Journal
of
The Union Faculty Forum

A Publication of
The Union University Faculty Forum

Vol. 14
Fall
1994
To: Union University Faculty

From: David McClune, President
       Faculty Forum

You are invited to participate in the Faculty Forum, which serves as YOUR united voice to the Administration of Union University.

The Forum serves as an advisory body to the Administration. Input from the Forum to the Academic Vice-President receives high priority in many areas:

1) faculty salary parity and competitiveness;  
2) faculty work load;  
3) schedules of classes and academic deadlines;  
4) student registration procedures;  
5) speakers for Staley and Jones lectures;  
6) faculty workshop programs;  
7) etc.

When the faculty speaks as one voice, that voice is a loud and strong voice clearly heard. You have an opportunity to improve the quality of the academic life of Union University.

Our meetings usually are held on the same dates and times (10:00 a.m. Mondays and Fridays) as the Student Government meetings. The exact dates and times will be published later.

Your officers of the Forum for the 1994-1995 academic year are:
       David McClune, President  
       Don Richard, Vice-President  
       Jean Marie Walls, Secretary  
       Roger Stanley, JUFF Editor.

We look forward to a productive year and trust you will become an active member of the Faculty Forum!
DEDICATION

THE CATALOGUE CAPTION READS: (Union 1965) B. S. Union University; M. Ed. Texas Wesleyan; M. R. E. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; J. D. Southland University; additional study, University of North Texas and George Peabody College; C. P. A. State of Tennessee; Emeritus Professor of Business Administration; retired 1992.

Known for "I move we adjourn," innovative test questions, donuts for teacher evaluation day, establishment of a Scholarship Award, he was and is highly respected, appreciated, and remembered as teacher, gentleman, and friend to all. Union faculty would do well to emulate.

THE NAME: Curtiss E. Scott
EDITORIAL

This issue contains nine different Union contributors, five from the English, one from Music, one from Communication, one from Religion, and one from College Services. It is fitting, perhaps even taken for granted, that English teachers should write. It is hard to conceive of one teaching others to write and doing little or no writing him/herself. That would seem analogous to a teacher of art who never paints or sculpts, or a teacher of voice who never sings or conducts. How can one be an authority on his/her subject and not participate in the public promotion of his or her field? Here are nine people who are preforming and doing so in a variety of ways: two poems, two critical articles, one satire on writing itself, one article that draws conclusions from a review of journal readings, one on Japan, one interview, and five photographs.

It is this last category that needs addressing since it is not a verbal medium. Wayne Day presents several photographs for our viewing, an area, of course, beyond his formal training. One should not miss the slant Wayne’s pictures take, and notice the emphasis on lines and angles. They seem very Grecian in form and design; yet, they are modern in subject and focus on sheer black and white. Notice the double meaning and irony of the photograph below.

Thanks to Roger Stanley for his advice and proofing this issue of JUFF. Roger has been selected by the Faculty Forum to be the editor of the 1994-1995 JUFF. And thanks again to Juanita for her usual good work on copy editing and format.

RIDGECREST CEMETERY

iii
# Table of Contents

President's Letter........................................................................................................... i  
   David McClune

Dedication....................................................................................................................... ii  
   JUFF

Editorial........................................................................................................................... iii  
   Ernest Pinson

Willard ............................................................................................................................. 1  
   Roger Stanley

A Plain and Easy Guide to the Art of Stylish Writing.................................................. 2  
   Joe Blass

Japan: Running to the West ......................................................................................... 5  
   Louise D. Bentley

Interview with Polly Spencer......................................................................................... 9

The Loose Canon—Again .............................................................................................. 11  
   John Harris

Print Media Use and Perceived Credibility Among Senior Congressional Staff......... 13  
   James R. Edwards

The Sharpening of Shake's Spear ................................................................................. 27  
   Ernest Pinson

While the River is Wide ............................................................................................... 33  
   Bobby Caudle Rogers

Contributors ................................................................................................................... 35

Photographs Contributed by Wayne Day................................................................. 35  
   Department of Religion
WILLARD

Steel-browed junkman, he has
Placed himself in this dark post-Carlsbad
Room. Not bats but fleas move up out
Of this space, a brown paper bag
On every tired bureau or dresser or chipped ledge.

He was wise, he asked
Rates, was no way misled to this
Third-floor spot beneath a neon
Shingle. "Land of Enchantment" the plates
Would proclaim, but if he had wheels to need
Plates who would find him here
In a once frontier town center?

Little enchants this beanfield survivor,
Forsaker of tractor, plow,
Furrow. There's his lone lean bowling
Trophy, Avocado Lanes emblazoned round
Red stripes of pin like a shrivelled chili
Pepper unbunched from its nine fellows. Gideon
Bible claims last shaft of slitted light, with
The leavings of today's roam:
Worn coin, false quartz, punched stub of
Bus transfer. Outside, a pug
Dog howls in dusk, the neon crackles:
First trumpets of Albuquerque night.

—Roger Stanley
FOYER OF THE GARDEN PLAZA HOTEL
A PLAIN AND EASY GUIDE TO THE ART OF STYLISH WRITING

(humbly submitted by Professor Blass)

This guide is offered primarily as a reference for those who will be writing reports for the upcoming SACS Self-Study. It is not by any means intended to be a comprehensive style manual; it merely contains a few random thoughts and suggestions which are humbly offered in the hope that they may be of service to someone.

It is important to remember that you are an educated person writing for other educated people. You must persuade them that you are worthy of their respect. Do not use the kind of simplistic writing style that may make the evaluators think you are not deserving of the position you hold at this institution, or worse, that the institution is a haven of mediocrity.

It is not an absolute rule, but it is generally true that the more big words you use, the more scholarly you will appear. (If you doubt this, just glance at any scholarly journal.) Beware of short words. The employment of an excessive quantity of words of one and two syllables will stigmatize you as an individual possessed of deficient vocabularial resources. Besides, the short words in English tend to have Anglo-saxon origins, and we all know how vulgar that language was!

If you have trouble with this, there is a “high-tech” aid right at your fingertips. The Thesaurus on your computer’s word processor is an invaluable aid. For example, why just “think” when you could cogitate, ruminate, speculate, envision, anticipate, consider, ponder, reflect, conclude, conceive, opine—you get the idea?

Foreign words add a certain je ne sais quoi to your work and make your writing more distingue. You don’t want to sound “provenial” do you? Besides you had to take a language as an undergraduate and you had to pass those terrible language proficiencies in graduate school—why not get some use out of it! Also, to demonstrate the angst of your weltanschauung, a single language is simply not adequate. (Don’t forget to italicize any word that is remotely foreign: be sure the reader notices your erudition.) And don’t neglect your Latinisms.1 Quod es demonstradum!

Limit the use of periods in your writing wherever possible: it is well-known that periods tend to brake up your thoughts into ragged little chunks and that the excessive use of periods, and the additional sentences which they create, will seriously inhibit the flow of your thoughts and interfere significantly with your communication; fortunately it is possible with the proper use of colons, semi-colons, dashes—not to mention the indispensable conjunction—to continue the flow of your thoughts (and don’t forget parentheses which permit you to inject an additional thought without ending your sentence2) to a length that is sufficient to express the profundity of your thought without the disturbing interruption of another period, with its inherent disruption of the flow of your ideas. And even when you are forced to end your sentence with a period, beginning the succeeding sentence with a conjunction helps to “bridge the gap” and maintain the continuity.

1But don’t be overly precise with this. For example, if you are one of those people who insist on saying, “these data” or who insist on the singular datum, you will stamp yourself as merely pedantic rather than scholarly.

2Footnotes also let you interject an additional thought and should be used liberally. Scholarly writing without plenty of footnotes? Preposterous!
Quotation marks are useful to “liven up” your writing and to give a kind of “visual sparkle” to the page as well as to call attention to certain “special” expressions you may want to use. Quotes are also useful when you have a bit of slang that you really like, but which seems a little too “lowbrow” to be used in a “hot shot” document like the one we are trying to produce. Quotes allow you to garner the impact and insouciance of the expression and still let the reader know that you know it is not quite “up to snuff.” You get the best of both worlds!3

Don’t neglect the versatility of your computer’s typefaces. In the old days when we had to use typewriters (does anyone remember typewriters?) all we could do was underline. Now we can emphasize with bold type, or with my personal favorite, italics. The look of an italic typeface adds a touch of class to any writing, and if you need to be even more eye catching you can bold the italic!

Classical references always add impact and “style” to your writing. Even if you don’t have a precise quote, you can always say, “As Plato has observed…” and then go on to make whatever point you want to make. After all, Plato wrote something about practically everything, and since nobody has read very much of it, your chances of getting caught are about the same as your chances of winning the Publishers’ Clearing House Sweepstakes. This also works for Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Voltaire, Kant, etc., etc.4 And certainly you won’t forget to throw in occasional references to the trivium and the quadrivium: everyone admires a classical education.

If you want to give your ideas the authority of a direct quote but are hesitant to attribute them to an historical authority, make up a name. As I. B. Leevit has said, “Why should you always be stuck with other people’s clichés? Why not use your own?”

Specialized writing of the sort we are doing here demands an appropriate adjustment to your normal vocabulary, syntax, etc. It is unseemly to say that we “test” our students when what we really do is to “implement an evaluation strategy.”6 We are not merely teachers; we are “learning facilitators” who are helping our students to spend sufficient “time on task.” With our successful recruiting program we have been “posturing ourselves aggressively and positively to enhance our position in the enrollment marketplace.” Do you get the idea?

This kind of technical writing is not always easy to do, especially for the beginner. To this

---

3And don’t forget the doughty exclamation point; it lets us know that you are enthusiastic about your ideas!

4Note that the humble etc. can save a lot of writing, and alert the reader to the fact that you know considerably more than you have time or space to say. The double etc., etc., on the other hand, is extremely powerful and should be used sparingly.

5Surely it’s not necessary to point out how much nicer “an historical” sounds. This and other Briticism will add “tone” to your writing.

6I am indebted for this and other quotes in this paragraph to William Lutz’s excellent book Double-Speak. (I confess I do not completely understand the title of this tome, but I believe it is a reference to the fact that if you use your words properly you can get twice the impact.)
end an aid has been included in the appendix. This consists of three lists of words. When you need a phrase to add weight and gravitas to your writing, merely select at random one word from each of the three columns and put them together in order. The result is an all-purpose phrase that which can be used in practically any context to provide a perceptual orientation resource, or an individualized cognitive interface. (You see how nicely it works?)

