me. It was a discovery in many ways, including reading Italian and discovering a totally different viewpoint."

He recites achievements of Italian aesthetics with an air of amazement. "Dante lived in the thirteenth century, four hundred years before Shakespeare. Music was almost an Italian invention; *do, re, mi, so, la, ti, do* was a Venetian monk's literature. Art and aesthetics touch all forms of Italian life, even down to common things. Every town, however small, has beautiful buildings designed with great taste."

So far, materials he has given to the UW-Madison libraries number in the hundreds. These are primarily documents, growing increasingly rare, related to Italian fascism, most of which he began collecting only eight years ago, when he began to wonder how such a humanistic culture could embrace totalitarianism. Materials from common lives fascinate him. (An exhibit of materials from the

Fry Collection opens in July; see story on page 10.)

"It is the micro history that's interesting, not the big things. The common life captured in letters, small town government, the bread baker and shoemaker." Their lives were controlled by the Fascist government right down to the schoolbooks their children used.

Other material he has been collecting since the 1950s dates to the Italian Renaissance and back, some to the tenth century.

"There is a history to each piece. Discovery is the most important motivation for collecting. It can be mundane or unique," Fry says. He lovingly describes the history that each piece reveals about Italian culture or history.

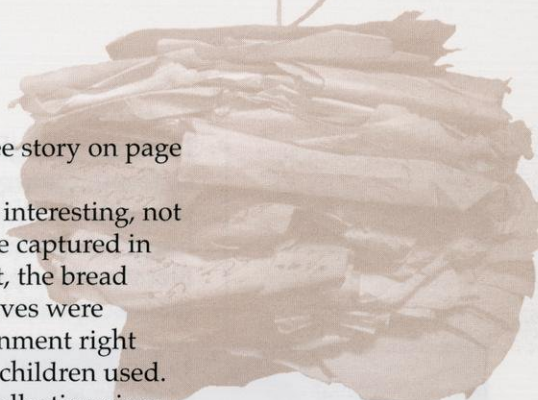
He has found diaries from people on a pilgrimage to visit the pope in Rome in the seventeenth century, descriptions of how a small chapel in Florence should be decorated in the eighteenth century, and the arrangements of how many related families lived together in wings of a blocks-long villa.

Sometimes the process of discovery is even more interesting.

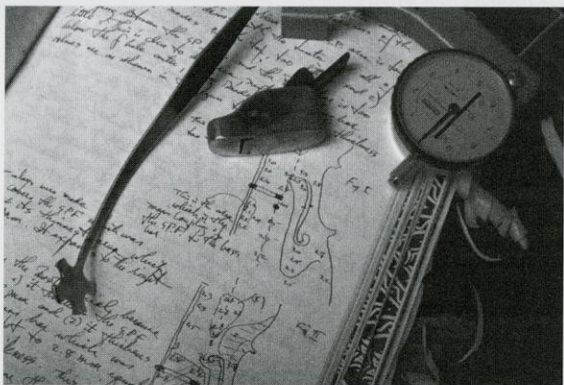
In one astounding moment, Fry saved nearly four centuries of papers from the Conselve town archives that were being hauled to the dump with a forklift. Apparently the city administrators were getting rid of the archive because they were building a new administration building. The material dated from as far back as 1570. When asked by customs "What have you got there?" Fry responded "About 75 pounds of documents that were being thrown away." "Good. Get them out of here."

Fry describes a friendship with an old man who had a tiny shop no bigger than a ten-by-ten room that seemed filled with junk. He asked the shopkeeper for old blank papers useful in restoring books. The man directed Fry to a stack of yellowing papers and manuscripts. As Fry dug through the pile, he grasped a manuscript bound in pigskin.

Papers on the string date from 1728, a filing system of the period.



Looking through it, he saw dates from the sixteenth century. A name appeared along one page—*Lodovico Ariosto*, one of the most important Italian poets at a time when Italian literature was preeminent. Fry bought the manuscript along with a few other books.



Notebook from Fry's violin research, caliper, and miniature plane.

Ariosto was the son of a captain in the service of the Este dukes of Ferrara. After his father's death in 1500, he entered the service of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, who sent him on numerous diplomatic missions, among them, to popes Julius II and

Leo X. He became governor of the Garfagnana in 1522, directed the theater at the court of Ferrara, and retired about 1526. His work was considered an important influence on many Elizabethan and seventeenth-century English writers.

The manuscript found by Fry includes 174 pages completely filled, still in their original binding. It represents one of the only documents existing from this important, undocumented period in Ariosto's life from 1524 through 1530. According to Fry's research, Ariosto was sent to the province of Garfagnana as its governor as a punishment for refusing to go to Rumania as ordered by the Este family. Garfagnana was overrun with bandits and thieves at that time, and it was Ariosto's duty to restore law and order.

The document provides impressive detail about governance, including numbers of men and horses, salaries, and insignificant items like the cost of straw for Ariosto's horses.

Other documents he has collected include two editions of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, the first printed in Nuremberg in 1486 and a

pirated edition published in 1500. The pirated copy is probably more rare than the original. The original *Chronicle* includes fourteen blank pages so that owners of the book could add in what has happened since its publication. The pirated copy does not.

He has also found original manuscripts describing the draining of a marsh and the construction of a villa, complete descriptions and drawings for a palace and church where nothing exists now, forgotten by time.

"The place for such documents is here," Fry says, "in a library where they can be preserved and used."

Violins

Since the mid-'60s, Fry has also pursued other questions that are less mysterious than subatomic matter or what happened in the lives of average Italians in the sixteenth century.

He has been researching the secrets of the great violin makers, such as Stradivari (usually referred to as Stradivarius), Amati, and Guarneri. The violins made by Antonio Stradivari in the early 1700s are considered the best in the world, putting many of today's violins to shame.

The old instruments possess a special aura and tone that is prized by performers. Because the value of old instruments increases with time, the best of them are owned and treasured by professionals or housed in special collections. A great Stradivarius violin, for example, sells for about \$3 million. He made about 3000 instruments.

"They all varied, however," observes Fry. "Not all were great."

What made the great ones truly wonderful? That body of knowledge was buried with the violin makers two-to-three hundred years ago.

"I want to make an instrument as good as the best Strad," Fry says of his goal. "Some have been better than the lesser Strads, but not as good as the best." The quest is in trying to understand why these violins are so much better than any people have been able to make since that time.

In 1964, when Fry was at the University of California-Berkeley doing particle research with the bubble chamber, he and fellow physicist Wilson Powell, who happened to be a good pianist, formed a duet. Powell borrowed a Stradivarius and a Galiano. It was the first time Fry had played a truly first-rate violin.

"There was something to these great violins," says Fry. Powell, a wealthy, kind man, was interested in identifying the acoustics.

"We needed some instruments for research, and Wilson said, 'You go out and buy what you want and send me the bill.' I could do any crazy thing I wanted."

Very little scientific work had been done on great violins. Varnish was prominent in the literature. "If you don't understand something," Fry says "blame something you don't know anything about." He dismisses many theories as just "myth and mysticism. I don't believe it is 'magic.' I think it's physics. I think it is science."

From census records of churches, we know who and when people worked for Stradivari and their age. "But we know nothing about their processes," says Fry. "Some were individualists; some were copyists. Certain things were true about them all, so something was being taught."

Concepts were understood in a vague way and used like the intuitive process that a child understands about the mechanics of a teeter-totter.

Fry set out to identify the physics involved. He traveled around the world measuring the great violins with an ingenious method: a set of magnets set up with a postage scale that could be calibrated. He was able to measure the thicknesses of the backs and tops of great violins without having to take anything apart.

Fry became the subject of a PBS special "The Great Violin Mystery," and lectured at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Ill., on "A Physicist Looks at the Violin." Fry also developed a university course, still being taught, to help musicians understand the technology of music: Physics 371-Acoustics for Musicians.

