Winter 1-1-1984

San José Studies, Winter 1984

San José State University Foundation

a publication of san jose state university volume x number 1 winter 1984

$5.00

san josé STUDIES

San Jose Studies is published three times per year in Winter, Spring and Fall. Subscription prices are:

$12.00 per year for individuals ($14.00 for foreign subscriptions)

$18.00 per year for institutions ($20.00 for foreign subscriptions)

$5.00 for single copies

Patron subscriptions are available for $50.00 per year. Benefactors may subscribe for $100.00. Guarantor subscriptions are $250.00 annually. Credit is given in the journal to patrons, benefactors, and guarantors unless otherwise requested.

Individuals are requested to send payment with the order.

Please make check payable to the *SAN JOSE STUDIES* and mail to:

Emi Nobuhiro, Business Assistant
San Jose Studies
San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192

Applicable taxes are included in the subscription prices.

SAN JOSE STUDIES

SAN JOSE

Volume X, Number 1

ARTICLES

Britain in 1984
Terry Christensen 6

Science, Discourse and Authorial Responsibility
Fred D. White 25

Generations of Women: A Search for Female Forebears
Doris Friedensohn and Barbara Rubin 40

POETRY

Leonard Uberman
The Late Bruce Stunning 58
Night Fishing 60
The Three Wishes 61
Racket Hand 62
The Last Train 63

Edward Kleinschmidt
The Well-Tempered Violet 64
Mistakes in the Mind of Movement 66
Against Reason 67
Four 68
Common Day: After Keats 69
Song Falling 70
Words To a Play 71

Marcia L. Hurlow
Mushrooms 72
To Resolve a Dream 74
Going Home 75

STUDIES

Winter 1984

POETRY

Thomas Kretz
Picnic on Hot Stones 77
Experiment 27 78
Symbolical Fission 79
St. Paul Acting 16:14 80

Norman Nathan
Composed of Atoms 81
dispossessed 82
Intimations of Mortality 83
hero considers everyman at a home for the aged .....

Sheryl L. Nelms
blown out egg 85
untouchable 86
your love .....
ever think 87
the rub 88

FICTION

Secret Codes and Other Handicaps
Barbara Ann Porte 91

The Proverbs of Klaren Verheim
Robert Wexelblatt 97

SAN JOSE STUDIES

Volume X, Number 1 Winter 1984

 ISSN: 0097-8051

ARTICLES

Britain in 1984

Terry Christensen

HELICOPTERS with cameras hover over a ragged encampment of women outside a military base.

ELEVEN POLITICAL INFILTRATORS are unmasked in a factory and fired.

PLASTIC ENSHROUDS Big Ben.

TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT of the population lives in poverty.

WAR is waged over forgotten islands far away.

RIOTS scar inner city neighborhoods.

VANS with rotating antennae prowl the streets searching for renegade television receivers.

A NEW VOCABULARY with words like "byte," "subroutine," "unsave," and "redimension" takes hold.

FIVE PER CENT of the population owns almost half the wealth.

FOREIGN TROOPS occupy 102 bases.

TELEVISION CAMERAS sweep the platforms of railway stations.

GANGS of hostile, strangely costumed youths roam the streets.

SOLDIERS are required to keep the peace in one of the country's provinces.

All of this is happening in Britain now, in 1984, but it could also be straight from the pages of George Orwell's classic novel, *1984*.*

When Orwell wrote his book in 1948, he arbitrarily reversed the last digits of the year to project his fantasy into the not-too-distant future, a future that is now upon us. It might have been comforting to Orwell to know that his book is still in print, which it surely wouldn't be in the

*George Orwell, *1984* (Penguin: Middlesex, England reprint 1983), 1953. All parenthetical page references are to this edition.

society he wrote about. *1984* is not only in print, it's back on the British bestseller list. That it still holds the imagination of Britain and the world is a tribute to the prescience of its author—and a sad comment on the extent to which what he warned about has come true.

The world of *1984* is divided into three superstates: Eurasia, Eastasia, and Oceania, which includes Britain and the United States. Oceania is ruled by "the Party," through the charismatic leadership of Big Brother and the political philosophy of Ingsoc (English Socialism), although both Big Brother and Ingsoc are merely fronts for the power-hungry Party. As one of its functionaries explains, "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power." (p. 211) Even Hitler and Stalin erred, in the view of the Party, because they failed to concentrate their efforts on this solitary goal.

Like the world, the society the Party rules is divided into three groups. The Inner Party is made up of an elite, living in luxury and concerned exclusively and self-consciously with retaining power. The Outer Party is larger, living in shabby conditions, carefully controlled and constantly brainwashed to sustain loyalty to Big Brother and the Party. At the bottom are the proles, a mass of uneducated poor, living in squalor but mostly left to themselves.

The Party maintains the system through rigorous mind control. Posters warn that "Big Brother Is Watching You," and he is, either electronically or through co-workers, neighbors, and families who are encouraged to report signs of deviance. Members of the Inner and Outer Parties are subjected to an incessant barrage of propaganda praising Big Brother and the Party and denigrating internal and external enemies. Meanwhile, the Party rewrites history to suit its own changing needs and reshapes speech and thought with a simplified vocabulary called "Newspeak." If all this isn't enough, it inculcates "doublethink," the holding of "two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, accepting both." (p. 172) It's a way of knowing the truth and at the same time ignoring it and accepting the lie. It's a system for reconciling reality with the needs of those in power. All of this brainwashing comes together in the shape of the Party's three slogans, which also describe social conditions in the Britain of *1984:*

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Disturbingly, each of these nonsensical slogans has a ring of truth for Britain today.

WAR IS PEACE

Although our world isn't formally organized into the three superstates Orwell describes, we do now think in terms of the West, the East,

and the Third World; and his prediction that conflict between the superstates would concentrate along the equator is chillingly accurate, as is his prophecy of a world permanently at war. Winston Smith, Orwell's central character, was born in 1944 or 1945 (he's not sure) and like all of us born since then, he cannot "definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war." (p. 30) The United States has fought in Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean; Britain has fought in Suez and the South Atlantic; for the past decade, British troops have been engaged in a sort of low level warfare in Northern Ireland; the Cold War spans the entire period.

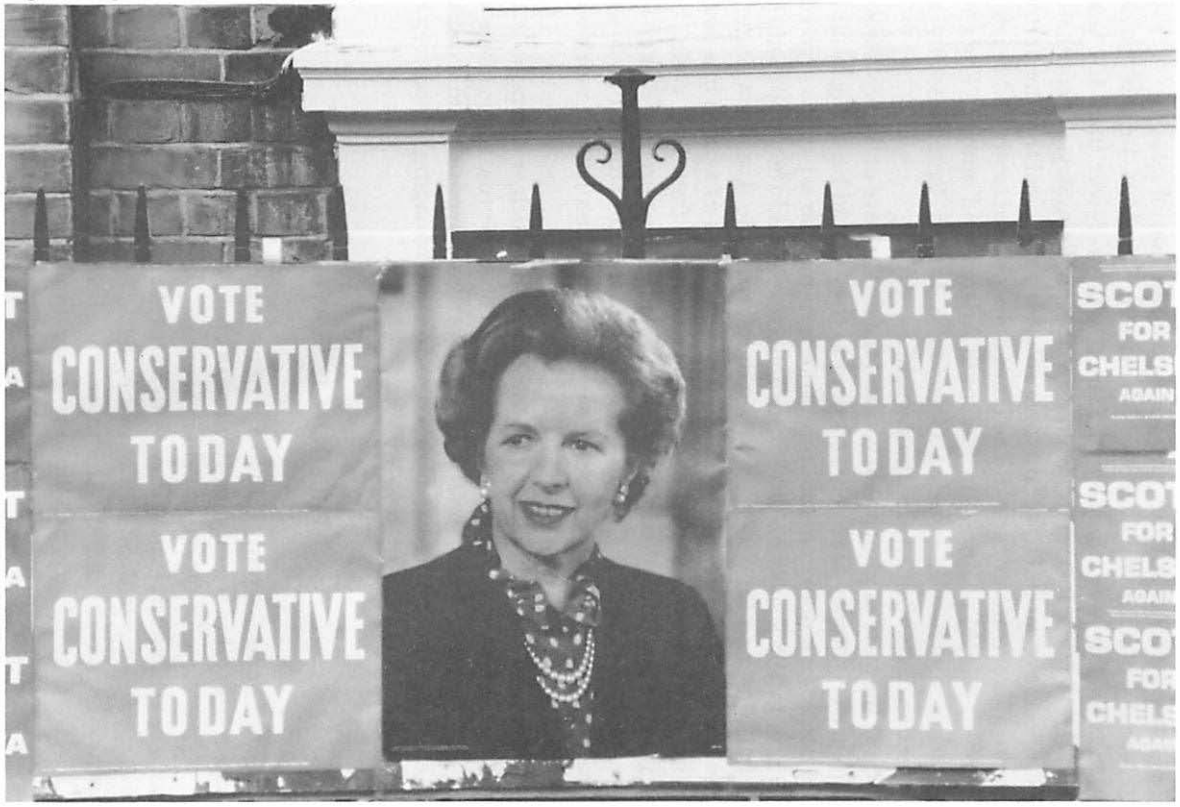
Big Brother couldn't have contrived a more politically convenient war than the one the British fought for the Falkland Islands (Las Malvinas) in 1982. The British tabloid press waged a campaign of hatred against the evil "Argies." The idea of a British fleet steaming across the Atlantic to rescue the captive sheepherders of the Falklands, a last remnant of Empire, had a nostalgic, comforting effect on the British. Their morale was boosted when the decrepit old lion showed it still had teeth and claws. Fortunately for them, the enemy was inept and ill-armed.

The biggest beneficiary was Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who risked a great deal by sending the fleet. With a little luck and a few more Exocet missiles, the Argentines might have turned Thatcher's gamble into a catastrophe. Instead, it was a triumph. The islands were regained, the "Argies" were humiliated, and Britain was once more proud. The "Falklands factor" cast such a political glow over Thatcher that despite Britain's faltering economy she won re-election in 1983, an election she called a year early to take advantage of the Falklands factor before it faded.

But the whole episode reeks of doublethink. Argentina has a legitimate territorial claim to the islands. Britain didn't even want them very much. Successive British governments have dawdled over negotiations to surrender the costly islands because of the political clout of the Falkland Islands Company and because the islanders wanted to remain British subjects. If the Argentines had persisted in negotiations, they might have got the islands peacefully. Thatcher had already pulled out most of the islands' military defense because it was too expensive. Foolishly, the Argentines took this as a sign of weakness and invaded. When that happened, Thatcher was prevented from appeasement by her own Iron Woman rhetoric; she had to send the fleet to save a possession the British don't really want anyway. Now that they've fought for it, they feel honor-bound to keep it, so they're spending millions to maintain the "Fortress Falklands." Big Brother couldn't have done better: A war to keep something that wasn't wanted or needed served to prop up national morale, take people's minds off their economic woes, and re-elect Big Sister Margaret Thatcher. [Figure 1]

The Argentines aren't very scary any more, so lately Thatcher has

Fig. 1: Big Sister is watching you.



shifted enemies. The Soviet Union is now the primary menace. Because of this threat, Thatcher has cut domestic spending in a time of severe unemployment and increased defense spending. Such a policy is remarkably like the state of "permanent war" maintained by the Party in *1984* to prevent a surplus and wider distribution of goods.

Nor is Britain involved in this permanent war alone. Britain provides its ally in this war, the United States, with no fewer than 102 bases, enough to make Britain not unlike an occupied country, except that the occupiers are careful to keep a low profile. It's also clear that the partners in the alliance are not equal. The United States reluctantly and belatedly came to the aid of Britain in the South Atlantic and ignored Thatcher's opposition when it invaded Grenada, a former British colony and member of the British Commonwealth.

Still, the state of permanent war and the dominance of the leader of the alliance are not so passively accepted as they would be in Big Brother's England. As a new generation of American nuclear weapons arrived in Britain in 1983, over half the British electorate said they opposed their installation and fully 94% said they didn't trust the American finger on the trigger. Many people feel Britain is being used as a pawn in a deadly game between the superpowers. Their country, they fear, could be a scapegoat in a limited nuclear war. Orwell may have predicted even this; he mentions that Britain had been the target of an atomic bomb some years before 1984, but he doesn't say the nuclear conflict was worldwide. [Figure 2]

Of course the rationale for all the bases and nuclear weapons is that they're necessary to maintain the peace. In other words, war is peace. But as in Orwell's vision, one suspects that the purpose of the military rhetoric and spending has as much to do with managing the natives as it does with repelling the enemy.

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

"The chains?" a punk said to a *Time* magazine reporter, "They say it's a free country, but we might as well be in chains." (*Time*, October 24, 1983)

As in Orwell's Oceania, Britain seems to be evolving into a tripartite society. An elite lives in luxury, with 5% of the population owning 45% of the country's wealth and 25% owning 84%. And the share of this elite is growing, not shrinking. At the second level, roughly equivalent to Orwell's Outer Party, are those who are employed and living in conditions ranging from just-getting-by to middle class comfort. At the bottom are what Orwell called the proles. Twenty-five per cent of the British population today—over 15 million people—live in what even Britain's Tory government calls poverty. Over 13% are unemployed—over 3 million people and more than at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Fig. 2: A sign notes the American occupation.

Britain has always been a class-ridden society, so such divisions may come as no great shock. But they're disturbing because they represent a reversal of a trend. In the decades after World War II, poverty and unemployment shrank and wealth became more broadly distributed. The trend was modest, but at least it was positive. For those at the bottom, there was hope. But since Thatcher's Conservatives came to power in 1979—and to some extent even before that—all the trends have been reversed. The concentration of wealth is growing again and so are poverty and unemployment.

It's not exclusively the fault of Margaret Thatcher. Britain's industrial base has been crumbling for a long time and she maintains that her harsh fiscal policies are intended to stop the rot, not make things worse. Her government managed to bring inflation under control in 1983 and there are signs of a modest economic revival in 1984.

But in the process of "saving" Britain, Thatcher has created a subgroup that is alarmingly similar to Orwell's proles. They are the 13.3% unemployed and the 25% impoverished. Their frustration and anger led to riots in many British cities in 1982; burned buildings and boarded-up shop fronts still marked these inner city neighborhoods in 1984, making them look like the London Orwell describes. But in 1984, anger and frustration had given way to hopelessness and resignation. As one of Thatcher's proles told *Time,* "Sod society. Work? I'm too lazy. I get £25 ($37) on the dole and manage to get pissed a couple of times a week. That's good enough." (*Time,* October 24, 1983)

Thatcher has created an alienated mass that cares little about the country or even each other. Soccer provides the bread-and-circuses for some of the alienated with virtual riots at the games and outside the stadiums afterwards. Others parade around as punks or skinheads. They know their style keeps them from getting jobs but they don't care. Most of the unemployed and impoverished, however, are simply invisible, isolated in grim public housing and rotting inner city neighborhoods. [Figure 3]

More remarkable than the apparent re-establishment of a permanent underclass, the next levels up no longer seem sympathetic. The hostility of the more aggressive elements of the underclass, like the punks and the soccer hooligans, may encourage this attitude but many of those who are employed resent the unemployed for living happily on their dole payments. That's blaming the victim, of course, but that's what Thatcher has managed to bring about. In a masterful stroke of doublethink, she's persuaded the electorate that unemployment is necessary to get employment. She says somebody has to suffer, at least in the short term, so that all may benefit from economic revival at some undefined time in the future. Over-staffing and inefficiency must be eliminated; British industry must be made competitive in the modern world. There's some truth in what she says, although there are only miniscule signs that the suffering her

Fig. 3: Down and out in London.

policies have caused is bringing about the revival she promises. Whatever the merits of the argument, the point is that the British have bought it. They re-elected Big Sister after four tough years and she was so persuasive that she even won the votes of 34% of the unemployed.