One final bit of advice: although modern word processors offer many invaluable aids, one increasingly common addition will be found to be of questionable value at best. I refer to the style checker. Just to see what would happen I ran my style checker on this admittedly not perfect, but generally well-constructed document. The computer screen turned red and smoke began to emerge from the disk drive. I recommend you avoid style checkers.

Appendix

(This writing tool, whose use is explained in the preceding text, was adapted from Dr. Laurence Peter’s estimable guide, The Peter Prescription)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>developmental</td>
<td>cognitive</td>
<td>adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualized</td>
<td>creative</td>
<td>approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructional</td>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td>articulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interdependent</td>
<td>guidance</td>
<td>concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimized</td>
<td>integrated</td>
<td>contingency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceptual</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional</td>
<td>involvement</td>
<td>objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality</td>
<td>monitored</td>
<td>philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsive</td>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sequential</td>
<td>postulation</td>
<td>resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synchronized</td>
<td>prototype</td>
<td>transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systematized</td>
<td>reciprocal</td>
<td>utilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7Surely you do not need to be reminded that to be taken seriously any scholarly writing must have at least one appendix.
CENTER COURTYARD—OLD UNION CAMPUS
JAPAN: RUNNING TO THE WEST

Louise Bentley

Standing in a long airport customs line in Okayama, Japan, we looked up to see the Exit sign—containing no words, only a figure running through a doorway. For my husband and me it became the symbol of the Japanese people—hurrying FAST! We watched them ride, sprint, and stride to be the best, to aim for perfection at great cost—even at learning the English language! Our five-week stay in southern Japan in the summer of 1993 on the island of Shikoku was as teachers of Conversational English—summer helpers to two veteran missionaries, Ralph and Stella Cox, who have spent 40 years there—and plan no retirement. Their Helping Hands program is a summer-focused way of getting interested Americans/others to go to Japan to help in infinite ways, primarily teaching English classes, to aid The Evangelical Alliance Mission’s outreach. The aim is Friendship Evangelism, establishing rapport with eager Japanese, developing relationships that staff missionaries can build on for giving the Gospel and starting churches.

In the Land of the Rising Sun we saw much. We spent our time in Takamatsu, a city that had been completely destroyed by bombs on July 4, 1945, in World War II. Today it is the capital of the Seto Inland Sea reached by cars and trains over the world’s longest bridge, Seto Ohashi, which links the islands of Shikoku and Honshu across the Inland Sea. It is framed by Yashima Mountain, the site of the famous Medieval Battle of the 12th century between the Minamoto and Taira clans vying for control of Japan. Today the mountain and lakes surround the quiet elegance of Shinto and Buddhist shrines, traditional Japanese gardens, crowded homes and businesses.

Takamatsu showplaces such things as the Shikoku House Museum—Shokiku Mura—with its replicas of ancient houses and a stage for "kabuki" dramas, a favorite of feudal lords. Its Ritsurin Park, famous for the traditional blending of rocks, water, and greenery exemplifies the artistic techniques employed by Japanese gardening specialists of the Edo Period. One can enjoy teahouses, arched bridges, lotus ponds, and flowers in profusion—azalea, irises, water lilies.

The city is a beautiful, modern mixture of the latest in technology and the oldest in rescued monuments from the past. While we were there the Takamatsu Art Museum, an incredibly generous piece of architecture itself, was showing four huge rooms of Norway’s Edward Munch’s paintings and woodcuts—a world-class exhibition! One can enjoy hand-rolled noodles known as Udon and their special sauce called "dashi." Shops and stores are filled with prized lacquerware, lanterns, pottery, green tea—and thousands of shoppers throughout the mile-long mall known as the Marugume, "big Roof." It is a heady experience to dodge bicycles, pedestrians, and fast-moving crowds while one stares at it all!

On our one day off each week, we visited museums, parks, Japanese baths, gardens, and Hiroshima. That trip on the Bulletexpress to see the first city on earth to suffer an atomic bombing on August 6, 1945, was a sobering experience. The Peace Memorial Park and Museum help one to relive graphically the horror of that wartime event and to see the miraculous recovery into a metropolis of more than one million people.

In the Land of the Rising Sun we did far more than sightsee; we went to Japan to work, to show through our service, love, and concern God’s Son, brighter than any natural phenomena. On four mornings each week we were available for Coffee time from 10-11 and lunch time from 12-1 P.M. Advertisements went out over the city for people to come converse in English and learn about America with the two of us at the Takamatsu Christian Center. Located strategically
near a main train terminal and the mall, the Center is a five-story building with a chapel, bookstore, offices, classrooms, etc.—as well as two apartments on the fifth floor—without elevators. We lived in one, learned to take our shoes off at the door, slept on the floor in Japanese style, hung our wash on the roof, shopped in a super market for items with pictures—and guessed at the directions—for some very strange meals; one can survive without American conveniences.

Our main job, however, was teaching Conversational English classes, for which Japanese pay money to the mission to learn pronunciation from a native American. Teaching materials were the Prentice-Hall Side by Side series—four books and four levels of increasing difficulty of sentences, conversations, etc. Students did exercises in their own texts and conversed in class sessions. The many English sounds that require open mouths, deep throat sounds, and other facial gyrations are most embarrassing to the polite Japanese, who speaks his language mostly from the front of his face without the visible changes English requires. The English Language Institute also provided a text, People Who Met Jesus, focusing on an account from the four Gospels and introducing those individuals who encountered Christ. These texts were extremely well done with the Biblical story in Japanese—to be read aloud. The story was restructured in a minidrama in English with students reading and acting. These lessons always included questions at the end of the lesson requiring student thought with a series of options for dealing with the subject matter. What an amazing opportunity to watch lovely Japanese, steeped in Buddhism and Shintoism, confronted with the claims of Christ—in an English lesson they chose and paid for!

We each had about 16-18 classes per week—some at the Center facilities, some at outlying places. We travelled to some by bikes, to others by train. Several required my driving in a crowded, strange city—on the left side of the street where no signs are in English and landmarks change overnight! One afternoon class was at the Coca-Cola plant with a half-dozen executives. Then I drove to the other end of the city to a one-man class for a steel construction executive who was learning English for his foreign travels; his class was from 7:15 to 8:15 P.M. after a busy day! Some of the Cram School classes for junior-high students lasted until 9:00 P.M. Teaching seventh graders that late is almost cruel when they are so exhausted and sleepy! But the desire to succeed, to outstrip others, to learn English—those are incredible motivators, not only among the typical students but also among the travel agents, nurses, engineers, and housewives. Two mothers brought their three-year-old tikes to ensure their being ahead! One elderly lady said she jogged at 5:00 A.M. for her health; then she took English classes for her brain!

What we learned and gained from five weeks will last a lifetime in memories indelibly pressed on our hearts. We learned that what is easy, natural, and normal for us—speaking English—is a highly-sought object by people wanting to get ahead—fast. They are impeccably polite, gracious, and diligent to acquire what we had to offer. Yet what they gave to us is the fresh insight that our volunteer services and expenses were offered to deeply appreciative people who are now our friends.

What we had been told many times before, we learned firsthand that offering Christianity in the Orient is not done in the typical Western way—inviting people to church, passing out tracts, etc. With Shinto and Buddhist shrines everywhere and the legacy of ancestor veneration strong, Japanese must be cultivated and shown a "better way" than they have. The Coxes have been extremely innovative in their witness—such as the English classes we taught. Stella has had a TV program on American cooking, hosted huge banquets with American foods, published a cook book of American cakes—with Japanese flexibility, of course—and served hundreds of lunches to students and visitors who come to their home for Bible studies.

The intent of Friendship Evangelism is that Americans/others show by their lifestyle and
behavior that Christ has made a difference from the formalities of clapping in the shrine and hanging objects to honor the dead. Their goal in Japan is 100 churches with native pastors; so the Center also has a seminary for training ministers/pastors. They work all over the area on both southern islands; we saw the book of Acts and the ministry of Paul re-enacted in an engaging way as our missionary friends seek to finish the last third of their goal!

We learned that millions in the world continue to worship dead leaders at hosts of shrines requiring endless tasks. Takamatsu is a city of 330,000—most of whom are lost and frantically rushing to learn more about technology, about English, about the world. What they do not know is the most important person of all—Jesus, the Son of God.

Japan is traditionally an upright, basically moral society, some recent political scandals notwithstanding. They have a keen consciousness of what will be best for the group and are eager to do the proper, right thing. One can leave a purse or a package on a train, in a bike basket, or on a step; it will be there when he returns. They do not want the embarrassment for the group. They are free, in contrast to the Chinese bound by Communism with whom we worked two years ago as teachers. They worry about "Japan-bashing" and want to know and understand more things about the West. But a few of them are becoming aware that not all Americans are violent, selfish gun-slinging people. If only more from the West would run swiftly to the Orient to show them the difference!

We learned how the Christian church is surviving in a pagan land and how God is doing His work against tradition, materialism, and other obstacles. The highlight of our trip was hearing testimonies of young Christians who had given up the national idols to accept the living Christ—and what the cost would be. One of the most moving was from a young woman who had heard about Christ in a literature class in the university; that initial contact ignited her search that led to a new life. The vibrant pastor of two churches had once been a Buddhist doing all the useless things one is expected to do for a dead religion. Today he is a product of missionaries' outreach, God's grace, and Bible training to help others.

In noting the contrast between the Chinese and the Japanese as I have experienced them from limited times and views, I have found one main contrast. Their governments make a vast difference in how the people perceive themselves and others. In Communist China fear ruled everywhere with good reason; they have suffered their own holocaust in the Cultural Revolution and other repressions. Many recent articles in various magazines have told the incredible story of "China's Bloodiest Secret"—the cannibalism in Guangxi, the province where we served. Their leaders want Western technology and money but fear their loss of control if both are ascendant. We were allowed to enter mainland China for 7 weeks in the summer of 1991 on a humanitarian mission as teachers of English; they wanted our help in that area but forbade us to speak about religion unless asked. Very few of their students are allowed to leave China for study abroad.