By studying the measurements of great violins, Fry found that their wood is unevenly thick, or asymmetrical. These asymmetries, he also discovered, are consistent across the great violins. The thickness graduations, when mapped, look like a lopsided bull's-eye. And the thick spots of the great violins are thinner than those of less distinguished instruments.

He describes this unevenness as what produces the different sounds of a violin. A thin "tweeter" along one F-hole produces high frequency overtones; the "rocking mode" of the bridge and sound post creates the middle range; and the "breathing mode" of air being sucked in and out the F-holes produces the low-frequency notes. Changing one changes all the others.

He has conducted literally thousands of experiments on violins. He works on either "white violins"—mass produced, unfinished instruments from Germany—or on old clunkers sold at auctions for very little.

He can do an experiment every day—take apart a violin in the evening; scrape and tap until he is satisfied; glue it back together; take the clamps off in the morning; and note what worked and what did not.

Ultimately, he found that the most important influence was the thickness controls. "Just the thickness of a piece of paper can make a tremendous difference in the sound," he says. "One of the problems in convincing people is that the sense of the variations is so small, and they are related to the shape of an instrument and the stiffness of the wood."

How does one control the sound? Fry uses a small scraper through the F-holes of the violin to scrape on the violin back. He found a tiny antique "rasp" that would have allowed

"Sometimes I have a dream that Stradivari is waving to me and saying 'Not yet'."

Stradivari to make the same adjustments through the F-holes. He uses other tools that would have been familiar to the great masters: tiny planes, scrapers, and calipers.

"Ultimately, you do the final tuning through listening and scraping. But you have to know what you are doing or you'll ruin the fiddle—the tweeter, the coupling, the inter-relationships. Three minute strokes of the scraper can be heard when the violin is played. Often, so little wood is removed, you can't see the dust."

Physics aside, the real test is whether violinists like what they hear. Apparently, Fry has passed that test admirably. He has sold hundreds of his violins, most of which have been to professional musicians. A recent buyer is a violinist with the symphony orchestra in Seoul.

"I think Jack is on the cusp of great violins," according to Rose Mary Harbison, a concert violinist and wife of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Harbison. "I think he's going to reestablish the boundaries of knowledge needed to make a great violin." It may bring great-sounding violins back within the price range of young performers.

Fry's work has caught the attention of many, including critics who think such a mystery is better left unsolved. But the genie is unlikely to go back into the bottle. Other physicists have been inspired by Fry's efforts. Bill Atwood at Stanford University started making violins in his spare time after hearing one of his lectures.

Fry is still not satisfied. "Sometimes I have a dream that Stradivari is waving to me and saying 'Not yet'," he adds.

The soulful sound of a Fry violin may be heard centuries from now, but the source of its great sound will not be a mystery. He keeps scrupulous notes of his progress. "Eventually, I hope to write a book or train someone so the information becomes accessible."

Right now, however, he is too busy with the process of discovery. Whether in Italy seeking out rare manuscripts or in his basement workshop adjusting the subtle sound of a grace note, Fry is fascinated by the process of solving mysteries.

"It's wonderful to discover things . . . Like being a detective."

Exhibit

Italian Life Under Fascism: Selections from the Jack Fry Collection

Department of Special Collections, 976 Memorial Library

Italian fascism did not allow for the differentiation between politics and daily life. What was daily life like under the Italian Fascist regime? This exhibition illuminates the nature of Italian fascism through original documents, which indicate the far-reaching intrusion of fascist ideology into all aspects of Italian life. Primary and secondary materials document the character and range of fascist propaganda and the special cult of Mussolini, which it fostered. Other materials illustrate Fascist social and educational policies, efforts to channel women's activities and foster family life and Fascist direction of youth activities. Fascist racial policies and the arts under Fascism are represented. Other items deal with Italian colonialism and the downfall of the Fascist regime. Department of Special Collections, 976 Memorial Library. Opens July 1 and continues through September 30, 1998.



Sparking alternative journal publishing

Major changes may be coming in the global system of scholarly communication. And those changes may be ignited through an initiative by sixty-six major university and research libraries, one of which is the UW-Madison.

The effort is called the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), and its existence is due in large part to Ken Frazier, director of the General Library System. Frazier initially proposed the concept at an ARL meeting in May last year.

It was an idea whose time had come. The proposal immediately led to a working group, and in less than six months the Association of Research Libraries agreed to make SPARC a new initiative. By March this year, the number of university libraries signing on as charter members has doubled.

"Throughout the higher education community," says Frazier, "there is growing dissatisfaction with a communications system that requires scholars to give away their intellectual labor to a profit-driven commercial publishing industry."

The enterprise is dominated by conglomerates that publish scientific journals for exponentially increasing prices. To circumvent those conglomerates, SPARC encourages lower-cost publishing ventures partnered with nonprofit and for-profit groups.

To understand Frazier's enthusiasm for SPARC, one has to understand what university acquisitions librarians are facing today. They're being squeezed from the inside and stretched from the outside.

Internally, journal price hikes have hit at a bad budgetary time. UW-Madison libraries have not received an acquisitions increase for the last eight years. And this year a UW System request for an additional \$5.2 million for collections was stripped from the budget for 1997-99.

Regardless of funding, the problem of ratcheted-up prices remains. That problem seems to bubble up out of bigness, and there is nobody bigger than Reed Elsevier, an Anglo-Dutch conglomerate.

Elsevier is the world's largest publisher of academic and trade journals and owns the Lexis-Nexis database company, Bowker-Saur, Butterworth's, Shepard's, the Congressional Information Service, *Lancet*, Cahners, and Martindale to name a few. They were about to get even bigger in an \$8.8 billion merger with Wolters Kluwer, but called off the deal this spring after the European Union opened a full probe into the merger.

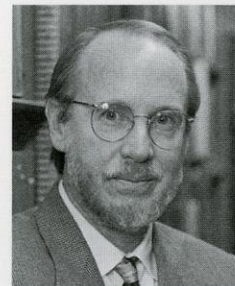
According to its Web site, Elsevier's objective is to concentrate on "must have" information and to continue its development through "organic growth and acquisition," which includes acquiring electronic publications.

This year Elsevier raised its subscription rates by an average of almost 12 percent. That comes on top of double-digit jumps in their rates for the past several years. When currency exchange rates are factored in, says Louis Pitschmann, GLS associate director for collection development, Elsevier will realize a 27 percent increase.

According to Stephen Vaughn, a UW-Madison professor of journalism and mass communication and a member of the University Library Committee, out of the 100 most expensive journals to which the UW subscribes, eighty-seven are owned by Reed-Elsevier. More than 17 percent of the library system's serial collection budget now goes to this one multinational corporation alone. Going electronic, however, is not necessarily cheaper. "In the short-run and for the foreseeable future . . . electronic versions are actually more expensive than their paper counterparts," says Vaughn.

At the same time, publishing giants have turned to cornering the market on electronic publishing and to head off profit losses to the new medium. In December, Elsevier Science announced that it was in negotiation with the nonprofit Beilstein Institute for an exclusive license to the *Beilstein Database*, a standard reference work for organic chemistry.

It was the UW-Madison libraries that pioneered a cost-saving group license agreement with Beilstein three years ago. That



Kenneth Frazier,
director of the
General Library
System

In this issue of the *Messenger*, we feature two original library publications, representing ventures into alternative publishing—translating an Icelandic poet (page 14) and exploring Wisconsin history (page 25).

"There is room for competition from new models of research communication."

was the first time institutions across the nation had banded together as buyers to negotiate lower individual prices through a group contract. The effort may have to start from scratch with future commercial licenses.

As if in a race against its buyers' ability to innovate, Elsevier is testing three models for electronic journal pricing:

- traditional subscriptions,
- a "by-the-drink" model based on usage; and
- a hybrid of the two identified as a "generalized subscription."

The last requires subscribers to prepay a fixed amount based on expected use and then draw down from that base during the year.

"The price of commercial journals has overreached the reasonable requirements of cost recovery and profitability," says Frazier. If true, the market is ripe for competition from new models of research communication.