One suspects, however, that most of Thatcher's support comes from people who just feel lucky to be in work themselves and who no longer care to risk it or make sacrifices for others. She's separated the haves and the have-a-littles from the have-nots and she's muted the old sympathy vote for the unemployed. Ironically, the welfare state she so abhors helped Thatcher by maintaining her proles comfortably enough that the other classes turned against them.

Thatcher's economic policy is not only based on unemployment, however. Her Conservative Party is attempting to revive British capitalism, not only through increased efficiency and reduced public spending, but also by selling off state-owned businesses like British Airways, British Petroleum, and the telephone company. Although these industries will still be regulated and in some cases subsidized by the government, their "privatization" is surely a reversal of the totalitarianism foreseen by Orwell.

But if privatization is meant to reduce the power of centralized government, in other ways Big Sister is acting to increase it. When they gained power, the Conservative Party, long frustrated by the power of labor unions, annually enacted increasingly rigorous regulations on unions. They did so with considerable public support because the unions, once the hope of British workers, are in disrepute in 1984. Big Sister blames them for the country's economic problems, the press is rabidly anti-union and the unions themselves offend sympathizers by taking excessive, sometimes indefensible actions.

Under the new labor laws, the courts approved dismissal of workers for their union activities and employers are attempting to break the union-favored closed shop. In one episode that could have been a chapter from *1984,* eleven auto-workers were unmasked as "red moles "or Trotskyite infiltrators and summarily dismissed, not for the quality of their work or their political activities, but allegedly for falsifying their job applications. Not even their unions rose to their defense. Most recently, Thatcher unilaterally outlawed unions for civil servants at the government's international communication (spy) center, offering to pay workers £1000 ($1500) to buy up their right to belong to a union.

If the economics of Thatcher's Britain in 1984 have parallels with Big Brother's in *1984,* so do the civil liberties. An independent review of the police—London's renowned "bobbies"—denounced them as corrupt, sexist and racist. Suspects can still be held incommunicado for 72 hours. The police investigated one woman merely because she had written a letter favoring nuclear disarmament to her local newspaper. Censorship is being expanded to include what are called "video nasties." Television

cameras moniter citizens in shops and at railway stations. [Figure 4] Vans cruise the streets with electronic devices to track down unlicensed television sets. Computer technology is beginning to consolidate information about citizens and although the government has made little use of it as yet, it increases the potential for control.

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Doublethink—"holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both" (p. 172)—is one means by which Big Brother's Party reconciles its version of reality with what its subjects experience and perceive. Orwell's characters know what's going on, but they accept it, if only to survive. They know that last week Oceania was at war with Eurasia but this week they accept the fact that Eastasia has always been the enemy. Anyway, what difference does it make? To further shape the way people think, the Party introduces Newspeak, ostensibly a simplification of an archaic language but in fact a means of mind control, persuasion, and propaganda because limiting the language also limits conceptual thinking.

Both Doublethink and Newspeak show up in the way Big Brother's government uses language. Take for example the names of the main governmental departments: the Ministry of Peace (Minipax in Newspeak) makes war; the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue) is a propaganda agency; the Ministry of Love (Miniluv) maintains law and order; and the Ministry of Plenty (Miniplenty) administers rationing.

In Big Sister's Britain of 1984, the Ministry of Defense is in charge of war, the Ministry of Industry presides over the country's economic decline, and the Department of Employment manages record-breaking joblessness. Nuclear armaments are necessary to prevent war. Unemployment must be suffered for future employment.

Contemporary governments manipulate language without resorting to Newspeak and all of us engage in doublethink to some extent—it's also known as hypocrisy or cognitive dissonance. Perhaps that's how the British public deals with mass unemployment and the prospect of nuclear holocaust. As for Orwell's characters, doublethink enables them to survive in a world where the truth is hard to accept.

Of course the natural human tendency to indulge in cognitive dissonance is aided and abetted by government in more ways than the naming of its departments. The British government rigidly controls information and readily engages in propaganda when it deems it necessary. The Ministry of Defense, for example, set up a special public relations group with one task, to discredit Britain's large Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

The press, although not directly controlled by the government, seems nevertheless to be an ally. All but two of Britain's national newspapers are

Fig. 4: Watchful cameras at Victoria Station.

conservative and militantly anti-union and anti-CND. The most popular papers are little more than scandal-sheets. The news they report between gossip, nude photos, and ads is biased and simplistic. The more serious newspapers are less read and, although superior to the American media in analysis and international news, they rarely engage in investigative reporting and never defy the government.

Censorship also constrains the press and keeps the public ignorant. Government in Britain has considerably more power to suppress information than it does in the United States. A government "D" notice can prevent the press from publishing a story in Britain, while such efforts to restrict the press are commonly defied by the U.S. press. When the British press is told not to publish, however, they obey. Information about the British Fascist movement of the 1930s is only now being released and some key documents are still being withheld, allegedly because they would embarrass contemporary establishment figures. Prime Minister Thatcher recently suppressed publication of a study of British intelligence during World War II. During the South Atlantic war, information was so tightly controlled that the British media relied in part on the enemy press rather than their own reporters with the British fleet. On a more mundane level, land ownership is not a matter of public record and reporting on court trials is tightly gagged.

As in the United States and Orwell's Oceania, more and more people in Britain rely on television for news, which means that what they get is both more controlled and more superficial. Two of Britain's four stations are government owned, although what they broadcast is not supposed to be controlled and newscasts are drily objective. All the stations are government regulated and any hint of left-leaning is instantly decried by the Conservative Parliament. Although nothing has yet come of these objections, the broadcasters seem conscious of the power of government and may have reduced coverage of protestors and dissenters as a consequence.

Both the British government and the press engage to some extent in rewriting history, apprently recognizing the truth in another Party slogan from Orwell's book: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." (108) History, according to the Party, is mutable. Indeed, the job of Orwell's main character, Winston Smith, is to rewrite old newspaper stories to make predictions accurate and eliminate all record of people whom the Party has purged. When the enemy changes from Eurasia to Eastasia, for example, history is literally rewritten so that Eastasia has always been the enemy.

Although history isn't being formally rewritten today—we aren't yet going through libraries to correct old newspaper stories or make certain books disappear—the interpretation of history is constantly revised. Prime ministers and presidents who were thought inept a few years ago become Great Leaders; heroes and saints are revealed to be cowards and

sinners; nations that were once ignored and others that were allies become enemies. In the United States, the significance of the Vietnam War is changing from a cautionary tale warning against foreign entanglements to a lesson that America lost because its determination wavered, so instead of keeping hands off Central America, the U.S. must go in with full force. In Britain, the Falklands revived a faltering empire and now, instead of wanting to unload the burden of these far-away islands, Britain is resolved to make them the Fortress Falklands. In both the United States and Great Britain, the memory of the Soviet Union as an ally has been blotted out—films and books written during the alliance are discredited. Domestic programs that may have saved both countries during the Great Depression are now blamed for another near-depression.

Although no government today is brazen enough to use the slogan "ignorance is strength," it's easy to see where Orwell got the idea and hard not to suspect that government often uses it as a rule of thumb in its relations with the public.

1984, NOT *1984*

All of the foregoing is true; it paints a chilling portrait of Britain in 1984, but it still doesn't add up to Orwell's vision. For all the parallels between Big Brother's England and Big Sister's, many of Orwell's forebodings have simply not come true.

He was right in predicting a new language, but instead of Newspeak, the new language in Britain today is that of computer programming. It's similar to Newspeak in that it simplifies language, but the intent is microprocessing, not mind control. Such simplification eliminates ethical values and ambiguities of human speech that can't be quantified, which may be cause for concern. But while computer languages may be akin to Newspeak in that sense, they have thus far added to language and conceptual thinking rather than detracting from them. And as computers and their users grow more sophisticated, their language is becoming more complex and subtle, more capable of dealing with ambiguity.

Nor has the new information technology been used to control the population. As one British bureaucrat puts it, "Government still works in the stone age. Very few ministries even have computers as yet." And the government has specifically blocked efforts to develop consolidated computer files on individuals.

While their government is just entering the age of the electronic typewriter, the British public has advanced further into high technology than the people of any other nation. Britain has more home computers per capita than any country in the world, including the United States. The smallest and cheapest of the British manufactured home computers can be acquired for under $60 in a vigorously competitive market. The

government-owned broadcasting system, the BBC, provides a "teletext" system with hundreds of "pages" of information instantly available to subscribers throughout the country. [Figure 5]

The computer age has arrived in Britain. Although it has overtones of *1984*, its effect is actually the reverse of what Orwell imagined because it is widely distributed rather than highly controlled and concentrated. The result is not centralization but decentralization because more people have greater access to information.

Television also seems omnipresent in Britain today, and it's true that detector vans electronically search for unlicensed sets. But the licensing is just a fee to subsidize the public broadcast system, the BBC. Britain doesn't yet have the two-way telescreens that constantly spied on the citizens of Orwell's *1984*. Even as Orwell's characters are doing their mandatory morning exercises ("the Physical Jerks"), they're being watched. "Smith!" the instructress screams, "Yes, YOU! Bend lower, please! You can do better than that." (p. 33)

There's no such constant intrusion into the lives of individuals in Britain today. In fact, it's a freer society than it ever was. In Orwell's vision, sex for its own sake is "a political act," (p. 104) proscribed by the state and almost unheard of. But sex in Britain is more liberated than ever, thanks in large part to the fact that women and homosexuals, at least for a time, actually made sex a political act. Today more people live together out of wedlock, more marriages end in divorce, birth control is more widely practiced, and homosexuality is more open than ever. Britain has its share of moralists trying to impose their old-fashioned values on others and the government itself espouses Victorian values, but these are for the most part not official or legal policy.

The individual is freer in Britain today than ever and also freer than in Orwell's novel, where "the individual is always defeated." (p. 111) Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government is, in fact, working to reduce government intrusions in the economy, although they're less concerned about civil liberties. Even in a welfare state fallen on hard times, individual entrepreneurs like computer manufacturer Clive Sinclair and film producer David Puttnam achieve spectacular successes. Others, even among the economically oppressed, manage to express their individualism in their personal lives, as manifested by the outlandish styles adopted by any number of social subgroups.

If anything, the complaint in Britain today is not so much government oppression as loneliness. As social institutions like the family, neighborhood, and even the work place break down, individuals are freer, but they're also more isolated. The combination of home computers, television, and widely used video recorders have had a negative impact in that they've reduced social intercourse in a society that has long thrived on it. Fewer people now go to the cinema, theatre, or even the local pub because they've got their home entertainment systems; violence and

Fig. 5: Telecommunications tower viewed from Bloomsbury.

other anti-social acts are increasing. In light of all this, Quentin Crisp, the flamboyant author of *The Naked Civil Servant,* says Orwell's two-way telescreen sounds like a good idea. It would be comforting, Crisp thinks, to know that you are "of abiding interest to *some*body."

On the other hand, Britain as a nation is nowhere nearly so isolated as Orwell imagined it might be. "Foreigners," Winston Smith thinks as he watches a truckload of prisoners-of-war, "were a kind of strange animal. One literally never saw them except in the guise of prisoners." (p. 96) Smith was standing in Trafalgar Square, renamed Victory Square with a statue of Big Brother commanding what was Nelson's column. But Trafalgar Square today is packed with foreigners—and pigeons.

Many of the "foreigners" in Britain today are from its former colonies. They're people of color and the British are mostly not very happy about this. The Empire has struck back. But the foreigners in Trafalgar Square are not ex-colonials, they're tourists. [Figure 6] One of the biggest changes since Orwell's time is that the country has become a sort of real-life Disneyland. Millions of tourists—and billions of dollars—arrive each year. Central London is so over-run that natives avoid it and are rarely seen. It's not only London that is over-run, it is also most of Britain. Only the decaying old industrial cities like Liverpool are exempt. Much of the rest of the country is probably more like it was in 1948 than like Orwell imagined it would be in 1984.

And despite high unemployment and poverty, Britain—especially outside the big cities—has the appearance of an affluent society. That's partly because the deprived are mostly out of sight, but it's also because modern consumer goods are far more widely distributed than Orwell—or anybody—imagined they would be. For the vast majority, Britain is a far better place to live than it was in 1948 or *1984.*

It's still a lively, creative place where individuals manage to express themselves, especially in the arts, which are thriving. Britain still has the best theatre and television in the world and its recently moribund film industry is experiencing a vigorous revival even as video makes a big splash. The book trade flourishes through it all, and British music still sets the pace for the world.

Political dissent also survives. The largely right-wing press doesn't do much to help it, but somehow it's there and it shows no signs of going away. Even during the South Atlantic War there was dissent and opposition to nuclear armaments remains strong and determined. The labor unions, though weakened, are still powerful and firmly on the left. [Figure 7] Fifty-seven per cent of the electorate opposed the Party of Big Sister in the 1983 election, even more than voted against them in 1979. Unfortunately for the opposition, they were unable to unite behind a single leader, party, or program, so Thatcher still came out of the election with a big parliamentary majority. Nevertheless, the opposition is broad and strong and Margaret Thatcher must face it in person twice a week

Fig. 6: Big Ben being cleaned up for tourists.

Fig. 7: Nuclear Disarmament Rally, October 1983.

during Parliament's "Question Time." Unlike Big Brother, she's no phantom. She's real and despite her Iron Woman image, she does sometimes yield.

For all the aspects of *1984* that apply to Britain today, there are more that do not. It's still a lively, vital society and a pleasant place to live. Perhaps that wouldn't have shocked George Orwell; it certainly wouldn't have disappointed him. According to Bernard Crick, Orwell's biographer, he wrote *1984* as a warning rather than a prophecy. Reacting to the political events of the 1930s and 1940s and particularly to Nazism and Stalinism, Orwell wrote *1984* as a warning against totalitarianism. Today, as both Britain and the United States continue their political drift to the right, Orwell's book is likely to be interpreted as anti-socialist. But Orwell was himself a socialist and his warning was not against socialism but totalitarianism, whether from the left or the right.

Orwell's warning is still one we should heed. Although things haven't deteriorated as much as he imagined, the methods of Big Brother's totalitarian state are all available and all, at least to some degree, in use. As a warning, *1984* is still valid and worth reading, even though Britain in 1984, happily, is not the Britain of *1984*.

Science, Discourse, and Authorial Responsibility

Fred D. White

I

WHAT role does discourse play in science? A first response might be, an important role—but not an indispensable one. Think of immunologists testing a serum on laboratory animals, of astrophysicists analyzing the spectra of distant stars: a lot of measuring going on, many computations being made, but little (if any) writing.

Then you wonder: is such activity—the purely operative aspects of scientific research—all there is to science?