In contrast, Japanese are free to come to America as often as they can get the money—or yen! What General Douglass MacArthur did after WWII to create good will and a positive image of the West is still predominate. They yearn, seek, and pursue in every way possible to be westernized—and they are running far ahead of us in many ways. Yet they often consider themselves behind and lacking; they consider Americans as wealthy answers to almost any question!

Another prime difference in the two countries is their economic goals. China with its socialist government wants the modern economy that Japan has; you have read and heard of Chinese experiments into capitalism, private property, stock markets—all alien to the communist system! China is far behind in technology and is eager to borrow from anyone; their desire to keep "most favored nation" status is crucial. China is a developing country, whereas Japan is a
modern, Westernized country. Characteristic of a developing nation, China is strong in light industry (slippers, clothing, etc.); Japan is strong in heavy industry such as automobiles and electronics.

The similarities between the people seem astonishing—especially since they have often been enemies to each other! They are meticulous, diligent, polite, artistic, and gracious almost to the extreme. Chinese are probably more reserved and formal than the Japanese. If one bows and smiles, he can be forgiven many blunders, mispronunciations, and "goofs" in Japan. They both revere older people and admire respectfully what is sometimes considered a "drag" in the USA. In China students were always at our elbows to guide our walk, to help on stairs, and to be sure we were fine. In Japan they smiled and bowed whether we were walking or riding bicycles. Actually, I think they were amazed that tall Americans could ride bikes; their skill and speed far outstripped ours, and they probably had less bruises, gashes, and scars to show.

The outstanding similarity was their eagerness to learn a second language—something some of them will probably never have any opportunity to use consistently. Their motivation is superb, their diligence noteworthy. Both seem to run—not as to an exit—to anyone who can speak English and especially who will converse with them, will let them practice what they know, and will help them correct their pronunciation. How they love idioms and slang—as strange as these words and phrases are, they beam with delight at knowing how to say "Right away!" instead of "immediately!" They seem to think Americans have a special finesse in making contractions; they practiced much to be able to say "can't" instead of "cannot."

But it is not only the language they desire—it is more accurately the way of life—the freedom, the options, the choices. The Orient—whether China in its repressive society or Japan in its craze for perfection—creates in an American a new appreciation of all we have here and all too often take for granted. We have far more than we need, waste far more than some Oriental will ever have. The exit sign is apropos—they seem to want to run to the West as fast as possible! I am grateful and deeply appreciate the opportunity I have had to visit both countries, offer my small "cup of cold water," share my love of language, and tell them about America—still the most sought-after place on the earth!
INTERVIEW WITH POLLY SPENCER
SUPERVISOR OF COLLEGE SERVICE

I am a native Jacksonian, graduated from high school (North Side), married my high school sweetheart (Jackson High graduate) and went to Texas where he graduated from Texas A & M. We lived in Louisiana, Memphis, and Kansas City, before moving back here in 1979. We have two married daughters, a son, and a wonderful 2-year-old grandson. One daughter and our son graduated from Union.

JUFF: You have been at this position five years now; do you think it will get any easier with the move to the new building?
SPENCER: The move to the new Student Union Building is going to be wonderful in a lot of ways, although we’ll miss all the people in Penick. College Services will be consolidated with the Post Office so having both areas of responsibility in one place will make supervision easier. Having a loading dock for deliveries and loading mail will be great. We will have a more efficient work space; for instance, bulk mailouts will be like one stop shopping.
JUFF: Would you describe the difference of the physical properties when you move in (size, shape, machinery, etc.)?
SPENCER: We are literally taking everything with us (including the kitchen sink)—from counters, to cabinets, to all the equipment we are currently using.
JUFF: How about new personnel, positions, modifications in work areas?
SPENCER: College Services has operated with a staff of 5 since its inception on the old campus some 20 years ago, and we are gaining another with the Post Office addition. We feel very blessed that the University has continually upgraded the equipment in our area. As of now there is no need for additional personnel. There will be some modification in work areas because of the different arrangement of our offices in the SUB. The one that will impact the faculty most will be having the Copy Center near the front counter.
JUFF: Will there be changes in services? Rumor has it that inner postal runner service will be added and possibly different faculty “stations.”
SPENCER: We will take on the responsibility for office supplies which are currently housed in the Business Office area. There will be order blanks which will be filled out by the customer and supplies will be charged along with other College Services materials. At the present time a courier service for faculty work orders is being discussed. We have not worked out anything specific as of this writing. The “station” would need to be area secretaries and we are exploring that possibility. Another change in service will be that the filing cabinet currently used by faculty will only be used for tests; it will be turned toward the inside of the room and our personnel will retrieve work for faculty from the cabinet. As always the cabinet will be locked when the office is closed and there is no key left on campus. All other work will be on shelves just inside the door of College Services. We believe this will not only keep the tests secure, but will aid in faculty use of student workers.
JUFF: What are the areas of responsibility in College Services? I can think of publication of JUFF, Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and Admissions publications; course syllabi, tests and other photocopying; mailout service, post office; pictorial service; dictaphone service; typing service; Heavens! what else is there?
SPENCER: I think you mentioned the biggest majority of responsibilities. Of course we’ve just added one, as I mentioned above. We are still using our old workhorse press—the AB Dick.
360—extensively. This press does all our two color work envelopes, the personal memo pads, newsletters, calendars, etc. We’re doing more desktop publishing than ever before. One staff member has been working on the Self-Study a great deal. For the last four years we’ve done the layout for the college catalogue. That is about a four month process. We design flyers for mailouts, certificates, invitations, and even Christmas cards. Much of the printing we do requires hands-on work, such as binding all the handbooks—they have to be punched and plastic binders put on them; all notepads have to be stacked, gummed, and cut. Other items have to be folded, labeled, and tabbed for mailing, and of course there is the proofing of all tests, syllabi, and letters. There is a Folder/Inserter that is used to fold and insert letters into envelopes, and it will seal the envelopes if needed. It has been greatly used.

JUFF: Last year you instituted the exceptionally popular “emergency” photocopy while-you-wait. I’m sure there have been abuses, but has it been taxing or disruptive to your office by-and-large?

SPENCER: The Xerox 5100 has greatly enhanced our ability to serve the campus because of the speed. Some of the features of the 5100 are that it will copy front and back, collate and staple, and will even print directly on to tab sheets. It has performed far and above even Xerox expectations. I have not encountered any abuses, but department chairs might have when they’ve seen the quantity of copying being done. We have no problem copying “while-you-wait” whenever possible. Of course, we still prefer overnight or at least several hours lead time. We are also doing personal work for faculty and staff as time permits. We have copied dissertations for several faculty members.

So far everyone has been very cooperative when told their work will have to wait. We have even had them tell us, “That’s O.K., I didn’t need it ‘til next week. I just thought as long as I was here I’d ask.” No horror stories yet. But as I said earlier, the copier has outperformed even Xerox specifications, so there hasn’t been much down-time for maintenance. We get compliments almost daily for speed and quality of work. We strive for quality—speed is just an added bonus.

JUFF: Do faculty become irritated if services are not available”? Is there a horror story you can share with us?

SPENCER: Most of our comments are favorable. Many of our new faculty members have not been accustomed to our type of service before so they’re excited when told typing services are available and they don’t have to do their own typing. We have one faculty member who dictates just like he talks—sometimes he talks to the dictaphone instead of into it—he “hangs loose.” So on occasion we transcribe exactly what he says. It makes for very funny proofreading.

JUFF: Under whom does your office work—the lines or change-of-command’?

SPENCER: College Service is under the umbrella of the Vice President for Business Affairs. I am responsible directly to Mr. Gary Carter.

JUFF: How about an overall policy statement—does one exist—should one exist?

SPENCER: College Services is exactly what we are and what we want to be. We are a service to the university and anything we can do to make your job easier (within reason of course) is our main objective. We have to be flexible because there are always circumstances that warrant change in “policy” so there is no set statement. I do not see the need for a policy statement at this time.

JUFF: If there something you would like to communicate to the faculty and/or administration not touched on by these questions?

SPENCER: We ladies of College Services, without exception, have servant spirits, so we feel that working in this area is where God wants us at this time, and this is where we can best serve Him. We enjoy working and visiting with everyone who comes in our area, and we never want you to leave feeling sorry that you came in.
THE LOOSE CANON—AGAIN

by John Harris

Brian Abel Ragen's essay in the Summer 1992 edition of Christianity and Literature, "An Uncanonical Classic: The Politics of the Norton Anthology," espouses the cause of the canon in terms which anyone with a little common sense can appreciate. None of us exists in a vacuum—and it is precisely because we are all shaped by the social and cultural forces of which modern literary criticism is so stridently aware that we must prefer the study of some works to others. Those works most responsible for having made us what we are clearly should be those which we study first. Otherwise, how are we either to cultivate our virtues or amend our faults? The correction of a tendency to certain racist notions, for instance, can only proceed in the sober understanding of where such notions originated. To expurgate all literature with any hint of racism from the canon would be to run the risk of raising a generation fully ignorant that racism ever existed. A vocal minority of spectacularly ignorant people is already insisting that the Holocaust never happened. In the process of bathing our anthologies in political correctness, what other blots left on literature and history by our essential human nature will be naively rinsed out? Consider the Norton editors' decision not to include Conrad's Heart of Darkness in the Anthology of World Masterpieces (sixth edition), presumably because of Chinua Achebe's well-publicized charges that the book is racist. (Achebe's own masterpiece, Things Fall Apart, concludes the anthology.) How will a new generation ever understand the Victorian mood of political and ethnic jingoism which tainted even Conrad, its would-be critic, if his incomparable novella is drummed from the ranks of the classics?

I am already straying from Ragen's discussion, but I intend simply to append several comments to it rather than to summarize or criticize it. (In fact, Ragen voices a desire merely to stimulate more discussion about the canon.) For one thing, I cannot help but see an irony in the way the Norton Anthology has responded to critics who have expressed hostility toward any canon of any description (the pedagogical equivalent of anarchy: acanonia?). Rather than mark off these curmudgeons from their clientele, the editors have made some bizarre adjustments. For instance, the selection from Marie de France, whose claim to fame has never been questioned by any generation, has been so chosen as to provide grist for the feminist mill. Missing are the Lai of the Laustic, Le Fresne, and others of her works which may legitimately be called masterpieces, their place occupied by the single most unconvincing tale of love that Marie ever penned, Eliduc. Could it be that the eponymous protagonist's clear victimization of not one, but two innocent women was the ground of selection? The editors' introduction suggests as much. Are we, then, to have a brave new canon full of long-suffering heroines and male rounders and rotters just to placate a fringe element which has announced its active hostility to all things canonical? This may be good marketing, but it is hardly the way to instill a sense either of history or of taste.