This fall UW-Madison librarians have worked with faculty to cancel more than 500 journals. That brings the total number of cancellations to nearly 7,000 in the past twelve years.

"There is really no choice," says Frazier. "We just don't have the budget to keep them all. We're targeting publishers that have been getting away with price gouging for years. If we don't learn to say 'no,' it will never stop."

As a short-term solution, says Frazier, "we will have to allocate substantial library budget resources for increased reliance on interlibrary loans and document delivery services. We also will continue to work within the university to gain support for additional increases in the library acquisitions budget."

For long-term help, says Frazier, the entire system of scholarly communication must be rethought and reshaped, and that is where SPARC fits in.

SPARC has been charged with supporting at least five alternative publishing ventures during the next year. Those ventures will flow from partnerships between university libraries and:

- professional societies and associations,
- start-up electronic publishers that have already created publications in subject fields dominated by publishing conglomerates,
- for-profit enterprises that offer new

strategies for controlling costs and improving access to research information, and

- "visionary" enterprises, both non-profit and commercial, seeking to create entirely new economic models for scholarly communication.

The current status of the SPARC initiative can be found on its Web site at:

[<http://arll.cni.org/sparc/index.html>](http://arll.cni.org/sparc/index.html)

Among libraries worldwide, however, the SPARC initiative is not alone. Efforts to join forces are popping up in Germany and the Netherlands.

Frazier admits that faculty will remain skeptical about new publishing systems until they see their colleagues being promoted, winning grants, and being recognized for their research through those systems. But he sees signs of a sea change.

"The most significant shift I've witnessed in the last two years is the growing awareness among faculty of the need for publishing alternatives," he said. "In physics, for example, researchers do not depend primarily on journals but rely heavily on the Internet for scholarly communication."

One way to make the Internet more appealing as a publishing vehicle is to expand its capability and its speed.

Internet2, now being developed by more than 110 research universities, is the next-generation version of the current computer Internet connecting people around the world. Internet2 will operate at speeds several times faster than today's network, facilitating transmission of audio, video, photographs, and other graphics. An electronic journal, for instance, could contain video clips.

A nonprofit group has been formed to continue development of Internet2, the University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development. Chairing theUCAID board of trustees is UW-Madison Chancellor David Ward.

Ultimately, pricing remains a key issue, regardless of the medium of publication.

Louise Robbins, director of the UW-Madison School of Library and Information Studies, points out that it may take time for these projects to "undercut the stranglehold these few companies have."

Friends award grants to campus libraries

Nineteen grants from the Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries will go to campus library programs this spring. The funds will help purchase encyclopedias, databases, exhibit cases, and medieval history books. They will also support microfilming projects, preservation equipment, and conservation efforts.

The awards total more than \$15,000, a record amount, made possible by the success of the semiannual book sales. The following projects received funding.

- The *UW Archives* will preserve photographs from the Meuer Photoart Album Collection. The project will produce copy negatives from 26,000 black and white photographs taken by William Meuer from 1888 to 1935. Topics range from faculty portraits, athletics, students, governors of Wisconsin, and images of Madison.

- The *Art Library* will acquire an encyclopedia of world architecture.

- The *Bibliographer for Africana/Near East Studies* will be able to acquire CD-ROMs related to the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, a critical resource in Hebrew and Semitic studies that only recently became available.

- The *Bibliographer for European Humanities* will use funds to acquire needed material in early modern European history and in classical archeology and medieval history.

- The *Bibliographer for the History of Science* will purchase the Pingeron Archive, an important resource in the study of eighteenth-century French technology.

- The *Bibliographer for Social Sciences* will purchase a one-year trial subscription to *CD-ROM Agency Europe*, which may provide researchers important insights into the day-to-day development of European Union policies.

- The *Biology Library* will acquire equipment for preservation.

- *College Library* will add to its ethnic studies collection with the *Asians in America* series.

- The *Conservation Lab* will purchase various equipment needed for repairing damaged books.

- The *Exhibits Committee* of Memorial Library will purchase two exhibit cases.

- The *Geography Library* will focus on preserving selected out-of-print serials.

- The *Law Library* plans to purchase conservation equipment.

- The *Music Library* will have conservation work done on its Americana Collection, which contains approximately 30,000 titles of nineteenth-century sheet music. They will also microfilm the complete run of the *Wisconsin School Musician*.

- The *Reference Department* at Memorial Library will acquire the ten-volume *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

- The *Silver Buckle Press* will have a rare specimen book, which is still used as a standard reference and research tool, mylar encapsulated to protect it during frequent use.

- The *Department of Special Collections* will acquire book holders and exhibit equipment.

- The *Women's Studies Librarian* for the University of Wisconsin System will acquire videotapes highlighting aspects of women's history, distributed by *Women Make Movies* in New York.



Maypole dance on Bascom Hill (circa 1917). From the Meuer Photoart Album Collection in the UW-Madison Archives. A Friends grant will help preserve 26,000 black and white photographs taken by William Meuer from 1888 to 1935.

O Hallgrímsson.

New in the Libraries

by Dick Ringler



Jónas Hallgrímsson
(1807-1845)

The art of translation

Why would I—or anyone else for that matter—want to spend six years translating a nineteenth-century Icelandic poet who is virtually unknown outside his own country? The answer—if there is one—will be found on the libraries' Web site, an electronic, and only, publication of this work <<http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/Jonas/>>. Some of the difficulties associated with translation in general might be addressed by discussing the specific problems of translating this poet.

Jónas Hallgrímsson is generally acknowledged to be the most important Icelandic poet of modern times.¹ He worked in a highly formal tradition that is unfamiliar to most English readers. In attempting to find a suitable method for translating his poetry into English, I ultimately settled on three principles:

- the translations must use relatively simple and straightforward English language and unforced, idiomatic sentence structure;
- they must suggest the complexity of the formal features of the Icelandic originals and the virtuosity of the poet's technique; and
- they must convey the basic meaning of the originals as faithfully and clearly as possible.

Writing Straightforward and Idiomatic English Verse

A successful English translation of a poem by Jónas Hallgrímsson will strike readers as a work that might conceivably have been written today. I therefore strove to avoid all conscious and deliberate archaizing in my translations, as well as any peculiar diction or strained syntax. I attempted to make the translations as fluent and supple as possible and hoped they would give the impression of spontaneity.

What I tried to achieve can perhaps best be suggested by comparing my version of Hallgrímsson's "Heylóarvísa" with the earlier English version by Watson Kirkconnell.² My version is printed below on the right, with its alliterating sounds indicated in boldface type. (Patterned alliteration was an obligatory feature of Icelandic verse in Hallgrímsson's day.)

The Golden Plover

Gay the little plover flew
Swooping up the morning blue,
Singing in the light:
"Praise the bounteousness of God!
See how green is every clod,
See how heaven is bright!

"On the heath I have a nest,
Where my little babies rest,
Waiting me at home;
Them my mother-love supplies
Tender worms and pretty flies,
When once more I come."

Home the little plover sped
(Radiant shone the sun o'erhead,
Sweet earth's flowery floor)
Laden sought her nestlings small—
But the crows had crunched them all
Half an hour before.

Plover Song

"**Dirrindee!**" the plover sings,
darting up on little wings
bathed in morning beauty:
"Praise the **gifts of God** on high,
grassy fields and shining sky---
that's our daily duty!

"**Back inside the berry patch**
babes of mine eat all I catch,
this and that and the other:
bees and wasps with burnished wings,
bugs and worms and tasty things
brought them by their mother."

Over **meadows moist** with dew,
moorlands, brooks, the plover flew
home to seek her haven.
Not a word the **nestlings** said:
each and every one was dead,
eaten by a raven.

Imitating Complex Forms

The Ringler version of "Heylóarvísa" conforms better than the Kirkconnell version to the first of the three principles. But it conforms better to the second principle, too, since it reproduces both the rhyme scheme and alliteration pattern of the Icelandic original.³ Kirkconnell uses a different rhyme scheme and makes no attempt to imitate the alliteration.