I should think not; no more than a novelist's research into those very same areas can represent literary activity. Experiments must be conceptualized, "written up;" more importantly, they must be discussed and speculated upon for their larger implications. "Writing is an integral act of science as it is of nearly every other form of human inquiry," states David Hamilton. "Writing is the way by which the scientist comes to know his work most fully."[1] Or to put it in other words, the writing act is a coming-

to-understand; an act of discovery arising from the impulse to express.

I wish to emphasize the fact that I am talking about scientitic *discourse* not scientific language. It is discourse, not language, which may have a scientific aim, a literary aim, or both. I think this distinction is important because it prevents us from saying that some words or statements are "scientific" while others are not; but more importantly, it prevents us from assuming that there are two languages, indicative of two cultures, and that knowing one makes it unnecessary or even undesirable to know the other. Of course it may be argued that mathematics is a language—the ideal language for science, since no subjective or ambiguous elements can enter it, and nothing gets distorted through translation (it being a universal code). Indeed, as Wilbur Urban maintains, "a point is often reached where relations are expressible only in these non-linguistic forms and when expressed in language are mis-represented." Nevertheless, as Urban himself is quick to add, "it remains true . . . that words called these equations into being and words are necessary for their interpretation."[2] Language, then, finds its ultimate signification through discourse.

In this light I. A. Richards' assertion that "language logically and scientifically used cannot describe a landscape or a face,"[3] strikes us first as irrational (when language is doing one thing—analyzing—why can't it also be doing another—describing?), then as demonstrably false: there are indeed numerous analyses that do incorporate descriptions where the author has deemed it relevant. An old geology textbook of mine, rather cut-and-dried insofar as most geology texts go, nevertheless contains descriptive passages with analytic intent, as the following excerpt reveals:

> The Black Hills in southwestern South Dakota and the adjoining portion of Wyoming are mountains which rise several thousand feet above the level of the surrounding plain. They are carved from a domelike uplift that is nearly 100 miles long and . . . 50 miles wide. Before the sedimentary rocks were removed from the top of the dome, it must have risen 6,000 feet above the plains. The exposed ancient core of the dome is composed of granite that has been eroded to form many ridges and peaks.[4]

The aim of this description is not to set a mood (although it can do that), but to convey information about a type of mountainous terrain. The essential information could have been presented in a chart, but the authors felt that description would convey the concept more effectively.

At this point we confront an interesting paradox: science, idealized as a striving to transcend all human limitations in an effort to embrace reality

itself, sooner or later resorts to discourse—that uniquely human and largely subjective instrument—to communicate its ideas. A dyed-in-the-wool solipsist, perhaps, would have no trouble resolving this: he or she would simply conclude that "reality itself" does not exist outside one's perception of it: the tree falling in the forest does *not* make a sound if no one is around to hear it. But I wonder if we might find a middle ground between logical positivism and extreme subjectivism.

"Science" consists of numerous disciplines, and as specialization due to an unending flood of knowledge continues, more and more disciplines (such as molecular biology, paleobacteriology, selenology) continue to evolve. Because no one scientific discipline is capable of embracing ultimate reality, we need a communications web—a "decoding" system that would give specialists the chance to relate their findings to a larger body of knowledge. This is not to imply that specialization is bad. Although it is true that "even mature scientists," in Polanyi's words, "know little more than the names of most branches of science" outside their own, such specialization is (again quoting Polanyi) "indispensable to the advancement of all our modern culture. The amplitude of our cultural heritage exceeds ten thousand times the carrying capacity of any human brain, and hence we need ten thousand specialists to transmit it."[5] The key word, of course, is *transmit.* Each of us is a specialist in something, and the more effectively we are able to transmit our knowledge via discourse, the more we contribute to the collective wisdom and well-being of our species.

II

If it is true that the aim of science is to provide us with the "whole" truth of the phenomenal world, then learning becomes *more* scientific when it embodies the human element, rather than when it attempts to weed it out. Nineteenth century science could not have accommodated such a view, for it had to be demonstrated that the *scientific method*—disinterested, astute, empirical observation and testing of hypotheses—was absolutely necessary for humankind to discover the concealed truths of nature. So long as natural philosophers refused to abandon—or were incapable of abandoning—their conviction that, say, man was a special creation, independent of the rest of biological creation, they would be blind to the most conspicuous evidence that would place man securely within the Order of Primates, Family of Mammals, Super-Family of Vertebrates, and so on. In other words, the *negative* human attributes such as pre-supposition, pre-judgment, improper investigative procedures, conclusions derived from insufficient data had to be eliminated before the positive attributes (intuition, tacit awareness, creative synthesis, engaging style) could be acknowledged as relevant to science. Needless to say, scientists were (and still are) caricatured as soulless, emotionless,

Figure 1. Foucault Out of Doors. From *l'Illustration* (Paris) 18 (1851).

disembodied brains. In an illustration which first appeared in the Parisian periodical, *L'Illustration* in 1851 (see Figure 1) Léon Foucault is caricatured in this manner. Absorbed in the geometrical abstractions of pendulum theory, he is oblivious to physical nature and to human feeling. Science, being mere measurement à la Lord Kelvin, cannot partake of the joy of life, represented by the carefree girl on the swing. In our own day Robert Frost demonstrates a similar satiric intent in his poem, "Etherealizing:"

> A theory if you hold it hard enough
> And long enough gets rated as a creed:
> Such as that flesh is something we can slough
> So that the mind can be entirely freed.
> When the arms and legs have atrophied,
> And the brain is all that's left of mortal stuff,
> We can lie on the beach with the seaweed
> And take our daily tide baths smooth and rough.
> There once we lay as blobs of jellyfish
> At evolution's opposite extreme.
> But now as blobs of brain we'll lie and dream,
> With only one vestigial creature wish:
> Oh, may the tide be soon enough at high
> To keep our abstract verse from being dry.

As I have said, the detachment of science from "humanistic" concerns was necessary in order for science to establish its authority. But gradually a Kantian awareness of the limitations of reason alone began to take hold. Space, time, causality, were undeniably a part of reality, but how was one to deal scientifically with these *a priori*, logic-defying concepts, inseparable from the human perception of them?

In the context of the human sciences such as sociology and psychology, an exclusively positivist approach can be dangerous, as anti-behaviorists are quick to point out. Polanyi, for one, insists on a "humanistic revisionism" of science, particularly the biological sciences, which must be "emancipated . . . from the scourge of physicalism."[6] It was this attitude that led Abraham Maslow to coin the term "humanistic psychology" in 1962 and to launch the humanistic psychology (or "Third Force") psychology movement.

Once we acknowledge the importance of the human element in any scientific endeavor, and once we agree with Werner Heisenberg that "natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is a part of the interplay between nature and ourselves,"[7] then we must look to discourse as the indispensable instrument for our coming to understand reality as fully as possible.

III

If knowledge can only reach fruition, signification, through the filter of human consciousness, then all disciplines are the domain of the writer. This is a sobering realization indeed, for it calls attention to the high degree of responsibility a writer must assume when he or she transmits knowledge to others. Certainly, writing skill is essential. Potential authors, regardless of the field in which they are working, must have acquired the ability to structure an argument coherently, to treat each point clearly and accurately. But more than rhetorical proficiency is needed before a writer may be deemed "responsible." He or she must be fully aware of the potential for distortion whenever raw information is transformed into discourse.

The grossest forms of distortion occur when "popular" writers with no apparent scientific awareness make little or no effort to be accurate. Consider the way TV and motion-picture scriptwriters or comic-book writers have depicted prehistoric peoples (*e.g.*, the Neanderthals) as hulking, ignorant brutes who drag their women around by the hair and battle dinosaurs that had been extinct for millions of years. The effect of such distortion upon the millions of children exposed to it is inestimable.

Less blatant, but equally serious, are the flaws in logic and the oversimplifications that plague the discourse of popular science. How often do we hear that humans "are descended from the apes," when it is much more accurate to say that both humans and the apes are descended from a common primitive ancestor. And then again, in both of these statements, we should be skeptical about the accuracy of the expressions "descended from" and "ancestor." We are accustomed to using such expressions in conversations about our family trees, where time is measured in generations and centuries (difficult enough to grasp), not millions of years. Insufficiently trained authors writing on the subject of evolution often neglect to emphasize the staggering amounts of time involved in the transmutations of species, and this does much to distort the very concept of evolution for many.

Other examples of distortion in science-based writing abound, and it is possible to categorize them (although the categories will often overlap): metaphoric distortion, distortion through faulty generalization, and distortion through falsification and omission (intended or unintended).

METAPHORIC DISTORTION: "Entropy" applied loosely as a synonym for "energy loss": "Having skipped breakfast, Hank reached maximum entropy by 11 a.m." Some inaccurate metaphors are innocuous because their inaccuracy is common knowledge: "shooting stars" for meteorites; "bottom of the world" as the location of Antarctica, are examples.

FAULTY GENERALIZATION: Consider: "Humans have steadily evolved from non-civilized roving in packs to hunt food, to highly organized urban life and the accompanying division of labor." What does the author mean by "steadily" evolved? or "highly" organized? There is the suggestion that "non-civilized" equals "barbaric" in this context. Another form of faulty generalization is the arbitrarily imposed hierarchy: "Three ways radiation can affect humans are, in order of importance, externally, internally, and psychologically." Faulty generalization is also common in speculative writing. Carl Sagan provides a vivid example of this in pre-spaceprobe popular astronomy: a speculation on the possibility of life on cloud-enshrouded Venus:

> The absence of anything to see on Venus led some scientists to the curious conclusion that the surface was a swamp. The argument... went something like this:
>
> "I can't see a thing on Venus."
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Because it's totally covered with clouds."
>
> "What are clouds made of?"
>
> "Water, of course."
>
> "Then why are the clouds of Venus thicker than the clouds on earth?"
>
> "Because there's more water there."
>
> "But if there is more water in the clouds, there must be more water on the surface. What kind of surfaces are very wet?"
>
> "Swamps."
>
> And if there are swamps, why not... dragonflies and perhaps even dinosaurs on Venus? Observation: There was absolutely nothing to see on Venus. Conclusion: It must be covered with life."[8]

DISTORTION THROUGH FALSIFICATION AND OMISSION: Scenarios depicting humans living with dinosaurs, spaceships generating sound as they travel through the vacuum of space, fictitious worlds outside the solar system millions of miles apart, "light-year" or "parsec" used as a measure of speed instead of distance—fall into this category. Ignoring details for whatever reason (*e.g.*, "they're much too technical, and besides, my readers are literary persons, not engineers") produces not only distortion but helps perpetuate the untruth of a scientific language as something separate from a literary language.

In his *Of a Fire on the Moon,* Norman Mailer manages to give mythic proportions to the image of spaceship-voyaging humanity. The success

of this mythologizing is largely due, I think, to Mailer's having mastered the technical background of his topic. That he did his homework superbly is evident in the following excerpt:

> A rocket was not unlike a ball inhabited by smaller not quite symmetrical balls which rolled around within—so deviations were present in every trajectory. Rockets with solid fuel had a firing chamber which grew larger as the fuel burned away—therefore, the thrust altered; rockets with liquid fuel were obliged to react to the fact that the fuel sloshed around in the tanks. A world of instruments, of gyroscopes, radios, telemetric devices, computers and various electric monitors and controls moved into position on the rocket, each instrument to exhibit its own peculiarities, working difficulties, tendency to malfunction and subtle hint of private psychology.
>
> So dread inhabited the technology of rockets. Two of the most primitive and mysterious actions of nature, the force of fire and the transmission of thought, had been harnessed in machines which sat within other machines—the fire was controlled to hurl a ship to the moon; the thoughts of men on the guidance and preservation of that ship were directed into electromagnetic circuits which propelled these thoughts and observations into other electromagnetic instruments thousands of miles away. If the mysteries of physics were still unplumbed, if men were able to perform these actions without knowing altogether why they worked, no ordinary dread had been engaged, particularly if we consider that the management of fire and the management of thought are two of the most perilous activities for primitive man. Speak next of what it means to invade the heavens, then occupy the moon, the moon! that pale sister of Creation.[9]

We notice two ways in which Mailer demonstrates his authorial responsibility over thc subject matter concerning him here:

1. His technical terminology and descriptions are factually accurate (*e.g.*, "Rockets with solid fuel had a firing chamber which grew larger as the fuel burned away.")
2. His use of metaphor is accurate—a carefully conceived aesthetic vision that grows logically and harmoniously out of the technical foundation. Fire is a central metaphor, one that embodies humankind's most primitive and most scientifically advanced pursuits simultaneously.

Santayana once referred to science as a halfway house between private sensation and universal vision. It seems to me that all disciplines must share this definition, if we agree that a given body of knowledge is

actualized most fully through discourse. Rather than draw hard distinctions between discourse aims ("informational," "persuasive," "expressive," for example), I prefer to regard any discourse as embodying all three aims. One cannot really accomplish one aim independently of the other two, although one aim will usually dominate. Thus, scientific writing can never be "completely" objective, nor can artistic writing be "completely" subjective. Discourse by its very nature includes both objective and subjective factors, in varying degrees of emphasis. Control of emphasis should be entirely the author's, by the way, and not the discipline's; pre-set standards of objectivity and subjectivity can do much to destroy an author's literary integrity. Thus, there can indeed be such a thing as a "scientific" analysis of a literary subject such as *The Canterbury Tales* (say, as a specimen of late Medieval poetics, or of Chaucer's use of the Southeast Midlands dialect), and such a thing as a "literary" treatment of the relationship between natural and synthetic polymers—as John Updike cleverly demonstrates:

> The *Polymers,* those giant Molecules,
> Like Starch and Polyoxymethylene,
> Flesh out, as protein serfs and plastic fools,
> The Kingdom with Life's Stuff. Our time has seen
> The synthesis of Polysioprene
> And many cross-linked Helixes unknown
> To *Robert Hooke;* but each primordial Bean
> Knew Cellulose by heart: Nature alone
> Of Collagen and Apatite compounded Bone.[10]

As I have tried to show, writers cannot sidestep technical aspects of their subjects on grounds that their aim is artistic. Every discipline, from metaphysics to metallurgy has a technical side. On the other hand, no matter how technical and objective we may be, we cannot cease being interpretive. What a reporter might consider to be "completely factual" is nonetheless a construct of *selected* details and emphases which can *represent* the event, but never quite present it. Only the event itself can do that. Reporters and their readers alike must acknowledge the margin of distortion that a report inevitably must carry.

IV

Just as there are different ways of interpreting scientific phenomena (based on the author's rhetorical aim), there are different ways of writing scientifically. Some interpretations will emphasize scientific content, others the human response. Still others will strive to balance scientific

content with human response. In the first group I would place writers such as Sir James Jeans, Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, as well as those lesser-known scientist-writers appearing in *Scientific American* and similar journals.[11] In the second group I would put Thoreau, Muir, Loren Eiseley. And in the last group, Lewis Thomas.