On the other hand, I have to confess a certain sympathy for the anti-anthologists. In striving to give students a coherent impression of history or taste, we teachers can sometimes be guilty of gross oversimplification. I shall never forget being told repeatedly by the news media as a newly eligible voter that I was traumatized by Watergate. Now my trauma has become historical fact: it is in all the textbooks. I must very nearly have resembled Algernon Moncrieff's imaginary friend, of whom the young rake says, "The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live... so Bunbury died"—very nearly, but not quite; for what I shall never forget is precisely that Watergate did not traumatize me in the least (young cynic that I was). How many times does the Norton
Anthology similarly engineer literary history? Volume Two's section on Neoclassicism contains Swift and Pope, Voltaire and Johnson (Candide and Rasselas, in fact - I should have thought an anthology could do better than select spin-offs, however ingenious). The aim is clearly to have us believe that Neoclassical authors were wry, poised punsters, wags, and satirists. No doubt, many of them were; but what about Prevost's troubling classic, Manon Lescaut, or Diderot's La Religieuse and Rameau's Nephew? The Norton editors' answer would probably be to class such authors under Romanticism, as they do Rousseau. Of course, then one faces the problem of where to put such quintessential Rationalist figures as Immanuel Kant, who was born twelve years after Rousseau and composed all of his great works late in life. Yet if one is editing an anthology, the problem solves itself: plead lack of space. The Norton's single mention of Kant actually does appear in the introduction to the Romantics, coyly non-committal statement that his influence was felt during these years. Thus several of the Western tradition's giants are marginalized as effectively as ever was any woman or minority—not, however, for political motives, but for cosmetic ones. It reads better to have all authors doing the same thing in the same period; or if this is pedagogically motivated emphasis, it comes dangerously close to brain-washing.

And need it be said that literature of a religious (particularly Christian) persuasion is automatically excluded from the modern canon? Ragen and many others have politely voiced their indignation for a long time. Norton's sixth edition, for instance, has succeeded in relegating Russian authors, perhaps more passionately religious as a group than any national tradition over the last thousand years, to the status of cool nineteenth-century Realists. The Italians fare even worse, for the same reason: one simply cannot find much great Italian literature before Pirandello which expresses utter indifference to God. Silvio Pellico's prison journal would have made an interesting companion piece with Dostoevsky's; and the first part, at least, of Manzoni's classic, The Betrothed, would have been very manageable in an anthology and infinitely more entertaining than yet another go at all the English Romantic poets. If only all those embarrassing convictions didn't get in the way... In fairness, I suspect that even here the problem is less one of deliberate conspiracy than of desire to water down and oversimplify. The Italian Romantics are embarrassing to those who wish to sell the period as deist or even atheistic, and imaginative works like Gogol's "The Nose" or Dostoevsky's more mystical writing don't quite fill the Realist bill. Just think of what difficulties would be involved in teaching Francois Mauriac beside Sartre and Camus—the twentieth century is supposed to be beyond good and evil!

We do not have to caricature historical periods to teach them. If our students' brains have grown so diffuse and ill-focused on a steady diet of T.V. that they cannot encompass the notion of a certain complexity in all human affairs, then perhaps our mission is to torture them back into sentient beings. Personally, I like the idea of a canon, and of an anthology that represents the canon; but I also like the idea of reading beyond the canon, if only to keep the anthologies honest. The book will never be written which adequately presents every masterpiece, even within specific national traditions. With that in mind, the Norton is an indispensable crutch for the teacher of surveys—but a carriage it will never be.
PRINT MEDIA USE AND PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY

AMONG SENIOR CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

By James Edwards

The traditional news value of prominence attests to popular interest in elite behavior. Furthermore, scholars have shown interest in elites' media behavior. Weiss, for example, surveyed American leaders in several fields to learn the magazines and newspapers they read.1

With respect to media behavior, an elite population that often has been overlooked is congressional staff. However, congressional staff serve an important role in assisting members of Congress in the execution of their official duties, including the processing of the reams of information received from numerous sources, among them mass publications. And changes in Congress as an institution have increased the number and importance of staff members.2

Congressional staff use the print media for purposes of surveillance. They employ published materials to remain informed about current events and political developments.3 They also assess public opinion from the news stories, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor in these sources.4

This study examines the print media use of senior congressional staff, as well as staff members’ perceptions of the credibility of several publications. Much of the research related to media use and credibility has focused on a general audience and at the level of type of medium.5 This study, however, makes individual publications the level of analysis and focuses on the media behavior of a special population.

In order to discover the publication preferences and related credibility perceptions of this specialized population, a sample of senior congressional staff was surveyed by questionnaire. One objective of the survey was to document the frequency of use of several major newspapers, magazines, and opinion journals. Another objective was to assess the level of credibility attributed to the publications. Responses were examined in light of three primary staff characteristics: staff position, political party affiliation, and congressional body in which one works.

To best understand the importance of knowing congressional staff media preferences, a brief review of the staff function and the research findings of print media in Congress follows. This paper then highlights media use and credibility research findings. The hypotheses and method of conducting this study are discussed. Then the results are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF FUNCTION

There are two primary categories of congressional staff: committee and personal. The ratio of personal to committee staff in both houses of the U.S. Congress is about three to one.6 While many personal staffers handle constituent-related duties (casework, requests, correspondence, etc.), staff increases over the past few decades and the expanding jurisdictions of the federal government have also meant that more personal staffers, especially senior staff, devote increasing efforts to tracking legislation and assisting members in legislative activity.7 Vogler and Waldman noted the finding in a study done for the House Commission on Administrative Review “that personal staff was the single most frequently used source of voting cues [by members].”8

Although every congressional office arranges its staff differently, certain aspects of staff positions remain generally consistent across Capitol Hill.9 The Senate Republican Policy
Committee categorized staff positions under four areas: legislative, press, administrative, and state office.\textsuperscript{10} This study is concerned with the top three staffers in congressional members’ Washington offices because of the key roles they fulfill, each heading the three areas of responsibility listed above except for the state office. Their information needs and sources may differ according to position.

Usually overseeing the personal office is the administrative assistant (AA), who may be called chief of staff. The AA is responsible for overall office operations and generally serves as chief political advisor. The legislative director (LD) is usually the person who coordinates a member’s legislative activities. The LD manages the legislative staff—a number of legislative assistants—and assists in developing the member’s legislative program. The press secretary (PS), sometimes called communications director, is responsible for the member’s interaction with the news media and for coordination of publicity activities. These three staff members comprise the core of staff advisors to members of Congress.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{PRINT MEDIA SOURCES ON CAPITOL HILL}

In government, the news media are recognized as helping to set the legislative agenda and giving significance to certain issues. They have a key role in placing issues within the framework by which policymakers and the public understand the topics.\textsuperscript{13}

While many publications vie for the attention of congressional members and their staffs, researchers have found a number of media sources that have been named by members and staff as useful in their efforts to remain informed about political and policy developments, as well as to learn of emerging issues and public opinion. Ornstein wrote: “Like the rest of us, [members of Congress] get most of their news and impressions of people and politics from the mass media: the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and the networks.”\textsuperscript{14} These three newspapers seem to be the most preferred on Capitol Hill. It should be noted, however, that Washington has a relatively new competing newspaper, the Washington Times. Members told Weiss that they read the major news magazines, such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report, but reported less frequent reading of the political opinion magazines, such as New Republic, The Nation, and National Review.\textsuperscript{15} Fox and Hammond confirmed the importance of the above named newspapers and magazines as information sources for congressional staff, as well as such specialized publications as Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report and National Journal.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{PREVIOUS MEDIA USE AND CREDIBILITY RESEARCH}

Mass media are used to gain knowledge and have been found effective at providing that knowledge, especially print media. Palmgreen examined the effect of media use on political learning, finding that media exposure most strongly predicted learning about national political problems. This finding held even after controlling for other variables.\textsuperscript{17} Among types of media, Hendrickson reported that newspaper reliance results in more comprehensive knowledge and a better understanding of international affairs among readers, in contrast to television-reliant viewers.\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, Bogart found general audience respondents to favor newspapers as the “best” source—over television, radio, and magazines—to learn about nearly three of every five news topics.\textsuperscript{19} Berkowitz and Pritchard examined political knowledge and various communication resources, including the news media, interpersonal communication, and campaign-generated information. They found newspapers to be the only communication resource “consistently related
to political knowledge.”

Studying the uses and gratifications motives of magazine reading, Payne, Severn, and Dozier concluded that the content of a medium can predict the uses of specific types of media. They linked interaction, surveillance, and diversion motives to trade magazine usage. On Capitol Hill, newspapers, news and business magazines, and opinion journals, as well as periodicals such as Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, may be regarded as “trade” publications for those people involved in policymaking. Thus, congressional staff would have uses and gratifications motives for print media usage.

Graber said that media use depends on the context in which usage takes place. McLeod and McDonald found evidence that those who purposefully read newspapers for public affairs content exhibit high levels of political participation and economic knowledge. Drew and Weaver examined media attention and media exposure for their possible effects, discovering that people interested in national issues were not necessarily interested in local issues, and vice versa. They reported that media audience members paid attention to relevant information, regardless of the medium delivering it. However, the case can be made that congressional staff have so much written material at hand in the workplace that they find print media more useful and readily available as related to their job duties, thus providing the context for media usage.

With respect to media credibility, research indicates that media audiences believe specific news sources to be more credible. Sargent found that personal news sources (i.e., named reporters) received higher ratings on ethical factors—accurate, sincere, responsible, and impartial—than impersonal sources (i.e., New York Times, NBC-TV). Graber found that subjects generally believed specific reporters or media except when a report directly contradicted personal experience. Complaints usually centered around exaggeration and a wrong emphasis.