In translating lyric poems like those of Jónas Hallgrímsson, in which recurrent acoustic patterns are responsible for much of the effect the poet wishes to produce, imitation of the form of the originals is highly desirable. Consider Jónas's elegy on his friend Jón Kjærnested, where acoustic devices of this kind are unusually abundant. In addition to patterned alliteration and endrhyme, we have internal rhyme of the second stressed syllable in each line.

Jónas's autograph of the Icelandic original of "At an Old Grave, 1841," contained in a letter to a friend. The original manuscript is in the Regional Archive for Zealand in Copenhagen. This is the first time images of the manuscript have been published.

At an Old Grave, 1841

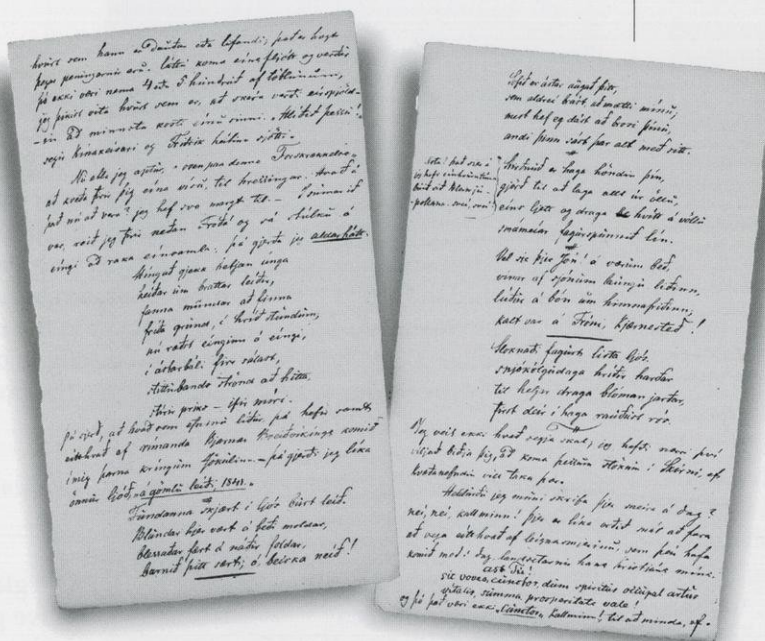
Hardship! though your unhappy son
lies here secure in nature's keeping,
clad in eternal night and sleeping—
his soul's enduring weal is won.

Glazed is your eye—how free from guile,
how kind in my young estimation!
It made me sigh with admiration,
seeing the triumph of your smile!

Stilled are your thin, deft hands (how high
their art had been! our envy lingers),
agile as winsome maidens' fingers
laying white linen out to dry.

Bide here, my old friend, in your bed
until the golden tones of seven
trumpets remold the earth and heaven!
Iceland was cold, oh Kjærnested.

Artistry knows her cue to cry:
wintertime snows lay waste the flowers,
waiting to close their tale of hours—
the reddest rose is first to die.



To translate a poem like this into free verse or prose is to lose everything the poet worked so hard to achieve—everything that shows his mastery of his craft. In this case the translation, like the original, strives for smoothness and an effect of spontaneity: it seeks to give the impression that the text is jumping effortlessly through the series of hoops placed in its way by the form.

How, in actual practice, does one go about translating poetry of such complexity? I have learned what I know about the process through long (and often frustrating) trial and error, as well as through careful study of Hallgrímsson's own procedures in constructing his poems.⁴

I begin by having as good a grasp as possible of the meaning (or meanings) of the Icelandic original. Then, in constructing a tentative English version of each stanza, I first establish the

rhymes, choosing—if possible—words that express thematically important ideas. (Word lists in rhyming dictionaries are very helpful at this point.) Once a stanza has been composed, it is very difficult to alter its rhyming words.

The next step is to fill in the text of the rest of the stanza, conveying the meaning of the original as accurately as possible within the framework established by the rhyming words.

Once the entire stanza has been drafted in rough form, I start working on the alliteration, substituting—for words standing tentatively in the text—alliterating synonyms or alternatives. Alliterants can be identified (laboriously) by plodding through a dictionary, where everything is alphabetized by first letter, or (more rapidly and effectively) by running through lists of alliterants in one's head—an occupation ideally suited to long cross-country drives and tedious committee meetings.

I have generally found it useful to remember that Hallgrímsson's poems, like lyric poems in general, tend to move toward some sort of climax and closure. It is important that the rhyme and rhetoric of the translation, too, show a snap and crackle at the end and not simply peter out.

There is no denying that all this takes a good deal of time and effort. But practice makes perfect (or at least skillful). And striving for perfection (or skillfulness) in phrasing and diction is of crucial importance, since it is a fundamental axiom that no poem is stronger than its weakest word.

Translating Accurately

It is obvious that a translator constrained by the first two principles will have to relax some of the demands of the third. But he ought not to relax too many. "A translation perfectly close is impossible," William Cowper wrote in 1791. "But i[f] we cannot be unimpeachably faithful, that is no reason why we should not be as faithful as we can."⁵

To exemplify the challenges posed by the third principle, I include here my version of Hallgrímsson's "Ólafsvíkurenni," preceded by a slavishly literal prose translation (my own) of the same Icelandic text. The example is chosen because it suggests both a translator's freedom to alter certain features of the original (always in the interest of the first two principles, of course) and his obligation to hold himself fairly strictly to others. The subject is a journey on horseback taken by the poet four years before he wrote the poem.

Ólafsvík Headland

[Literal Translation]

We rode along the foreshore
between rocks and sea
beneath Ólafsvík Headland
out near the jaws of the land.

The fjord, bright and broad,
glitters on one side,
twelve full leagues across—
(only) two ells on the other.

Ought I to go now
straight into this black cliff
or—better—head out to you,
Eggert my friend?

Ólafsvík Headland

The glad sun gleamed in the shallows
as we galloped along the sand
under Ólafsvík Headland,
out near the jaws of the land.

Blazing and broad, the fjord
basks there calmly enough:
twelve leagues' travel across it,
two short yards to the bluff.

Ought I to turn and enter
into this black cliffside?
Or sink down beside you, Eggert,
in the sunless depths where you died?

Libraries publish professor's research on Internet

First-of-a-kind publication

by Jennifer A. Galloway

When campus librarian Dennis Hill approached Dick Ringler about putting his research about an Icelandic poet on the Internet, the UW-Madison professor's first response was "no way."

"I said, 'That's out of my area and it would be a big detour,'" says Ringler, a professor of Scandinavian studies and English.

A year later, Ringler has a new attitude about scholarship on the Internet and he may even have created a new model for electronic publishing. He and Peter Gorman, an automation librarian at UW-Madison, have developed a richly detailed and interactive World Wide Web site dedicated to the life and work of Jónas Hallgrímsson, a nineteenth-century naturalist who is Iceland's most famous poet. He is relatively unknown outside the country because of the difficulty of translating his work into English.

Gorman says the Web site is unusual because it electronically provides comprehensive scholarly material, a niche relatively unfilled on the Internet.

"The technology is straightforward," Gorman says. "The content is what is really different."

Ringler's English translations of fifty of Hallgrímsson's works—and the versions in Icelandic—provide the literary foundation for the Web site. But since a good deal of Hallgrímsson's work relates to the natural environment and his homeland, Ringler and Gorman added scores of photographs, maps, and lithographs that back up the texts.

The Web site also contains images of surviving manuscripts and even folk music renditions and recorded readings, in English, Icelandic, and Danish, of Hallgrímsson's poems. Such features can provide viewers and readers with an intensely intimate understanding of the work, Ringler says.

Gorman says the venture is exciting for librarians because it helps them fulfill their traditional mission of preserving open access to information.

"We want to explore what it takes to produce original scholarly material on the Web," he says.

The challenge of creating new models for scholarly publishing is becoming increasingly important as the print publishing market becomes consolidated and prices for academic journals rise sharply. UW-Madison and its director of libraries, Ken Frazier, are involved in a national effort to create cheaper ways of publishing research.