I find Lewis Thomas particularly interesting in terms of the idea of authorial responsibility, and so would like to examine his literary technique in some detail. Read a page of Dr. Thomas's essays and you will realize at once that it is indeed possible for one to write with almost Mark Twain-like wit and folksy informality, to use metaphor as a means of aiding comprehension for the non-specialist—and still be uncompromisingly accurate in the handling of scientific (in this case biomedical) information and terminology. Thomas, I feel certain, would be the first to say that words ought not to be segregated according to academic discipline ("Hmmmm, 'bacteriophage': you'd better scoot on over to the Bacteriology Department; 'polymer?' you mosey on down to Organic Chemistry; 'videodisc'—hey, you can stay right here with us, young feller.") Thomas would say that there are no such critters as "hard words" or "easy words." Synonyms are largely non-interchangeable, varying in degrees of accuracy relative to context. Go ahead, Thomas seems to be saying between the lines, look up every other word if you need to, cussing under your breath all the while; once you have learned what mitochondria are and can understand the difference between prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells, you will be all the wiser for it. Dr. Thomas is almost telling us that the "language" of biology or of medicine is the language of all humanity, if only because these disciplines are so integral to our everyday lives. The language of a scientific priesthood is no longer tenable.

For too long, people in the so-called humanistic disciplines have instinctively pinned the label of "jargon" on specialized terms, words that have not entered the mainstream of usage. But jargony Lewis Thomas is not. "Jargon" implies that such expressions do not *belong* in the mainstream, where they go around intimidating folks.

Let us look closely at a sample of Dr. Thomas's prose:

> [W]e have always been a relatively minor interest of the vast microbial world. Pathogenicity is not the rule. Indeed, it occurs so infrequently and involves such a relatively small number of species, considering the huge population of bacteria on the earth, that it has a freakish aspect. Disease usually results from inconclusive negotiations for symbiosis, an overstepping of the line by one side or the other, a biologic misinterpretation of borders.

> Some bacteria are only harmful to us when they make exotoxins, and they only do this when they are, in a sense, diseased themselves. The toxins of diphtheria bacilli and streptococci are produced when the organisms have been infected by bacteriophage; it is the virus that provides the code for toxin. Uninfected bacteria are uninformed. When we catch diphtheria it is a virus infection, but not of us. Our involvement is not that of an adversary in a straightforward game, but more like blundering into someone else's accident.
>
> I can think of a few microorganisms, possibly the tubercle bacillus, the syphilis spirochete, the malarial parasite, and a few others, that have a selective advantage in their ability to infect human beings, but there is nothing to be gained, in an evolutionary sense, by the capacity to cause illness or death. Pathogenicity may be something of a disadvantage for most microbes, carrying lethal risks more frightening to them than to us. The man who catches a meningococcus is in considerably less danger for his life, even without chemotherapy, than the meningococci with the bad luck to catch a man. Most meningococci have the sense to stay out on the surface, in the rhinopharynx.[12]

A striking synthesis of "scientific" with "literary" language is demonstrated here—sufficient to dissolve those false distinctions, I would hope. The style of the passage suggests that the sheepherder, the biochemist, and the philologist are to be equally engaged—intellectually as well as aesthetically. No translating into "simple language" à la Rudolph Flesch is occurring here. There is no recognition of language boundaries or even of disciplinary boundaries which have been keeping so many of us intellectually straitjacketed. What we are witnessing instead is discourse that allows data to co-exist with human responsiveness, metaphor with hardline referents. Such discourse, I submit, makes the highest cognitive claims.

Anyone can understand the passage, not because it is "simple" but because it is readable, in the most meaningful sense of the word. Along with the lively, conversational style there is another important factor contributing to the readability of Dr. Thomas's prose: a superb metaphor control. A metaphor universalizes an isolated idea or experience. If one states that disease is not usually the result of pathogenicity, a lot of nonmedically oriented readers would be lost. But if one adds, as Dr. Thomas does, a metaphorical vehicle for the idea—"Disease usually results from inconclusive negotiations for symbiosis"—and again—"Our involvement is not that of an adversary in a straightforward game, but more like blundering into someone else's accident"—then the reader has gained

understanding by seeing the connection between the specialized experience of the biochemist or physician and the more commonplace experience wherein allusions to "negotiations," "adversary," and "blundering into someone else's accident" are frequent. By the time the reader gets to the third paragraph in the above passage he or she will have come to understand what "pathogenicity" is—or at least what it is not; so that even when the reader sees the word again, it has no enigmatic aura about it at all:

> Pathogenicity may be something of a disadvantage for most microbes, carrying lethal risks more frightening to them than to us.

"When we are lucky enough to find a direct match between a receptor and a fact," Dr. Thomas writes in one of his essays on communication ("Information"), "there is a deep explosion in the mind; the idea suddenly enlarges, rounds up, bursts with new energy, and begins to replicate. At times there are chains of reverberating explosions, shaking everything: the imagination, as we say, is staggered."[13]

I cannot think of a better way to describe my own reaction to Dr. Thomas's essays. No poet I have read has revealed so much of the language of biology and the biology of language, and why it is so necessary always to see one in terms of the other.

V

Almost every night the stars and the moon shimmer into our consciousness and fill us with awe. Perhaps we have learned to recognize the planets and constellations. Many a skywatcher is able to name the lunar *mare* and the craters, just as traditional nature poets are able to recognize and name innumerable species of flora as well as any botanist. The recent discovery of a proto-solar system around Vega should ignite as much contemplation among literary persons as among scientists. We might call this "scientific" knowledge of the heavens, but I would rather think of it as our having tapped into what Teilhard in *The Phenomenon of Man* calls the "interiority" of the universe, and discovering over and over the intimate relationship between mind and cosmos. "The eye," proclaims Emerson, "is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second." Our having bothered to learn the names of stars and planets (no less than our bothering to learn the names of beautiful flowers or of human beings) has stemmed from our instinctive need to enter and participate in the mystery of the Other, not to eliminate that mystery. Knowledge does not dispel mystery, only ignorance. How can it be otherwise when the very phenomenon of knowing is itself an unfathomable riddle? All the times we have gazed into the face of the full moon, contemplating her lunar

nature, thinking about the men who have set foot upon her and the discoveries they have made in her shadows, we ought to feel no loss of "blood response"—but on the contrary feel an enhancement of it. Some of us, with D. H. Lawrence, have seen the moon

> Flushed and grand and naked, as from the chamber
> Of finished bridegroom, seen her rise and throw
> Confusion of delight upon the wave
> ("Moonrise")

Of course this is not the only kind of poetic response to the moon that is possible. Poetry is most powerful (to me at least) when it can provide beauty and meaningfulness to the raw ore of new knowledge, to the new discoveries of nature. Here, for example, is May Swenson contemplating the moon ten years before the first Apollo landing, during the time of the unmanned lunar probes:

> Old fossil
> glistening
> in the continuous rain
> of meteorites
> blown to you
> from between the stars,
> stilt feet
> mobilize to alight upon you,
> tickling feelers
> determine your fissures
> to impact a pest
> of electric eggs in the
> cracks of your cold
> volcanoes
> ("After the Flight of Ranger VII")

To be a writer, whether of "scientific" or "artistic" stripe, means to be sensitive to such great launchings of both mind and spirit, and to provide humankind with a sublime yet accurate discourse-record of both the journey and what it is like after we arrive, wherever that might be. Like Moon-Watcher, the precocious man-ape in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, we reach out and try to touch the ghosts that rise above the hills. After a long struggle, and after we learn to articulate our longings, we discover, to our astonishment, that we are there.

NOTES

[1] David Hamilton, "Writing Science," *College English,* 40 (Sept. 1978), 32.

[2] Wilbur Urban, *Language and Reality* (London: Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1939), p. 508.

[3] I.A. Richards, *Science and Poetry* (London: Kegan Paul, 1928), p. 24.

[4] William H. Emmons, et. al., *Geology: Principles and Processes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), p. 519.

[5] Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 41.

[6] Polanyi, p. 46.

[7] Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 81.

[8] Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York; Random House, 1980), p. 92.

[9] Norman Mailer, *Of a Fire on the Moon* (New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 154.

[10] John Updike, "Dance of the Solids," *Scientific American,* Jan. 1969, p. 131.

[11] Of course the target audiences may differ greatly among the authors in this category. The individual authors mentioned, for example, attempt to reach a wide "lay" audience; those reporting their research in *Scientific American* generally try to reach a scientifically oriented but non-specialist audience.

[12] Lewis Thomas, *The Lives of a Cell* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), pp. 76-77.

[13] Thomas, p. 92.

Generations of Women:

A Search for Female Forebears

Doris Friedensohn and Barbara Rubin

Rosa Graham at 109. 1967. Collection of Lisa Bryant.

At 109 Rosa Graham stands erect and proud. A grey-white afro frames her strong ebony face, and clear, dark eyes meet the photographer's. Her cotton paisley dress, long sleeved and self-belted, reaches to just above the ankles. Surrounded by a turn-of-the-century wood burning stove on the right and a 1960's refrigerator to her left, Rosa bridges two centuries and at least as many worlds.

Padmavati and Govinda Prabhu. Pilar, India. c. 1960. Collection of Shobha Devi Pilar.

Padmavati Prabhu was 14 and her husband Govinda Prabhu 22 when they were married in Manpadi, India, in 1906. The wedding festivities, culminating in a religious ceremony, lasted five days. An agricultural family, the Prabhus lived a simple life; their main ambition was to educate their 6 children. Padmavati died in 1970 at the age of 78. After her death, Govinda longed to join his wife. He died four years later at the age of 90.

Fidela Sarne Paredes and Friend. Imur, Cavite, The Philippines, 1937. Collection of Susan Isaac.

The oldest of seven children, Fidela Sarne Paredes (left), interrupted her college studies in Business Management when her parents died. She wanted to see her younger sisters and brothers finish college; and with her support, they all became professional people—pharmacists, teachers and engineers. Fidela herself became a successful business woman, importing rice and managing a tailor shop and shoe factory. She died in childbirth at the age of 36.

Anna Keogh Hickey. New York, 1907. Collection of Judith Kosmaı

Anna Keogh, the youngest child of Katherine and Miles, was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1884. At Manual Training High School she studied typing and stenography in addition to academic subjects. After graduating from high school, she worked for a textbook publisher until her marriage to Daniel Hickey in 1907. When Hickey died in 1914, leaving Anna with three young children, she returned to her parents' home and took two jobs to help support the extended family. A "fighter," Anna counselled others to be independent. She died at the age of 90, leaving seven grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

I. Photos of Female Forebears

JACKIE Shamburg, a 35 year old student and mother of three, sits in a circle with eighteen other women of varied ages and backgrounds. Jackie is talking about her Sicilian grandmother, Theresa Provendete Maccagnano. "Grandma was born out of wedlock in 1885. Her mother, who supported herself by 'renting out chairs in church,' placed Theresa in a convent to be educated and disciplined. At age 19, she left the convent, turned her back on an arranged marriage, and sailed in steerage for America. Through relatives she met and married Carmelo Maccagnano, a gentle shoemaker, with whom she had six children. Carmelo died at 45, and within a few years of his death Theresa also buried three of their young daughters." Now Jackie interrupts her narrative to show the group a portrait of her grandmother as she remembers her: dressed in black, grey hair pulled severely back, face full and strong, features in repose. "I look at this picture, Jackie continues, "and I see pain, loss, and an undaunted spirit."

Jackie Shamburg, her classmates, and some 400 other Women's Studies students at Jersey City State College have been recovering the history of women in their families—using photographs from their own and their relatives' collections as sources of data and spurs to memory. This essay concerns their search and discovery. It also concerns our efforts as teachers, first to provide a framework for the students' activities and then to transform their individual findings into a larger statement, "Generations of Women: An Exhibit of Photographs and Narratives.[1]

Who are the women in your family photo albums, we asked our students? In what historical moment did they appear? How and where did they live? What do the photos suggest about their origins and social circumstances, their fears and dreams, crises and triumphs? What do older relatives remember about these female forebears, and how do they assess their impact upon themselves and others? What do you yourself know about their histories, personalities, and beliefs? What relation exists between photographic image, observation, memory and fact? With questions like these, almost four years ago, we inaugurated the first phase of "Generations of Women."

II. Home Work

Family photographs are democratic artifacts. Our students, with very few exceptions, had within reach the essential ingredients for their work. In the process of locating photographs—in a mother's drawer or attic trunk, on a grandmother's mantle, in a great aunt's ancient album or a grandfather's wooden cigar box—they were also identifying informants: older family members who could bridge the gap between past and present.

Silvia Velasquez leans over the formica table in her mother's kitchen. Her left hand rests on the cassette recorder while her eyes fix on the tattered photo of her great grandmother, Dolores de Alfaro. "Her life was so hard," Mrs. Velasquez murmurs in Spanish. "Always she worked on the farm and took care of children. She never learned to read or write. Dolores was superstitious. But look, she is so beautiful."

Among students in the "Generations of Women" project, Silvia feels particularly fortunate. Her mother cherishes the small group of photos she brought with her from Cuba to Union City, New Jersey, and welcomes excuses to recall the old life. Although she gropes for details about her grandmother Dolores, Mrs. Velasquez is precise and animated in recreating the adulthood of her own mother, Maxima. Stories tumble out: Maxima's struggles as a young widow with seven children, her chicken farm, the fresh eggs she sold at the market, her refusal to consider remarrying because she doubted that having a stepfather in the house would be good for the girls. . . .

In many respects, Silvia's situation and Jackie Shamburg's are typical. Grandmothers are the most common subjects of students' research and mothers and grandmothers the most common informants. Photo collections are modest in number, uneven in pictorial quality and condition; photos are only occasionally dated or otherwise documented. The family's local roots (in New Jersey) are only one or two generations deep, and immigration to America is the heart of their story.

Susan Ganther has a different kind of opportunity. Her lineage-conscious family has meticulously documented their migration from the British Isles to 17th century New England and from there to Pennsylvania and New Jersey. When Susan visits her mother in nearby Bayonne she finds, in addition to good quality studio portraits and snapshots, letters, journals, and a family history written by her grandmother, Elizabeth Barbour. The oldest photo of significance for Susan, dated 1880, shows her great grandmother and great aunt (both well educated and well off) presiding over a sewing circle of smartly dressed matrons. But Susan wants to focus on Elizabeth Barbour who has long been her heroine and model. A 1914 studio photo memorializes Elizabeth and the

Dolores de Alfaro. San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba. c. 1900. Collection of Pedro Fleitas.

Regal looking Dolores de Alfaro posed for this portrait in her very best dress. Born on a farm near Havana, Dolores never learned to read or write. Her life revolved around farming and raising her two daughters. She was superstitious, loving, and understanding with her children and grandchildren.

Bayonne High School basketball team. In a candid shot taken four years later, Elizabeth—now a self-proclaimed feminist—and friends at Wellesley College prepare for an adventure on the open road. Elizabeth, Mrs. Ganther muses, followed her own path: a Masters degree in History at Columbia, teaching at Kalamazoo College, then marriage at age 38 to a widower with children and a farewell to her career.

Christine Franklin's roots are in the Deep South where her mother Ethel Thompson was raised in the extended family of "Aunt" Mattie Clark. Mattie, now way over a hundred years old, has cast a long shadow over the Thompson family in New Jersey. Her presence is felt, but few tales are told, and there are no photographs to be found. So Christine and her sister Rosa pack cameras and cassette recorders and fly to Bainbridge, Georgia, to see what is to be learned of Mattie's life and by extension their mother's and their own.