Also, audience members’ predispositions affect their views of news media credibility. Gunther and Lasorda correlated respondents’ ratings of their personal interest in four political issues with their ratings of trust in newspaper content regarding those issues. They learned that as issue importance increased, respondents trusted issue-related information in newspapers more; however, the researchers surmised that at the upper end of issue importance, highly partisan readers may trust the media less on that issue. Gunther pursued his investigation of attitude extremity and trust in media, finding trust in newspapers to be highest among the politically neutral and lowest for partisans. Mason and Nass reported that readers who are more strongly favorable toward the target of a “mudslinging” newspaper article are likely to view the newspaper as biased against the target, basing their interpretation upon their previously held disposition toward the target of a “cheap shot” being reported in the newspaper.

In an effort to learn the characteristics of people who perceive the media as less credible, Gaziano and McGrath identified two personality types: “less well informed and suspicious” and “sophisticated skeptics.” The latter group is more likely to be found on Capitol Hill than the former. “Sophisticated skeptics” have higher education and income levels, have greater knowledge of and personal experience with news media, are very critical of the news media and likely to act on media affronts, and are generally Republican and conservative. Taken with Graber’s finding that people take issue with the media when a report conflicts with their personal experience and with research showing the influence of audience predispositions, Gaziano and McGrath’s characterization of media critics indicates active audience members whose involvement in public affairs tempers their perceptions of the credibility of specific news media. Audience sophistication and partisan predispositions also would affect credibility perceptions of specific publications, the level of analysis in this study.
It is hoped that this study will complement research like Weiss’s survey of American leaders and extend the line of media use and credibility research by examining a single type of medium. This study should aid in understanding the publication preferences of members of a partisan specialized population using print media as sources of specific types of information and for job-related purposes.

**HYPOTHESES**

Two general hypotheses were tested in this study. One concerns media use, and the other relates to media credibility.

H1: Congressional staff differ in publication usage in terms of political party affiliation, staff position, and House/Senate service.

H2: Congressional staff differ in perceptions of publication credibility in terms of political party affiliation, staff position, and House/Senate service.

The data were expected to indicate that Republican and Democratic staff differ in their media behavior to some degree in publications used and more so in terms of their credibility ratings. This expectation was based on the fact that congressional staffers have strong political party affiliations and the generally accepted assumption that Democrats tend to be more liberal ideologically and Republicans more conservative. Thus, although both parties were likely to read some of the same publications, their perspectives regarding those sources’ credibility would likely vary systematically, in keeping with the findings of Gunther, Graber, Gaziano, and others discussed above.

It was also expected that the media behavior of top staffers (AAs, LDs, and PSs) would differ as a function of job duties and consequently the information needs of people in those three positions.

House and Senate staffers were expected to differ in media behavior because of the two-year vs. six-year terms of their bosses, placing vastly different election time frames under which they respectively work. Also, representatives tend toward more provincial perspectives because they represent districts rather than states, which senators represent. It was expected that these factors would bear upon publication preferences and perhaps perceptions of publication credibility.

**METHOD**

Questionnaires were personally delivered to a sample of 535 senior congressional aides (a staffer in one of the top three positions in each House and Senate office) in November 1991. A letter on University of Tennessee School of Journalism letterhead introduced the survey to respondents. The questionnaires were accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return by mail.

A random start, systematic sampling technique was applied to alphabetical lists of House and Senate members taken from the Spring 1991 U.S. House of Representatives and the July 1991 U.S. Senate telephone directories (the most recent ones). This method yielded a sample of one senior aide in each office.

A master list of room numbers was made for each of the six House and Senate office buildings and included the job title of the sample subject, along with a control number that corresponded to a number on the return envelope. The control numbers allowed checking off the list once the questionnaire was returned. This procedure guided follow-up delivery of a second round of questionnaires to nonrespondents in December 1991.

The first 535 questionnaires delivered resulted in 152 completed and returned surveys, a 28.4% response rate. The follow-up delivery yielded forty-eight additional surveys returned,
increasing the total response rate to 37.4%. Although this was a relatively low response rate, it fell within the range of responses reported in the literature. The response in this study was considered acceptable for the extremely busy, specialized population being examined.

Media Use Measurement. The questionnaire was divided into three sections, the first dealing with publication usage. "Recognition" type measures similar to Weiss's were employed, with respondents being asked about how often they read each publication. Respondents indicated frequency of use on a 5-point scale ("never" = 1, "read every issue" = 5). Checklists of six newspapers, twelve magazines, and six opinion journals were given, the publications named having been validated by pretest. A place was given in each list for respondents to name and rate additional publications. Following each publication list, a derivative of the Roper question was posed. Respondents were asked to indicate which one publication from each list they would choose if they could read only one.

Media Credibility Measurement. The three lists appeared again in the next section for respondents to rate each publication on 5-point scales, each scale measuring Rimmer and Weaver's four attributes of media credibility: bias, completeness, accuracy, and trustworthiness. The negative characteristics of each attribute were all put at the low end of the scale and the positive attributes at the upper end, which allowed the construction of a credibility index for each publication. Respondents were instructed to skip any publication with which they did not feel familiar enough to rate.

After respondents rated the publications in each list on all four credibility attributes, they were asked a forced-choice believability question. This also was a form of the Roper question, asking if respondents received conflicting reports from these sources, which one publication would they be most inclined to believe?

Personal Data. The final section of the questionnaire asked for demographic and political information, including staff position, congressional body worked for, ideology ("very liberal" = 1, "very conservative" = 7), and political party affiliation.

The 200 respondents resembled fairly well the original sample in terms of the three key variables. The original sample included 19% from the Senate and 81% from the House. The actual response was 80.5% from the House, 14.5% from the Senate, and 5% who did not indicate the body of Congress. For political party, the original sample contained 61% Democrats and 39% Republicans. The actual response yielded 50% Democrats, 39.5% Republicans, 7% Independents, and 3.5% giving no indication. By staff position, the sample originally drawn included a third in each position. The actual response was 29.5% from AAs, 23% from LDs, and 43% from PSs. Thus, two of the top positions were underrepresented somewhat and the press position overrepresented among respondents. Almost 5% of respondents did not indicate their job title.

Regarding ideology, a significant difference was found for political parties, as was expected (p < .0001). Republicans rated themselves as more conservative (M = 5), while Democrats considered themselves to be more liberal (M = 3). No statistical difference was found for the ideology measure between House (M = 3.99) and Senate (M = 4.29) or in terms of staff position (AA M = 3.97; LD M = 3.98; PS M = 4.06).

Pearson correlation coefficients indicated no significant collinearity problems among any of the three key variables.

RESULTS

Media Use. Table 1 gives the results of significance tests of means (t-tests) by political party for frequency of newspaper use. Democrats read the Washington Post and the New York Times significantly more frequently than Republicans, although Republicans read the Post very
often. On the other hand, GOP aides read the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Times to a significantly greater degree than Democratic staff. Cross-tabulation of the forced-choice responses indicated the Post to be the primary newspaper choice among both parties, followed by the New York Times for Democrats and the Wall Street Journal for Republicans.

As a function of congressional body, only one significant difference was found in the means of newspaper frequency of use. Senate staff (n = 28) read the New York Times more frequently than House staff (n = 160) (S M = 3.69, SD = 1.04; HR M = 3.22, SD = 1.21; p < .05). Aides in both bodies reported reading the Washington Post (S M = 4.76, SD = 0.79; HR M = 4.76, SD = 0.71; N.S.) most frequently, followed by the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

By position, PSs (n = 85) reported reading all six newspapers more frequently than AAs (n = 59) or LDs (n = 45). Multiple t-tests yielded significant results between the mean frequency of newspaper use of PSs and the other two positions for the Christian Science Monitor (AA M = 1.98, SD = 0.99; LD M = 1.93, SD = 1.09; PS M = 2.48, SD = 1.20; LD/PS p < .05; AA/PS p < .05), New York Times (AA M = 3.17, SD = 1.26; LD M = 2.70, SD = 1.19; PS M = 3.69, SD = 1.02; LD/PS p < .0001; AA/PS p < .05), and USA Today (AA M = 2.05, SD = 1.06; LD M = 1.86, SD = 1.03; PS M = 2.65, SD = 0.91; LD/PS p < .0001; AA/PS p < .005). All three positions read the Washington Post (AA M = 4.69, SD = 0.82; LD M = 4.61, SD = 0.98; PS M = 4.89, SD = 0.41; N.S.) most often, with this result supported in the forced-choice responses.

The frequency of reading magazines varied as a function of political party and position more than by service in the House or Senate. Staff in both parties read Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report most frequently, with no statistically significant difference (see Table 2). Significant differences occurred for Time and Newsweek, read more frequently by Democrats, and U.S. News and World Report, which Republicans read more often. Responses to the forced-choice question reflected this same order of magazine preference by party.

While respondents in all three senior staff positions read CQ Weekly Report most frequently, AAs (n = 59) and LDs (n = 45) relied on it significantly more often than did PSs (n = 85) (AA M = 4.48, SD = 0.80; LD M = 4.69, SD = 0.56; PS M = 3.98, SD = 1.19; LD/PS p < .0001; AA/PS p < .005). Generally, AAs and PSs seemed to read other magazines more than did LDs. This was the case with the three principal newsweeklies, U.S. News (AA M = 3.22, SD = 1.24; LD M = 2.84, SD = 1.17; PS M = 3.65, SD = 1.00; AA/LD N.S.; LD/PS p < .0005; AA/PS N.S.), Time (AA M = 3.67, SD = 1.15; LD M = 3.33, SD = 1.33; PS M = 3.82, SD = 0.97; AA/LD N.S.; LD/PS p < .05; AA/PS N.S.), and Newsweek (AA M = 3.75, SD = 1.23; LD M = 3.30, SD = 1.25; PS M = 3.91, SD = 0.96; AA/LD p < .05; LD/PS p < .005; AA/PS N.S.). National Journal was read about as frequently as these magazines (AA M = 3.70, SD = 1.38; LD M = 3.25, SD = 1.48; PS M = 3.38, SD = 1.28; N.S.), with all other magazines listed read much less frequently. Cross-tabulation of forced-choice responses by position generally supported the above order of magazine preference.

As a function of congressional body, frequency of magazine use differed little. However, the most often read publication, CQ Weekly Report, significantly differed between House and Senate (S M = 3.96, HR M = 4.39, d.f. = 169, p < .03); no other pair of means was significantly different. Congressional Quarterly was followed by Newsweek and U.S. News for both houses in order of usage.

Opinion journal usage differed significantly by political party, but not as a function of congressional body or staff position. Aside from Commentary, the difference in mean frequency of use was statistically significant for the five other opinion journals (see Table 3). Overall opinion
journal reading appeared less frequent than that of the most preferred newspapers and magazines. Also, the findings here were in general accord with the ideological perspectives of the publications, although Republicans reported reading New Republic more than any other journal except National Review. And Democrats on the average read National Review more often than other opinion journals except New Republic. Analysis by cross-tabulation and nonparametric statistics, while somewhat tenuous, generally supported these results.

Opinion journal usage differences as a function of congressional body or staff position were nonsignificant, save one. In light of both variables, respondents reported reading New Republic (HR M = 2.69, SD = 1.30, SM = 2.66, SD = 1.37, N.S.; AA M = 2.64, SD = 1.31, LD M = 2.64, SD = 1.33, PS M = 2.77, SD = 1.32, N.S.) most frequently, followed by National Review (HR M = 2.44, SD = 1.28, SM = 2.45, SD = 1.21, N.S.; AA M = 2.37, SD = 1.20, LD M = 2.16, SD = 1.31, PS M = 2.60, SD = 1.25, N.S.). The one significant difference occurred between LDs and PSs for reading Progressive (LD M = 1.18, SD = 0.45; PS M = 1.41, SD = 0.73; LD/PS p < .04). In the forced-choice responses, respondents selected New Republic most frequently, closely followed by National Review, both by congressional house and staff position.

Media Credibility. Republicans rated the Wall Street Journal most highly among newspapers, while Democrats gave the New York Times the highest rating. Democrats rated the conservative Washington Times the lowest in credibility terms, while Republicans rated it higher than the liberal Washington Post, which received the lowest GOP credibility rating. In the forced-choice measure, Democrats chose to believe the New York Times, while Republicans believed the Wall Street Journal.

Position on staff had little influence on newspaper credibility perceptions. One significant difference was found in the credibility index, constructed by adding the mean ratings of the four credibility components for a publication, of the Washington Times between PSs and AAs. The Times had a mean index of 9.79 from PSs and of 8.39 from AAs (d.f. = 117, p < .03). The credibility components in which PS ratings were significantly higher for this newspaper were accuracy and trustworthiness. Also, PSs rated the Wall Street Journal (PS M = 4.17, AA M = 3.86, d.f. = 122, p < .02), the Washington Post (PS M = 3.84, AA M = 3.46, d.f. = 123, p < .02), and the New York Times (PS M = 4.13, AA M = 3.86, d.f. = 120, p < .04) significantly higher on accuracy than did AAs. Press secretaries significantly differed with LDs on accuracy ratings of the New York Times (PS M = 4.13, LD M = 3.71, d.f. = 65, p < .03) and the Washington Post (PS M = 3.84, LD M = 3.37, d.f. = 67, p < .04).

No significant differences occurred between houses of Congress in newspaper ratings or in frequency distributions with respect to credibility.

Regarding magazine credibility ratings by party, both parties rated CQ Weekly Report the highest, with no statistical difference between group means (see Table 5). National Journal, which received the second-highest rating from both parties, differed significantly between its mean ratings. Republicans rated Forbes, Fortune, and Insight significantly more highly than did Democrats, while Democrats indicated higher credibility perceptions for Atlantic Monthly, Newsweek, and Time.

Just two credibility indices had significantly different means with respect to House and Senate: Congressional Quarterly and Fortune. House staffers assigned CQ Weekly Report a mean credibility index of 18.62; Senate staff rated it 17.68 (d.f. = 143, p < .04), occurring from a difference in trustworthiness ratings. This remained the highest rated magazine, however. Fortune received a mean rating of 13.21 from the House and 12.00 from the Senate (d.f. = 36, p < .01).

Staff position made little difference for magazine credibility. The majority of respondents in each position reported being most inclined to believe CQ Weekly Report. Only a few
differences were found in magazine credibility component ratings, mostly on trustworthiness, PSs generally assigning higher ratings than AAs.

Regarding opinion journal credibility, political party once again was the most fruitful of the independent correlates. While New Republic earned a high index rating from both sides of the aisle, from there on, partisanship prevailed. Republicans rated the conservative Human Events and National Review significantly more highly than did Democrats, while Democrats gave significantly higher ratings to the liberal Nation and Progressive. The ratings of Commentary, while generally in the right ideological direction, represented little significance in differences. Nearly all credibility ratings by party, whether statistically significant or not, went in the expected ideological direction.

Position on staff yielded a few statistically significant differences with respect to opinion journal credibility, primarily between AAs and PSs. In every case, PSs gave publications the higher rating, while AAs and LDs tended to assign similar ratings. The most notable difference occurred in the Human Events credibility index (PS M = 10.23, AA M = 8.23, d.f. = 68, p < .03). Generally where differences were found, PSs rated opinion journals more highly than AAs on completeness.

Only one significant difference occurred regarding congressional body. Human Events, in terms of accuracy, received a House rating of 2.79; it received a 2.17 Senate rating (d.f. = 96, p < .03).

DISCUSSION

The two general hypotheses tested in this study were partially supported. Regarding the first—that congressional staff differ in publication use by political party, congressional house, and staff position—several conclusions may be drawn.

First, the most significant of the three variables was political party. Publication use as a function of party resulted in fourteen statistically significant t-tests out of twenty-four total t-tests. The publications most read by members of each party tended to differ in accordance with ideological perspectives generally attributed to those publications, beyond the publications most frequently read in the newspaper and magazine categories. Thus, the Washington Post was cited by both parties as the most frequently read newspaper, giving support to previous findings that the Post is the paper of Washington officialdom. Second choices exhibited the ideological differences: the Wall Street Journal for Republican staff and the New York Times for Democrats. Besides Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, which provides useful political and legislative information to all, second choices of magazines also reflected differences by party—Republicans chose U.S. News and World Report, Democrats chose Newsweek. And as expected, the same influence held sway for opinion journal usage; Republicans most frequently read National Review, Democrats the New Republic.

Second, position on staff had some, although limited, significance regarding frequency of publication use. Press secretaries reported reading more publications more frequently than those in the other two positions. Legislative directors appeared to read the least of the three positions. This finding suggests that PSs need to survey the environment beyond Congress, LDs seek more specific, policy-related information, and AAs, whose reading preferences indicated a mixture of contents, generally fell between the other two senior staffers in print media usage.

Third, the house of Congress had little correlational value regarding publication usage. House and Senate staff seemed to have about the same publication preferences.

The second hypothesis—that congressional staff would differ in perceptions of publication credibility in terms of political party, congressional body, and staff position—was supported along
the same general lines as the media use hypothesis and lacked support in the same areas as above.

As a function of party affiliation, the newspapers and magazines read most often were not necessarily those regarded as most credible. While both parties read the Washington Post the most, Republicans rated their second most frequently read newspaper, the Wall Street Journal, as the most credible newspaper. Democrats treated their second-choice newspaper under usage, the New York Times, the same way—they rated it the most credible newspaper.

Because both parties gave CQ Weekly Report and next National Journal the highest credibility ratings of magazines, these publications perhaps should be placed in a category of their own. The most distinct differences in magazine ratings by party occurred with respect to Newsweek, Time, and Insight. Party was also a significant correlate of opinion journal credibility ratings, generally occurring in the expected ideological directions. However, New Republic received from Republicans the second highest rating on credibility of opinion journals.

Concerning staff position, PSs tended to rate publications as more credible than did those in the other two positions. This may be explained by the fact that PSs often have worked in the news media and thus trust the product of their former colleagues, while LDs and AAs have more direct knowledge of legislative and policy matters, thus knowing when the press gets it wrong.

Congressional body was, once again, an almost insignificant independent variable regarding publication credibility ratings.

In conclusion, the findings of this study support the work of Weiss and others with respect to specific publication usage. This study also couples usage and credibility perceptions, an important link to be made in the advancement of media research. While these findings may hold for the specialized population of congressional staff, the media use and credibility perceptions of a general audience should be linked in a similar manner in future endeavors.

ENDNOTES


Vogler and Waldman, Congress and Democracy, p. 85.


Senate Republican Policy Committee, untitled list of Congressional Office Staff Positions and U.S. Senate Committees (undated).

Carlile, A Functional Analysis; Cummings, Capitol Hill Manual; Senate Republican Policy Committee, untitled list.

Carlile, A Functional Analysis; Cummings, Capitol Hill Manual; Senate Republican Policy Committee, untitled list.


Ornstein, "The Open Congress," p. 208. See also Nimmo, Newsgathering; Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read;" Linsky, Impact; and Miller, "Reporters and Congressmen."

Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read."

Fox and Hammond, Congressional Staffs.

20 Berkowitz and Pritchard, “Political Knowledge,” p. 701.
22 Fox and Hammond, Congressional Staffs.
33 Fox and Hammond, Congressional Staffs.
34 Questionnaire design, the writing of the introductory letter, and the mail survey method followed the guidelines found in D. A. Dillman, Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978); and E. Babbie, The Practice of Social Research, 5th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1989). The questionnaire was a 12-page booklet, which included the cover, the introductory letter, and most of the back page left open for comments. Pretest found the questionnaire to take ten to fifteen minutes to complete.
35 Seven additional offices returned the questionnaire uncompleted and/or sent a letter stating they do not participate in surveys.


Rimmer and Weaver, “Different Questions.” Also see H. K. Jacobson, “Mass Media Believability: A Study of Receiver Judgments,” Journalism Quarterly, 46:20-28 (1969). “Adjectival opposites” were given for each scale: biased/unbiased, doesn’t tell the whole story/tells the whole story, inaccurate/accurate, and not trustworthy/trustworthy. The questions asked respondents to “Rate these [type of publication] from 1 to 5 on how [positive attribute] or [negative attribute] each is.”

See Carter and Greenberg, “Newspapers or Television;” and Gaziano and McGrath, “Segments of the Public.”
Table 1

Frequency of Use of Newspapers As a Function of Political Party*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Democrat N=99</th>
<th>Republican N=77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Science Monitor</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Times</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1=Never Read, 5=Read Every Issue

Table 2

Frequency of Use of Magazines As a Function of Political Party*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Democrat N=99</th>
<th>Republican N=78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Monthly</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Week</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Qtly.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Journal</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Dimensions</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Economist</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US News/World Rpt.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1=Never Read, 5=Read Every Issue

Table 3

Frequency of Use of Opinion Journals As a Function of Political Party*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion Journals</th>
<th>Democrat N=99</th>
<th>Republican N=79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Events</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Review</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Republic</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE SHARPENING OF SHAKE'S SPEAR
by Ernest Pinson

There's an old movie about Jesse James when he was known as the top gun of the Old West. Because he was the number one gun slinger, every would-be gun shooter throughout the nation came to Dodge City to challenge Jesse, simply to try to dethrone the best. So it is with Shakespeare. No less than 16 pretenders to the 38 plays he wrote as the world's top playwright have bitten the dust. Among them such famous names as Charles de Vere, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Sir Walter Raleigh, Burbige, etc., etc., etc. So far Shakespeare has successfully defended his title he still is the most read, the most performed, the most critically acclaimed dramatist in all the world. Hamlet, to take only one instance, is the most translated, the most performed, the most discussed work outside the Bible. No less than 36 Shakespearean festivals exists in the US and Canada alone. Productions persist all the way from the 4-stage arena in Stratford, Ontario, to the one minuet production of Hamlet recently seen at Union University. I was amazed to see Twelfth Night performed by an all girls school at Oxford, England, out in the trees among cows on the campus. I saw Romeo And Juliet done in Germany with real motorcycles on stage, ghetto chain gangs, and rock music, among mafia family political bosses as the Montagues and Capulets. The prestigious Shakespeare festival in Stratford, Canada, presented Julius Caesar in German gestapo style, hip boots, and a concrete pyramid as its senate headquarters. The same group did Merry Wives of Windsor in 19th century southern dress of hoop skirts, ballroom dances, with Falstaff dressed as a Kentucky Colonel. A. C. Bradley tells us that King Lear was studied at the Harvard Business School as a class exercise in bad delegation. Just recently I returned from San Francisco after seeing King Lear performed in the bottom of a drained YMCA swimming pool. When Lear came out raging against the storm in the rain, they turned on the waterhose in the pool which splattered the small audience surprisingly simulating a real rain storm in the play. I mention these sometimes effective innovations, sometimes bizarre productions, in order to make a point about teaching. I want to argue that Shakespeare need not be buried in 16th century dress or thought along with the skull of "poor Yorick," but rather can be resurrected in modern dress for modern students.

I. Shake's Speare

The title of this essay has three rather obvious allusions: first, it is, of course, a reference to the name Shakespeare itself: second, it is a pun, a bad pun perhaps, on the sharpening of Shakespeare's quill; third and more to the point, it is a reference to sharpening our own minds to various readings and productions Shakespeare's plays.

To the first point, I simply pay homage to Ben Jonson's poem "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, William Shakespeare" which refers to Shakespeare as one who "seemed to shake-a-lance" (a pun on shave-a-spear).

To the second point I will offer details of Shakespeare's language and plays as indications of his sharp quill. To the third point I offer a modern religions reading of the play King Lear.

II. Shakespeare's Tongue

According to Bill Bryson's book English: The Mother Tongue, Shakespeare in the year 1610 had about a 30,000 word vocabulary, well above the estimated 20,000 of the average educated person today. Byson claims Shakespeare used 17,700 words in his writings of which at least one tenth had never been used before. It is astonishing to realize (if those figures are correct) that every tenth word I used in this paper would be a new one. Critics are still working on "honoricabilitudinititibus" (that's 27 letters in 13 syllables) from Love's Labor Lost. Yet
curiously not once does he use the words "Bible," "Holy Ghost," or "Trinity," nor do the plays contain swearing (although someone has taken the trouble to count 105 damns). He loved puns—3,000 of them sprinkled through his plays—and he was a phrase maker par excellence. If you're "in a pickle, vanish into thin air, drink the milk of human kindness, true to thine own self, can't budge an inch, a tower of strength, you have a remembrance of things past, and hear the sound and fury," then you are talking Shakespeare. He helped make London the most loyal theater city in the world, (about 1/5 of the population frequented the 7 theaters then open), and he attracted the attention as both actor and dramatist of Queen Elizabeth herself. It is astonishing that of the 38 plays from his sharp pen (two other plays Love's Labor Won and Cardenio, are lost) not one Shakespeare manuscript survives.

Somehow a play like Hamlet seems to stir interest from almost every walk of life. Criticism has been written by a medical doctor, a lawyer, a theologian, a philosopher, a teacher, a fellow Prince, the psychologist Freud, physicist/astronomer Issac Asimov, Goethe, Keats, Coleridge, C. S. Lewis, even a marriage counselor giving advice to young lovers.

III. Shakespeare's King Lear

Because this is a Christian institution, I would like to focus on an issue I once thought had been exhausted—Christian elements in his plays, specifically King Lear. I want to deal with Lear because it poses more problems, perhaps, for a teacher from a religious college than any other Shakespeare play. Indeed, two years ago in a Shakespeare Conference at Wheaton College, Ill., David Bevington (current editor of the Harper Complete Works of Shakespeare, argued that not only has Christian analysis in Shakespeare been revived, it is finding itself quite apropro in current debates with deconstructionist, the feminist, the absurdist, the new historicist—to all, in fact, that we call post-modern. Says Bevington, this play provides no comfort that the gods concern themselves with mortal affairs or that the gods even exist. I tell my students that surely this play's very lack of comfort is itself a comfort to us today, to know that human alienation and religious fragmentation reaches as far back as the old King Lear play which was the model for Shakespeare. The first thing we must try to do is deal squarely with the play's pagan setting and its lack of references to a Christian deity. The Parliamentary act of 1606 forbidding the use onstage of "the holy name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost or of the Trinity" provides only a mechanical answer to the question. More to the point, Shakespeare appears to have deliberately chosen a pre-Christian setting in ancient Britain in order to test his characters, to see how they would fare in a world lacking explicit Christian precepts." As Cordelia goes to prison and to her death in Act 5, she stoically observes to her father Lear: "We are not the first / Who with best meaning have incurred the worst" (V. 3. 3-7). This point is made even more acute when we consider that a play like Macbeth by contrast is indeed set in a Christian era, and Shakespeare makes full use of that fact by stressing the saintliness of Edward the Confessor and by showing the consequences of evil acts and the reality of heaven and hell. King Lear, however, is set in a pre-Christian era, or a least in a Britain which had lapsed into paganism. William Elton's recently reissued full length study King Lear and the Gods, makes the point that the Old Lear play was much more Christian in theme before Shakespeare got hold of it, than after he wrote his Lear; and the references in the old Lear were more explicitly Christian and Biblical in that older version. Rather than "the gods," it cried out for "God" alone, and "it assumes the whole institution of Christian practices, offices, sacraments, liturgy, and creeds." One quick example from that old version will have to suffice. When Cordella and Leir are reconciled, Leir blesses her and hopes the blessings

which the God of Abraham gave

Unto the tribe of Juda, will light on thee
and multiply thy days... 

The faults God will pardon on high (ll. 2336-31)

Clearly that is not Shakespeare's play! Of course the question is "why"? Why did Shakespeare deliberately withdraw the Christian tone from his source at a time when Christian Renaissance flourished? Why change his characters from a Christian orientation into heathen atheists or superstitious skeptics and thus remove the play out of the comfort of Renaissance liturgy. As Bevington puts it: "King Lear's world is even more radically individualistic than Protestantism ever was in that its inhabitants are wholly on their own, forced to find out their identities and moral centers" without benefit of a personal edict from God. In short, in this play Shakespeare presents an amoral universe that robs Lear of any objective creed by which to live. Cordelia and Edgar practice their goodness not in the name of any formal religious creed, Christian or otherwise, but rather are possessed by some innate need for good. And Edmund, both the chief villain and the most profound thinker, seems guided by an intelligence beyond his own orientation that is neither Satanic, nor Manichaean, nor deterministic.

Kent's question in the last scene of the play is the key issue: "Is this the promised end?" (meaning, is this the way the world ends?) Kent seems to suggest Christian hope has been betrayed, but as Alexander Leggatt puts it in Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare (29), this does not argue a Christian reading of Lear is put out of court. There is no place in this play, nor can there be in our own modern times for a naive optimism about virtue rewarded, or for a simple trust in a perfect world. Christianity can be tougher and darker than that; it knows, indeed it insists, that the world is wicked and unfair; and it also insists that God is finally unfathomable. It can imagine Christ himself crying from the cross, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—a cry that seems to reverberate from the mouth of King Lear himself. But though Christianity may acknowledge the pain of life, it also insists that life has a purpose throughout the play; even if we may not always discern its meaning, it is not finally and eternally absurd. It also reverberates with the fear of nothingness in a crazy universe that just doesn't seem to make sense. Gloucester addresses Lear toward the end: "O ruined piece of nature! This great world/Shall we wear out to nothing" (V, 5, 190-1). And the play offers little hope of divine justice guaranteed. True enough, Goneril and Edmund are punished. True, Cordelia is praised for her innocence and purity. True the moral contradictions in the play defy a happy world, but the play.

IV. Shakespeare's Religion

So just where is Shakespeare religiously in all of this? Shakespeare, of course, is notoriously elusive. He hides behind the mask of his characters, submerges in the events of history, and lurks in the ambiguity of his puns. Books have been written to prove that he clung to the Catholic faith, that he was a rigid follower of St. Augustine, that he was a neo-platonist, that he was profoundly skeptical, and that he was a conformist. All we really know is precious little—that he read two versions of the Bible (the Bishops and the Genevan), that he read some of Erasmus and Montaigne, that he knew the Homilies and was acquainted with the prayer-book version of the Psalms. Beyond that we can't pin him to any sect or creed. Spencer has noted that the "good" characters in the play invoke the gods and the others do not; Richmond Noble lists 15 passages in Lear which are possibly Biblical in origin; Knight argues that whatever religion is in the play is naturalistic; Bradley makes the point that the sense of justice held by the characters is dependent upon their belief in divine agents; Wyndham Lewis to the contrary calls the play "nihilistic"; E. E. Stoll agrees that evil has triumphed. Others have pointed out the repentant spirit of Gloucester and Lear, the renunciation of the world, Edmund's attack on astrology, the resemblance of Gloucester's attempted suicide to the temptations of Christ, the resemblance of Lear's crown of nettles and weeds to Christ's crown of thorns, the reflections on the Ten Commandments and the 7
deadly sins, Edgar’s Christ-life charity, the references to doomsday; Welsford even stresses the Christian quality in the literature of fools. But why no search for all these Biblical allusions? Isn’t it enough to just apply the play to our present-day dilemma, to the angst and uncertainty of a world gone mad with violence?

The play, then, is a "what if" proposition. What if we didn’t believe in the gods of our culture or tradition? How would we perform? What would be the source of our ethics? By what creed would we gauge morality? Can we survive in a world where great masses of people are without belief, without morals or values? By stripping away Christian religion and the gods themselves from the world of King Lear, Shakespeare does not deny their reality in another context. He does, however, ask us to confront a world in which human beings must examine their own potential for good or evil, alone, shut off from a response from a Supreme Being. King Lear has often been compared to Job of the Old Testament, but it goes one step beyond that ancient text which accepts as its premise that God and the devil exist. The testing of Job determines whether Job can hold faith in a God who is undeniably present, but who refuses to reward Job for his virtuous ways. Shakespeare’s play makes no such assumption. Various characters display a need to believe in gods, but belief is continually undercut as a cruel illusion. Cordelia’s belief in virtue for its own sake is pure, constant, and deeply moving. Can it therefore be said to be intrinsically superior to more selfish creeds? To argue that selflessness is ipso facto better than selfishness is to refer the matter to a value system that is itself under attack in this play. The formal argument that the play, by its very plot, rewards virtue and punishes vice collapses, as Dr. Samuel Johnson saw, in the face of the deaths of Cordelia and Lear. Our worries about the absence of poetic justice in the play stem from deeper worries about the seeming absence or indifferent of the gods themselves. Shakespeare bears a naked Lear, a shredded soul, to see what human beings are made of, and for us in the post-modern world this play provides a confused choice of answers. One can try to be a stoic, an agnostic, a Manichean, a relativist, an existentialist, a bitter disillusionist, a protestant, a catholic, a pagan, whatever, but the universal puzzle will fit neatly together, and this will forever severely test our beliefs. Although Peter Brook’s controversial 1970 film of King Lear which is based on a comparison of the play with the modern absurdist theater (specifically Becket’s End Game) has been attacked as radical, it nonetheless showed what can be done with Shakespeare in contemporary relevancies. It showed that King Lear is universal and modern in that its problem is an eternal one, despite, even because of, its pre-Christian context. Whether a Christian or pagan context, whether we believe in a cause or effect or in a quantum mechanics randomness, whether we accept Einstein’s cry that God doesn’t throw dice to make decisions, or accept the End Game as a universe devoid of meaning, Shakespeare’s Lear shows us that we must endure the ordeal of fire. Lear’s final words to the dead Cordelia puts it squarely: "why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life? And thou no breath at all?"

V. Conclusion

The sharpening of Shake’s “spear” I really had in mind in the title of this paper is the sharpening of our focus; I mean the application of his works to our own modernity, which surely we must do in our teaching if we are to keep Shakespeare viable to current, contemporary students in this ever shifting, ever changing world. Can we see Anthony and Cleopatra as modern western civilization in conflict with the third world eastern Arabic block; can we see The Tempest not only as traditional male dominance over an island and his daughter’s marriage, but as a problem of colonization, or as social problems with an ennobled savage; can we see Romeo and Juliet as Leonard Bernstein did with urban street gangs in a conflict with each other; can we agree that Shakespeare’s Othello does not have to be taught as it has traditionally been at the U. of Delhi by some 800 of the English faculty as an object lesson in wifely obedience to their husbands, but it
can be taught as discussions of racial tensions in marriage; can not Othello's relations as a foreigner in a Venetian society encourage students to ponder their own dilemmas of color? If we discuss Shakespeare's plays in modern eyes we will call him out of soggy, musty theaters, take him out of mothball costumes, take him out of cobweb thinking, and make him relevant to modernity. Not only would this teach Shakespeare to our students, it would teach them to think creatively in preparation for their own future world.

ENTRY TO CARL PERKIN'S DRIVEWAY AT HIS HOME
WHILE THE RIVER IS WIDE

by

Bobby Caudle Rogers

It is helpful to be reminded how the sun sets
unfailing fast and final no matter the clearness or the depth
of haze, reddening and trailed out
like a turning wake in placid water. I believe
we should make these steps away from each other
as difficult as possible, as wary and tentative
as our coming together, hoping
they will matter more this way; but we will take them,
regardless,

by the end of the summer. I am wearing a ring
and doing what I should have done
from the beginning, marrying a man it took time
to convince, and then troubling to explain my compulsion.
But whoever hears these thoughts? I used to consider them
hurtful voices inside my head which need be heavily

shielded.

I’ve learned, since, that they are incidental
as the sirens passing along Union Avenue, hardly heard
and quickly silenced: they leave us
untouched, their dangerous irradiation lost
in the decay of our reconsiderings.
I am on the highest piece of bluff, and the unsteadiest.
A railroad line once ran its crest but was lost
when a section collapsed in a dry summer,
the drop in the water table loosening a lens
of sand left undetected by the guessing geology
employed back then. There is a steam locomotive buried
below Riverside Drive, a machine so large,
built onto tracks, I suppose, that it wasn’t feasible to raise it
once it had fallen with the bluff. Maybe no one knew
a way. So they covered it with earth, invisible, to become

story.

I have been down here at night, on this vantage point
when the bridge lights laid their curves
onto the water that appeared, to my eyes,
almost to be standing in place. But this evening,
in the remaining daylight, I can see worshipfully

each wave’s edge and progress, the defined unrest of the
boiling river

as my thinking roils from me and over its own horizon.
I had wanted to think about someone
I knew who would with faith write down these thoughts
in my head if he could. He would love
to know I am pondering rivers, how as they age
they become more tortuous in their route downward, to
whatever sea
is waiting then and they finally powerful
unloading. He would remark how a great river can change
course
in its rushing search for the lowest, most amenable path
and leave a bent leg of water in its straightening,
an oxbow lake miles long that will stay for a time
and gradually go dry and overgrow, leaving a sandy stain
of the river's passage. He would like this.
But I am concerned with the view from here
and little else, only looking westward
towards where I will move and live at the end
of the summer, leaving this river to its narrowing, leaving
the days to smolder and ready, the next season
rumored in the cooling and spread of these shadows, already
the sun setting every night further downstream.

BEHIND ELLIS HALL—OLD UNION CAMPUS


CONTRIBUTORS

Louise Bentley, Professor of English, arrived to teach at Union in 1981. She has a BA degree from Bob Jones University, MA from University of Southern California, and Doctor of Arts from Middle Tennessee State. She has presented several papers to Christianity and Literature conferences and the Tennessee Philological Association of which she is a past president.

Joseph Blass's career at Union reaches as far back 1959. He has his AB from University of Alabama, MSM from Southwestern Seminary, and Ph. D. from Florida State University. He was the first to receive the newly created position of University Professor of Music. He writes, sings, acts in plays, and grows nice roses.

Wayne Day came to Union University in the fall of 1988, having received the BM from Union, the MS from Murray State, the MA and Ed. D. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently Assistant Professor of Youth Ministries and Religious Education. Aside from reading, writing, preaching, and teaching, he manages to spend time developing his hobby of photography.

James R. Edwards, Assistant Professor of Communication Arts, came to Union in 1992. He received his AB and MA from the University of Georgia and his Ph. D. from the University of Tennessee. He is currently faculty sponsor of both the college newspaper (The Cardinal and Cream) and the college year book (Lest We Forget).

John Harris arrived at Union this past year (1993) as Associate Professor of English. All three of his degrees (BA, MA, and PH. D.) are from the University of Texas at Austin. An excellent student of language, he has published frequently and has recently written a full length novel.

Ernest Pinson came to Union in 1969. He has a BA from Mississippi College, MA from Vanderbilt, Ph. D. from Ohio University, and additional study at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England. He is currently 1993-94 co-editor of JUFF.

Bobby Rogers, Assistant Professor of English on the BMH campus since 1989, will be joining the Jackson campus English Department the Fall semester of 1994. He received his BA from University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and his MA from the University of Virginia. He has published poetry widely and has recently written a novel.

Polly Spencer started in College Services at Union in 1982 and has been here ever since. She became its Supervisor in 1990. Polly was the first recipient of newly created Union Staff of the Year on May 22, 1994.

Roger Stanley has been instructor in English at Union since 1990. He has a BA degree from Appalachian State, MA from East Tennessee State, and is currently working on a doctorate at the University of Mississippi. He is a frequent contributor to journals and is co-editor of this year’s JUFF.
Photographs by Frank Lower
Contributors

LILLIAN BAGGETT came to Union’s English Department in 1981 and taught on a part-time basis until 1987, when she was employed full-time. She has a BA from the University of North Texas and an MA from MTSU. She has contributed several papers to the Joseph E. Martin Shakespeare Circle in Jackson.

LYTLE GIVENS, Professor of Sociology and Chairman of the Department, came to Union in 1978. He has both the BS and MAT from Middle Tennessee State and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. He contributes often to this journal, is a prolific reader, and a constant traveler.

FRANK LOWER came to Union in 1988 as Chairman of the Department of Communication Arts. He has the BA and MA degrees from Adams State College and a PhD from Florida State University. He wrote and acted in his own play presented by Union University on “Pecos Bill” and has also performed in plays in Jackson theaters. Although no longer at Union, his material was collected prior to his move.

HOWARD NEWELL has served since 1982 as Professor of Business Administration, Dean of the School of Business, and currently Vice President of Academic Affairs since 1989. His B.S. and M.S. degrees are from Southern Illinois University and his Ph.D. from Indiana University.

ERNEST PINSON arrived at Union in 1969. He has a BA from Mississippi College, MA from Vanderbilt, and Ph.D. from Ohio University. He has written several articles and book reviews and serves as 1991-92 editor of this journal.

PATRICIA PINSON came to Union in 1969 in both the Music and Art departments. She has served as Honors Director and Dean of Fine Arts, as well as teaching. She is presently helping write and edit a book in music.

ROGER STANLEY came to Union’s English Department as recently as 1990. His B.A. degree is from Appalachian State and M.A. from East Tennessee State. He has written several articles and served as editor of the East Tennessee State University Journal.

RUTH WITHERINGTON began teaching in the English department at Baptist Memorial Hospital in 1987. She is Chairman of the Division of Humanities/Arts and has her B.A. from Union and M.A. from Memphis State University. She contributes fiction and poetry often to this journal.