The work here has attracted the attention of Icelandic cultural institutions and the government, which flew Ringler and Frazier to Reykjavík for the official opening of the Web site on the 190th anniversary of Hallgrímsson's birth.



"... It was while shivering in a fishing boat on my way back from Drangey, drenched to the skin by an Icelandic downpour, that it slowly and damply dawned on me that my translation was in need of some heavy revision, if it was going to do justice to Grettir and his last moments."

Jónas Hallgrímsson

The UW-Madison General Library System has published a Scandinavian scholar's research on the World Wide Web, an innovative and highly accessible approach to scholarly publishing. The *Encyclopedia Britannica Internet Guide* highly recommends this new publication by the libraries and calls it "a detailed, scholarly, and complete resource to study this poet's literary contributions." See *Jónas Hallgrímsson: Selected Poetry and Prose* (edited and translated with notes and commentary by Dick Ringler) at: <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/Jonas/>

Courtesy of the Wisconsin State Journal



Profile of the poet
(self-portrait)

In translating the first two lines, I took the liberty of suppressing a number of features of coastal scenery—the foreshore, the tidal rocks, the wind-ruffled sea—to play up the idea of sunlight and brightness (which is introduced and emphasized in the second stanza). Taking this liberty enabled me to set up a balance—emphasized by word echoes—between the cheerful scenery and mood with which the translation opens and the gloomy image of an underwater grave with which it ends. This contrast, implicit in the original, is made explicit in the translation. In doing so, of course, the translation departs from the letter of the original—but only to better realize its spirit.

The opposite problem arose in translating the second line of the poem. Hallgrímsson was a geographer and geologist and many of his poems describe particular localities in Iceland. I came to feel that stock landscape features should be added to translations only if they are actually present in the landscapes described. This meant that I often had to visit the places in question to find out exactly what they looked like and what constraints might exist on substituting one kind of landscape feature for another. At one point the second line of “Ólafsvík Headland” ended with the word “strand”: a safe choice, topographically, but an undesirably “poetic” word and also (in the context) general and uninteresting. “Sand” is preferable: specific and concrete. But is there sand below Ólafsvík Headland? There is. Verifying that point required a visit.

Many such visits were necessary, in fact, before the translation project was concluded. These visits sometimes resulted in subtle, sometimes substantial changes to translations in progress. Below, for example, are two versions of “Drangey,” an early draft (without alliteration) dating from *before* a visit to the remote island where the saga hero Grettir the Strong met his death, and the final version (with alliteration) dating from *after*. It was while shivering in a fishing boat on my way back from Drangey, drenched to the skin by an Icelandic downpour, that it slowly and damply dawned on me that my translation was in need of some heavy revision if it was going to do justice to Grettir and his last moments.

Drangey

Tindastóll's glimmering summit
shimmers three leagues away.
Mælifell Peak sits watching
what happens in the bay.

There Drangey juts from the ocean,
screaming with seabird song,
while round its rocks are sporting
whales in a bellowing throng.

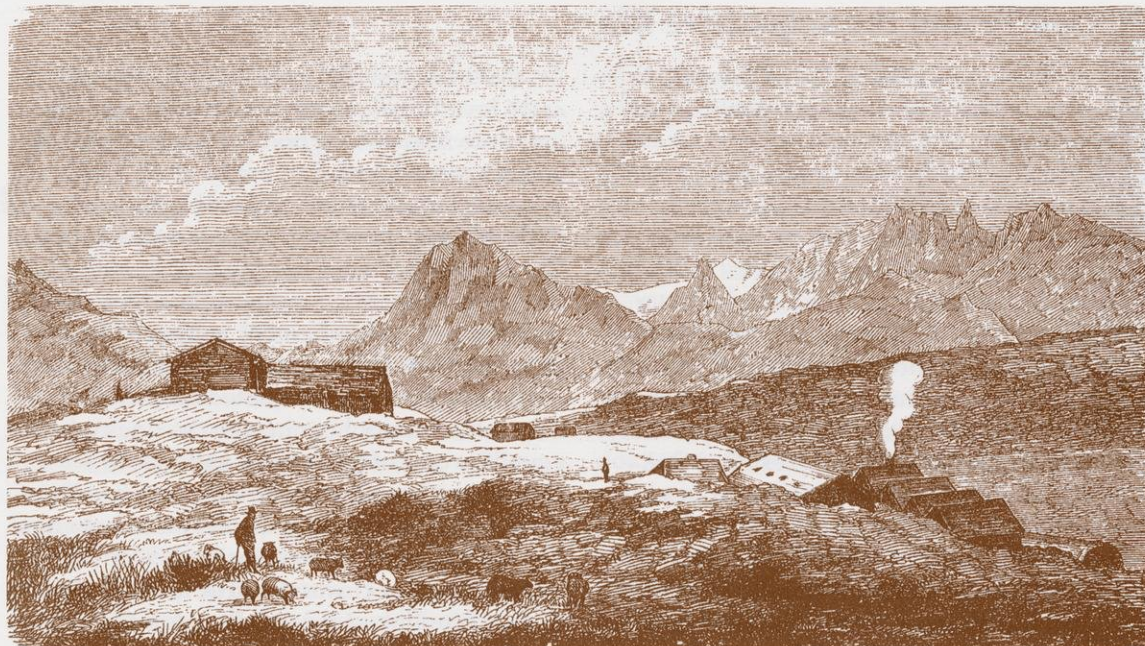
A lone ram walks the island,
where high above the tide
Illugi sits despairing
by his dying brother's side.

Drangey

Tindastóll's twilight summit
trembles three leagues away.
Mælifell, towering mutely,
measures the darkening bay.

Drangey looms in the deep there,
dinning with seabird songs;
under its walls go wheeling
whales in clamorous throngs.

Grazing its grassy summit
a grey ram wanders wide
where Illugi drinks the darkness
by his dying brother's side.



Halgrímsson spent his boyhood at the farm Steinsstafir, located in a picturesque valley in the north of Iceland. The woodcut is based on a sketch by Gustav Georg Winkler, a geologist from Munich who visited Steinsstafir in 1858.

About the Author

Dick Ringler is a professor in the departments of English and Scandinavian Studies at the UW-Madison.

In this case a visit to the site, coupled with the struggle to meet the demands of alliteration, had the effect of making the translation tighter and more evocative.

Translating highly formal poetry like that of Jónas Hallgrímsson demands time, application, and skill. There is nothing magical about the process itself, however—even though a translator may hope that readers will sometimes find his translations magical.

1. For a biographical sketch of Hallgrímsson and an account of the formal aspects of his work, see Sections II and III of the World Wide Web site *Jónas Hallgrímsson: Selected Poetry and Prose* (<<http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/jonas/>>).

2. Kirkconnell's version was originally published in *The North American Book of Icelandic Verse* (New York & Montreal: Louis Carrier & Alan Isles, Inc., 1930), 134.

3. The originals of all poems quoted in this essay can be found in Section IV of the Web site ("Texts and Commentaries"). "Plover Song" is one of the poems in the prose piece *Gathering Highland Moss*.

4. Evidence for these procedures comes from texts that survive in a series of drafts, each incorporating revisions from the draft preceding it. Interested readers should consult the commentary to "The Sog" (on the Web site).

5. *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, ed. James King and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979-86), 3:562.

Writer's Page

by Marianna De
Marco Torgovnick



Dr. Dolittle and the acquisitive life

I'm at the supermarket, at the checkout counter, looking around for something to read to pass the time. My eye skips mechanically over the candy bars and chewing gum. On the way to *Vogue* and *Glamour*, it pauses at a section filled with paperbacks, many for children. Among the books is the jewel of children's books, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*. My heart leaps up as my hand reaches out to put this treasure in my shopping cart.