The welcome they receive in Georgia is cool. The younger generations now in Mattie's house protect her from the prying Northerners. To their surprise, there is nothing of the past in Mattie's comfortable suburban "ranch," save one retouched photo of young Mattie and her husband. Why, Christine and Rosa ask themselves? Slowly, through talks with Mattie and relatives they piece together the following story. At the turn of the century in rural Georgia, Mattie Clark was a Black woman alone, childless, and impoverished. Tough-minded and clever, she did what she could to insure her survival: she "adopted" other people's children and put them to work. The children earned and some of them (but not Christine and Rosa's mother) flourished. Mattie gradually put want behind her and banished the unpleasant past. For the sisters from New Jersey, visiting Aunt Mattie is sobering indeed. They have drunk at the well of their mother's bitterness, and the taste remains in the mouth.

For all of the students, doing family research with family members is a seductive business. The process often confounds the findings. Generally, mothers, grandmothers and other relatives delight in this unexpected collaboration with student researchers. To be taken seriously, to see the family—particularly women in the family—as front and center on the agendas of their college-going progeny is surely an occasion for rejoicing; however, it is also an occasion for nostalgia and filial piety. Families nurture their myths and guard their secrets; novice researchers, attuned to the rules of the family game, protect themselves, their informants, and the dead. For most students, finally, the deepest satisfactions derived from this work are in the freshly structured connection with female relatives and the sense of a newly important female line.

III. Class Work

In class we struggle for distance and a modicum of dispassionate analysis. Students match tales, query one another, and speculate about distortions, missing details and conflicting accounts of relatives' lives. They pass photos around in the circle, commenting on hair and clothing, groupings of figures and interiors in relation to class and status. Why, they ask, is Antoinette Florio hiding in the doorway of the general store she owns, while her husband, the ice man, assumes a proprietary pose in front? Why is Vinnie Schenone bathing Rosemary in the kitchen sink (Jersey City, 1952)? Is it because the family has no private bathroom, because the bathroom they have is only a "toilet," or because the kitchen is simply the warmest room in the house? How about the women who pose with bikes and cars: do they own or have they borrowed the vehicles in question? Scrutinizing gestures and facial expressions, students observe that more may be hidden in family photographs than is revealed. Where, in all the portraits, they ask, are wit, anger, ambivalence, idealism, discontent, and despair?

The more attentively students examine photographs, the more familiar they become with the conventions, deceptions, and mysteries of the medium. They notice, for example, that wedding pictures taken in Hoboken and Havana, Bucharest and Brooklyn are similarly composed, depersonalized. The professional photographer's rendering blocks out the idiosyncratic, uniquely individual gesture or expression—thereby homogenizing and normalizing experience.

They notice, too, that in portrait after portrait of immigrant and poor women, studio backdrops serve as democratic levelers—creating illusions of bourgeois ease and well-being. For the benefit of the photographer and posterity, all those grandmothers and great grandmothers have donned their Sabbath and Sunday best, straightened their backs and lifted their chins high in the air: Emeline Churchman, at 19, a maid for a wealthy family and Dolores de Alfaro, impoverished in rural Cuba, pose like proud queens. Students, like amateur psychologists everywhere, recognize that some photographs are not only illusions used to create illusions, but also the proverbial mirrors of the soul.

Each class of 20-odd students has its collective experience. After the photos are returned to their folders, the images and narratives hover in the air, awesome in their totality. Students marvel at "the company of

"Brakemen." Bremen, Germany. 1918. Collection of Sandy Shader.

When men go off to war, jobs of all sorts are filled by women. Augusta Schrober, age 19, and her friend went to work as "brakemen" on the German railway during World War I. They were photographed here in their official uniforms.

women" (to borrow Mary Gordon's phrase) in which they find themselves: the grandmothers, great grandmothers, aunts and great aunts, generally uneducated and poor, who have displayed such remarkable fortitude as workers, mothers and wives; they cared for the young, the old, the sick and the needy—these farmers, teachers, cooks, and factory workers, these seamstresses, faith healers, shopkeepers, and maids. Examined close up, our students' "ordinary," hitherto unheralded forebears now bask in an extraordinary light.

IV. Returning the Research to the Community

Before the "home work" and the class work were actually underway, we envisioned the project's third phase: a public event, an exhibit at the college in which we would return the photohistory research to its rightful owners: our students, their families and friends. We had other, related targets for this public event. As feminists at a state college (an urban, commuter institution) which had never in its 50 year history hosted an all day "women's program," we believed our time had come. We wanted to orchestrate a celebration particularly, but not exclusively, for women; and we wanted to place women's lives at the very center of the community's attention. The exhibit, "Generations of Women," would provide the necessary focus, connective tissue, and drama.

To collect photographs, Susan Sontag proposes in *On Photography*, is to collect the world. Indeed, the 400 students (and the dozen staff members) who participated in "Generations of Women," presented us with a cornicopia of visual history: materials spanning more than a century and stretching across the globe from India, Iran and the Philippines to Nigeria, Ecuador, Portugal, Poland and Puerto Rico. However, an exhibit is not simply a collection. It is, of necessity, a selection; and selection implies criteria, goals, perspective, and organizing principles.

The exhibit, we decided, would be a work of translation and transformation.[2] There would be no tattered 2" × 4"s, no picture post card slick 3" × 6"s; no replication of the odd sized medley of likenesses which were removed from family settings and brought into the classroom to be studied and admired. The exhibit would be different from and larger than the sum of its parts.

Its form would be theatrical, its scale imposing, its aesthetic potential fully exploited. Since women have long been hidden from history—forgotten, obscured or diminished—our "Generations" would be BIG (some eight feet tall, others 20" × 30" and 16" × 20"), beautifully visible, occasionally larger than life size. Clearly, we would enlarge the "best" pictures; those that are sharp, well composed, and richly textured; those

Lena Wilson in the Mirrors. New York, 1916. Collection of Esther Penchansky.

Born in Kobryna, Russia (now Poland) in 1893, Lena Wilson came to the United States in 1910. She worked as a dressmaker in the New York garment district. The dress she is wearing here, photographed in a studio in front of multiple mirrors, is probably one she made herself. Lena was "the beauty" of the family (the third of nine children) and was courted by many men. She dreamed of marrying well and living elegantly. In 1923, she married Abe Papkin, a garment maker. They had two daughters.

in which the chief figure has presence, character, complexity, mystery, affect.... We would also see to it that our choices displayed the social and ethnic diversity of the project's participants. Clearly, too, we would subordinate the verbal to the visual. Narratives would be brief, their language faithful to that of family informants and the students themselves.

We would organize the materials in the interest of visual coherence—as the subject matter of the selected images dictated: portraits of individuals, mothers and children, couples, friendship, and group occasions. (Unfortunately, very few photos of women at work came our way; nevertheless, work experiences figured prominently in the accompanying narratives.) We would let the images and narratives speak for themselves: provide a critique of the status and situation of women while paying homage to women's complex reality. These arrangements had curious ramifications. Within categories, photographs of equivalent visual authority hang side by side: the Black chambermaid, the lace-curtain Irish bride, the Philadelphia society matron, the Russian Jewish "princess," and the sun battered Puerto Rican grandmother. On the wall, the images do not fight one another; rather each somehow complements and supports the other. Ironic? Yes and No. Perhaps the exhibit wall is really an extension of the feminist classroom with its politics of mutual respect; or perhaps the wall is the world as we wish it—a place where differences are honored, where democracy of the spirit is triumphant.

Like all translations, "Generations of Women" involves losses and gains in relation to photographs and their meaning for family members. The losses are in the realm of particularity: gone is the original picture to which memory is attached; gone, too, are its shape, feel, surface and intimate character. The gains, however, are in the realm of the universal. The women whose photos were brought into the classroom are remembered and revered by their families for themselves. But on the wall, they move towards myth: they become representative figures, each standing for hundreds, perhaps hundreds of thousands like herself. Thus, ahistorically presented, "Generations of Women" pass into history.

"Generations of Women, I" opened at Jersey City State College in the spring of 1980 and "Generations, II" (new photos following the same format) premiered there the following spring. Both were emotionally powerful events, especially for the working class, ethnic and immigrant families of our students. With photos of their forebears on the walls of "an institution of higher learning," family members felt more than familial pride; they recognized a public tribute, an acknowledgement of their participation in the American mainstream.

Faculty and students, tape recorders in hand, wander through the crowds, speaking with visitors about the photographs they had contributed. Blanca Gonzales' mother, standing before a snapshot of herself, her mother, and daughter on her mother's farm (Cundinamarca,

Colombia, 1959), compares her own life today with her mother's 20 years ago (she is now almost the age her mother was in the photo), and she asks if the tape (all in Spanish) could be sent to her son in California.

V. Generations of Women on the Road

May, 1981, Washington, D.C. A middle aged woman stands before a larger than life size sepia photograph of a young Black schoolteacher and bursts into tears. Strangers move to her side to comfort her. "It's my grandmother," she says, weeping, "no, not really my grandmother, but so like her I can hardly bear it." Several minutes pass before the woman can trust herself to look again at the haunting face of Sarah Butler Bonner (Eaton, North Carolina, 1908) and wonder at the bridge between them.

In some 70-odd exhibitions of "Generations of Women" held around the United States and abroad, few moments have been quite as poignant as this one at Washington's Market Five Gallery. Still, in schools and colleges, museums, libraries, government buildings, hospitals, shopping malls—and even in a prison, the shock of recognition occurs. Visitors identify features of their own families in the students' photos and pause to reflect on a forebear and her life. But there are also different experiences to be encountered. The faces that stare out from the photos encourage sympathetic understanding of other peoples and other ways. In the exhibit the familiar and the exotic are linked by universal themes: ritual and romance, youth and aging, migration, matriarchy, patriarchy, and the relations between the sexes. The "Family of Woman" is seen loving and nurturing children, enjoying the company of friends and partners, celebrating holidays and marking the rites of passage: Abosede Owosina is preparing her daughter Olukeme for christening, Anna Keogh Hickey is about to be joined in holy matrimony, and the family of Maria de Guia are paying their final respects.

Haifa, Israel, December 1982. "Generations of Women" has been invited to an international conference at the University of Haifa on

Sarah Butler Bonner. Eaton, N.C., 1908. Collection of Denise Small.

For most of her adult life, Sarah Butler Bonner taught school in rural North Carolina. Married and childless, Sarah was about 30 years old when this photo was taken.

"Women's Worlds: The New Scholarship." There, on top of Mt. Carmel, before Israeli students with roots around the world and feminist scholars from some 30 nations, we unpack history. Sarah Bushkin Schnipper, Mary Flax Geller, Lena Wilson, Lottie Shapiro, Rose Rubenstein Arenson, and all the other Jews—and Christians and Moslems—who are to hang on the walls of the University's Terrace Building have, in a sense, come home. The generations give and the generations receive.

Notes

[1] A session of the American Studies Association Biennial Convention (Memphis, 1981) was devoted to the "Generations of Women" project. Our thanks go to Annette Baxter and Alice Kessler-Harris, who served on the Round Table with us, for their probing questions and extremely provocative critique. We have benefited enormously from discussions with both of them not only during the presentation but before and after as well.

[2] The visual conception and actual design of the exhibit grew out of our collaboration with Harold Lemmerman, Professor of Art and Director of Galleries at the college. We are ever grateful for his inspired approach to scale, design acumen, impeccable taste, and deep commitment to the project. Our fourth "partner" in the exhibit, Gary Mirasola, not only produced enlargements of extraordinary quality, but also provided no end of general and technical assistance and support.

POETRY

Leonard Uberman

The Late Bruce Stunning

Flash fire of shock
flies through Round Lake Hotel.
Bruce Stunning is dead;
everyone knew him.
At lunch he was having his soup,
dropped the spoon in mid-air,
his head struck the table like a mallet,
startling his neighbor
who was feeding in complete absorption
like Goya's Saturn.

Everyone knew him.
He led a divided intense existence
like Dracula. Was there a hidden box
where he slept weekdays and the off-season?
He moved in a cloud of questions.
Was he an airline pilot
as he said,
or a commodities broker
or a jockey's agent
also as he said?
He was not afraid to spend money,
he had that foreign classic car
with its chrome intestines streaming
out of the portholes in the tonneau.
He knew the magic word
to open clenched disinclined thighs.
Other fellows bit their lips.
There were incidents, excesses.
An irate father who came up from the city
with a cast on his leg no less

and was beaten caddishly.
The Spanish girl whose husband
played in the band
in her second obvious trimester.

Apollo's orange Volkswagen is burning
on the edge of the eighteenth green,
the luminous moon paring hangs
over the deserted lake.
The day's last foursome comes in.
A bridge game at a poolside table
is noiseless except for the slapping cards.
He lies in his dark room
in his mauve Chemise Lacoste,
Menzies tartan daks, Wall Streeter loafers.
His grey-templed hair, for some years
partly honest like Rousseau's confessions,
is tightly combed. He looks baffled
like someone whose psychiatrist
has just killed himself.
Everyone wants him taken away.

Come, Charon, over Round Lake's wave,
convey him to the land of the dead
as the throng of shades
of betrayed school teachers,
assistant buyers and secretaries
on the shore bare their stained
fallen breasts and execrate him.
Straight and tall in the stern,
he shall not acknowledge them
but fix his gaze on your boat's spreading wake.

Night Fishing

To come over the dune and see him casting,
in a dinner jacket, for striped bass,
his silk-striped trousers rolled up.

He throws his hook through the moon's bright cobbles.
The sea coats his lapels with diamond chips.
The VW at the water's edge
is the color of a water bottle.
An exasperated cigarette
flits to and fro in the back seat.

A fine spun cloud spreads under the moon.
The moon's light pavement
sinks under the dark swell.

The Three Wishes

At the moment, I can only think
of two wishes, he said to the genie.
I should have the third for you
by tomorrow at this time.
Stop back then.

The two wishes are, first,
not so many bones in my kippers,
and second, no more losing golf balls.
The genie disappeared like light switched off,
leaving his bottle,
sparkling emerald Moselle container,
on the George III mahogany bow-fronted sideboard.

But he never came back,
the wishes didn't go through.
It was absolutely a broken vow,
a breached contract.

They are not supposed to do that.
He can't understand it,
keeps peacock feathers in the bottle.

Racket Hand

Lightly sprinkled with clay
like a chicken with paprika,
smelling of the sun,
I strip off crocodile shirt and tennis shoes
and hit the unmade bed.
My hand, red and warm
like a small lobster,
rides on the shallow waves of my chest
set apart from my corpus.

Sleep, for two hours, and when I wake
it is in the same place,
but white and cold.
Ill-starred papistical hand, it lost music,
barely held what it loved most,
now disesteemed as erratic forehand,
weak backhand.

The Last Train

When I got to the station
at what I thought was an early time,
indeed, a very early time,
it was literally blanketed with people—
people on the platform, the roof of the platform,
the tracks and even the branches of the trees
behind the station.
And how many people would be on the train
when it finally pulled in?

I took one wistful look at the eastern horizon
and then set out for home.
Riding slowly between rows of anxious windows
I thought I heard the guns in the wind
and even smelled soldiers' bodies.

At home I simply threw the suitcase in a corner
and went and made a pot of tea.
As I sat in the old armchair sipping it
my cat came in, unaware, of course,
that his beloved master would have abandoned him.
He looked at me as if to say:
"What on earth are you doing here at this hour?"

Edward Kleinschmidt

The Well-Tempered Violet

The violets sing about the constant,
wonderful pain of love. Of course, songs
the violets play off Main Street next to
the old movie houses are too noisy for some.
To others it is a privilege for ears.
Not as coloratura as the columbine
being combed by its servants in
front of a mirror. And more than

the boy in a blue shirt riding
his bicycle down the long pier. He
is listening to his transistor radio. His
brother and sister fishing somewhere are
doing the same. While the juniper are
the *basso continuo* of our neighborhood,
slightly adaptive, filling in when
other players forget their parts,
the violets never forget. The violets

sing to the sailing ships in the harbor.
Their faces are not buried in old copies
of *Dover Beach.* They face the sun and give
the sun its color to use, and all its variations.
They wonder at the color yellow, though, if
this sparked color will burn like too much love
or if it, the violet, the color of bedsheets
and blushes and bruises, should fear

its fading means more than simple death,
which wipes off color for the moment,
like a towel does water on a porcelain
plate. The violets' color is a shiny
copper penny dropping in the street, or
a monkey screeching on the shoulder of
a flower vendor in Verona. If doctors had
opened Modigliani after he had died, they
would have seen violets. In Schubert, too,

perhaps Chopin. The violins play for
the violets. The cellos strum the air.
The violets let the winds hum over them,
let themselves be pressed in telephone
books under the letter V, allow us to forget
them, momentarily in winter, playing
the piano, singing around the piano,
"My love is like a red, red rose."

Mistakes in the Mind of Movement

A design is painted on the floor. Let
Me tell you what it looks like. First, the sky,
Taken down and sold last year, was a bargain
When we had it. Now monotony is

In our lives again because the sun plays
The pendulum, but the mood, the need of
Numbers joining hands to show us different
Phases, is lost. And then the trees, the acacia,

The elm, the redwood, and the tulip, all,
Mass migration, mass suicide, all took
Their sway and bend, all gathered up the wind,
Knotted it in strings around their trunks, moved

Decisively deep into the earth, waiting
For another time to come. The flowers,
And the grasses went the way of water, inward
And toward some dream they should have known

To believe in. Now the design is lines,
Some heads, some hands, some feet to walk
From one place to another place, some ropes
Between the distances, some attempt at landscape.

Against Reason

This is faddish, these
clothes which hike up
our bodies to an inch
of seeing is believing.

Why not yesterday? Someone hit
another with a snowball and
died. Both died from one
thing or another thing. Stands

to reason. This bridge is cross-grained,
like a word crossed out,
like a coat never taken to
the cleaners, not even on

principle. This duty is over.
Up against one wall, it is
the same wall. Or summed up:
kick summer out, hold off

the fall, grab winter by
its scarf and twirl it.
Leave spring as it is—
always looking backwards and laughing.

If this season, what season,
doesn't prove itself true,
we can start ripping up the calendar,
until we can find something new.

Four

Calendar of Events

Monday: fun. Tuesday: tears.
Wednesday: fun. Thursday: tears.
Friday: fun. Saturday and Sunday:
tears, tears, tears, tears, tears.

Suffocation Complex

Up from the chest cavity,
a barking dog, a skinflint,
two snake handlers, reporters.

Happy and Delirious

A new disease among camels:
they believe they are leopards
when they climb trees. They realize
they are camels when unable to get down.

Barbarian Rag

I wear a target on my heart,
which means to say: I am no
philospher. Death is random.

Common Day: After Keats

Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow
That turns our gray eyes towards the freshness
Of scarlet slashes in the sky? We are roused
As if always unanchored and glad of it. We are
Tangled and like the sheets on the beds in
Our lives. We walk in doors. We walk in doors.
But when I came to feel how far above the two of
Us the silvery hand of chance whipped up the air,
The clouds and airwaves, I felt the tenderness of
Natural despair sending messages off the black wall
Of joy we might have felt. The spirit culls what
Our mind rejects out of selfishness. And substitutes
A common sense of fright. Would we lie gnarled and
Broken and forgotten while the rain, so sweet, so sweet . . . .
O feel as if it were a common day! One for beggars who
Love the rain! For it downwards pulls us further down.
Though from this bed we can see, and though through
Your eyes I can live, what we look at while traveling is
At *home through the gloomy wood and wonderment* of day,
The day giving to you a place for me, and me for you.

Song Falling

Two women sit
and sing to each
other and every other:

the memory of a blue
song, the kind of heat
coal gives them when
they are hungry and
even the angels are
stomping their feet.
The echo is the sound
of the trains dying
without tracks.
They say glory be for
two birds, both singing
red, both singing blue:
When the king dies,
Who will sweep the church,
Or really want to?

And in the afternoon,
after the singing
by the water,
their eyes
don't exactly explode.
But the blue does seep
into all the corners.

They can hear the light
shine on the false houses
and make the sticks collapse.
And this light is received
into the shafts of their
hands, and is carried
into the caves of their flesh.

Words to a Play

There is a play going on
in this room. I can feel

it through my clothes.
And next door, through

the thick skin, live
curious ones whose eyes

turn a bright red rust
when the waves they are

thinking wash over them.
But here, in this room, we

talk to clay heads, terra-cotta,
incognito, eyeless,

baked in hot ovens.
This room is a hot oven,

larger than an oven.
And next door the waves

are making an ocean
and the ocean is

threatening us. We
sense its green violence.

But this is the fourth
act and most of

the audience, luckily,
has already left.

Marcia L. Hurlow

Mushrooms

I remember their layering us
with stiff clothes and rubber boots,
driving to the farthest acres of my grandpa's farm,
down weedy hill lanes
past fields and deep
into the early fall evening of a woods.
I remember an old smell, a hundred dead
layers of oak and chestnut sucking at my feet.

Mother said they always had found mushrooms
near a creek, so we went yards into brush and brittle vine.
The creek was dry from summer,
but they still thought they'd find some there
and looked, slowly moving away
from the creek and deeper into the woods,
talking softly, first telling us and each other
to watch the vines, to watch the ground, to watch what weeds
we touched and not to touch our faces,

then what to watch for.
I remember first, Dad's short science of mushrooms,
then more quietly, they recited layers of lore:
the circle of stumps, the line of posts;
the one, a month old, sending out northern seeds,
or downhill tubers, spirals of young.
Each tale told more.

I admit we heard only part.
I was making my own stories in the gnome-light between the trees
breaking to pull Mikie off a branch or to look at his weeds,
or when Dad asked how many I'd found:
I should try to find at least one;
I was probably stepping on them;
didn't I want to eat some tonight?
Later, we stood to watch the stove boil
dozens of long grey sponges
and tiny hidden bugs, dark genetic layers,
that surfaced on the salt water.

To Resolve a Dream

for Greg

Here you are in a boat,
flat-bottom, unrustable silver,
trailing folded silk.
Beneath you is the dream:
orange-eyed, saw-toothed
water boas; they roil and bite,
fierce in their own sour fluids.
You dare not dip even an oar
into their midst and drift
toward the ground fog that has poured
over the lake, its threads of clouds
churning like the snakes.
The mist dampens your hair.
You stand into the fog
and the snakes rise from the water
as geese, the scales falling
from their long pale necks,
wings shredding the ancient coils.

Going Home

A spectre, skin dried flat as a photo
of pioneers after too many seasons of failure,
you are at my door. You've made notes
to guide you through your recitation
of why a pacifist buys a gun,
of how a poet files for bankruptcy.

On the phone in the kitchen
with a bottle of bourbon in an E. T. glass,
you bargain with your second ex-wife,
left with her mother in Columbus, Ohio,
on your way back from Philadelphia
back to Wichita, home.

You can't phone home.
You can't talk to your ex-wife too long
or her mother will pull out the cord.
You can't write because you don't have the postage.
You can't write because you are
in the pivot of stanza, line, and foot.

Driving West in your van, with the few
pieces left thrown in loosely and leaking
out broken windows and holes in the floor,
you say you'll get committed in Des Moines
or ask Arthur for five hundred so you can work
on the poems from your last nightmare.

Greg told you to take a factory job,
go live with your mother.
Your mother asks why you don't teach.
An artist without a medium
can only go home; a ghost returns
where life stays unresolved.

Thomas Kretz

Picnic on Hot Stones

That hungry day in Puerto Monti
you filled your first pair of slacks
since profession. Shyly we rowed
each other's hands to the island
while at opposite ends of the battered boat,
wise old fishermen approved through their nets
though our companions seemed dumb. The unknown
irresistible. I was too buoyant for the boat.
You smiled. Sudden rain applauded wildly
against back water, waves clapped the prow.
Rather prowess. Giggling, we got feet wet with beach
as I helped you out. All broke for the cabin-clutch.
We lost hurricane hours in the tin funnel

of a holy crowd on holiday.
Night lunged at our *curanto* as we dug up
dinner, then relaxed upon the empty shells
which we scattered as the sky its stars.
We were a secret constellation hidden
in our Milky Way. You replaced the moon
making me shadow. I began to rotate until
someone shouted my name. I emerged
with wooden guitar and invisible strings
on my cheeks. Fearfully, like Adam and Eve,
afraid of whispers, disrobed. We sang the mainland
to sleep without further discovery
of each other's innocence and confusion.

Experiment 27

How can it be
that I love you still
with wound intensity
a muscled heart feels but once
with beat painfully out of sync
and yet cannot meet blue eyes
or remember the slope
of your face leading
me down meadows

Memory fears
intellect and will
without full possession
and I remember how I
wanted you to love me wholly
Your quick assent startled me
sending wild tumbling down
the far mountain side
to safe cities

Symbolical Fission

Dark rainsoaked shorts
Helda barefoot bound
Dripping bedward
Ready to stain
Defiantly any surface
With heaviness.

Follow musk trail of Heloise
Through white dabs of doorjamb
Sharing primal pigments

Or track sweet scent
Of rain, expressing senses
Too old to tame.

Split apart
By the vividness
Beneath the sea.

Frog legs mmmm . . .
Another surreal painting
I can ill afford.

St. Paul Acting 16:14

Invited I came in a sheet of wind,
Yes, and slept with her while the fever rose
And fell like moisture molecules until
Snow-weight told her brow better unfurrow.
I squeezed the name through a clam in her hand:
Celibate lovers risking for riches,
Straining, bottom line shared. Smiling weakly,
Draining my borrowed strength, surfeiting all
Dreams. Awake to her sleep, my Lydian
Stone, I knew I would be the one to die
First with my stretched neck turning tired crimson
While she grew in wisdom and age and grace.
A high moral to everything I write
Like the long essential tail of a kite.

Norman Nathan

Composed of Atoms

composed of atoms that are
mainly space,
i sit solidly
not slipping through the chairseat,
the wood unbelievably roomy
with whirling particles which,
if they could be crushed,
would coalesce to a pinhead.

Though love, too, lacking even
the smallest photon,
may wall out all substance,
two loves will flare into
less than space
like separate beams of light
brightening
by sharing a target.

dispossesed

i travel on a speeding train,
riding backward,
facing where i've been;
fields appear but never approach;
my hands can't reach out quick enough for me
to touch the passing leafy branch
almost jutting into
my open window

my thoughts grab at
going away from

cows, telephone poles condense;
the countryside shrinks fast
dying in a point

riding forward my eyes would overflow with
scenes growing large before
being suddenly cut off—
facing back i'm terrified,
never being able to let go of
what i never have—
everything flies from me.

Intimations of Mortality

The mountain seems to reach
heaven, until you stand
on the peak
with no place to go
but down.

hero considers everyman at a home for the aged

you've read about me; i was often
a prize winner, though memories
blur like faded newsprint;
yet we've grown much alike,
two maximum claims for pensions;
sitting near you i brag
by rocking a little harder,
a competitor to the death;

but under our glassy skins we've hardened into
surfaces to each other,
the past, unscratchable shells;
i reject my erosions and accretions,
the bewitchery of mirrors,
as each thought i have retouches
my changing photograph;
all pictures lie, even mine;

now as equals we meander into words
merging toward a single lane;
and we pretend to take turns
listening; we speak
what we'd never believe
from another's mouth,
making monuments of ourselves
to ourselves.

Sheryl L. Nelms

blown out egg

we live this white lie

inside this hollow
shell of our marriage

inside this lovely home
you worked so many
years to get

inside our families
trying to make
them believe

that the yolk
is still
here

untouchable

I go into the graffitied bathroom bunker
in the Greyhound depot in Albany

knowing to touch
is to contact
something

scabies
or impetigo
or herpes

I pick impetigo

and on the way out
stop to scrub
my hands
hard

then softly Kleenex
the scabrous door
open

your love

has become
puddled oatmeal
gone cold
in the pan

glued in chunks
along the silver rim
of my life

hard now

ever think

about all of the fish
finning around
under so many
glass laketops

about all of the squares
of saltness
shaking down
onto your sirloin

about all of the chewed
gum wads
hanging
under cafe tables

about how much
stamp glue
is licked
in post offices
every day

about your next
breath
if it
will
come

the rub

maybe native Texans
are jealous of Yankees
because

they know how
to get really warm
when it turns cool

they have
layers
by heart

they know
long underwear
like second skin

they've been wearing
great coats
lined with wolf fur
since they toddled out
of their blanket sleepers

cold hardy to 44 below
they are a threat
to native pride

because that southern cold
is one Texas phenomenon
that can be taken
lightly
by fur-lined
faces scoffing out
silent smirks

FICTION

Secret Codes and Other Handicaps

Barbara Ann Porte

VANESSA finishes making up the bunk bed, then looks around the room and smiles, showing perfect teeth. A tall, thin woman, she is dressed in black wool pants and a gray silk shirt; a gold chain hangs around her neck; a plain gold band is on her wedding finger. Looking at the bed again that is her son's, that she has just made up, her smile is gone. At thirty-six she could stand to smile more often.

Jerome, the son whose bed it is, will not be home tonight. He is spending this portion of his school semester-break visiting his grandmother who lives in Connecticut. Vanessa regards his bed distastefully. Ever since they brought it home and set it in Jerome's room so that he could have guests stay overnight, she has seen the speculative way in which her husband has been eying it. It is the only piece of furniture in the apartment now on which he hasn't yet made love to her.

Leaving Jerome's room, Vanessa goes into the kitchen and pours herself the last lukewarm cup of coffee from the pot. She takes it black with her to the table where she picks up a manuscript already marked with blue pencil in order to review it one more time before putting it in its envelope and returning it to the publisher. For years she has worked this way at home, on an assignment basis. She knows that she is fortunate to get such work. Before she married Jerry, her current husband after whom Jerome was named, when she was just divorced, and even before that when she was married for the first time, she had a job as junior editor of children's books.

The manuscript she's editing has to do with a young girl and her dog. Vanessa finds it hard to keep her mind on it. She thinks about what she will need to do later that day. Pick up odds and ends of groceries for dinner. Remember to defrost the steak. Telephone her mother and find out how Jerome is doing. Stop by at the cleaners and pick up Jerry's shirts, bring the sheets and pillow cases rolled up in the hallway. Her eyes come to rest on a picture of her husband and herself set up on the bookcase in the foyer. She frowns, thinking of this evening.