I have looked for this book before, only to be told it was out of print; other parents probably have looked too, and their requests led Dell Yearling Books to begin republication in a moderately priced format. Dell planned eight volumes between 1988 and 1992. Brisk sales accelerated the schedule. Thanks to Dell, I have had the pleasure of reading these books aloud to my children. Night after night, over months that stretched into years, we read the adventures of Dr. Dolittle, that tenderhearted man who studies animal languages and talks with his menagerie of animal friends—a duck named Dab-Dab, a dog named Jip, a pig named Gub-Gub, a parrot named Polynesia, and others. The children laughed. My younger daughter, in bed for the readings, skipped out of bed each time I held up a picture, to come closer—"I want to see that," she said, "Oh, cute."

I remember the books vividly from childhood. In fact, for me possessing *Doctor Dolittle* had become, through the accidents of memory, a synecdoche for the whole process of owning books. Unlike my children, I did not have books of my own until well into my teens, and even then my collection was meager (Edna St. Vincent Millay, an anthology of American poems, one of short stories, Helen Keller's autobiography, a few plays by Shakespeare, and not much more). The first book I almost owned was in the Dolittle series. I took it out of the library in the first grade—

Dr. Dolittle's Post Office, to be precise—and I loved it, especially its simple line drawings of the good Doctor and his animal friends. I loved it so much I neglected to return it to the library, incurring my first overdue fines. The fines were heavy—some \$1.25—at the time, a fortune. My parents were angry—or at least that's how I remember it. They talked about not letting me take any more books from our public library but relented on that. Then they talked about how maybe the fines would equal the cost of a lost book and maybe I should just keep the book. I held my breath in anticipation. Ultimately, the fines did not equal the replacement cost and the book went back. But my love for Doctor Dolittle and my desire to own him linked my childhood to this moment in the supermarket.

The book is exactly as I remember it. The line drawings are still charming, the cover is the same, one of the drawings from the particular novel framed by a kaleidoscope of motifs from them all, mostly line drawings of the Doctor's pudgy profile or of his animal friends. The experience of reading Doctor Dolittle is even better now than it was in my childhood, since we (my children and I) get to read the books in order.

It's all there, as I remember it. The good Doctor loves the animals and cares for them; they love him and help him out of numerous scrapes. It's Edenic all around except that his human practice drops off as he becomes obsessed with his animals, and the Doctor grows poor. He too would have found a \$1.25 fine, or its British equivalent, stiff.

In these books, parents and children get a chance to empathize with Dolittle and admire his dogged altruism. They get to act silly and speak in animals' voices—in the way people talk to and for their pets. They get to go to Africa and the South Pacific, and to travel with a circus. It's a tradition of adventure. A tradition that goes back to World War I.

Hugh Lofting, author of the Dr. Dolittle series, was stationed in the trenches. Depressed, lonely, missing his family, Lofting began to write stories home to his children,



illustrated with charming drawings of the pudgy Doctor and his friends. Right from the start, the books straddled two worlds: the blood and death of the trenches; the cozy circle of the household hearth. Before the war, Lofting had been a civil engineer, traveling to places that provided locales for some of Dolittle's adventures, among them Lagos, Cuba, and Jamaica. When Lofting was invalided in the war, he was shipped home to the United States, where he lived for most of his adult life—a surprising fact, given the nineteenth-century English ambiance of the Dolittle series. After the war, the stories were expanded and printed as books, the first in 1920. By 1928 Lofting tired of the series. He sent Dr. Dolittle to the moon, hoping to be rid of him, but was pressured into publishing more volumes during the thirties and forties that are different in tone and have not been reprinted.¹

Until the Dell edition, the tradition of reading Dr. Dolittle had lapsed in the United States from the early seventies to the late eighties after New York librarian Isabelle Suhl charged in a 1968 *Bulletin of Interracial Books for Children* that the Doctor “is in essence the personification of The Great White Father” and Lofting thoroughly “racist and chauvinist.”² The books, which had undergone some localized editing of racial slurs in the 1940s, went out of print entirely in the U.S. for the first time since the twenties. Although they had always been loved for their altruism and goodwill, the books were now accused of propounding the worst kinds of prejudice and bad feelings. Ironically, Dolittle the series stood accused of precisely the kinds of ugly hierarchical thinking that Dolittle the character tries to escape. The charges stuck. When it was released in December 1967, the film version directed by Richard Fleischer and starring Rex Harrison was supposed to make Dolittle a mini-industry—with toys and dolls and a ride at Disneyworld. But after Suhl's charges got press coverage, some corporations dropped their options.³

In the late eighties, in time for the centenary of Lofting's birth, Dell decided to try broader

editing and enlisted Lofting's relatives for the task. It added to the series an afterword written by Christopher Lofting, the author's son, pointing out that although “on principle one can make a strong argument that one should not tamper with the classics . . . times have changed.” Accordingly, offensive references to racial minorities, including certain drawings and paragraphs, were deleted so that “future generations of children” could share “the opportunity to read the Doctor Dolittle stories.” The decisive factor was “the strong belief that the author himself would have immediately approved making the alterations.”⁴

Like many adults, I originally read the Dr. Dolittle stories in childhood. Back then, I did not perceive their racism or sexism; I simply adored the Doctor. An acquaintance and colleague who is an African Prince tuned right in when I mentioned Dr. Dolittle; he too did not remember the books as racist and had loved them as a child. I loved Dr. Dolittle so thoroughly that I sought out *The Story of Dr. Dolittle* in used bookstores towards the end of 1987, as my older daughter turned seven; I secured a 1948 edition and began to read it aloud. After 1988, I was able to finish the reading and purchase the books in the Dell edition, available at my supermarket checkout counter. I have thus had what is now the unusual experience of reading to my children a substantially unedited version of Volume One—in racial terms among the most offensive of the books—and then reading Volumes Two to Seven in the Dell version.

Basically, I approved Dell's changes. Most people today would choke on Polynesia's racial epithets and dislike the presentation in Volume One of Prince Bumpo as a vaudevillian Black Man. I also felt uncomfortable with portions having to do



Marianna De Marco Torgovnick

Stuart Torgovnick

"Dr. Dolittle is a misfit, an outsider, someone who has cast off material things, someone so different from the norm that it's miraculous."

with women, portions that remain unchanged in the Dell edition because they are less obviously offensive and far less localized. Ms. Suhl was right in a way: Dell's alterations eliminated the most obviously biased passages but could not change certain effects of the whole. Yet Dell books and Dolittle fans are also right: neither "racism" nor "sexism" are finally what count about the Dolittle stories.

Ultimately, the books imagine a world in which all forms of prejudice would be meaningless, in which all that really mattered would be goodness of heart. Money would have no value in such a world. Racism and the abuse of animals would disappear along with social class and other hierarchies. Although as a parent and child I wanted to own the books, that very desire involves a certain paradox. For the books teach the pitfalls of ownership and possessions—and the good Doctor is a master at changing his life and giving things away. This is what children have always, I believe, understood about the books and made adults want to read them to children: Dr. Dolittle is a misfit, an outsider, someone who has cast off material things, someone so different from the norm that it's miraculous. Reading Dr. Dolittle allows us to exit the workaday world and to do little but reside with him outside of business as usual.

Notes

1. Not much has been published about Lofting. These facts come from *Longman Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature*, ed. A. C. Ward, rev. by Margaret Hussey, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 1981), 321; *Authors of Books for Young People* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971), 322; and Edward Blishen, *Hugh Lofting* (London: Bodley Head, 1968).
2. Accounts of the controversy about the Dolittle books appear in Maureen O'Brien, "Dr. Dolittle Is Back: In Carefully Revised Editions for Today's Readers," *Publisher's Weekly* (February 26, 1968), 122; and Selma G. Lanes, "Doctor Doolittle [sic]: Innocent Again," *New York Times Book Review* (August 28, 1988), 20. Suhl is quoted in Lanes's essay.
3. Suhl's charges probably marred the success of the movie and of a planned Dolittle industry equivalent to that surrounding Mickey Mouse; see the high hopes expressed in "The Dolittle Explosion," *Newsweek* 71 (January 1, 1968), 58.
4. The full afterword appears at the end of the Dolittle books in the Dell Yearling edition.

About the Author

Marianna De Marco Torgovnick, professor of English at Duke University, is the author of the acclaimed *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives*. She is also the author of *Crossing Ocean Parkway* from which she selected this essay for *The Messenger*.

According to Joyce Carol Oates, "*Crossing Ocean Parkway* is a brave, enlightening, compassionate, and beautifully written work in a new genre . . ."

Torgovnick's other books include *Primitive Passions: Men, Women, and the Quest for Ecstasy* and *Closure in the Novel*.

The author has been selected as the 1998 Friends annual lecturer.

The 'artists of fire' and the Denis I. Duveen Collection

"All philosophers affirm, with one assent, that metals have a seed by which they are increased, and that this seminal quality is the same in all of them; but it is perfectly ripened in gold only . . ."

"On the Philosopher's Stone,"

from *Collectanea Chemica*, London, 1893.

by Kevin Chang

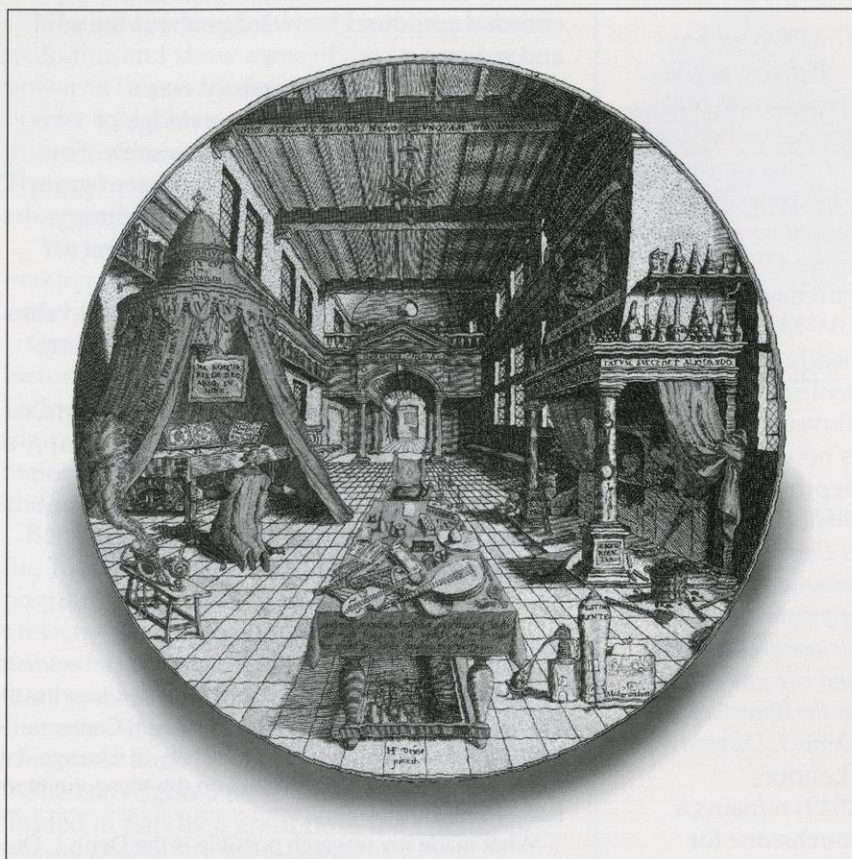
The *opus magnum*, or great work, of alchemy, was to attain the philosopher's stone. As a key to this occult science, the philosopher's stone, also called the "elixir of life," was thought to have the power to transform material substances such as lead into gold and to prolong life by perfecting the body and soul.

I was researching the evolution of chemistry and alchemy after the Thirty-Years War (1618-1648), paying most attention to two German chemists, Johann Rudolph Glauber (1604-1670) and Johan Joachim Becher (1635-1680). The Glauber publications at the UW library show the strength of the library's alchemy collection. The libraries' Department of Special Collections has more than fifty copies of various titles, a number probably second to none.

Alchemists called themselves "spagyrist," the artists of fire, as they relied heavily on the use of heat and fire in their work. Their observations of natural processes like fermentation and daily phenomenon, such as cooking, had revealed to them the importance of these elements in transforming materials. Their laboratory techniques, for example distillation, calcination, and water bathing, convinced them that fire was useful for all purposes, such as separation, destruction, purification, and alteration.

They were serious knowledge seekers who insisted true knowledge could never be obtained from books or scholastic speculation. It could only be obtained by observing nature and working with (coal and) fire.

Glauber invented new designs of chemical furnaces and thus paved new ground for later chemical sciences by providing higher temperatures than ever before; yet following



Hand-colored engraved illustration of the alchemist's laboratory from Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphiteatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hamburg, 1595) in the Duveen Collection, Department of Special Collections. This book was described by Denis Duveen as "one of the most important books in the whole literature of theosophical alchemy and the occult sciences." A project, supported by a campus Brittingham grant, is under way to exhibit the book on the World Wide Web.

the alchemical tradition, Glauber still thought the new temperature enabled him to attain the most subtle, and thus spiritual, substance for transmutation of matter and life.

As alchemists often expressed their thoughts symbolically, Renaissance alchemical literature was filled with plates of symbols. This alchemical symbolism impressed the psychologist Carl Jung and the poets William Blake and William Butler Yeats. Jung found the symbolism surprisingly similar to his patients' dreams, which suggested to him that alchemy was a projection of physical

The Duveen Collection

The Duveen Collection in the Department of Special Collections contains more than 3000 separate works and spans some 475 years. Purchased by the UW-Madison nearly a half-century ago, the Duveen Collection is noted both for its depth and balance. *Bibliotheca alchemica et chemica: An annotated catalogue of printed books on alchemy, chemistry, and cognate subjects in the library of Denis I. Duveen* (London, 1949) remains a touchstone for scholars of pre-1900 European chemistry.

archetypes and collective unconsciousness. To Blake and Yeats, alchemical symbolism encoded profound knowledge about the soul and nature.

To alchemists, the laboratory was a microcosm of nature, and knowledge of minerals and metals was indispensable. For this reason, they were the most diligent group at the time to study mineralogy, metallurgy, and mining. (After all, they believed that art was bound to imitate nature.)

Some historians question the historical value of alchemy arguing that the gold-making dream never came true and that rational science has thrown alchemy in the junk yard of history. It would be closer to the truth, however, to say that alchemy did not die out; rather it changed over time. As physics went through a revolution in the seventeenth century, alchemy also went through a

transformation, and while the nature of this transformation remains to be studied, certain causes are known.

The religious wars in the early seventeenth century displaced many alchemists because their pursuits were suspiciously heretical and the Reformation's iconoclasm repressed the alchemists' use of symbols and plates. After the religious wars, a rising nationalistic mood led alchemists to adapt their knowledge and practices to the need of their society. Also, the revival of atomism gradually reshaped alchemists' conception of the material world, its constitution.

With the transformation of European society, alchemists moved forward. Practical alchemists carried with them, into the century of Enlightenment, a science with a new face, while spiritual alchemists redeveloped with various mystic orders in Catholic and Protestant churches.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the generous support of the Friends of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries and the Morris Fishbein Center for Studies in the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Chicago, I was able to work in the UW-Madison Libraries twice in 1997 on the transformation of German alchemy in the late seventeenth century.

What made my research possible is the Denis I. Duveen Collection of Alchemy. A treasure of thousands of rare books, the collection in the Department of Special Collections is one to which every historian of alchemy pays respect. Also essential, and less frequently mentioned, are the friendly staff, the well-prepared catalog, and the substantial and well-organized reference books in the Special Collection Reading Room.

The library's modern collection is no less impressive. Several times I found books or journals that were little-known pieces published either in the first-half of the twentieth century or in Eastern Europe after the War.

All these advantages contribute to making the UW libraries one of the most remarkable research library systems in the country. I am grateful that I could do my research in such a great environment.

I especially thank Dr. Robin Rider, curator of the Special Collections, Professor John Neu, History of Science bibliographer, and John Tortorice, coordinator of the Friends grant program, and all the staff members at the Special Collections for their kind and generous help.



About the Author

Kevin Chang is a doctoral candidate in the history of science at the University of Chicago. He is using research from the Duveen Collection and other materials in the History of Science Collection at the UW-Madison. His dissertation focuses on chemistry and its cultural context in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Germany.

Electronic Reader opens a window to Wisconsin's past

"Laugh and the world laughs with you."

That's the famous line by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the southern Wisconsin poet who took the world by storm in the late nineteenth century. She and others now reappear among many descriptive bits from personal diaries, poetry, and formal histories, many of which date from Wisconsin's earliest days.

More than 1,300 pages of historical documents from UW-Madison library archives and the State Historical Society are now at the fingertips of scholars, students, and citizens through a new electronic publication unveiled this spring, the *Wisconsin Electronic Reader*.

The Web site sponsored by the UW-Madison General Library System—

www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader/Welcome.html—offers wonderful discoveries for anyone interested in Wisconsin history.

Most documents are presented in their original form, as illustrative objects in themselves or accompanied by period illustrations. They also appear in a searchable form so that users can look up specific words or ideas. The content drawn from so many sources—many of which are fragile and obscure—presents an entirely new resource that does not exist anywhere else.

"The sesquicentennial is a great opportunity to do this and show some of the tremendous power of this technology," GLS Director Ken Frazier told a local reporter. "When we did this, we were aiming at the common reader. The goal was not necessarily to create an educational tool but just enjoyable reading.

"We really wanted this to be a model for making the treasures of the university more widely available," he adds.

Crossroads, reminiscences, and links to other historical events can lead the reader on a happy exploration. According to Steven Dast, digital projects coordinator, "We wanted to make this a place where readers could go in and get lost for awhile."

Betty Ferris, historian and cofounder of the Big Top Chautauqua variety show and radio program in Bayfield, acted as editor for the project. "We wanted to tell stories that are somewhat universal and bring people to life that have been hidden away for a long time," she says. "It's really just an extension of the Wisconsin Idea."

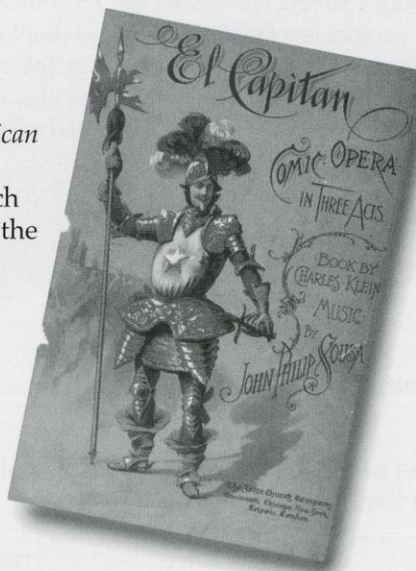
The copyrighted electronic publication is funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Commission.



Ella Wheeler Wilcox, circa 1870.

Spring Exhibit

The Mills Music Library presents *Music on the American Stage, 1830-1920*, in the Department of Special Collections, 976 Memorial Library. The exhibit, which runs through June 1998, showcases the evolution of the American musical in the century preceding Jerome Kern's *Showboat*. The show relies heavily on the nationally-recognized Tams-Witmark/Wisconsin Collection. It includes an overview of many genres: comic opera, minstrel show, pantomime, operetta, burlesque, farce, and extravaganza.



Hot Type in a Cold World

The Silver Buckle Press celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary on campus this year. The press is a working museum of letterpress printing operated by the General Library System.

The SBP will host a conference this fall and produce a publication funded by a campus Brittingham grant. In the conference, "Hot Type in a Cold World," Nov. 19-20, printing historians, book artists, and typographers will present their ideas on the fusion of digital technologies with traditional printing methods. In conjunction with the anniversary and the conference, the press will mount a retrospective exhibition in the Department of Special Collections.

The press's wood type collection will be described in an anniversary publication, referred to as a specimen book. Coincidentally, the country's largest wood type manufacturer and the source of much of the SBP collection, Hamilton Manufacturing Company, was located in Two Rivers, Wis.

Research for the publication includes cataloging and identifying all the collection's specimens. Rob Roy Kelly, the scholar most associated with work on American wood type, will work on the publication project.

The sesquicentennial and the Silver Buckle

The Silver Buckle Press is preparing limited edition prints in honor of the UW sesquicentennial. Together with the UW Alumni Association, which will offer the prints in a sesquicentennial catalogue, the Silver Buckle Press has selected cover art from the Mills Music Library Wisconsin Sheet Music Collection. The selected art, dating from the early twentieth century, will be used in two print projects.

One includes a set of four collegiate sports song images, *Wisconsin Sue*, *On Wisconsin*, *Wisconsin Football Jingles*, and *U Rah Rah Wisconsin*, with an explanatory sheet. The prints are 7 x 9 inches. The second project is a large print of the sheet music cover image *Nothin' But Wisconsin; A Tale of Love* by Carrie Jacobs Bond. (This image was also used for the Special Collections exhibit poster celebrating the Music School's Centenary.)

The print is approximately 14 x 19 inches. All prints are suitable for framing.



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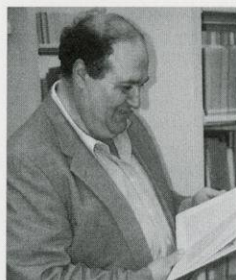
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Jack Lawrence Sukov examines material in the libraries' Little Magazine Collection. The collection was acquired from his late father, Dr. Marvin Sukov, a Minneapolis psychiatrist. Sukov recalls that when he was in the seventh grade he spent days hand embossing pages in each volume before the collection went to the libraries.

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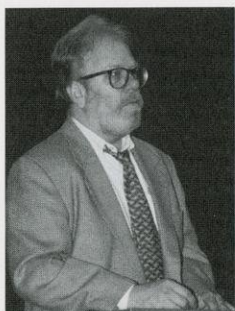
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A. Lin Neumann, foreign correspondent in Manila and program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists, gave the libraries a large collection of fact sheets, press releases, leaflets, and documentation on the process of print journalism. Neumann has covered the Philippines, Korea, Burma, and other countries as a regular correspondent for NBC News, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *London Sunday Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and other newspapers and magazines.

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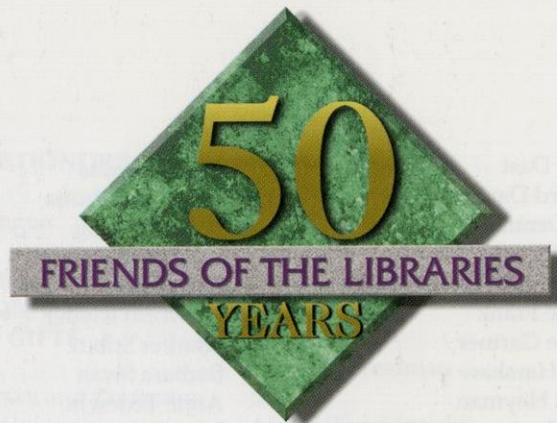
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Two gifts were made to honor the dedication of others to the libraries. Milo and Joan Jones made a gift in memory of Walter Frautschi. Renée Lang's gift honors John Tedeschi.

Semiannual book sales continue to grow

The most recent Friends semiannual book sale, held in late March, brought in more than \$12,000, according to John Toussaint, coordinator of the sales and a member of the Friends board of directors. Buyers from around the state attended the sale, thanks to word-of-mouth and the Internet.

To donate books for the sale, contact the Friends at 265-2505 or e-mail: Friends@doit.wisc.edu.



*This year the Friends of the University of
Wisconsin-Madison Libraries
celebrates its fiftieth year.*

*Founded by the Board of Regents on
December 13, 1947, it is one of the oldest
academic library friends organizations
in the nation.*



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