Her husband's propensity for making love in awkward places is a thing she does not understand, although she will admit that once she found it flattering. She need only look around their apartment now to be reminded—the beige carpet, the pale blue sofa, even the unsteady upright chair with the tied-on cushion. She'd cared least for the dining room table, and afterward had scrubbed it with a mixture of ammonia and hot water, removing a portion of the finish which she now has covered over with an antique vase. Once they had done it in the cloakroom of a church. Had they been a churchgoing family, perhaps she might have understood it. But they were not, nor are they now. The particular occasion for their being there that day had been marked only by a need to attend the confirmation ceremony of a distant cousin's child.

Oddly, she thinks, excepting for his preoccupation with the unfamiliarity of place, he has never shown any special inclination for the untried or the new, and she has often, especially of late, been left unsatisfied. She has tried to talk to him about it, but as with other things that she has tried to talk with him about, he hasn't seemed to hear, or hearing, understood.

Looking up now from her manuscript, Vanessa is surprised at how much time has passed. Pretty soon the mail will come. Jerry can be counted on to telephone part way through the morning, their conversation a convenient replay of days gone by.

"Hey babe," he'll say to her. He is the only man who has ever called her babe; his calling her that was one of the things about him that had first attracted her. "Just thought I'd call and check on you, be sure you hadn't run away and left us." To her discomfort and annoyance, he frequently includes Jerome in their relationship, as though he and Jerome together

form a union of which she is a separate, junior member. "You know how much I need you babe?" he'll ask. He always does.

She has never yet been able to find a satisfactory response to such a question on a daily basis. Nor does he seem to need one. "Love you," he always sings then into the telephone receiver before he clicks it down on his end, severing their connection. It is a feat she marvels at. Never once in all the time that she has known him, no matter how often she has tried, has she ever been able to beat his click on her end. Rarely, but not recently, she still will try.

As Vanessa gets up to rinse out her coffee cup the phone begins to ring. After five rings it stops. Jerry will think she's gone out to do her errands. He may or may not try again later on that day. It isn't that easy for him getting to a telephone. Not as if he were working in some office with a desk and secretary. A plumber, Vanessa thinks, my husband is a plumber. Each time she thinks it she is amazed anew at the way her husband earns their comfortably substantial living.

Even though she sees him leave the house each morning in clean work clothes and return each night in dirty ones, she can never quite picture him a plumber. Maybe it is because he is the only plumber she has ever known so intimately. Her marrying him had caused the usual stir that such a marriage across class lines can cause, and usually does. It was not until after Jerome had been born that they were invited to visit her mother's house together as a family. Then, the one time they had stayed overnight, on account of the weather, Jerry quite predictably had caught her in her mother's room and they had done it there.

Putting on lipstick in front of her mirror she wonders at his need, as she has often wondered. His need to possess not only her, but time and space it seems to her as well. She wonders now, as she has before, if his need is not in some way rooted in his secret.

It is a secret secret, not a shameful one. Her husband after all is not a criminal. He rarely drinks and then only to be social. He has never laid a hand on her in anger nor on his son. He thinks he lives just for his family; and so thinking, he is a faithful husband and attentive father. He is, in short, that rare good man so hard to find.

What is this secret secret then, so difficult to say, even in the framework of a story; so difficult to say out loud, to say in such a way that you of all people, a reader, can understand and not make judgment. His secret, Jerry Schreiber's unshameful secret, is only this, he cannot read.

"What do you mean, he cannot read?" the reader asks. "Do you mean he cannot read anything. He is not blind? Do you mean that he sees, he is not blind, but cannot read. Like a child just starting school, do you mean he never learned to read?" He does not know how to read. What does it mean to say this grown up man who earns a living, is a father, cannot read.

Well to be fair, Jerry Schreiber reads a little. Certainly nowhere near as well as ten-year-old Jerome who has always been in the Happy Bluebird

reading group in school, but at about the same level say as an average third grader who still has trouble sounding out. When he writes, his letters lean against each other, then away. They do not always face in the direction they're supposed to. That it is difficult to decipher them is often just as well, since quite understandably, Jerry also cannot spell.

It is knowing this about him, Vanessa reflects now, that touched her most in their early days together. In their early days together, before she knew, Vanessa used to read aloud to him, as she does now, as she has read aloud for all her life anytime her eyes have caught something in a book or magazine of special interest. "Listen to this," she'll say to anyone within proximity. "Listen to this,"—then read out loud the whole of it.

She thinks back now to the evening when she learned his secret, remembers all of it and smiles. It was after dinner and she was cleaning up the kitchen, washing the last of the dishes. He was sitting at the table with a newspaper. She quite naturally assumed that he was reading. A headline caught her eye.

"What does that say, Jerry," she had asked, squinting, unable to read from where she stood the article beneath. And because he needed her to know, he had read it to her; stumbling over words, leaving out, saying others in a way that made so little sense she knew they must be wrong. So then she knew.

She had tried to act natural, but later on that same night when he had lifted her up gently and carried her into her bedroom and lay her on the bed, and started to undress her, for the first time in their relationship, she'd made no protest. And even when, for her, that first experience had not been a particularly rewarding one, like most men who have a woman, that first time he came too fast, the relationship persisted.

"Dyslexia," she had said to him a few days later. "You have dyslexia." She formed the word with her lips, her tongue, slowly, carefully, as though in naming the thing she could relieve it of its power. In theory, it was nothing new to her. A well-read person, she could recite the famous names of those who'd had it, much as she could tell you which historic figures were subject to epileptic fits. In practice, however, she had never known before a grown-up person who didn't know how to read; and she whose view of life had been formed around the printed word worked hard to keep on knowing that his view of life was as valid as her own.

Putting away the groceries later on that afternoon, she recalls a conversation they had had not so long ago. It concerned an article that she was reading; it had to do with women sports writers needing to be admitted to athletic locker rooms in order to cover sports events on equal footing with the men reporters. Not having given it much thought before, she was surprised by the depth of the article's concern, the thoughtfulness of the writer's comments, the intelligence of the recorded interviews. As usual, she read parts of it aloud to him, thinking he would be as interested.

Halfway through he said to her, "I wish you'd shut up and let me get my work done. What do I care who they let in baseball locker rooms. If lady sportswriters get their kicks from seeing naked players, what is it to me." She, who hadn't known that he'd been working, and couldn't imagine anyway at what, plumbing not being the sort of work that one brings home, had been astounded. Having thought to include him on her side as a thoughtful, disinterested observer she'd been astounded at his bitterness, his tone of voice, his choice of words. Most of all she'd been astounded at the level of his rejoinder. At such a level, what is left to talk about. She'd left him then sitting in the living room with the television on and gone inside to go to sleep. Soon she will be reminded of this conversation.

Promptly at six-thirty Jerry walks through the door, kisses her, pats her on the backside, then begins:

"Would you believe," he says to her, "that Johnson got that job. I mean Mariano was next in line. He was counting on it. That'd be nearly a hundred dollars extra take home every paycheck. You know why Johnson got it, don't you? Just because he's black." At least, she thinks to herself, he doesn't use that other word.

"But you always said," she reminds him, "that everyone should get a fair shake. You always said you wanted to see the union really open up, not just on paper."

"Sure," he says, "fair and square. The same chance for everyone. You think Mariano got the same chance? Not on your life. Why should he have to stand aside because his color's not in style."

She starts to point out that the Johnsons of the world have been on standby now forever, that catching up is part of getting to be equal, but decides to try another line of reason. She lets some time go by, then after he has showered asks, "Jerry, how was it that you were able to pass your union test? I mean the reading part. It's a thing I've always wondered at, always meant to ask."

He, thinking they are on another subject now, does not mind answering. "My cousin Herbie," he says. "You know Herbie. He drilled me on the questions. I mean he is really tops. You know how far back him and the union go; before his grandfather, that's how far. Herbie got the tests for me ahead of time and drilled me and drilled me." Remembering Herbie has put him in a better humor. Before he can ask Vanessa why they don't have Herbie and his wife out to dinner later on that week, she interrupts to ask, "Don't you see,—don't you see that there's no difference between what your cousin Herbie did and Johnson?" The only thing he sees is that she never changed the subject.

He flicks on the television as he passes by. Why, he asks himself, can he always understand the television, and so seldom understand his wife. Brinkley, he thinks, answering his own question, says what he means. Vanessa works around the truth in circles. He peeks into Jerome's room,

then remembers he is gone. Eying the double decker bed, he makes up his mind not to discuss with Vanessa tonight anything the least bit controversial.

During dinner there is little conversation, a background hum provided by the television telling what the day's been like for people that they do not know in places that they haven't been. Vanessa, who does not care for television, turns her thoughts elsewhere. She thinks about her friend named Tisha who is married to a deaf man. Sometimes, surrounded by her husband and his friends, fluently conversant in sign language, Tisha forgets that she herself is hearing, sometimes doesn't speak excepting with her hands for weeks together at a time. Until something will happen to remind her, and she has to. Vanessa wonders what it must be like. Hard, she thinks. It must be hard.

After dinner Jerry goes inside and sits down in front of the television. Vanessa does the dishes, then settles down at the kitchen table with a book. It is where they'll stay until eleven when he turns the television off, and she rises automatically to join him.

Before they reach their own room, first they have to pass Jerome's. Outside his door, her husband stops her. As he used to do, he presses her against him; touches her in secret places; guides her gently through the doorway to the room that is their son's.

He climbs the ladder that now seems ridiculously small to the top bunk and stretches out on it. He has to bend his knees to fit. He pats what little space remains beside him. "Nice," he says to her. She shrugs, then climbs the ladder too, and lays beside him in the bed. She hopes they won't fall out.

Later, looking down at her, he smiles. His lips soundlessly form her name, his wife who sleeps beside him, peacefully he thinks. Her hands are clenched in fists. Jerome touches them wonderingly with his own large hands, taking them, mistaking them, for a measure of her satisfaction.

The Proverbs of Klaren Verheim

1 The man who leaps from the bridge is not the same as the one who drops into the river.
2 All the visions of summer are futile.
3 The rich man steals; the poor man dreams of theft.
4 A mirror shows you half the truth backwards.
5 There are only two ways to escape the horizon: to leave the earth or to shut your eyes.
6 All virtues vanish when your hair is dirty.
7 Ever since man lost his tail, the future of toenails has looked bleak.
8 Women change size when they lie down, men when they stand up.
9 Nobody is ever a man-of-the-people.
10 Eat the best lambchop first; better to choke on it than the bad one.
11 Some roads are nothing but middle.
12 A man with two shirts sweats less than he who has but one.

13 Forwards or back; it is the same with ships—to go sideways is to sink.
14 A dead man forgives no one, reproaches everyone.
15 Gossip is either a punishment or a reward for the division of labor.
16 An uprooted tree is not a lesson in tolerance, but in survival.
17 Without water, no soup; without roses, no thorns.
18 Music is the best way of telling off an infinity of time.
19 To Eden there are only backdoors.
20 A potato has less potential than a farmer.
21 Gluttons invariably devour the things they love.
22 Power without conflict is an amnesiac orphan, having lost its past, present, and future.
23 To build a wall is to turn your hands into stones.
24 Logic: a form of interior decoration.
25 Three men can share what two will murder each other to possess.
26 The truth can't be revised, only our understanding.
27 The world likes imagination more than imagination likes the world.
28 All life depends on the radius of a single orbit.
29 A man sitting still may also be going in every direction at once.
30 If others laugh, the jester eats; when the jester eats, no one laughs.
31 Heraclitus said all things are fire; perhaps he was only prophesying.
32 Of any assembly of drunkards, half are trying to forget, half to remember.
33 It is nature that allows an airplane to stay aloft, rain to come down.
34 In order to lose oneself one must first have the wish to gamble.
35 Light lets you see; darkness makes you feel.
36 When people speak of "getting along" it is usually a plea for indifference.
37 The trick is not to sell your soul either to the Devil or to God.
38 Most people have contempt for their own desires.
39 Children could be innocent, but they lack persistence.
40 Not the art of conversation, but the art of belonging is lost.
41 All names are values; all numbers are prices.
42 A skeptic is the most patient of men—he reserves judgment.
43 Where is the man who fails to claim that the common good is his own and does not secretly contrive that it should be otherwise?
44 If you look closely enough, every deception is self-deception.
45 A dog never depends on his vision; that's why he makes the best detective.
46 Butchers and priests must change clothes before leaving work.
47 There is no such thing as a well-earned vacation.
48 The honest man admits the constancy of change; the dishonest man changes constancies.
49 Poetry has always been a mnemonic device.

50 A really good rainbow can make the earth look like an optical illusion.

51 Naturally, an indirect man finds a direct one vulgar; it is for the same reason that embezzlers rank themselves above robbers.

52 The most significant events occur morning, afternoon, and night.

53 Nature's open secret is randomness: that is why a premeditated birth is curiously upsetting to all of us accidental children.

54 The only perpetual war would be one with an infinite number of truces.

55 When the law-abiding man chooses lawlessness, heaven and hell both open.

56 One laments over the ruins; another takes careful note of the properties of the buildings left standing.

57 There is infinite variety in ignorance, but stupidity is one.

58 Before all stories pose the enchanting once-upon-a-time.

59 As there is no beauty in waste, so there is no waste in beauty.

60 Two theories of art: order and chaos; these depend on the traffic jam and when you do the dishes.

61 In the end even honest men will prefer that you don't trust them.

62 A battle between those who want to say "we" and those who want to say "I."

63 The psychiatrist denies that a man can manufacture unhappiness within himself. The politician doesn't care about this; he asserts that happiness can be gained by voting for him. Both agree that nothing comes from nothing.

64 Since, even though they do not really exist, fathers and sons have always insisted on speaking of the differences between generations, it must be a way of avoiding speech with each other.

65 Why do you believe that in the just society only those without ambition will rise?

66 People are entropic, and the proof is that even the largest homes have no empty rooms.

67 A great leader always represents the suffering of his people: it is the only way he can bear their hopes.

68 Professor X. is full of great ideas whose time has passed: it is through knowing this that he is such a tough grader.

69 Even at the beginning of his book Solomon candidly informs his son that wisdom will be a "chain around his neck." Could this be giving up in advance? How many sons believe in the wisdom of chains?

70 All statues of the Buddha are more or less identical. This was absolutely necessary; otherwise people might have deduced a nervous tic.

71 The smaller the animal the further it may be safely dropped; that is, the more liberties it may take with gravity.

72 Isn't the expansion of freezing water a suspension of the laws of nature?

73 How many things are like bicycle-riding? At first it seems impossible to stay up, but then impossible to fall.

74 Many men say that the myth, because it is a myth, is untrue. Others declare the myth to be the truth, and for the same reason. This disagreement can be resolved, but only mythically.

75 At least since Bacon, certain men have searched for some beauty in all strangeness.

76 Whenever we actually look closely at something it is found to be in transition. Thus, a final word must always be pronounced, literally, with aversion.

77 Many people believe they are heading straight toward the mark when, in reality, they are pursuing the vector of two marks and consequently will never arrive at either.

78 As there is no cold, but only degrees of heat, so perhaps there are no pleasures of the mind, but only degrees of pain.

79 If the nature of light is itself so ambiguous, then nothing can be illuminated without preserving a certain vagueness.

80 Among crows scavenging is the most respectable profession.

81 If perfect happiness had not been found boring, would we then still be in paradise?

82 It is always easier to believe in the nobility of the past (even one's own) than in the free will of those who inhabited it (even one's own).

83 A river without fish, a field without trees, a school without questions.

84 Imagine a man who could feel the weight of the air on his head. That is truly oppressive sensitivity.

85 Europe is always fled, America always discovered. Therefore Americans who flee to Europe are merely taking the long way around.

86 Levitation is the mystic goal after which all the lazy strive. That is why it has never been attained.

87 Wood cracks with the grain, and so do we. Whatever is against the grain is what we were constructed to resist.

88 Too much refinement always celebrates its victims.

89 Those who are truly weak are indistinguishable from those whose strength has only been temporarily lost inside them.

90 In his youth X. saw a difference between happiness and the good which he now is forced to deny under the stress of the difference and the ease with which he attained only the former.

91 Pity those who make security their only purpose; the campsite at the end of their trail rests on quicksand.

92 The sky is a father's face; the sea a mother's breast; but all the earth is one's own.

93 Few jobs are more difficult than simply and honestly to bear witness.

94 The most beautiful women are those who have seldom been told they are beautiful. Nevertheless, it sometimes helps to tell a man that he is honest.

95 Whatever can be explained can be explained away.

96 Mr. A. says proudly that when he moves in the world of ideas he moves in his own element. Poor A! He misunderstands the vital difference between swimming and drowning.

97 The marvelous thing is not the infinite extent of the universe, but the fact of its having an infinite number of centers.

98 Those without a sense of humor generally wish they did not have bodies either.

99 Everyone is interested in his own destiny; only a very few consider that of the man who is piloting their plane.

100 When Adam and Eve were cast out of paradise so were the animals. Since then the animals have been too busy to wonder why.

101 It was old people who began the habit of idolizing youth. The young have never quite gotten over this lack of self-regard on the part of the elderly and take it as the due of nature.

102 What a wonder is Art! When we become too placid, it braces our sleepiness with the tonic of chaos; when too disoriented, it alone can slake our thirst for order.

103 The first duty of a nightwatchman is not to watch but to stay awake in order to watch.

104 A proverb contains about as much wisdom as an heirloom does one's grandmother.

105 The wish to destroy oneself may be sheer vanity. The humble man holds on to what limits him.

106 Those at a loss for a helping word will sometimes substitute a kick.

107 Virtue often consists only in a willingness to commit the smaller vice.

108 Place is time and vice-versa. When we can find ourselves nowhere we cannot really exist. This not-existing will seem to some transcendence.

109 What everyone agrees on as real is not all of reality to anyone.

110 The best things we do, we do to think well of ourselves; the worst, so others will think well of us.

111 The telephone is the modern rack-and-wheel.

112 When you come to weigh what you have learned from experience, consider also what it has made you forget.

113 Education is rapidly becoming another of the mass media. Already a good deal of it is made up of extended commercials.

114 When sports become professional they cease being a preparation for life and are instead a substitute for it.

115 The present war: the wish to control what is so distant most resembles the fantasies bred by self-abuse.

116 Remember the alert indifference of green things.

117 Even insignificance has its romance.

118 The religious is like a planet around which the ethical, its moon, revolves.

119 The world is full of half-hearted recluses who lack even the conviction to slam the door.

120 Each of us is given the same choice: either use the world or use yourself up.

121 The family is the wall against which the young person throws himself, seeking independence. However, this longed-for independence usually consists in nothing more than the choice of whether to lean or to push.

122 The essence of secrecy is not the idea of concealing something, but of concealing it from someone else. Hermits can have no secrets, being secrets themselves.

123 Modern painting: still-life and abstraction tell us that at a certain moment the human became an embarrassment. Thus, even in genocide, life imitates art.

124 There is some loss in every gain. Even happiness can spoil loneliness for us.

125 There is some gain in every loss. Even loneliness can teach us the conditions of happiness.

126 In the war of nerves, the analysts are the profiteers.

127 The first modern tragic hero was Galvani's frog.

128 Devoted readers are insatiable. They always want to smoke Sherlock Holmes' pipe with him.

129 In coitus is to be found the greatest potential for loneliness, for there imagination itself is annihilated. Without some immediate redemption, it even dies in bitterness.

130 Most of us live in elevators: going up or down we visit the same places.

The Proverbs of Klaren Verheim: A Note from the Editor

Robert Wexelblatt

KLAREN Verheim was born in 1935 in the Ober-Dobling section of Vienna. When he was two, his parents emigrated to New York. His father, formerly a banker, secured employment with a furrier while his mother devoted herself to playing a badly tuned piano and raising Klaren and his younger sister, Hannele, who was born in 1940. Verheim attended New York public schools, then went on to Columbia University from which he graduated in 1956 with a degree in Musicology. He then joined his father, who had gone into business for himself after the war. From the time of his college graduation Verheim lived in a small apartment on West 89th Street. In 1966, while crossing Fifth Avenue not far from his home, Verheim was struck by a school bus and killed instantly.

According to his sister, Verheim was extremely shy, scrupulous, and a great reader as well as a music-lover. His humor tended to be disturbing rather than jolly. She knows nothing of his relations with women, except that he never married. Hannele remembers her brother's kindness to everyone. "He liked to give his money away," she says, "which often led to tremendous arguments with Father." Apart from that Hannele speaks of the false impression created by her brother's shyness. "People tended to think him worthless, I believe, because of Father's vitality and Klaren's silence in company. I remember too that my girlfriends used to giggle at him when he was still living at home. You see, Klaren was rather gawky, very angular and thin. You'd never think he could be a good athlete, but he was." Of his inward life Hannele knows nothing. She reveres his memory, however.

Verheim's 130 proverbs came to me through Hannele who has recently become friendly with my wife. She brought them out one evening after we had eaten dinner with her and her husband, Ralph. We had been talking about the death that day of a well-known poet. "My

brother might have been a poet," she said. "Oh God, the fortune-cookies," said Ralph. Hannele straightened up, left the room, and returned with a large accordion envelope. "The reliquary," said Ralph. Hannele glowered at her husband and handed the envelope to me.

It was stuffed with variegated bits of paper: some were regular sheets off of notepads, but there were also torn envelopes, laundry tickets, cancelled checks, formal invitations, even pages ripped from books. Each was scribbled on in a regular, very upright, but hard to decipher hand. Hannele explained that she had collected these at the time of her brother's untimely death while going through the apartment on 89th Street. "I haven't read them for years," she confessed. "Oh, how I am fallen from myself," murmured Ralph cruelly. It was my wife's suggestion that I edit the proverbs.

The arrangement of the proverbs is pure guesswork on my part. It seems clear that they were written down over a period of some years, but there is no way of telling how many or in what order. Internal evidence is unreliable at best and, to be candid, I have no idea which ought to come first and which last.

In the world of the spirit there are neither lotteries nor legacies; all that is gained must be earned. The 130 proverbs of Klaren Verheim—in so far as they contain a spiritual element—must therefore be presumed somehow to conform with the following remark of John Keats: *Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your life has illustrated it.*... On the other hand, the inwardness of Verheim's proverbs is, for me, their leading quality, as it seems to have been of his life. Many of them embody a kind of aphoristic speculation which does not appear always to be practical or derived from particular occurrences, but which all the same illuminates some corner of human experience. Others are really not proverbs at all, but tiny essays or more or less concise observations. There is a certain chilliness in these latter remarks, a distance from life which need not have been incompatible with the generosity described by Verheim's sister. Verheim's generosity was perhaps the other side of his shyness, a way of dealing with a world in which he was uncomfortable—quite possibly, the world of his father.

As a self-portrait, the proverbs are indirect and only sketchily suggest aspects of their author's mind: a concern with art, with the family, with ethics—there are even sayings of a political, journalistic, and humorous character. And yet one cannot avoid the idea that these are the thoughts of a skeptical mind with a strongly religious bent, a restless intelligence which expressed itself in the most disembodied of forms: thoughts without context. The outward features of Verheim's life are unremarkable; they suggest a frustration of the spirit, perhaps a self-imposed constraint—but it is perhaps for this very reason that his proverbs occasionally attain both timelessness and universality. At moments, they seem less a response to living than to life itself.

Notes on Contributors

Terry Christensen, Professor of Political Science at San Jose State, is on leave, in London, studying British politics and film. A frequent contributor to the *San Jose Mercury* and the *Business Journal,* he has also published four books, including *California Connection* (1984).

Doris Friedensohn, Professor of Womens' and American Studies at Jersey City State College, was a Dean at Kirkland College, Vice-President of the American Studies Association, and a Fulbright Professor in Tunis. A widely published writer, Friedensohn is known for her work on innovation in teaching and interdisciplinary study.

Marcia L. Hurlow, a teacher at Asbury College, earned the Ph.D. at Ohio State. Her poetry has appeared in the *Kansas Quarterly,* the *Ohio Journal,* and in *event.*

Eward Kleinschmidt, lecturer in English at the University of Santa Clara, earned the M.A. in Creative Writing from Hollins. A much published poet, Kleinschmidt's work has appeared in such journals as *Poetry, College English* and the *California Quarterly.*

Thomas Kretz, is Business Manager of the Vatican Astronomical Observatory. He has also worked as a translator, a science teacher, and a nurse. Author of three volumes of published verse, Kretz says he is "trying to be, like St. Francis of Assisi, a troubador of celibate love. . . ."

Norman Nathan, Professor of English at Florida Atlantic University, has published six books, fifty scholarly items, twenty short stories and over three-hundred poems. Nathan's non-academic employment is as varied as his publications are numerous: he has been a shipyard worker, a motion and time-study engineer, and an audit clerk.

Sheryl L. Nelms, "the most published poet in Texas," appears here in *San Jose Studies* for the first time. Having earned the B.S. in Family Relations and Child Development, Nelms has worked as a "painter, weaver, wife and mother/keeper of three teenagers."

Barbara Ann Porte, is the author of three childrens' books as well as poems, articles and stories which have appeared in various major periodicals and newspapers. She is presently employed by the Nassau Library System as a librarian.

Barbara Rubin, who is completing the Ph.D. at Union Graduate School, is an Associate Professor of Womens' Studies at Jersey City State College. Rubin's research on mother-daughter relationships has been published in *New Directions for Women* and *Womens' Studies Quarterly.*

Leonard Uberman is a freelance musician who does space-sales for the Gannett Newspaper chain. At work on a German translation of *A Shropshire Lad,* his own poetry has been published in the *Midwest Review, Haiku,* and *Appalachian Studies.*

Robert Wexelblatt, a not infrequent contributor to this journal, has published fiction and essays in the *Kansas Quarterly,* the *Midwest Quarterly* and the *Southern Humanities Review.* An Associate Professor of Humanities at Boston University, he was awarded the Metcalf Cup and Prize for Excellence in Teaching in 1983.

Fred D. White, who earned the Ph.D. at the University of Iowa, is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Santa Clara. His poetry, fiction, drama, and articles have appeared in a variety of journals; his book, *Composition: Art and Craft* will be published in 1985.

To Prospective Contributors:

San Jose Studies, a journal sponsored by San Jose State University, is published three times each year in Winter, Spring and Fall. The contents include critical and creative prose, as well as poetry, interviews and photographs. We publish essays which originate in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge but which appeal to the educated general reader who has broad interests and a lively intellect. Our compass is suggested by the indices in which we are listed: America, History and Life; Behavioral Abstracts; the MLA Bibliography; Chemical Abstracts; Women's Studies Abstracts, H. H. Wilson Company Indices.

Our scope is interdisciplinary. We treat the subject matter of the sciences, and the humanities and arts, the social sciences, business and technology. Past issues have included articles on topics as diverse as the social implications of genetic engineering, Melville's deliberate "errors" in *Billy Budd,* the texts of secret Politboro resolutions, and the letters of William James. Special numbers have been devoted to John Steinbeck, the Evolution Controversy, and the American Bicentennial.

Our goal, issue by issue, is to provoke the intellectual pleasure that comes with discovering a new idea or with re-examining an old concept from a new perspective. Thus, the journal complements the formal education that goes on within the university and contributes to the life-long learning of our readers.

Each February, the Committee of Trustees of *San Jose Studies* gives a $100.00 award from the Bill Casey Memorial Fund to the author of the best essay, short story or poem appearing in the previous volume of the journal. In addition, authors of the best article, short story and poem in each volume receive a year's complimentary subscription to the journal.

Manuscripts are welcome from all writers and should be submitted to:

The Editors
San Jose Studies
San Jose State University
San Jose, California 95192

Manuscripts should be limited to 5,000 words and must be typewritten and double-spaced on standard 8½ x 11 white bond. The author's name should appear *only* on the cover sheet. An identifying word from the title (rather than the author's name) should appear on the succeeding pages of the manuscript adjacent to the page numbers in the upper right-hand corner. Each manuscript should be submitted in duplicate.

Because *San Jose Studies* is a refereed journal, manuscripts are evaluated by a generalist reader, a specialist in the area of the paper, and the editors. This process usually takes from six to eight weeks. Authors receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their contribution appears. Manuscripts not accepted for publication are returned if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included with the submission. Previously published work and multiple submissions are not accepted for publication.

Acknowledgments

The publication of *San Jose Studies* is possible only through the support of its guarantor, benefactor, and patron subscribers. The Trustees and Staff of *SJS* would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following supporters.

GUARANTORS

Association of California State University Professors, San Jose State University Chapter
Hobert W. and Patricia Burns
School of Social Sciences, San Jose State University
Spartan Shops, Inc.
Ellen C. Weaver in memory of Mildred Riche Cleminshaw (1889-1982)

BENEFACTORS

Stanley and Gail Fullerton
Jay D. Pinson
Fauneil Joyce Rinn
Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Williams

PATRONS

Gene Bernardini
Ralph C. Bohn
John R. Brazil
Kathleen Cohen
Whitaker T. Deininger
Lucius R. Eastman, Jr.
John A. Galm
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Gordon
Ted C. and Caryl Hinckley
Elsie Leach
Men's Athletics, San Jose State University
Arlene Okerlund
Robert Pepper
Rose Tseng
United Professors of California
Gerald Wheeler

In addition, a number of anonymous donations have been received.

SAN JOSE POETRY CENTER 1984

Poetry Workshop led by Sharon Olds
Saturday, April 7
9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Faculty Office Building, Room 104
San Jose State University
Limited enrollment Fee: $40 (Members $35)

Sharon Olds — A Reading
Saturday, April 7
8:00 p.m.
377 South First Street
Admission $3

Andrew Hoyem (of Arion Press) — "Fine Printing: The Visual Art of Literature"
Tuesday, April 24
8:00 p.m.
377 South First Street
Admission $3

Robert Bly — A Reading
Friday, May 4
8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall, Music Building
San Jose State University
Admission $5

A Seminar with Robert Bly: "The Heavenly Marriage and the Human Family"
Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
University Club
San Jose State University
Limited enrollment Fee: $100 (Members $85)
Checks should be made payable to our co-sponsor, Alembic Seminars.

Open Reading (coordinated by Phyllis Koestenbaum and Al Shultz)
Saturday, May 26
8:00 p.m.
San Jose Museum of Art
Admission $2

For ticket information, call 277-2817 or 277-2834.

San Jose Studies
San Jose State University
San Jose, California 95192

LITHOGRAPHY BY: GRAFICO MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA