

**HANDBOOK ON DISSEMINATING
RESEARCH RESULTS IN
ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS**

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managed by
International Development Research Centre
Asia Regional Office
Mailing address: Tanglin P O Box 101, Singapore 9124
Visiting address: 7th Storey RELC Building, 30 Orange Grove Road
Tel: (65) 235 1344 Fax: (65) 235 1849 Internet: DGlover@idrc.org.sg

HANDBOOK ON DISSEMINATING RESEARCH RESULTS¹:

I. Policy-Research Linkages

David Glover, "Policy Researchers and Policy Makers: Never the Twain Shall Meet?," December 1993

Ravi Kanbur, "The Links Between Economic Policy and Research: Three Examples from Ghana and Some General Thoughts," The World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper, October 1993

II. Writing Scholarly Articles for Publications

Anne Gordon Drabek, "Disseminating Research Results: A Guide to Publication in International Journals"

Donald McCloskey, "Economical Writing," Economic Inquiry, Vol. 24, April 1985, pp.187-222

Walter S. Salant, "Writing and Reading in Economics," Journal of Political Economy, July/August 1969, pp.545-558

Three articles from A Leigh DeNeef, Craufurd D. Goodwin, Ellen Stern McCrate (eds), The Academic's Handbook. Duke University Press, Durham/London, 1989

1. Louis J. Budd, "On Writing Scholarly Articles," pp. 201-215
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3. Richard C. Rowson, "The Scholar and the Art of Publishing," pp. 226-237

III. Journals in Environmental Economics

Ambio, A Journal of the Human Environment

American Journal of Agricultural Economics

Asian Journal of Environmental Management

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Development Policy Review

Ecological Economics

Environmental and Development Economics

Environmental and Resource Economics

Environmental Values

Forest Science: A Quarterly Journal of Research & Technical Progress

The Journal of Environment & Development

Journal of Environmental Economics and Management

Journal of International Development

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Journal of Environmental Planning and Management

Land Economics

Society & Natural Resources, An International Journal

Water Resources Research

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"Handling Difficult Questions," Barry McLoughlin Associates Inc, Executive Training Consultants

"Speaking with the Media," Continental Golin/Harris

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"ENRAP Beefs Up Institutionalization Program," ENRAP Monthly Monitor, December 1994

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I. Policy-Research Linkages

Economy and Environment Program
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**POLICY RESEARCHERS AND
POLICY MAKERS :
NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET?**

**David Glover
December 1993**



managed by
International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international
Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia / Bureau Regional pour l'Asie du Sud-Est et de l'Est
Tanglin P O Box 101, Singapore 9124 / 7th Storey RELC Building, 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 1025.
Tel: 2351344 Telebox: ICS001 Telex: SINIDRC RS 61061 Fax: 2351849
Head Office / Siège social: P O Box / BP 8500, Ottawa, Canada K1G 3H9

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**Policy Researchers and Policy Makers:
Never the Twain Shall Meet?***

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1980s saw a heavy emphasis on economic policy making. As macroeconomic crises shifted attention from sectoral to national and international issues, the quality of policy making was given increased importance as a factor in promoting stabilization and growth. A frequent observation is that policy making could be substantially improved if it were based on better information and relied more on the principles of analysis and evaluation developed by economists and other social scientists.

Current discussions of this subject in developing countries might benefit from an examination of the literature on research and policy making during an earlier period in the United States. Under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, the federal government launched ambitious social programs and at the same time attempted to increase the 'science base' of policy making. It attempted the latter by transferring a system of Planning, Programming and Budgeting from the Defense Department to other departments and by funding advisory and evaluative research related to those social programs. Subsequently, a wave of studies (most notably Weiss, 1977 and Lynn, 1977) assessed the impact of that research. The findings were disappointing - social science appeared to have had little direct impact, measured by the direct adoption of specific recommendations. However, these studies did identify basic differences in the ways in which policy makers and academics analyze problems and make decisions. They also identified the more fundamental contributions of social science as 'research for knowledge' rather than 'research for action'.

This paper surveys that literature and highlights its importance for developing countries. It examines the differences between policy makers and researchers, and recommendations for overcoming those differences. It then critiques the recommendations and discusses alternative concepts of social science's impact. It concludes by examining the implications for agencies financing research in developing countries.

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2. 'DEMAND-SIDE' PROBLEMS OF UTILIZATION: THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

Four aspects of the policy making process are frequently incompatible with the utilization of social science research: policy objectives, the timing of decisions, who takes decisions, and the decision-making process.

Policy objectives. Rigorous analysis requires a clear definition of a problem and the variables to be measured. Government policies and programs are not often amenable to such analysis because they tend to have loosely defined and multiple, even contradictory, objectives. Stated and real objectives may differ. Furthermore, the relationship between means and ends is not simple. In policy making, as elsewhere in life, ends are not always chosen first. "Ends are chosen that are appropriate to available or nearly available means"; they are not fixed, but explored, reconsidered and modified (Hirschman and Lindblom, 1962). Finally, the pervasive role of government in society and the increased politicization of ethical issues (e.g. population policy, human rights, genetic engineering) have brought highly value-laden issues into the political arena; these are not easily amenable to research or evaluation (Rose, 1977).

Timing. For a variety of reasons, the need for research often becomes apparent too late. Because of inertia and more urgent priorities, governments are usually not receptive to suggestions for improvements unless there is a serious and self-evident problem. They tend to think about changing policies only when time and funding have run out; at that point, it is too late to carry out research (Wilson, 1978).

Timing usually pre-empts evaluative research. New policies and programs are usually launched in a research vacuum, partly because ex ante appraisal techniques tend to be less reliable than those for ex post evaluation. The latter requires an existing program to study (Sundquist, 1978). Furthermore, it is only after a program has been established and a clientele created that an effective demand exists for research (Lynn, 1978). For these reasons, policy implementation tends to precede rather than follow research.

Who makes decisions. The model of a researcher advising a decision maker applies only weakly. In most cases, decisions are arrived at through multilateral bargaining. Even in cases where a client agency requests advice, there is no guarantee that it will be the appropriate audience for the results (e.g. a study done for the Ministry of Education which finds that the principal bottleneck to better student performance is poor nutrition: Weiss, 1978). This problem has led some observers to recommend that policy analysis focus on a policy area rather than on specific agencies (Lamb, 1987), although it is not clear how this would be operationalized. Furthermore, policies are 'made', in varying degrees by many actors, including senior civil servants, technicians, advisers and technical assistants (sometimes foreign); it is incorrect to think that only cabinet ministers are 'policy makers'. Finally, (1977) many 'policies' are not the result of conscious decisions at all; they are simply the sum of previous ad hoc actions and

inaction (Weiss, 1977). As a result of these conditions, it is often extremely difficult to identify a client for research.

The decision making process. The loosely defined and often inconsistent objectives of many government policies result from the process by which they were formulated. In multilateral bargaining, it is often impossible to obtain consensus on anything more than broad statements of principle; accuracy and specificity must be sacrificed (Rose, 1977). Furthermore, these bargains would not hold up if the costs and tradeoffs involved were made explicit (Verdier, 1984)¹. Research that examines the ex ante feasibility or ex post achievement of objectives is thus extremely difficult, and analyses that highlight costs and tradeoffs are threatening. Research always has the potential

to upset delicate agreements; to take debates out of political back rooms where they can be controlled by the actors involved (Verdier, 1984); and to generally reduce the freedom of policy makers who request studies and then find themselves under pressure to follow unwelcome recommendations (Davis and Salasin, 1978).

Finally, there are practical problems that prevent decision makers from making better use of research. Often, governments are afflicted with too much information; attempts to absorb the data already available can delay and complicate decision making (Sharpe, 1977). Furthermore, most senior policy makers have very little time to read: the average US congressman works an eleven hour day, of which eleven minutes are spent reading (Verdier, 1984).

3. DIFFERENCES IN THE LOGIC OF ECONOMISTS AND POLICY MAKERS

Some of the objectives and values of economists are particularly divergent from those of policy makers. To the extent that their objectives are identifiable, policy makers tend to emphasize distributional concerns (i.e. winners and losers); economists emphasize efficiency. Policy makers tend to define goals in (sometimes arbitrary) quantitative terms rather than in financial terms, as economists do (e.g. reducing pollution by 25% rather than investing in pollution control up to the point that marginal returns equal marginal costs: Leman and Nelson, 1981).

In measuring the achievement of objectives, economists and policy makers also differ. Policy makers tend to assess costs and benefits in terms of the number of people affected, rather than financial costs and benefits (Verdier, 1984). Partly because of the vagueness of many program goals, they assess performance in terms of inputs rather than outputs (e.g. number of new hospital beds rather than improvements in health: Behn, 1981). They also weigh losses more heavily than gains, since the credit accruing to the originator of the policy is asymmetrical. As Verdier (1984, p. 432) says, "a policy that hurts five people and helps five, produces five enemies and five ingrates".

There are also differences in the decision making criteria employed by policy makers and those recommended by economists. While economists emphasize the future costs of a potential project, policy makers place much weight on sunk costs to justify further investment, since these reflect the amount of credibility the policy maker has invested, the size of the project's constituency and its expectations (Behn, 1981). Opportunity cost usually does not figure heavily in policy makers' calculations (Leman and Nelson, 1981); projects and programs are assessed in their own terms, without close reference to alternative uses of funds (particularly alternatives in areas outside the decision maker's control). Finally, the issue of compensation is critical to policy makers; for economists it is usually an afterthought. Economists tend to find a solution satisfactory if, in theory, the losers could be compensated. To push a policy innovation through, policy makers must usually ensure that they will be compensated, and have mechanisms to do so.

Many sectoral ministries are also dominated by sectoral specialists (i.e. engineers controlling infrastructure policy; doctors controlling health policy). Economic analysis is often absent or done as an afterthought when financing is sought for the investment programs.

The last area of divergence is in the means favoured to influence the behaviour of economic agents. In part because many policy makers have a background in law, they often favour legal and regulatory instruments (Rhoads, 1978). That is, they try to affect behaviour through legal prohibitions and by redefining rights and duties. Economists, by contrast, emphasize economic incentives, manipulating these so that the desired behaviour comes to be in the agent's self-interest.

4. 'SUPPLY SIDE' PROBLEMS OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH

University research is often unsuitable for use by policy makers. It often takes much longer to produce results than a policy maker with a short deadline can tolerate. It is frequently highly critical, without positive suggestions for action, in keeping with the self-image of many academics as gadflies. It often avoids simple recommendations that can be acted upon and instead analyzes the advantages of various alternatives. There is also a tendency for some researchers to learn tools and techniques and then search for problems to apply them to. Streeten (1988, p.640) calls this "the law of the hammer according to which a boy, given a hammer, finds everything worth pounding, not only nails but also Ming vases".

The state of social science research is such that consensus is rare. The incentives in academia are to question and overthrow existing theories and replace them with new ones. A state of conflicting views and information is therefore normal (Aaron, 1978)². This undermines the confidence of potential clients when they realize that for every study they examine, another can be found that provides opposite conclusions. Policy makers rightly judge that such research is more likely to complicate a debate than to resolve it (Weiss, 1977), and may even delay badly needed action in the face of conflicting advice (Aaron, 1978).

Academics also tend to search for general laws and patterns of behaviour - these reveal phenomena of greater theoretical and long run importance than highly specific observations. Funding agencies favour this approach because it provides a greater return to the research dollar. Consultants also look for general lessons, since these can be applied to new assignments at little marginal cost (Szanton, 1981). Policy makers, however, are not interested in generalizations - they want answers to the specific problems they face, even though such 'small' problems may not attract the interest of researchers.

Finally, the easiest kind of policy-oriented research is program evaluation. Policy makers are generally more interested in forward-looking research, however. Evaluations may actually be counterproductive by provoking a defensive reaction from the object of study (Szanton, 1981).

5. RESEARCH UTILIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The wealth of material on research utilization in the US is in contrast to its paucity in developing countries. This paper attempts to glean from the former literature generalizations applicable to at least some developing country situations. However, a number of provisos should be made. First and most obviously, the degree of openness in the political system in most LDC's (both openness to influence by the electorate and researchers, and openness to investigation) is more limited than in the US. However, in those cases where researchers are permitted to express their views on policy issues, the suggestions made subsequently about increasing the likelihood of utilization are applicable. In some countries, the probability may increase from 40 to 80%, in others from 4 to 8%, but the principle is the same.

Second, data are scarcer and less reliable in LDCs. This will make 'quick and dirty' policy analysis more difficult and may lead researchers either into basic data collection or into data-free theory and modelling.

Third, in many LDCs, interest groups are less articulated than they are in industrialized countries and the demand for policy analysis from non-government clients is likely to be weaker.

Fourth, while the overt role of domestic interest groups may be weak or repressed, the influence of external agencies like the IMF over policy making is far greater than in any developed country. However, this 'policy dialogue' may actually serve to increase government demand for research, as ammunition needed in negotiation.

Fifth, in those societies where politics is highly ideological, researchers and research institutions tend to be similarly divided, often with explicit partisan affiliations. The process by which research influences policy resembles a lottery: a researcher can hit the jackpot if his or her party achieves power, but may then be quite marginalized during succeeding regimes. This phenomenon is common in Latin America.

Sixth, cabinet ministers in LDC's often tend to be more technically competent for their portfolios than their counterparts in North America or Britain. In Canada, for example, ministers often hold very different portfolios during their careers and rely on their staff for technical expertise. In Latin America, it is not unusual for a sectoral minister to hold a PhD in the relevant discipline and thus be in a better position to make independent assessments of information³.

Similarly, casual observation suggests that cabinet ministers in some developing countries (again, Latin America provides the greatest number of observations) come from a wider variety of professional backgrounds than those in North America, where lawyers and businessmen predominate. One might expect the lesser weight of lawyers might make developing countries less prone to regulatory solutions, though the results do not seem to bear this out.

Seventh, decision-making tends to be highly centralized, placing heavy burdens on a few key individuals.

Eighth, administrative capacity for implementation is weaker, so the practical implications of any recommendation are critical.

Finally, it has been observed that the distinction between the formulation and implementation of a policy may be quite difficult in developing countries (Fine, 1990). Particularly in negotiations with external agencies, an apparent agreement on a policy may be nothing more than the avoidance of overt disagreement. Only after funding is in place do the hard decisions start to be taken. As the effects of the policy change become visible, resistance mounts, involving conflicts among a larger number of actors at different levels and in different agencies (Thomas and Grindle, 1990). This suggests that recommendations aimed simply at defining a desirable policy are unlikely to be effective; only if they are pursued throughout the implementation process will they stand a chance of success.

6. GUIDELINES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF RESEARCH UTILIZATION

Many authors have made suggestions about the design and dissemination of social science research with the intention of increasing the likelihood of its utilization. Some authors have discussed the conditions under which utilization is most likely to occur; others have gone further

in providing quite specific recommendations. Many of these flow logically from the diagnoses presented in previous sections of this paper.

Weiss and Bucavalas (1977) found, somewhat counter-intuitively, that the quality of the research, including the reliability of its methodology, did have an important bearing on its credibility and impact. They also found that research that challenged existing assumptions and ways of doing things was not necessarily rejected and was often highly valued.

credibility and impact. They also found that research that challenged existing assumptions and ways of doing things was not necessarily rejected and was often highly valued.

Faulhaber and Baumol (1988) looked specifically at the conditions under which economic research is likely to be utilized. The adoption of economic methods or recommendations was mostly likely in the following circumstances:

- 1) when they pertained to critical future decisions (e.g. forecasting techniques useful for investment in the stock market).
- 2) in situations where competitive pressures are strong, and there are pressures as well as incentives to innovate.
- 3) when a technique provides an accurate signalling function (e.g. a forecast that is not necessarily based on a correct diagnosis of underlying causes, but which itself influences expectations and behaviour).
- 4) when an agency or firm is highly accountable and must justify the decisions it takes.
- 5) when recommendations take into account their effects on income distribution.

A number of authors have gone a step further and provided recommendations for the design and conduct of research. Szanton's (1981) studies of urban policy research in the US provided the following conclusions:

- 1) Avoid explicit evaluations. Clients are more likely to respond to positive suggestions for change than to criticism of past performance.
- 2) Give the client credit for successful innovations; he will certainly have to take the blame for failures.
- 3) Don't try to develop complex methods on the job; stick to simple, tried and true ones. These are less risky and more comprehensible to the client.
- 4) Try an experimental or pilot project to test a recommendation before proceeding to full-blown implementation.
- 5) Aim for situation-specific solutions, not generalizable laws. Good solutions will eventually catch on.

Verdier's (1984) paper is directed to would-be advisors to US congressmen. His ten recommendations appear sensible for policy advisers in most situations.

- 1) Learn about the history of the issue. By researching previous arguments, the analyst can identify key interest groups, areas of disagreement and data gaps, as well as changes in context that may influence future bargaining.
- 2) Find out who will be making the decision. Target the recommendations to those groups and present them in a form appropriate to the audience.
- 3) Timing is critical. Recommendations should be presented when they are most likely to receive attention. Generally, it is best to get into the debate early before positions harden.
- 4) Learn everyone's interests and arguments.
- 5) It's OK to think like an economist but don't write like one. Emphasize the decision at hand, the underlying problem, and options to solve it. Minimize methodology, jargon and equations.
- 6) Keep it simple. Where it is essential to explain complex features of an issue, illustrate them simply, using examples where possible.
- 7) Policy makers care more about distribution than efficiency. Explain what groups will be affected by the proposed measures, avoiding general references to 'welfare losses for the economy'.
- 8) Take implementation and administration into account. Don't propose measures that are technically optimal but too complex or costly for an agency to administer.
- 9) Emphasize a few crucial and striking numbers. Use statistics that emphasize the number of people affected, rather than aggregate dollar figures.
- 10) Read the newspapers. More generally, try to gain access to the same sources of general information as the policy maker, since these sources influence their perceptions.

Similarly, Leman and Nelson (1981) provide 'ten commandments for policy economists'. Those that do not duplicate Verdier's are:

- 1) Be economical about the use of economics. Apply economic analysis only to problems where it is relevant. Emphasize basic economic principles.
- 2) Discount for political demand. If the first-best solution is infeasible push for the second-best and make it as good as possible.

- 3) Dare to be quick and dirty. Partial analysis is better than none.

7. CLIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH BROKERS

Some authors who stress policy impact have gone farther than this and propose the development of a distinct type of inquiry: policy analysis. Behn (1981, p. 200) defined this activity as follows:

the examination of a particular policy problem in an effort to determine what the government should do; usually but not always, it is prepared for a particular policy maker who wants to make, has to make, or is able to make a specific decision (or take a specific action) about the policy problem.

Policy analysis is action-oriented, aiming to produce specific changes and providing suggestions not only on the content of the change but also on how to achieve it. Assessments of political feasibility play an important role. Theoretical innovation, methodological rigour and primary data collection are downplayed, but the need to deal with political aspects adds different complexities. The challenges of conventional social science research and policy analysis are different; each style will appeal to different temperaments and many would argue that policy analysis is not a second best. As Behn (1985, p. 432) says, "many prefer the chess of policy analysis to the checkers of social science".

In Behn's definition, the essential difference between a researcher and a policy analyst is that the latter has a particular user in mind for the research product and previous contact with the user. ("If you don't have a client, you're not doing policy analysis": Behn, 1985, p. 428.) This view is controversial. If the implication is that the client must be situated within government, it is highly restrictive and eliminates much focused, applied research that is appropriately critical of government. At the least, one could argue that research carried out for non-government clients should be considered policy analysis. At most, one could argue that economists traditionally view society as a whole as their client when pointing out various inefficiencies, and that some see their role as defending the interests of unorganized but disadvantaged elements of the population. Research carried out in these circumstances, if it provides specific policy recommendations, might also be considered policy analysis. A better term for the approach advocated by Behn might be 'client-oriented research'.

An alternative or supplement to the specialized policy analyst is the research broker who, instead of providing policy advice himself, acts as an intermediary between policy makers and the research community. The broker responds to a client's needs by seeking out needed information (or a researcher who could provide it); synthesizing and condensing information; and providing technical assistance to help the client interpret the data (Davis and Salasin, 1978).

This role would be a difficult one to say the least. Brokers might be liable to the 'shoot the messenger' syndrome and could be used as convenient scapegoats for policy failures. They

might also be pressured to suppress embarrassing reports and to tell clients what they want to hear (Sundquist, 1978).

The precarious nature of the broker's existence has led some observers to doubt the feasibility of such an approach. The broker is an idea "off-touted and rarely instituted" (Weiss, 1978, p. 70); there are few cases to empirically evaluate. Some experimentation with this promising but risky idea would probably be useful. One could reduce the vulnerability of the position by having the broker funded by and perhaps reporting to an external funding agency; the advantage of the broker's greater autonomy might well outweigh the loss of commitment by policy makers to use a service they are not paying for.

In practice, the main limiting factor may be the availability of suitable people to play the broker's role. The combination of technical skills, diplomacy, entrepreneurship and relative risk-indifference calls for an exceptional individual.

8. CRITICISMS OF CLIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH

The client-oriented approach to utilization has a number of deficiencies. At the empirical level, it simply has not worked well. The great wave of studies surveyed in this paper were done largely to find out why such an enormous investment in policy-oriented research had been so rarely utilized. It is clear from Section 2 and 3 that the ways in which policy makers and researchers analyze information and make decisions are fundamentally different in many respects. It is not particularly useful to deny this problem and exhort researchers to 'try harder'

Some measures can certainly be taken to reduce the gap. The various guidelines cited earlier are not unhelpful. They are limited, however, by the need to apply them in varying circumstances. Most of those listed earlier could just as easily been phrased as their opposites. For example:

1. Make use of pilot projects before moving to full scale.
vs..
'Seize the moment'. Go straight to implementation while the opportunity exists, including a monitoring and evaluation component. You may not get another chance.
2. Be prepared to sell your proposal, from early discussion through to implementation. (Except in circumstances where your credibility will be greater if you are seen as detached.)
3. Find out who's making a decision and target your results. (Except when it is a non-decision, resulting from unconscious, uncoordinated actions.)

Clearly, what is needed is not more detailed lists of highly specific 'commandments', but the ability to make good judgements in specific and sometimes unique circumstances.

At a more philosophical level, there are other problems with client-oriented research. Selecting the right client is obviously a critical decision, but how do you do it when you don't know in advance what results you will come up with? (see Section 2). If the client is an individual, how do you know that he or she will be in the same post when the research is completed?

More fundamentally, how legitimate are the interests of any single client? Any given client is likely to have a partial view of its own needs, let alone those of society, and a weak understanding of the broader repercussions of satisfying those demands. Farmers may want more subsidies, cheaper credit or higher prices, but they are unlikely to calculate the effects on the fiscal deficit, farm employment, or inflation. Client-oriented research does not create an awareness of those conflicts, or an understanding of the broader social system and the legitimacy and interdependence of various interests within it.

The question of time lags is probably more serious than the literature implies. The problems are not only the mechanical ones of coordination, but relate to the setting of research priorities. Except for extremely narrow topics, the research process is lengthy, while the demands of clients are immediate. Furthermore, the crises clients face are frequently the result of previous errors or of trends sent in motion some time ago, but whose effects are felt only now⁴. A suitable slogan to illustrate the danger of this approach might be "Client-oriented research: tomorrow's solutions for yesterday's problems".

9. ALTERNATIVE USES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

So far this paper has been relatively pessimistic about the utilization of social science research. The remainder of the paper is more optimistic. It contends that many of the negative assessments of research impact are based on a mis-specification of 'impact': using a broader definition, the utilization of social science research has in fact been considerable.

The most frequent and most important way in which social science research actually affects policy seems to be through its effect, often slow and cumulative, on widely-used concepts and methods. This was the principal finding of a massive 1975 study of research utilization in the United States (reported in Weiss, 1978) and the observation seems to be more broadly applicable. The contribution of social science research is not so much in proposing specific solutions to already well-defined problems, but rather in defining the problems and providing an array of methods with which to analyse them. These can be extremely important contributions. "Determining what issues are discussed in the policy making process may be the single most powerful political act" (Seekins and Fawcett, 1986).

Several terms have been coined to describe this more diffuse model of research utilization, in contrast to the highly focused, client-oriented approach described earlier. Pelz (1978) refers to conceptual vs. instrumental research; Weiss (1977) to enlightenment vs. social engineering; and Rich (1977) to knowledge for understanding vs. knowledge for action (summarized in Snell, 1983).

Problem definition can take many forms. It can consist of detecting or imposing a pattern on data, for example, a trend toward worsening income distribution (Rein and White, 1977). As Weiss (1978, p. 31) points out, it can focus attention and "help to turn what were non-problems or private problems into policy issues (such as child abuse), help to convert existing policy issues into non-problems (e.g. marijuana use), (or) drastically revise the way that a society thinks about issues (e.g. acceptable rates of unemployment)". In developing countries, changing approaches to research on the informal sector have had a major influence on how that phenomenon has been viewed over the last twenty years. Once seen as an embarrassing symptom of backwardness to be eradicated, research led to a greater acceptance of the informal sector as legitimate, and more recently through de Soto's (1987) work, as a positive force for development.

In fact, it could be argued that the most significant contribution of social science research is at the most general level, in the generation of ideas and ideologies. History shows that ideas can be very powerful. The writings of Raul Prebisch had a tremendous influence on Latin American policy makers and led directly to the wave of import substitution that transformed the continent's economic structure in the fifties and sixties. The subsequent implementation of conservative policies had equally far-reaching effects and was also strongly influenced by the intellectual currents of the day. In both cases, ideas took root in an environment and a time when policy makers were receptive to them.

All of these approaches to problem definition contribute to what Verdier (1984) calls 'structuring the terms of the debate'. This can include setting the agenda (for example, predicting long term trends that will eventually require the attention of policy makers or putting forward specific problems for discussion) and subsequently, injecting into that debate certain concepts and methods used in social science. Concepts like 'marginalization' made their way into policy discussion from social science literature; so did analytical methods for appraisal and evaluation.

10. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH FUNDING AGENCIES

What does all this imply for agencies financing research in developing countries?

First, one should recognize that the likelihood of utilization of any kind of research (social or technical, instrumental or conceptual) is quite small. Furthermore, while the impact of instrumental research is limited it is highly identifiable; the impact of new concepts and problem identification is far-reaching but difficult to attribute. Furthermore, there are rarely total victories or losses in any policy arena and policies are frequently reversed or eroded with changes in personnel or circumstance. In some areas, such as tax reform, continuous revision rather than once-and-for-all change seems to be the rule (e.g. Perry and Cardenas, 1986). This also complicates the identification of research impact: what appears to be a strong impact in the short run may be eroded in the long run, while basic research which illuminates certain constant relationships may be drawn on years later to support or justify a policy change.

An approach which creates the conditions for both kinds of impact is desirable. This could involve a portfolio approach, financing a variety of projects, each intended to produce a different type of impact. Alternatively, it is possible to finance long term research programs from which both conceptual and instrumental impacts can be derived.

The content of such research should be such that it creates an understanding of basic behavioural relationships and a thorough knowledge of existing data and data sources. Research agenda that lead to such knowledge and that deal with long-term issues that have short-term implications can be tapped to provide short-term policy advice. An example is a multi-year research program financed by IDRC in Latin America since 1983, examining savings and investment behaviour and the functioning of financial markets⁵. Knowledge gained through this research has frequently been applied in policy recommendations related to management of inflation, capital flight, and wage and price policies.

Similarly, a multi-phase network on debt bargaining⁶ has yielded both 'instrumental' impact (progress in the adoption of recommendations about provisioning requirements for commercial banks) and 'conceptual' impact (by reinforcing general principles about cross-conditionality, no net transfers by least developed countries and so on). In the former case, it is relatively easy to trace a policy change back to a specific recommendation and to claim credit for it. In the latter, the researchers contribute to an ongoing debate; their contribution is partial and less identifiable. In the long run, however, the acceptance of broad principles may have greater effect on the debt problem. Both types of impact are valuable, so we need an approach that does not rule out one or the other *a priori*. While short term impacts can be derived from long term research programs, conceptual innovations rarely result from highly specific, client-oriented projects. It is this asymmetry which makes the case for program support a powerful one.

The literature on policy analysis also gives some suggestions about research approaches that are most likely to influence policy. For example, traditional economics is probably not adequate. Something like the style of policy analysis advocated by Richard Behn is probably more suitable, without the single-client orientation.

Many of the limitations of economics could be mitigated by paying attention to factors which affect the feasibility of implementation. One of the traditional role of economics in identifying specific inefficiencies, their costs, and who pays them, should receive more emphasis. This need not imply that quantitative economic criteria are overriding, but that the costs of tradeoffs, where estimable, are made explicit. For example, countries may deliberately choose to forego the putative efficiency benefits of trade liberalization in return for greater cultural or political autonomy. It helps in making such a decision, however, to know if the price of such autonomy is 2% of GDP or 20%.

In addition, economists should extend their analysis into the implementation phase. In making policy recommendations, they should not stop at recommending the first-best technical solution, but rather present a variety of ranked options, indicating the efficiency and

distributional consequences of each. Who are the winners and losers in each scenario? It may be possible to design instruments to compensate the losers (rather than simply saying that efficiency gains will be sufficient that they could, in theory, be compensated). It may also be possible to map out alternative sequences of policy implementation, so that the introduction of measures in sequence progressively neutralizes opponents and strengthens supporters. Improvements in modelling and computer techniques are making this increasingly feasible.

This style of research is not common, and there may be a need for specific graduate training to meet this need. Since researchers comfortable with interdisciplinary methods are scarce, there may at times be a need for multidisciplinary teams from economics, political science and/or public administration. This approach also requires knowledge of the history and evolution of policy issues and familiarity with the institutional context and decision-making process of government. These cannot be acquired through short-term projects done by individuals; the earlier recommendation of greater reliance on program grants is thus reinforced.

Another process which needs some rethinking is the setting of research agenda. There is currently a fixation on the part of policy makers and donors with problem solving. This is understandable, but we often forget that there are other ways of dealing with problems, principally by avoiding them in the first place. Too often 'problem-oriented research' means trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together. One of the most important roles of research is to alert policy makers and others to incipient trends, so that they can take appropriate action before it is too late. Those trends can contain opportunities as well as dangers. It can be argued that one of the reasons the Asian NIC's have done well, at a time when others have done poorly, is that they have anticipated problems and taken advantage of opportunities, rather than simply responding to crises.

Donors have an important role to play in supporting theoretical research, though they are often reluctant to do so. They should recognize that the distinction between "theoretical" and "empirical" is in no sense equivalent to "useless" and "useful". Theoretical research can be extremely useful. A plausible, verifiable theory about how peasants respond to increases in crop prices, or savings to changes in interest rates is of obvious relevance to poverty and can be extremely useful. On the other hand, the collection of masses of data on an irrelevant topic benefits no one except computer manufacturers. The aim should be to support practical, applicable research, be it theoretical or empirical, rather than applied research per se.

It is sometimes argued that donors should prefer to support government agencies rather than universities or private centres, in order to increase the likelihood of impact. The reverse also could be argued: that non-government research centres may have better trained people with more time for research, are less likely to have their findings 'smothered' and less prone to shifting their stance with the government of the day.

Neither generalization is likely to be robust. Policy impact can best be achieved by adapting the process of consultation to local circumstances. Often this consists of the formation of teams of researchers from government and academia; formation of inter-institutional steering

committees (to provide direction for university research); frequent consultations and seminars with policy makers; training of government officials by academics; and so on. The flexible application of mechanisms such as these is likely a more effective means of increasing the probability of utilization than a priori decisions about institutional affiliation.

Whatever kinds of institutions and mechanisms are supported, greater attention should go to dissemination. Donors should be prepared to pay the costs of those 'frills' which enhance the quality and utilization of research: training, networking, replication of studies, and dissemination of results through conferences, books, working papers, abstracts and the like. The familiar 'project cycle' syndrome must also be broken, whereby researchers have an interest in finishing a project quickly in order to get on to the next income-earning activity, while donors want to finish it in order to close the books and begin the job of spending next year's budget. Follow-up activities which refine, repackage and disseminate results to different audiences should be seen as legitimate and important, often more so than new data collection exercises. The various 'commandments' in Section 6 may be useful to researchers making their first forays into policy advice, and the mechanism of a 'research broker' is worth experimenting with.

In general, the literature should caution donors against excessive risk-aversion or emphasis on purely instrumental research. This is at least as true for developing countries as for developed ones. Particularly important is the role of research that detects and analyzes trends (e.g. the implications of new materials and technologies for primary commodity exporters; developments in global financial markets; issues likely to arise in global negotiation over climate change).

Also important is the contribution of research to problem definition. Over the last decade, there has been a wave of interest in increasing the role of the market. This has complicated the role of policy analysis, since it is increasingly difficult to distinguish ends from means. Many changes that seem most appropriately to be viewed as means (e.g. privatization) have come to be seen as ends in themselves. In such conditions, the fundamental role of research in defining problems and setting the terms of the debate becomes even more crucial.

NOTES

1. As Hartle (1979) puts it, "[Cabinet] ministers are like undertakers: they are paid to disguise what everyone knows to be painfully true".
2. It is thus a mis-specification to refer to academic research as 'supply-driven'; it simply responds to a different set of demands and incentives than client-oriented research.
3. This underscores the importance of de Pablo's (1988) advice to would-be Ministers of the Economy: "Never assume that the failures of your predecessors were the result of incompetence".
4. This problem is even more severe for technology-oriented research than policy research, since lead times in the former tend to be even longer (Lipton, 1989).
5. The participating research centres in this program are FEDESARROLLO (Colombia), PUC (Rio de Janeiro), CEDES (Argentina), CIEPLAN (Chile), Universidad Catolica (Bolivia). See Ahorro y Inversion en Latinoamerica, IDRC: MR207s, Ottawa, 1988.
6. S. Griffith-Jones, ed. Managing World Debt. (Wheatsheaf, 1988).

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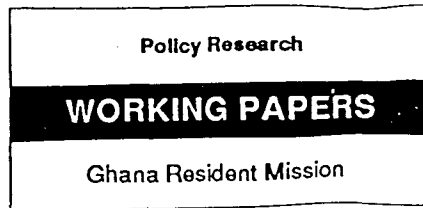
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The Links between Economic Policy and Research

Three Examples from Ghana and Some General Thoughts

Ravi Kanbur

For research to reach policymakers and be useful to them, it should be as country-specific and policy-specific as possible. It should be presented in short, pithy summaries that policymakers and their top advisors can understand. Most senior policymakers are unlikely to read anything longer than two pages.

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The Links Between Economic Policy and Research: Three Examples from Ghana and Some General Thoughts*

by

**Ravi Kanbur
The World Bank**

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1. Introduction

This paper is about how papers published in professional economic journals might (or might not) have an impact on economic policy. I have in mind, in particular, development economics journals such as the Journal of Development Economics, Journal of African Economies, World Development, or World Bank Economic Review. I write from the perspective of someone who has been in the policy trenches for the past year, as the World Bank's Resident Representative in Ghana, and as someone who has been involved in, and continues to be involved in, academic research and publication.

Rather than talk in very general terms about policy making and research, I will simply give three examples where I feel academic research has helped, or could help, me in formulating policy advice. The concluding section does, however, offer some general thoughts on fostering links between policy and research.

2. Reference Interest Rates on Lines of Credit

When I arrived in Ghana, one of the first issues to cross my desk was the slow disbursement of a line of credit in our Rural Finance Project. The line of credit is from the Bank of Ghana (BoG) to Participating Financial Institutions (PFI's) for onlending to the agricultural sector. The instruments available in the design of the project are (i) monitoring to ensure that onlending is indeed to agriculture and (ii) the interest rate charged by BoG to the PFI's. Notice, in particular, that the interest rate for onlent funds is not controlled.

The interest rate to the PFI's was based on a formula (also part of the original design), which took the interest rate on 180-day deposits minus 2%. The rate was adjusted every six months. The problem we faced was that the line of credit was not being used because the interest rate thrown up by the formula was too high to induce PFI's to come in and borrow in order to onlend. This was only partly because twice yearly adjustments were too infrequent in a period of rapidly declining interest rates (as was the case at that time). So, what formula ought to be used?

The professional literature on credit markets, for example the special issue (September 1990) of the World Bank Economic Review on this topic, helped in thinking through the issues involved. It should be stated, however, that I did not question the basic objectives of the project, which were to ensure that credit got into the hands of those engaged in the agricultural sector, although the credit markets literature would help in addressing this question as well.

One possibility that the recent literature alerts us to is that of rationing in credit markets. Even if there is excess demand for credit at the going interest rate, price adjustment may not take place because at a higher interest rate the composition of loan applicants may change adversely. Such adverse selection can explain non-market clearing equilibria. In such a setting, it seems clear that making an additional line of credit available to financial intermediaries, at the same cost as the current marginal cost of funds to them, will alleviate the credit rationing and achieve the objective of getting credit into the hands of those who did not previously get any. The right formula for the interest rate to the PFI's seems to be one which approximates the PFI's marginal cost of funds.

However, suppose that the market is characterized not by rationing because the interest rate is being used as an indirect screening mechanism (to use the terminology of Hoff and Stiglitz, 1990),

but by the use of direct screening mechanisms which identify and exclude high risk borrowers in the agricultural sector. Suppose that we are nevertheless determined to ensure that credit does flow from the PFI's to these borrowers, perhaps because we feel that part of the perceived risk by the PFI's will be removed once they start interacting with these traditionally excluded borrowers, or that once these borrowers acquire credit and invest, a virtuous circle will set in. Then it seems clear that a subsidy will be needed for the PFI's, the exact extent of which will depend on what sort of a spread they will demand in order to lend to the target group. In this case the formula should use the marginal cost of funds to the PFI's as a base, and then subtract a certain amount (say 2%) to determine the lending rate from the BoG to the PFI's, on condition that onlending from the PFI's will be monitored to ensure that it is indeed to the target group (otherwise the subsidy is a straightforward transfer of rent to the PFI's).

In the case of Ghana, the consensus is that the second of the two settings described above obtains. The "reference interest rate" formula is thus clear in principle. Of course, operationalising this in practice is not easy. If all PFI's were identical we could simply identify the marginal cost of funds. But in reality there is a range of PFI's, some of which rely primarily on savings deposits, while others take in time deposits. The clientele is segmented as between rural and urban banks. In principle, we could segment the PFI's into different categories, but the project design did not allow for this. So, how to calculate the marginal cost of funds? One operational answer is to take a weighted average of interest rates offered on various types of deposits by the range of PFI's, the weights being the proportion of all deposits accounted for by each type (i.e. to estimate the average cost of funds). But the formula needs to be monitorable and easily implementable, and information on deposit shares is not easily and openly available. Information on interest rates is indeed available, so that finally, practically, it was decided to take a simple average of the highest time deposit rate and the lowest savings deposit rate. Even this can be justified, it seems to me, on the principle of insufficient reason, since what we are really after is the

interest rate on the marginal source of funds for the PFI's, and we cannot easily find out which is the marginal source and it can in any case change over time and across PFI's.

2. The Dutch Disease Literature

Aid plays a major role in Ghana's economy. In recent years aid flows have been running at 7 to 8 per cent of GDP. In a (now) largely liberalized foreign exchange market, the implications of this aid for different sectors needs to be thought through. Clearly, the Dutch disease literature has been of immense help. I have found particularly useful the article by Younger (1992), in developing a strong argument to convey to policy makers in favour of larger budget surpluses.

Younger (1992) summarizes the issue as follows:

" 'Dutch Disease' refers to the problems that a booming export sector causes the rest of the economy. In Ghana's case, the boom sector is capital from aid (and perhaps repatriations). As this capital hits the economy, it is spent either on imports or domestic goods and services ... If the expenditure is on imports, then there is no direct effect on the money supply or aggregate demand in the economy: the balance of payments shows an off-setting current account deficit. But when the demand is for domestic goods and services, it creates problems for macroeconomic management. First the increase in aggregate demand for Ghanaian goods will begin to drive prices up, and this helps to explain the persistence of inflation in Ghana. At the same time, foreign exchange must be changed to cedis to make local purchases, so the money base increases."

The response to inflation and monetary expansion has been a tight credit policy, which explains to some extent the fact that private-sector investment has not taken off in Ghana. Since most of the aid flows to government, this beneficiary of the boom sector has crowded out the private sector in competition for scarce domestic resources. In particular, private investment has been crowded out. Younger's solution is that the government should run budget surpluses (perhaps with the aid of a VAT), over and above grant inflows to the treasury and should at the same time make more credit available to the private sector. "This move toward tighter fiscal policy together with looser monetary policy would promote more investment."

I have found Younger's (1992) analysis perceptive. Clearly, it draws on earlier academic literature (e.g. Corden and Neary, 1982), but its application to Ghana is novel and insightful. It helps to frame one's thinking in an area where muddle headedness is common. It has also provided me with analytic ammunition when I argue in favour of budgetary restraint.

4. Fuel Taxes and Income Distribution

Taxes on fuel are at centre stage in any discussion of Ghanaian public finances. In 1988 the petroleum tax accounted for 8.9% of total tax revenue, in 1991 and 1992 the figures were 24.7% and 23.4%. The 1993 budget, in response to large increases in recurrent expenditure, announced significant increases in petroleum taxation which led to an immediate 60% jump in prices at the petrol pump. It is expected that petroleum taxation will account of 38.0% of total tax revenue in 1993.

Such steep increases in petroleum product prices have generated considerable controversy, and many observers have based their critique on the assertion that fuel taxes are regressive. How true

is this assertion? In order to analyze this issue, we need information on fuel consumption patterns in the Ghanaian economy. We also need a conceptual framework from which to develop rules of thumb for assessing the "regressiveness" of alternative revenue raising measures.

Besley and Kanbur (1988) develop a theoretical framework for evaluating the poverty consequences of alternative commodity taxes. In the framework of modern public finance theory and using a recently suggested class of poverty measures by Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (1984), they derive rules for when shifting the pattern of commodity taxation will reduce poverty. It turns out that a crucial indicator is the fraction of total expenditure on a commodity accounted for by the poor. The intuitive reasoning is straightforward. A unit increase in excise taxation raises revenue in proportion to total consumption of the commodity in the economy (as a first order of approximation). By the same token, the income equivalent of utility loss to a poor household is proportional to its consumption of the commodity, so that if the poverty measure is additively separable in the appropriate sense, the impact on poverty will be proportional to the total expenditure on the commodity by the poor. It follows then that the efficacy of taxing a particular commodity is proportional to the ratio of the poverty impact to revenue raised - hence the indicator. Besley and Kanbur (1988) show the precise assumptions required and how the indicator can be generalized when these assumptions do not hold. But the indicator can serve as a useful and implementable benchmark in policy discussions. Notice, for example, that it is different from another indicator that is often used - the fraction of total expenditure of the poor accounted for by the commodity.

One important point that emerges from the above, and which is drilled into those trained in modern public finance theory, is to focus on "equal revenue" comparisons. The regressivity of a tax cannot be coherently discussed in isolation - the formulation always has to be one of relative regressivity

in raising the same revenue. There may, however, be some comparators that could be candidates for providing a general benchmark. One example is a proportional consumption tax. Here the indicator is clearly the fraction of total consumption of all commodities accounted for by the poor. Another example is a poll tax. Here the indicator is simply the head count ratio - the fraction of the population below the poverty line (see Besley and Kanbur, 1988).

Armed with this conceptual framework, we can now proceed to assess the regressivity, or otherwise, of petroleum taxation in Ghana. What we need to implement the rules of thumb is a "poverty profile" for Ghana, which gives us consumption patterns of the poor and of the economy as a whole. Such a poverty profile is presented in Boateng et al (1992), based on the Ghana Living Standards Survey. I will not here go into the details of the survey and how it was used to construct the poverty profile. Suffice it to say that the survey was conducted in 1987-88, and a poverty line of two thirds of mean per capita household consumption expenditure was used. On this basis, the survey showed that 36% of Ghanaians were below the poverty line, and their consumption was 16% of total consumption by all Ghanaians.

The following table presents consumption patterns for non-food items, among which are gasoline and kerosene - the key items in fuel taxation (Boateng et al, 1992, present much more information on poverty in Ghana, including consumption patterns for food). The table makes interesting reading. The poor account for only 0.2% of total expenditure on gasoline. There is a clearly a prima facie case for the progressivity of taxing gasoline. However, the poor account for 25.3% of the consumption of kerosene. The poverty consequences of taxing this commodity are clearly more severe. In relation to the two "universal" indicators we see that while taxing kerosene is still more progressive than a uniform poll tax, it is less progressive than a uniform consumption tax. Another issue that has

come up in the Ghanaian context is the possibility of taxing alcohol. For alcohol, tables in Boateng et al (1992), show that the poor account for 17.4% of total consumption, so that taxing it is more progressive than taxing gasoline, but less progressive than taxing kerosene.

One concern that has been raised about gasoline prices is that they will feed into transportation prices. From Table 1 we see that the transportation expenditures of the poor account for 13.3% of total transportation expenditure in Ghana. Thus the second round effects of a gasoline price increase will be more regressive than the first round effects, but overall the total effect is still likely to be less regressive than taxing kerosene or a poll tax, and about as regressive as a broad based consumption tax.

But these considerations of second round effects, with associated elasticities of substitution in consumption and production lead to an area where further research is needed. We have the methodology, as developed for example by Hughes (1987). What is needed is an application to Ghana, which takes into account the institutional peculiarities and makes best use of the limited information available. Such research, if it is done quickly and if it is kept focussed on the central policy issue will, I can assure you, find its way into the policy dialogue in Ghana instantly.

Table 1**Non-Food Expenditure Pattern by Poverty Group**

	Non-poor		Poor		All	
Cigarettes, Tobacco		3.6		7.1		4.2
Cola Nuts	72.7		27.3		100	
Soap		8.2		10.6		8.6
	80.0		20.0		100	
Charcoal or Wood		5.8		4.1		5.5
	88.1		11.9		100	
Other Fuel		4.1		7.3		4.6
(Kerosene etc)	74.7		25.3		100	
Gasoline		1.5		0.02		1.3
	99.8		0.2		100	
Shoes and Clothing		20.4		22.0		20.7
	82.8		17.2		100	
Public Transport		5.9		4.7		5.7
	86.7		13.3		100	
Medicines, Medical		5.5		6.3		5.7
Services	82.0		18.0		100	
Education		8.6		8.6		8.6
	83.9		16.1		100	
Housing		4.1		5.7		4.4
	78.9		21.1		100	
Utilities		2.9		1.4		2.6
	91.5		8.5		100	
Other		24.9		13.4		23.1
	90.6		9.4		100	
All		100.0		100.0		100.0
	83.9		16.1		100	

Note: in each cell the upper right entry represents the percentage of the column total, and the lower left entry the percentage of the row total.

5. Fostering Links Between Economic Policy and Research

I have given three specific examples where research published recently in professional journals helped or could help in formulating policy advice (and perhaps even policy making) in a fairly direct manner. This shows that the link between economic policy and research can be made. But just

because it can be made does not mean that it will be made. In many, if not most, cases, it seems to me that the occurrence of a linkage relies on chance and serendipity - in the case of the three examples noted here, it relies on the chance placing of a researcher in the policy making and advising trenches. But can we set up channels that will increase the probability of links being made, and of links continuing to be made, without necessarily requiring that all researchers take time off in policy making, and that all policy makers and advisers take time off to write technical pieces in the learned journals? Even as one says this it should become clear that the strategy is not really feasible, except in isolated cases. It may not even be desirable - after all, comparative advantage in research and in policy making should be exploited.

The transition and translation between research and policy is not easy for two reasons. First, the problems faced by policy makers are highly specific and time bound. The policy maker is, understandably, interested only in answers to particular questions - the general applicability or methodological novelty of the answer is not of interest to him or her. But, for the researcher, it is precisely the generality of the results, or of the methodological innovations in the analysis, that matters. This is what gets articles published - how many times have referees turned down a paper with the comment: "a competent exercise, but nothing new or exciting."? The three topics cited in this paper rely on publications that were accepted by the journals because they raised general issues or presented results for the first time. The fact that they were (or could be) useful in answering very specific policy questions in Ghana seems to be accidental. I am sure the editors of the journals in which they were published - and I was one of them - did not have this consideration in mind. So this seems to be a basic problem given by the very nature of research and publication on the one hand, and policy making on the other.

A solution to this problem seems to me to lie in appropriate dissemination. Before elaborating on this, let me pose the second of the reasons why the link between research and policy is

not easy. This is the language problem. If an Englishman does not speak French and a Frenchman English, they will never understand each other. Each will probably get frustrated, blame the other for lack of communication, probably insinuate lack of competence on the part of the other, etc. Policy makers and researchers do indeed, for the most part, speak a different language, and a whole lot of translation is needed. I am referring not just to the obvious fact that a highly technical paper in all its mathematical glory is unlikely to be understood by those in policy making - even those who once had that ability will lose it once they have been in policy making for a while, because survival and advancement in this area needs skills of a different type. I am referring also to the tendency of researchers to be comprehensive in their writings, leading to longish papers that are unlikely to be read by those in the policy making fraternity. A basic rule of thumb I have developed is that anything longer than two pages single space is unlikely to be read by the senior-most policy makers, the limit for the next most senior is four pages, then eight pages and sixteen pages. If it is longer than sixteen pages, do not bother to send it to the policy fraternity (unless it is prefaced by a two-page summary).

Given these twin problems of (i) difference in horizons - specificity and timeliness versus generality and thoroughness, and (ii) language - both length and style of written presentations, what can we do? In answering this question I do, however, want to acknowledge that from time to time, research does impinge on policy making through the "big idea", or through the slow accumulation of evidence from a myriad of experiences.

My first proposition is that the way professional research can help policy making is through highly country specific and policy specific studies which use the best practice methodological tools as well as a detailed institutional knowledge of the country at hand. If in conducting this analysis a new methodological innovation is introduced, this is all well and good (particularly for the researcher),

but it must be understood that this is not the primary objective. In fact, replicating a methodology first tried elsewhere is a perfectly acceptable exercise and should be rewarded, provided that a specific policy question has been addressed and resolved. The test of excellence here is the specificity of the question asked, the detail of the knowledge marshalled, the appropriateness of the tools used and, finally, the nature of the answer delivered. I feel that such excellence is under-rewarded in the economics profession, relative to contributions where methodological innovations are presented or generalizations are established. However, even if the incentives are right, researchers will have to look for such problems actively - they will not simply land on their desks.

My second proposition is that there has to be a continuous attempt at synthesizing the findings of professional research for the benefit of the policy community. This includes synthesizing the findings of highly country specific research of the type discussed above, or of latest developments in theory. Out of such synthesis can come the themes that could provide the broad framework for policy thinking even as the policy makers struggle with putting out the fires of the here and now.

My third proposition is that there is tremendous value to short, pithy, summaries of research of any of the types noted above, in a language and a style that policy makers and their top advisers can understand. While such expositions of "big themes" are useful, even more important are summaries of highly policy and country specific research which sets out the policy question addressed and the answer provided - the latter are not as common, especially in Africa.

These propositions are not new, of course, and I feel that with some modifications, the current system of academic research and publication could be made to serve their purpose. Specialized development journals like the ones mentioned in the introduction do indeed publish country specific

research. But perhaps more could be done in highlighting papers that address, and resolve, highly specific issues through best practice techniques. The development of professional journals at the national level (like recent attempts to revive the Bulletin of the Economic Society of Ghana) will also help in providing an additional outlet for country specific professional research.

On the second proposition, professional journals do go in for surveys from time to time, but so far as I am aware there is only one journal that focusses exclusively on synthesis of professional development economics research - the World Bank Research Observer. We could perhaps do with one or two more journals of this type. Finally, we need single or double page flysheets summarizing the results of research, particularly the country specific and policy specific variety. I know that I would be very happy to have a compendium of such flysheets for Ghana, in areas where I do not myself have special expertise. The production of such flysheets is not of course research, and researchers themselves may not be good at it (although they should try - they may get to like it). The reward structures in research do not encourage such "publication." Yet it is the final step in the link. Many institutions do already produce such policy briefs. But there is room for more, particularly for briefs directed to policy makers in Africa and dealing with very specific policy questions.

One final point. It should be apparent that I have put the onus on the research community to reach out and disseminate to the policy community. I think this is right. While there are some in the policy community who could or would want to interact directly with researchers, I think there is a fundamental asymmetry which makes this direction of linkage very difficult except in some isolated cases. It is up to researchers to learn the language of their policy counterparts, to understand policy problems as perceived by policy makers, to translate these into the language of research and analysis, to conduct the analysis using the best available techniques, and then to attempt to translate the findings back into the

language of policy makers. No single researcher can do all of this, but researchers as a whole should be able to. At least they should try to. Speaking for myself, I can assure them that it is a satisfying experience.

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II. Writing Scholarly Articles for Publications

DISSEMINATING RESEARCH RESULTS --

A GUIDE TO PUBLICATION IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

by

Anne Gordon Drabek

Many AERC researchers have expressed an interest in pursuing more actively the possibilities for publication of their research results apart from the mechanisms provided directly by AERC (the Research Paper series, etc.) This guide is an attempt to impart some of the insights gained by the author over ten years as Managing Editor of World Development and subsequent involvement with that and other publishing activities. It is written primarily from the perspective of an editor, but also as an advocate for authors. The suggestions are based on personal experience and will not be universally applicable. Hopefully, at a minimum, they will help AERC authors to ask the right questions, to begin to level the international academic playing field, and to gain confidence to try new and different outlets for their research.

A. Why publish in international journals?

This question should really be divided into two parts: why publish at all, and why in international journals. Since research is essentially the pursuit of knowledge, a natural outcome of that pursuit is the dissemination of its results so they can be added to the general stock of knowledge available to people engaged in the study of a particular field. Publication is one mechanism which can be utilized to achieve that dissemination. Publication also enhances the value of that knowledge. It is, therefore, an essential part of the research process.

Why is journal publication, and especially international journal publication, important? Some of the reasons might be:

- (1) to establish a researcher's credentials among his/her peers in the economics profession;
- (2) to achieve recognition for a specific contribution to the discipline;
- (3) to ensure recognition of "ownership" of a particular idea, theoretical advance, etc.;
- (4) to move up the professional ladder (the "publish or perish" syndrome);

(5) to influence policy decisions and thereby to contribute to the development process;

(6) to achieve personal gratification.

The approach taken to publication will depend, among other things, on an individual researcher's motivation. Clear understanding of the implications of each of these motivations will help to determine other decisions with regard to publication.

B. Deciding what to publish - fashioning articles from monographs

A journal article is a very different animal than a dissertation or a research monograph such as the AERC Research Reports. The following key points should be remembered in preparing an article for journal publication:

(1) Be sure that each article you write has a self-contained point to make; this point should be clearly stated in the purpose and conclusion.

(2) Each article should make clear what the author thinks is its new contribution to the subject under study.

(3) Place the article in context, whether theoretical, methodological, empirical or policy.

(4) Articles should present only that material which is necessary to make the key arguments and support the conclusions; they should not include extraneous information with a view to impressing editors with the breadth of the research.

(5) Do not rehash the same argument in several different articles to submit to several different journals -- editors generally recognize this for what it is and will not be sympathetically inclined.

(6) Wherever possible, arguments should be explained in words, not equations. The exception would be when submitting to journals which specialize, for example, in econometrics.

C. Deciding where to publish - choosing a journal

This decision is as important as determining what you want to say, and the two issues should be considered in tandem. Choosing a journal carefully will enhance the chances of your article being accepted and save you a lot of time and trouble later on.

(a) Look over back issues of a number of journals to get a feel for the content and style, the type of issues preferred, the disciplines emphasized, and so on. Most journals publish their 'aims and scope' in each issue [see the journal information in this handbook].

(2) If you are unsure, send the abstract (100-150 words) to the editor(s) of a couple of journals to get their initial reaction to the suitability of the topic and approach. Some editors, however, may decline to do this and will ask you to make the choice and submit the complete paper.

(3) Also keep in mind whether the topic of your article is time-bound, that is, whether it deals with a rapidly changing situation and needs to be published quickly to have any impact, or it will still be relevant if published within eighteen months. If it is of very current interest, try to choose a journal with a short publication lag as well as an interest in that type of article. A monthly journal is likely to have a shorter turnaround time than a quarterly or bi-annual one, but check with the editor to be sure.

(4) Think about the audience that you want your article to reach. In this sense, some familiarity with the nature of a particular journal's readership is helpful. For example, if your article is highly technical, you should choose a journal aimed at a specialist audience. If it deals with a topical policy issue, you should choose a journal which clearly targets the policy community. If your article is primarily important to an African or country-specific audience, a regional journal might be the best choice.

(5) If you write several articles, based for example on your dissertation, do not send them all to one editor and ask him/her to choose the most suitable one -- this is your responsibility. Remember that editors and reviewers do not like unnecessary work any more than anyone else!

D. Submitting an article -- what does an editor want to know?

(1) Most important, do not submit one article to more than one journal at a time. Your covering letter to the editor should state clearly that you are submitting this article only to that journal and will not submit it anywhere else until you have received their response.

(2) In general, do not submit more than one article to a journal at a time. This can send a signal to the editor that you lack confidence in the merit of your work, and want to ensure that at least one paper is accepted.

(3) It is useful in a covering letter to specify the article's relevance to the interests of the journal and to indicate, for example, if the article was sent to that journal because of specific articles published earlier.

(4) If your article relates directly to an earlier article by yourself or someone else published in a particular journal, send the new article first to that journal and let the editor know this is the case. Editors like to feel that their publication stimulates discussion and reaction.

(5) When dealing with an international journal on a topic that has international relevance or implications, try not to be parochial in your reference to the literature. The references and the introduction to the paper should indicate the extent to which you have been able to review both international and local research on the topic.

(6) Having said all of the above, a covering letter to the editor should not be longer than one page. Draw the editor's attention to the important points in as concise a manner as possible. Do not try to tell your life's story. Excessive self-promotion often has a negative impact.

(7) Again, in order to make a good first impression, follow each journal's specific instructions regarding submission procedures and numbers of copies required, etc.

E. Style guidelines -- how far should you go to accommodate them

(1) Check a recent copy of the journal to which you plan to submit for instructions about style guidelines. Incorporate as much as possible of a journal's style guidelines. Though this can always be remedied at a later stage (when a paper is revised for publication), some initial effort on this tends to make a good impression on the editor, especially because it indicates that the author is giving priority to this journal. However, do not redo the style each time you submit the same paper to another journal!!

(2) Most important, make certain that the paper is carefully and logically argued, with clearly marked sections which at a glance can give some idea of the structure and sequence of the argumentation.

(3) Though the substance of an article is of prime importance, the style certainly affects first impressions. Make sure that the paper is carefully proofread -- no typographical or grammatical errors, and no missing footnotes or references. Editors will definitely not be impressed by sloppiness.

(4) Articles should be no longer than absolutely necessary. For most topics, 25 double-spaced pages is sufficient. One possible exception is review articles which attempt to synthesize the existing literature on a particular topic. If that literature is extensive, such articles may need to be longer. Another exception is commissioned articles for which length restrictions may be more flexible.

F. The review process -- what to expect; when and how to react

Each journal's review process is different in terms of procedures, standards, time-frames, etc. Most journals send an article to two reviewers. Most request that reviews be submitted within four to eight weeks, but many reviewers take longer. Some journals have a single editor who makes decisions upon receipt of reviewers' comments; others have active editorial boards which must meet to make joint decisions. The review process rarely goes as quickly and smoothly as authors and editors would like.

Editors rely on reviewers' sense of professional responsibility and reciprocity to encourage them to assist with reviewing. Most are fairly conscientious, but often there are delays and reminders have to be sent. Editors generally ask reviewers to decline immediately if they know they are overcommitted, but sometimes reviewers hold onto papers longer than they should.

Although most journals ask reviewers to comment on specific aspects of an article's suitability for publication, the form and style in which reviewers choose to reply varies enormously. Some reply in one line, recommending acceptance or rejection. Others write five pages or more of comments. These are the extremes; most fall somewhere in between.

Most journals have, in recent years, adopted a policy of 'blind reviewing'. This means that reviewers are not told who the author(s) are; this is meant to prevent any kind of bias. For example, studies in the United States have shown that there was bias against women and junior-level academics of both sexes when the authors' names were known to reviewers. This may be unintentional, but 'blind reviewing' is generally accepted as a more objective approach.

However, it is also the case that despite blind reviewing, experienced reviewers can discern who the authors are by studying the references -- most authors refer to several of their own publications. Thus, it is not a bad idea to be economical in your choice of your own work referred to in your article!!

Some general hints for coping with the review process are:

(1) Authors should remember that theirs is not the only paper under consideration by a particular journal; some major journals have hundreds in process at any one time.

(2) When submitting an article, authors should not suggest potential reviewers to the editor. This will simply exclude those suggested from consideration and is unlikely to speed things up.

(3) Authors should try to restrain their impatience and not start writing or telephoning to the editor within a month or two of submission. As a rule, it is justifiable to inquire after three months, unless the editor had specifically promised a quicker turnaround.

(4) It is rare that papers are accepted for publication with no revisions at all. Thus, authors should expect to have to make at least some minor changes.

G. Revision -- the dialogue between editors and authors

The dialogue between editors and authors is particularly crucial once the reviews are in and the authors have seen the comments. It would be highly unusual for an editor to tell the author who the reviewers are. This information is generally treated as confidential unless the reviewers volunteer to tell the author themselves. Sometimes the authors may guess the reviewers' identity by virtue of the nature of their comments. However, in general, any discussion of the comments and subsequent revisions will be carried out between the editor and the author.

(1) Editors' style differs on this, but many editors will try to give an author the benefit of the doubt. They will take a constructive approach to communicating the comments with a view to helping the author make the necessary revisions if there is any chance of making the paper publishable. Editors generally consolidate the reviewers' comments into one set, or where there are conflicting views, the editor will give guidance to the author about which comments are essential to incorporate and which are a matter for the author's choice.

(2) However, authors should also try to read between the lines of the editor's reply (or at least not delude themselves) and make their own judgments about the advisability of resubmission.

(3) On the one hand, if a paper suffers from what appear to be fundamental flaws and is rejected by the editor, do not waste your time and his/hers in making cosmetic revisions for resubmission. On the other, authors should not necessarily be discouraged by what appear to be extensive revision requirements,

(4) Remember that neither editors nor reviewers are perfect!! They can and do make mistakes. So, if you disagree with a particular comment or set of comments which you feel are incorrect or unjust, you should not hesitate to question them. Write a letter to the editor responding to each point in turn -- if your arguments are effective, your point of view will be accepted. Sometimes, an editor will agree to send your paper to a third reviewer to mediate a disagreement. Usually, such situations are resolved by some kind of compromise.

(5) It is never helpful for authors to take an angry tone in replying to editors, just as it is not helpful for reviewers or editors to be unduly negative or insulting in their comments. Hopefully, the process is one governed by mutual respect among professional colleagues.

(6) It is often advisable to ask a friend or colleague to check your revisions to make sure you have dealt with all the relevant points. This may save time later on.

(7) When resubmitting a revised paper, make sure that you have followed all the stylistic guidelines for that particular journal. If the editor has not provided them, ask for them!

(8) A covering letter should accompany your revised paper upon resubmission. The letter should indicate how and where you have responded to each of the reviewers' points. This facilitates the editor's review of the revised (and hopefully final) draft.

(9) Unfortunately for the author, papers are not always accepted after revision. Where the author has not succeeded in clarifying arguments or has not responded adequately to discrepancies cited by the reviewers, the editor may decide to reject the paper.

(10) Editors may be willing to do some final rewriting or editing to polish papers, but on the whole, they should not be expected to implement major changes on your behalf.

H. Mission accomplished -- author responsibilities in the publication process

Once your article is accepted by a journal, usually the editor will send you a letter indicating the projected date and issue of publication. You may be asked to check the proofs of your article, especially if it is at all technical. When you receive the proofs, you should correct them immediately and return them to the person/address specified in the instructions. Make sure that you check proofs extremely carefully. Though

Journals almost always have a staff person check them, they cannot be expected to catch subtle errors. Having put in all the effort to get the paper published, you will certainly want it to be perfect!

I. Ethical issues

There are probably three major ethical issues which arise from time to time in the world of journal publishing. All three are extremely distressing for editors and embarrassing for authors (and sometimes illegal). As a professional, it is important to be aware of these and avoid them at all costs!!

(1) Never submit an article to more than one journal at a time. Editors, reviewers, and other journal staff spend a lot of time and effort processing an article. They do not like to discover that, in the meantime, the same article has been accepted for publication elsewhere.

(2) If you have published an article already, but wish to submit it for re-publication elsewhere, make sure that you inform the editor of this from the beginning. In many cases, editors will refuse to consider it. If the earlier publication has been a very local one with small circulation, they may agree to proceed. But it is crucial to be honest and explain the situation from the start.

(3) Make sure that all information and argumentation in your article is properly and fully sourced. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE -- that is, do not copy other authors' work and claim it as your own. This is both unprofessional and illegal.

If you are unsure about the ethics of a specific situation, the best thing to do is ask - your colleagues, the editor, or someone else fully conversant with normal procedures.

GOOD LUCK!!!

ECONOMICAL WRITING

DONALD McCLOSKEY*

Most people who write a lot, as do economists, have an amateurish attitude towards writing. Economists do not mind criticism of their facts or their formalisms, because they have been trained in these to take criticism, and to dish it out. Style in writing is another matter entirely. They regard criticism of their drafts the way a man unfamiliar with ideas regards criticism of his ideas: as an assault. The man in the street cherishes his notions about free trade because, says he, they are "just matters of opinion" which anyone is "entitled to believe in a free country." The man in the street and the economist at the typewriter view their intellectual habits to be on a par with their opinions on transubstantiation or their taste in ice cream.

The economic writer, therefore, cherishes his habits of style as matter God-given, or at the least highly personal. One cannot change one's body type or basic character, and it is offensive for some creep to criticize them:

Linus: What's this?

Lucy: This is something to help you be a better person next year . . . This is a list I made up of *all* your faults. [Exit]

Linus [reading, increasingly indignant]: Faults? You call these *faults*? These aren't faults! These are *character traits*!¹

Writing is supposed to be the same. The real professionals, such as journalists and poets, have learned to take advantage of brutal criticism of the writing in the same way economists have learned to take advantage of brutal criticism of their first order conditions. But the amateurs don't look at it that way. They react to hostile remarks about their graceless use of "not only . . . but also" the way they react to hostile remarks about their weight. Damn! That's who I am; lay off, you louse.

Consider, though, that professional musicians continue taking lessons and that Thomas Sargent takes a new math course each year. The mature and scholarly attitude would seem to be to suppress our injured pride, to admit that we all—you, I, and J. K. Galbraith—can use more instruction in writing.

*Department of Economics and of History, University of Iowa. Eleanor Birch, Thor Borchert, Ross Eckert, Anthony English, Clifford Geertz, Albert Hirschman, Linda K. Kerber, Charles Kindleberger, Meir Kohn, David Landes, much of the McCloskey family (Laurie, Helen, and Joanne), Joel Mokyr, Erin Newton, much of the Solow family (John, Barbara, and Robert), Richard Sutch, Donald Sutherland, Steven Webb, A. Wick, and Barbara Yerkes have favored me with comments. The paper originated a long time ago in a course for graduate students at the University of Chicago. I thank the students for their help. As usual, Margue Knoedel has been patient with my excessive number of drafts. The John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Advanced Study and the University of Iowa provided the financial security to write them.

1. As D. H. Lawrence wrote in 1915, "A book which is not a copy of other books has its construction, and what [Arnold Bennett] calls faults . . . I call characteristics." (quoted in Geoffrey Strickland, 1981, p. 9).

1.) *Writing Is the Economist's Trade*

It's a shame that no one tells the novices in a trade that writes a lot how important it is to write well. Non-economists have long complained, but there is little incentive to pay attention.² Most older economists shrug off their responsibility to instruct the young, with the dismal remark that the young will not pay attention anyway. Walter Salant did his part to help younger scholars learn the trade in a charming essay published a generation ago (1969) and J. K. Galbraith wrote more recently (1978) on "Writing, Typing and Economics." Occasionally an editor will receive and pass along to the author a report by a referee that criticizes style in more detail than "I found this difficult to read" or "There's a typo on p. 6." The editors themselves do not edit. At the least they might reveal to the young that rotten writing causes more articles to be rejected for publication than rotten *t*-statistics. Honest. Bad writing does not get read.

Graduate teachers, who are paid to do it, do not teach writing. In graduate school the young economist gets no instruction on how to do what he will spend the rest of his life doing. The graduate programs, which claim to show him how to teach, to do research, and to advise governments and businesses, in fact make a habit of discussing things slightly off the point. No graduate program gives courses telling directly how to do economics, and most do not trouble to offer much in the way of workshops under an experienced eye. The literature, too, is impoverished, offering little to read concerning the hard business at hand. Students are taught minor details in statistics when the hard business of econometrics is a specification search; they are taught minor details in mathematics when the hard business of mathematical economics is to make our ideas clear. They are taught nothing at all about the obscurity of elegant variation, the folly of acronyms, the vanity of five-dollar words, and the thoughtlessness of imposing a first draft on the reader. Yet the hard business of economic scholarship is to marshal ideas well. In this secret of the craft the master carpenter turns his back on the apprentice, to conceal the skill of cutting a board clean.

The reason for learning to cut it clean is that the skill is used a lot. The economist's task depends more on writing than on speaking (though this, too, is neglected), because writing is the cheapest way to reach a big audience. Economics depends much more on the mastery of speaking and writing than on the mastery of engineering mathematics and biological statistics usually touted as the master skills of the trade. Most of the economist's skills are verbal. An economist should be embarrassed to do such a large part of the craft inexpertly.

2.) *Writing Is Thinking*

The answer comes, "Oh, that's only style: after all, it's content that matters." The undergraduate, a barometer of invisible pressure in the intellectual world, will whine piteously about a grade of D+ awarded for bad

2. See Samuel T. Williamson (1947), for example.

writing: "Gee, you *knew* what I meant; my *ideas* were O.K.; it's just *style* you didn't like; that's *unfair*" (undergraduates speak in italics).

Two responses can be made. Adopt for the moment the strange prent that content and expression are separable. One response is then that a body who wants influence will want to express his content well. Bad writing, to repeat, does not get read. The only wretched prose that we literati must read is that from our gracious servants at the Internal Revenue Service. All other writers are on sufferance, competing minute-by-minute with other writers in an atomistic market for ideas. To put it less grandly, a writer who wants to keep his audience bears always in mind that at any moment it can get up and leave.

The influence of writing on science and policy deserves more attention than it gets. The history of ideas is filled with wide turns caused by "mere" lucidity and elegance of expression. Galileo's *Dialogo* succeeded because it was a Copernican tract (there were others) or because it contained much new evidence (it did not) but because it was a masterpiece of Italian prose. Poincaré's French and Einstein's German were no trivial elements in their influence. And of course the hypnotic influence that Keynes has exercised over modern economics is attributable in part to his grace and fluency in English.³

Of course the premise that content and expression are separable is wrong. The production function for scholarship cannot be written as the sum of two sub-functions, one producing "results" and the other "writing them up." The function is not separable. You do not learn the details of an argument until writing it up in detail, and in writing up the details you will often uncover a flaw in the fundamentals. Good thinking is non-tautological, accurate, symmetrical, relevant to the thoughts of the audience, concise yet usefully abstract, concise yet usefully full, and above all self-critical and honest. So too is good writing. People who write honestly and self-critically, trying to say what they mean, will often find that what passed for a truth when floating vaguely in the mind looks a lot like an error when Moore's Law hits the page. Better still, they will discover truths they didn't know they had. They will refine, for instance, their notion of an obstacle to trade by finding the precise word to describe it, or they will see the other side of a market by writing about it symmetrically. Writing resembles mathematics. If mathematics is a language, an instrument of communication, so too is language; mathematics, an instrument of thought.

3.) *Rules Can Help, But Bad Rules Hurt*

Like mathematics, writing can be learned. One hears it said that writing is a natural gift, a free lunch from the gods. This is a poor, lazy excuse for ignorance. To be sure, we cannot all become George Orwells or Robert

3. See, however, the hostile dissection of the style of a passage from Keynes in Graves Hodge (1943), pp. 332-340. It makes one wince.

Graveses, or even George Stiglers and Robert Solows. But everyone, top to bottom, can do better with a little effort. Elementary writing can be learned like elementary calculus. On the simplest level neither is inborn. Few people can prove fresh theorems in analysis, about as few as can write regularly for the *New Yorker*. Yet anyone can learn to take a first derivative, just as anyone can learn to delete a quarter of the words from a first draft. Like mathematics at the simplest level, good writing at the simplest level follows rules, algorithms for clarity and grace.

The rules, together with reflections that rules become silly if followed mechanically and that every rule can be broken for cause, have been written down in many scores of books on English style. Anyone who thinks about writing has favorites. I have three:

William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, NY: Macmillan, 1959 and later editions.

Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Reader Over Your Shoulder: A Handbook for Writers of English Prose*, NY: Macmillan, 1943 and later editions.

Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1981.

I'll pay cash money, coin of the realm, to have the externality of bad economic prose internalized. Any economist who reads them will receive one shiny quarter by return mail.⁴

The first correct rule is that many of the rules we carry around from Miss Jones' class in the eighth grade are wrong. True, sometimes Miss Jones had a point. Dangling participles *do* dangle. But her class, and the folk wisdom that reinforced it, did damage. "Never repeat the same word or phrase within three lines," said Miss Jones, and because the rule fit well at age 13 with our emerging verbosity we adopted it as the habit of a lifetime. Now we can't mention the "consumer" in one line without an itch to call it the "household" in the next and the "decisionmaker" in the next, leaving our readers in a fog of elegant variation. "Never say 'I,'" said she, and we (and you and I) have drowned in "we's" since, suited less to mere economists than to kings, editors, and people with tapeworms. "Don't be common; emulate James Fenimore Cooper; writing well is writing swell," said she—more by the way she praised Harry Whimble and his fancy talk than by actual

4. There are others. Some that I know and admire are Donald Hall, *Writing Well*; Richard A. Lanham, *Revising Prose*; Jacques Barzun, *Simple and Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers*; part III of Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*; Paul R. Halmos, pp. 19–48 in Norman E. Steenrod, et al., *How to Write Mathematics*; Sir Ernest Gowers, *The Complete Plain Words*. Curiously, in German and especially in French, I am told, such books are rare. The French believe that grammatically and idiomatically written French automatically yields clarity and elegance, a theory one encounters in weak writers of English, too. The mere following of rules of grammar and idiom certainly cannot yield clear and elegant English, perhaps because of its immense vocabulary. Even in French, wordpoor though it is, one doubts that it could.

precept—and in later life we struggled to attain a splendidly dignified bureaucratese.

Miss Jones ruled also against our urge to freely split infinitives. H. W. Fowler, who wrote in 1926 an amusing book on the unpromising subject of *Modern English Usage*, knew how to handle her: "Those who neither know nor care [what a split infinitive is] are the vast majority, and are a happy folk, to be envied by most. . . . 'To really understand' comes readier to their lips and pens than 'really to understand'; they see no reason why they should not say it (small blame to them, seeing that reasons are not their critics' strong point)."⁵

Miss Jones made us feel guilty, too, about using a preposition to end a sentence with. Winston Churchill, a politician of note who wrote English well, knew how to handle her, and the editor who meddled with a preposition-ended sentence: "This is the sort of impertinence up with which I will not put." Worst of all Miss Jones fastened onto our impressionable minds the terrible, iterative rule of Jonesian arrangement: "Say what you're going to say; say it; say that you've said it." It is a big problem in economic prose nowadays, perhaps the biggest. Most drafts of papers in economics consist mostly of summary, outline, anticipation, announcement, repetition, and review.

One cannot, in other words, trust everyone who sets up as a teacher of English. It is sad, for instance, to see the clumsiness of some books on style by and for scientists. Robert A. Day, *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper* (1979), is such a case. He quotes one Justin Leonard: "The Ph.D. in science can make journal editors quite happy with plain, unadorned eighth-grade level composition." (Day, 1979, p.5) Day tells what this is: no split infinitives, no prepositions at the end of sentences, no metaphors. He does not appear to have read Darwin or Haldane, not to mention A. Smith or F. Y. Edgeworth.

4.) *Be Thou Clear*

The one genuine rule, a golden one, or at least good gold plate, is Be Clear: As Christopher Morley said, "The rule of clearness is not to write so that the reader can understand, but so that he cannot possibly misunderstand." Clarity is a social matter, not something to be decided unilaterally by the writer, because the reader like the consumer is sovereign. If she thinks something you write is unclear, then it is, by definition. There's no arguing. Karl Popper, the philosopher, wrote:

I . . . learned never to defend anything I had written against the accusation that it is not clear enough. If a conscientious reader finds a passage unclear, it has to be rewritten. . . . I write, as it were, with somebody constantly looking over my shoulder and constantly pointing out to me passages which are not clear (Popper, 1976, p. 83).

5. Fowler, 1965 (second edition), pp. 579-580.

Clarity differs from precision, and the one is often purchased at the cost of the other. Much economic obscurity comes from an excessive precision that hides the main point among a dozen minor ones. To a request for more clarity an economist will often respond with more mind-numbing details about his axioms or his diagrams, remarking proudly that "I believe in saying *exactly* what I mean." Though admirable the sentiment is naive. One cannot say *exactly* what one means, for this life has not time. A writer who tries to make the time will lose his readers.

In reading bad writing you must reread and stop and reread and stop. Repeatedly you are distracted from the point, made to ask half-conscious little questions about what the subject is now, what the connection might be with the subject a moment ago, why the words differ, why a figure of rhetoric that raised certain expectations did not fulfill the expectations. Bad writing makes slow reading. The practice of Graves and Hodge in compiling the data for their principles of Clear and Graceful Expression was "to glance at every book or paper we found lying about and, whenever our reading pace was checked by some difficulty of expression, to note the cause" (Graves and Hodge, 1943, p. 127). (The sentence itself, incidentally, illustrates one rule for speedy reading on which they could have done better: Do Not Overpunctuate.)

E. D. Hirsch, Jr. calls it readability, and marshals statistics and experiments to show how good writing achieves it.⁶ Someone said that in most prose the reader is in trouble more than half the time. You can see the truth in this by watching your own troubles in reading. If you get in too much trouble you give up. Lack of clarity offends good taste, to be sure; it is vulgar to be obscure. But more important it is selfish and confusing and inefficient. The writer is imposing a deadweight burden of slowness. The writer is wasting your time. Up with this you need not put.

To be sure, easy reading like easy listening does not always make for good music. It is not too much to ask of the reader that he pay attention, which will require sometimes a deliberate slowing of the pace, a more complex way of speaking, even an occasional deliberate ambiguity. But more usually the slow pace, the complexity, and the ambiguity of economic prose arise from ignorance and carelessness, not from deliberate art. Very seldom would clearer writing in economics cost anything in art. When economic writers have finally reached the possibility curve between Clarity and Subtlety they can profitably begin to emulate Joyce or Eliot, trying for really splendid effects down at the Subtle end of the curve. But they've got some distance to go.

Telling someone who has not thought about it much to "Be Clear" is not much help. "It is as hard to write well as to be good." In the abstract the golden rule of writing helps about as much as the golden rule of other

6. See for example, p. 85f.

doings, of which it is a corollary. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Well, yes. But how?

5.) *The Detailed Rules Are Numerous*

The answer can be put in a long list of admonitions and prohibitions. An economist who has not thought about his writing since the eighth grade will be stunned by how many there are. Consider, though, how long the books are on econometrics or constrained maximization or even FORTRAN. It is not remarkable that the complexities of manipulating a natural language equal these. Comfort yourself with the reflection—itself a piece of advice—that most advice about writing is actually advice about rewriting. You need not hold the bulk of the rules in your mind from the start, unlike rules about programming. If the centipede thought too much about how to do it he could not walk. As long as there is time and room, you can revise, noting the spots where the pace of reading is checked by some difficulty or where the ear is offended by some noise.

6.) *The Rules Are Empirical*

The rules come from empirical observation. We know that George Orwell wrote well, that we seldom have difficulty understanding what Edmund Wilson was talking about, that E. B. White seldom took a false step. As Johnson said of Addison, so too of these: "He who would acquire a good style should devote his days and night to the study of Orwell, Wilson, White, Barzun, Thurber, Hemingway, Twain, Kipling, Porter, Woolf, and Wolfe." In modern economics, on a rather lower level, the list would include Akerlof, Arrow, Boulding, Bronfenbrenner, Buchanan, Caves, Fogel, Friedman, Haberler, Harberger, Hirschman, Hughes, Galbraith, Gerschenkron, Griliches, Gale Johnson, Harry Johnson, Kindleberger, Lebergott, Leijonhufvud, Olson, Robertson, Robinson, Rostow, Schelling, Solow, Stigler, Tobin, and Tullock. The diminishing returns even in this list is sharp. Even economists who take some pains with their style will overuse "we," the passive voice, and soporific latinisms. But one cannot define good style without a list.

Good style is what good writers do. If Orwell and his kind use double negatives, no amount of schoolmarm logic should stand in the way of its imitation. In matters of taste—and everything from the standard of proof in number theory to the standard of usage in split infinitives is a matter of taste—the only standard is the practice of recognizably excellent practitioners.

There is some social science, perhaps, in this. Rules about double negatives, say, are usually defended on grounds of "logic." One might as well defend the placement of the dinner fork on grounds of logic. One can't. Language like ceremony has a grammar, but not a logic, if "logic" means "able to be settled once and for all." Although the grammar of polite behavior at present makes us put the fork on the left and avoid using locutions like "You don't have no class," the grammar is from an olympian standpoint

arbitrary. It is not timeless truth. The fork could come to be put on the right and the double negative could become standard (as it is in, say, French) without violating the laws of physics.

Yet we are mortals, not olympians, and among us, right now, it matters. That social customs are "arbitrary" in the timeless, logical sense does not make them arbitrary (or even foolish) in the timebound, social sense. In particular, it matters if the Queen puts her fork on the right and George Orwell does not use double negatives; it matters even more if Archie Bunker puts his forks on the other side and his negatives in the sentence twice. The custom is then a signal, much as a skillful mathematical derivation (even when entirely lacking in point) is a signal of intelligence in economics. We do not wish to be classed with the Archie Bunkers, or with the mathematical illiterates. If we behave like them we will be.

This is not altogether a matter of snobbery, that is to say, mere invidious social distinction designed to push the underprivileged out of the gates.⁷ It is a signal, and has market value. Our reading is more efficient, if less equitable, if we sort by stylistic competence. The violation of social rules of clarity and grace signals incompetence. If double negatives begin to get used by writers who write well in other ways—who say true things, for instance, and say them plainly—then the double negative will lose its value as a signal of incompetence. Because the violations do in fact signal incompetence they are correlated with each other: it's a good bet that a writer who does not know how to express parallel ideas in parallel form, and does not care, will also not know how to avoid excessive summarization and anticipation; it is about as good a bet that he will not know how to think, and will not care.

What is more, many of the correlates of good and bad style are perfectly "objective," which is to say that lists of rules are not merely "one man's opinion." This is for two reasons. For one thing, as Hirsch and others have shown, the readability of writing can be shown to depend on measurable features of the psychology of reading. For another, beyond readability, the rules of taste are as definite as the rules of baseball. Competent players of the language game know them by heart. The competent writers, of course, write with competent readers in mind. The test of rules is excellent practice, and the test of practice is the sovereign reader.

7.) *Classical Rhetoric Guides Even the Economical Writer*

Essays are made from bunches of paragraphs, which are made from bunches of sentences, which are made from bunches of words. The rules about whole essays or paragraphs are most useful at the stage of first composition; the rules about sentences and words at the stage of final revision. Some apply everywhere: it is good to be brief in the whole essay and in the single word, during the midnight fever of composition and during the morning chill of revision. Brevity is the soul of clarity, too. Yet the rules of writing

7. But before dismissing snobbery entirely, though, see Aristides 1984.

can be stuffed if necessary into boxes by diminishing size from essay to word.

It is not so routine as this. Like advice on investing in stocks or on campaigning for Congress, if good advice on how to invent and arrange good economic ideas were easy to find we would all be Ronald Coases or Paul Samuelsons. This is why graduate programs are driven to teaching students how to be good readers of textbooks in theory or econometrics or history but do not teach them directly how to be first-rate economic scholars. If it were easy to teach students to be first-rate economic scholars there would be no second-rate economic scholars.

What is needed is some thinking about economic rhetoric. I do not mean by "rhetoric" a frill, or a device for deception, but its classic and correct meaning: the whole art of argument, the art, as Wayne Booth put it, "of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving those beliefs in shared discourse" (Booth, 1974, p. 59). The three important parts of classical rhetoric were Invention, Arrangement, and Style.

Invention, the framing of arguments worth listening to, is the business of economic theory and of empirical economics. They seem to be doing all right, though they have been impoverished by an unexamined official methodology (See McCloskey 1983).

Arrangement, too, is a part of economic rhetoric not much examined. A good deal of economic prose implies that the only proper arrangement of an empirical essay is Introduction, Outline of the Rest of the Paper, The Theory, The (Linear) Model, The Results, Suggestions for Future Research (since nothing ever works), and (again) Summary. One rarely sees experiments with alternative arrangements, such as dialogues or reports on the actual sequence of the author's discovery. Or at least one does not see them in print. In the seminar room, of course, the dialogue is the entire point, usually introduced by an apology reporting in sequence "how I actually came to this subject." Economists might try learning good Arrangement from their own behavior.

Robert Day's compendium of vulgar error, as cited, recommends of course a rigid arrangement for a scientific paper (Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion). The Arrangement is in fact common in many sciences, an obstacle to scientific communication. It does not tell what needs to be known—which experiments failed, what mathematics proved fruitless, why exactly the questions were asked in the way they were (see Peter Medawar, "Is the Scientific Paper a Fraud?" *Saturday Review*, August 1, 1964). The most important scientific communication therefore gets done face to face. The pity is that more is not done in print. Print is more intellectually democratic: one does not need to be at Cal Tech to read.

8.) *You Too Can Be Fluent*

The third branch of rhetoric, namely, style, is easier to teach. It begins with mere fluency. No economist, even while instructing the young, has yet said anything about fluency. Unlike writers of fiction, who delight in tales

of writer's block and prodigies of pace, professors are reticent about how they stay fluent. Maybe they just haven't been asked. Here is one true confession on the mechanics of the matter, of some use perhaps to beginners wishing fluency.

You will have done some research (this is known as "thinking") and are sitting down to write. Sitting down to write can be a problem, for it is right then that your subconscious, which detests the anxiety of filling up blank pieces of paper, suggests to you that it would be ever so much more fun to do the dishes or go get the mail. Sneak up on it and surprise it with the ancient recipe for success in intellectual pursuits: locate chair; apply rear end to it; locate writing implement; use it.⁸ Once planted at the desk, though, you will find your subconscious drawing on various reserves of strength to persuade you to stop: fear, boredom, the impulse to track down that trivial point by adjourning to the library.

The most troublesome distraction is taste. The trouble with developing good taste in writing is that you begin to find your stuff distasteful. This creates doubt. Waves of doubt—the conviction that everything you've done so far is rubbish—will wash over you from time to time. The only help is a cheerful faith that more work will raise even this rubbish up to your newly acquired standards. Once achieved, you can reraise the standards, and acquire doubt at a level of still better taste. Cheer and an irrational optimism are hard to teach but good to learn for any scholarly production.

The teachable trick is to get a first draft. Don't wait until the research is done to begin writing because writing, to repeat, is a way of thinking. Be writing all the time, working on a page or two here, a section there. Research *is* writing. You will have notes, bits of prose awaiting placement in a mosaic of argument. It helps to give each note a title, preferably a phrase stating its gist. Though any writing surface from clay tablet to CRT screen can hold the notes, white 4" × 6" cards lined on one side are best. Vladimir Nabokov wrote even novels with cards. This seems a bit much, but cards fit expository prose well. The smaller 3" × 5" cards are too small to hold a rounded idea, even if allowed to spill onto the back; the bigger 5" × 8" cards are too big to carry around while awaiting the moment of inspiration in the library or seminar or street. Use one idea per card, even if the idea is only a single line. Do not worry about the wasted paper.

Manila folders are nice. They can hold longer ideas, fuller outlines, bulkier computer output, and bigger bunches of cards. The American sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote an exhilarating essay in 1959 "On Intellectual Craftsmanship" in which he called the whole assemblage of cards, folders, and so forth *The File*: "You must set up a file, which is, I suppose, a sociologist's way of saying: Keep a journal. Many creative writers keep journals; the sociologist's [and economist's] need for systematic reflection demands

8. You may wish to increase the element of surprise by writing standing up to a tall desk, as my colleague Gary Fethke does.

it." (Mills, 1959, p. 196) It should become thick and rich, dumped out occasionally and rearranged.

Read through the file (which is Invention) trying to see an outline in it (which is Arrangement), at first quite a broad outline. Allocate the cards to related stacks; add cards reminding you of transitions and new ideas that occur as you ponder the File. If the outline does not come easily, write down a few words per card on a sheet of paper and try to see a pattern. Arrangement is like good empirical work, searching the data for patterns. Now set aside the broad outline. It will be revised as the work proceeds: nothing is written in stone.

Pick part of the broad outline to write about today. It need not be the beginning, though it is sometimes difficult to write first drafts any other way: preparations and back references are normally integral to the story, because readers normally read from beginning to end. List on a separate sheet the points to be made that are suggested by the cards. You need a certain intensity for all this. Writing cannot be done like peeling potatoes.

Write another outline, a narrow one, checking off points as you write (Arrangement is a matter of finding optimal outlines). Keep another piece of paper at hand to try out turns of phrase or to note down ideas that occur in advance of their use. Do not depend on memory alone. A phrase or word will jog it. Don't let the moment of insight pass.

9.) *You Will Need Tools, Tax Deductible*

You will therefore need several pads of paper on your desk at all times, with the outline sitting there, too, covered with supplementary notes, and your File standing in readiness at a distance. Do not worry about being neat: clean up in a dull moment. To repeat, do not save paper. Leave plenty of room on the paper for revision. Writing on both sides is bad economy, because it makes it impossible to cut up drafts or to add inserts in the simplest place, which is the back. View paper as working capital and remember that it is the marginal product of your mind that you wish to be paid for.

You will need certain other bits of capital in abundance. Pencils are in general better than pens, though it is good to shift media from time to time. You should find pleasure in exercising the tools of writing. An expensive and well balanced fountain pen is anachronistic, to be sure, but amusing to wield when the mood strikes. Indulge yourself, though try not to become anal retentive about equipment and procedures. Look on yourself as an honest-to-goodness professional writer (which, you see, you are) who can do any job on command anywhere with any equipment whatever, Ernie Pyle pecking out dispatches on a portable Olivetti from a fox hole.

Many people compose at a typewriter or in these latter days a CRT screen (the word processor eliminates any excuse for failing to bring one's style up to the best one can do). Some dictate into a tape recorder. A new medium will change style, perhaps for the better. Switching from medium to medium is interesting, because each suggests new ways of putting the matter. Pencil is forgiving, ink on paper less so, type still less, and recording

tape least of all. The word processor is at a different level entirely, a new and higher production function. It is pretty plain that any writer who does not use a wordprocessor is wasting a lot of time, though perhaps sparing the world some ill-considered fluency. Even bad typists find composing on wordprocessors almost excessively easy. The machines do not resist as much as typewriters, and are entirely forgiving of mistakes.

When using an unforgiving medium one's style will become serial, which may be good if it tends otherwise to overdecoration with insertion and adjective. It will tend in the unforgiving medium to be erroneous in detail and harder to rewrite. In hand writing always double or treble space: style in writing, as was said earlier and will be said again until you pay attention, is rewriting. One needs room to do it in. The wordprocessor, of course, solves this problem, too.

The next most important tool is a dictionary. Every place at which you read or write should have its own dictionary. A good one is *Webster's* (nearly all American dictionaries are "Webster's", which reduces the value of the signal to zero) *New World Dictionary of the American Language*, Second College Edition (William Collins and World Publishing, NY, 1976 and other editions). It is handsomely produced, does a good job at word origins, notes Americanisms (handy when writing to non-Americans), gives easy-to-follow pronunciation guides (handy when speaking to anyone), and distinguishes levels of usage. Shun the monstrous Merriam-Webster *Third Webster's International* and its evil college brood (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* and siblings), belching illiteracies attested by quotations from *Newsweek*.⁹

A dictionary is more than a spelling list. Read the definitions and the etymologies. If you think "disinterested" means the same thing as "uninterested" you need to get acquainted with a dictionary right away, and read good prose with it at hand. Learn to like words, to be interested in them and to be amused by them, inquiring into their backgrounds. It is a useful friendship, a joy of life.

A thesaurus (Greek: "treasure") finds the precise word within a more or less fuzzy region of the language. Use a big one, not the pocket versions. If you are unskilled at assessing the treasure, then the *Webster's* [of course] *New Dictionary of Synonyms* may help, although the *Webster's New World Dictionary* makes room for such work, too. "Proper words in proper places, make the true definition of a style," said Dean Swift (Bartlett, 322:8). Dictionaries of quotations (Bartlett's, Oxford, Penguin) are worth having—not to extract ornamental remarks in the manner of the speaker at the Kiwanis Club, but to find the precise words within a more or less fuzzy memory:

9. My colleague Eleanor Birch recalls a reviewer's verse on *The Third*: "That I imply and you infer / Is clear to me; but don't refer / To Webster's Third, which may imply / It's all the same to you and I."

What exactly did the Dean say?¹⁰ It is also a good idea to keep a personal book of quotations, important economic ideas expressed well. The thing is called a "commonplace book," not because it is plebian but because in classical rhetoric the commonly shared materials of Invention were called *loci communes*, literally "the common places," or "usual topics," "*koinoi topoi*" in Greek. Well kept, such a book can be the writer's journal of which Mills spoke. Simon James published his for economics, as *A Dictionary of Economic Quotations*, which contains much encouraging evidence that at any rate British economists know how to turn a phrase.

10.) *Keep Your Spirits Up, Forge Ahead, and The Like*

Now start writing. Here I must become less helpful, not because I have been instructed to hold back the secrets of the guild but because creativity is ineluctably scarce. Where exactly the next sentence comes from is not obvious. If it were obvious then novels and economics papers could be written by machine. If you cannot think of anything to say then perhaps your mind is poorly stocked with ideas, or perhaps you have been reading too much machine-made prose. The solution is straightforward: spend a lifetime reading the best our civilization has to offer, starting tonight with elementary Greek.

Anyway, say it. Saying it out loud will help. Don't write entirely silently or you will write entirely stiffly. Good modern prose has the rhythms of actual speech—good modern speech, that is, not the waffling obscurities of the Labor Department bureaucrat trying to lie about Black teenage unemployment or the cloudy generalities of the professor trying to conceal his confusion about exchange rates.

Regard the outline as an aid not a master. When you get stuck, as you will, look at the outline, revise it, reread what you have written, reread the last bit out loud, talk to yourself about where it is going, imagine explaining it to a friend, try to imitate some way of speaking that Dennis or Maynard had, write a sentence parallel to the one just written, fill out the idea.

Do not panic if the words do not come, and do not quit easily. Try changing the surroundings. Move to the library, block out noise with the earmuffs that ground personnel in airports wear, visit the fridge, sharpen a pencil. Don't expect to write with the ease of a Harry Johnson all the time. Like any sort of thinking, writing sometimes flares and sometimes fizzles, like a fire. When on a burn, though, do not break off. Do not let anyone entice you into watching a movie on TV; tell the baby to go away; resist going for a snack. Be

10. Lack of precision in such matters will place you with the Florida football player who on the eve of the Florida State game recalled the Good Book's admonition to "do unto others what they would like to do unto you." Not so bad after all, I suppose. Compare Demosthenes, First Olynthiac, section 24. Robert Day's book, a compendium of what not to do, follows of course the Kiwanian practice. The chapters are adorned with mottoes lifted unprocessed from *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* ("Chapter 12: How to Design Effective Tables" begins with Bret Harte, "I reside at Table Mountain").

selfish for a while about the little candle of creation you are tending, however poor it may seem beside the conflagrations of the giants.

Keep the finished manuscript in some form handy for frequent rereading and revising. A looseleaf ringbinder is good, since it can be added to easily and is hard to misplace even on a crowded desk. Replace the written manuscript in the binder with a typed one and keep working on it. Richard Lanham has some good advice:

The typewriter distances prose and it does it quickly. By depersonalizing our priceless prose, a typescript shows it to us as seen through a stranger's eyes. . . . No single bad writing habit is so powerful as the habit of typing an essay only when you are ready to turn it in. Correct the handwritten manuscript by all means, but then type a draft and revise that." (Lanham, 1979, p. 54).

When dull, and especially when starting a session, reread a big chunk of the draft, pencil in hand (now more definitely a pencil, or a pen of another color if a typist is involved) to insert, amend, revise, correct, cancel, delete, and improve.

At the end of a session or at any substantial break always write down your thoughts, however crude, on what will come next. Write or type the notes directly onto the end of the text, where they can be examined and crossed off as used later. A few scraps will do, but will save half an hour of warming up when starting again. Jean Piaget, a titan of psychology—although not, it must be admitted, much of a stylist—remarked once, "It's better to stop in the middle of the sentence. Then you don't waste time starting up." (Bringuier and Piaget, 1980, p. 1) Paul Halmos urges the mathematical writer to plan the next session at the end of the present one (Halmos, 1973, p. 28). After a session of writing the ideas not yet used stand ready in the mind, and one should get them onto that ideal storage medium, the piece of paper.

So much there is to writing a first draft, and so much can be taught of Invention and Arrangement.

11.) *Speak to an Audience of Human Beings*

But Style, to repeat, is rewriting, and rewriting can be learned in sub-rules. Rewriting can be tiresome. The myth of the free lunch to the contrary, good or even adequate writing is easy for few writers, and some of the best writers work at it the hardest, working to make less work for the reader. Hemingway said, "Easy writing makes hard reading." Actually, much of rewriting is pleasant and not excessively hard once you are equipped with a technique for doing it skillfully. Rewriting does not have at least the anxiety of Invention and Arrangement, that you will be unable to produce anything at all.

The first of the sub-rules of Style at the level of the essay as a whole will be obeyed by looking right into the eye of your audience. Be honest with them. Ask who they are, aim the draft towards them, and keep hauling yourself back to facing them in revisions.

Pick a reader to ride and ride all the way with him. Economic writers too

often will swap and reswap horses in midstream. The trick is dangerous and in a technical sense inefficient. An article using the translog production function wastes motion if it rederives the elementary properties of a Cobb-Douglas production function. No one who has gotten so far into such an article will be innocent of Cobb-Douglas. The writing mixes up two mutually exclusive audiences. It is inefficient to spend the space on matters that the only reader remaining on the scene will skim over with glazed eyes and vexed heart. Economic historians write a little better than the average economist. Yet about half the manuscripts received by the *Journal of Economic History* over the past five years, especially those written by younger writers, have had this fault of inefficiency in audience.

The rule is to pick someone to write for. Some find it best to pick an Implied Reader of imagination, an ideal economist; others find it best to pick a real person, such as Charles Kindleberger or good old Professor Smith or the colleague down the hall. It is a healthy discipline to be haunted by people with high standards (but some sympathy for the enterprise) looking over your shoulder in imagination; and it keeps the prose steady at one level of difficulty to imagine one master spirit.

Halmos agrees, though he remarks wisely that if you choose some particular person "it becomes tempting to indulge in snide polemic comments and heavy-handed 'in jokes'" (Halmos, 1973, p. 22). The temptation should be resisted, since you have other people in the audience, too, an audience that may be offended by attacks on those incredibly old economic historians or those astonishingly naive set theorists outside the present company. The choice of audience determines who you are going to be in the essay, what rhetorical stance or authorial persona you are going to adopt: the Earnest Scientist, the Reasonable and Modest Journeyman, the Genius, the Math Jock, the Professor, the Breezy Journalist.¹¹ You cannot abstain from choice. Abstention merely means that you make the choice unthinkingly.

12.) *Avoid Boilerplate*

A related piece of advice is that the writing must be interesting. This sounds harshly difficult. When in society we all doubt that anyone finds us the least bit interesting, as we doubt, too, that we are pretty or handsome (unfortunately, few in academic life have doubts that they are intelligent and well educated). But one can avoid some dullnesses by rule. Choosing oneself as the audience tends to dullness, since most of us admire uncritically even the dullest products of our own brains, at least in the vanity room

11. I, for instance, am adopting a persona of the Sharp Tongued Old Professor, because my intended audience—the rest of you are free to stay—are American economists early in their careers who are receptive to such stuff. An audience of undergraduates would warrant the persona of a Breezy (and Slightly Nitwitted) Journalist (or so one gathers economists think from the way they write textbooks). Established economists would warrant a less didactic and more condemnatory persona, in the style of many books on style (see Edwin Newman, *Strictly Speaking*, for a popular instance).

of the study. Rederiving marginal product in Cobb-Douglas without mixing up the exponents strikes its author as a remarkable intellectual achievement. But Charles Kindleberger or good old Professor Smith or the colleague down the hall probably don't agree. Spare them. Restatement of the well known bores the readers; overelaboration bores the readers; excessive introduction and summary bores the readers. These are busy professionals, not amateurs in economics with time on their hands and unlimited toleration. The typical reader is not your mother, and even mothers have trouble with economic writing. Get to the point that some sceptical professional cares about and stick to it.

Therefore, avoid boilerplate. Boilerplate in prose is all that is prefabricated and predictable. It is stale drivel, lamentably common in economic prose. Excessive introduction and summarizing is one example; another is redoing for N separate cases what can be done with a single well-chosen one. The academic pose of which Mills spoke inspires boilerplate. Econometric chatter copied out of the textbook, rederivations of the necessary conditions for consumer equilibrium, and repetition of hackneyed formulations of the theory accomplish little. Explaining a model of efficient capital markets by writing for the thousandth time " P , given I ," where I is all the information" does not advance understanding. If it didn't much help make Eugene Fama's work clear when he first uttered it, why suppose it will enlighten someone now?

Such is the prestige of Theory that a young economist will sacrifice any amount of relevance and clarity to show that he can take it, make it, and make it up. The result is filigreed boilerplate. The economist will write about the completeness of arbitrage as follows: "Consider two cities, A and B, trading an asset, X. If the prices of X are the same in market A and in market B, then arbitrage may be said to be complete." The clear way to do this does not wear the emblems of "theory" on its sleeve: "New York and London in 1870 both had markets for Union Pacific bonds. The question is, did the bonds sell for the same in both places?"

The received outline of The Scientific Communication breeds boredom and boilerplate. Spurn the received outline. Never, for instance, start a paper with that universal hook of the bankrupt imagination, "This paper" Describing the art of the hook in the short review, Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff note that "the opening statement takes the reader from where he presumably stands in point of knowledge and brings him to the book under review" (Barzun and Graff, 1970, p. 272). "This paper" does not take the reader anywhere (so never start a book review with "This book . . ."). A paper showing that monopoly greatly reduces income might best start:

Every economist knows by now that monopoly does not much reduce income [which is where he presumably stands in point of knowledge]. Every economist appears to be mistaken [thus bringing him to the matter under review].

It bores the reader to begin with "*This paper discusses the evidence for a large effect of monopoly on income.*" The reader's impulse, fully justified by the tiresome stuff to follow, is to give up.

Another piece of boring boilerplate, and one which kills the momentum of most economics papers on the second page, is the table-of-contents paragraph: "*The outline of this paper is as follows.*" Don't. Most readers skip to the substance, if they can find it, but the few who pause on the paragraph usually cannot understand it, because it usually has been written with no particular audience in mind, least of all the audience of first-time readers of the paper. Even when done well the table-of-contents paragraph lacks point. You will practically never see it in good writing, unless inserted by an editor who doesn't know how to write. Weak writers defend it as a "road-map." They get the idea from the advice from school: "Tell the reader what you're going to say. Say that you've said it." It's bad advice.

The writer who truly wishes to be clear does not clot his prose with traffic directions, but thinks hard about arrangement. Use headings if you wish, especially ones with declarative sentences advancing the argument, like the ones used here. But your prose should read well and clearly without the headings.

13.) *Control Your Tone*

The tone of the writing and much of its clarity depends on choosing and then keeping an appropriate persona, the character you pretend to be while writing. Again, there is no way out of a choice: you can't just "be yourself," though the best persona, unless you are crabbed, humorless, and nasty, is someone like you. Writing, like teaching, is a performance, a job of acting. Out of stage fright, mainly, economic writers overuse the pompous and unintelligible persona of The Scientist. Consider C. Wright Mills's discussion of the problem of writing sociology in the 1950s, not inapplicable to writing economics now:

Such lack of ready intelligibility, I believe, usually has little or nothing to do with the complexity of subject matter, and nothing at all with profundity of thought. It has to do almost entirely with certain confusions of the academic writer about his own status . . . [Because the academic writer in America] feels his own lack of public position, he often puts the claim for his own status before his claim for the attention of the reader to what he is saying . . . Desire for status is one reason why academic men slip so readily into unintelligibility . . . To overcome the academic *pose* you have first to overcome the academic *pose*. It is much less important to study grammar and Anglo-Saxon roots than to clarify your answer to these important questions: (1) How difficult and complex after all is my subject? (2) When I write, what status am I claiming for myself? (3) For whom am I trying to write? (Mills, 1961, p. 218f.)

In other words, it is lack of confidence that spoils academic writing. The pose of *This-Stuff-Is-So-Complex-That-I-Can't-Be-Clear* is usually strained when not a lie. It's really not that difficult to explain a Malthusian demographic model or a rational expectations model in plain words to smart

people willing to pay attention. And a reader of a professional journal is smart and willing. Above all, in other words, one must decide to be understood, and worry some other time about being loved. One must not try to impress people who already understand the argument (they will not be amused), but try to explain it in a reasonable tone to people who do not now understand.

Tone of writing is like tone of voice. It is personality expressed in prose. The worst mistake is to be unpleasant: if you yell at people they will walk away, in reading as at a cocktail party. For instance, avoid invective. "This is pure nonsense," "there is absolutely no evidence for this view," "the hypothesis is fanciful" are fun phrases to write, deeply satisfying as only political and intellectual passion can be, but they arouse the suspicion in any but the most uncritical audience that the argument needs a tone of passion to overcome its weakness. Tone is transmitted by adverbs and adjectives. To mention the worst, run your pen through every "very" (or tell your word processor to flag it). Most things aren't very. "Absolutely," "pure," and the like are the same: most things aren't absolute or pure, and to claim that they are conveys an hysterical tone.

Even if you are in fact dogmatic and intolerant, it will be less wearisome for the reader if you will let some doubt enter your way of speaking. Screaming is not speaking well. To parody some otherwise excellent economists, who are in fact unusually undogmatic and tolerant, but have poor control over their tone:

Some foolishly infer that the best, cleverest, and most *persuasive* way of making a case for private-property, free-enterprise market economies as against *stupid* communism is via throwing invective at those who, contrary to *all* historical evidence that has *ever* been assembled on the point, naively believe in virtues of dictatorial socialism! (Economics is of course a positive Science that does not offer moral judgments.) This opinion of some people *ignores* reality and arises from their *self-interest*.

It has been said that "to air one's views gratuitously . . . is to imply that the demand for them is brisk" (Strunk and White, 1959, p. 66). And to air them intemperately reduces whatever demand there is. A comical example of what can go wrong with verbal abuse is: "These very tendentious arguments are false." The writer meant "tenuous," but even had he said so the "these" gives the reader the fleeting and hilarious impression that it was the writer's arguments, not the victim's, that are being characterized. Tendentious they are.

Wit compensates for tendentiousness, as is apparent in the literary careers of H. L. Mencken and George Stigler. Mencken's railings against the boobocracy, or Stigler's against the bureaucracy, are made less tiresome by rhetorical coyness, ducking behind self-repudiating exaggeration or arch understatement. Readers allow such writers more room to be opinionated because the opinions are so amusingly expressed.

Most academic prose could use more humor. There is nothing unscientific in self-deprecating jokes about the sample size, and nothing unscholarly in dry wit about the failings of intellectual opponents. Only third-rate scholars are so worried about the Academic Pose that they insist on their dignity. The rich laboratory humor of economic science—Griliches's Law that more than five variables in a cross section yields garbage, for instance—should find its way into articles. Maybe it would drive out the tiresome “widgets.” In the uncomfortable little jokes about themselves economists reveal forbidden thoughts worth pursuing.

Robert Solow should be followed in this. He is aware of what he does, and how it contrasts with the usual denatured tone of articles in economics:

Personality is eliminated from journal articles because it's felt to be 'unscientific.' An author is proposing a hypothesis, testing a hypothesis, proving a theorem, not persuading the reader that this is a better way of thinking about X than that. Writing would be better if more of us saw economics as a way of organizing thoughts and perceptions about economic life rather than as a poor imitation of physics (Solow, February 27, 1984).

14.) *Paragraphs Should Have Points*

So much for the essay. The paragraph, then. Paragraphing is punctuation, similar to lines in poetry. You will want occasionally to pause for various reasons, shifting emotional gears perhaps or simply giving your passenger a break. The reader will skip around when his attention wanders, and naturally skips to the next paragraph. If your paragraphs are too long (as they will be if you do not watch closely your wordprocessor) the reader will skip a lot to get to the next break. The paragraph should have a single point. The one I've just written, for example, doesn't.

Paragraphs, like sentences, and for the same reason, should not be too short too often.

Short paragraphs give a breathless quality to the writing.

Newspaper writers, especially on the sports page, often write in one-sentence paragraphs, for a cheap thrill.

The usual paragraph should be long enough to complete a thought, short enough to give the reader some visible hope of relief, and middling enough not to look odd alongside its fellows.

Big quotations (in a block if more than eight typed lines) have two legitimate jobs. First, they can give the devil his due. If you plan to rip to pieces a particular argument, then you must quote it in full, to give at least the impression of being fair. But mild criticism cannot follow a big quote: you must indeed rip it to pieces, word by word. Otherwise the reader feels that the effort of settling into a new style has not been worthwhile. Second, block quotations can give an angel his voice. If Armen Alchian said something strikingly well with which you entirely agree, then you do not hurt your case by repeating what he said, and gain from his authority. Routine explanations do not belong anywhere, whether in brief or short quotations.

They convey the impression that you think with your scissors, and not very well at that.

15.) *Make Tables, Graphs, and Displayed Equations Readable*

The wretched condition of tables and graphs in economics shows how small is the economist's investment in expression. The main point is that tables and graphs are writing, and the usual rules of writing therefore apply. Bear your audience in mind. Try to be clear. Be brief. Such precepts have not guided a table of twenty regressions spread over two pages, with columns labeled "LBLB" and "DLBL." The author should synthesize the results, not dump them in a glob on the reader. Don't worry: no one will be upset if you do not give every one of the twenty specifications of an equation with fifteen variables you fitted to series with ten observations. They are not about to cast the first stone. You should always ask, "Is this entry necessary? Would I dribble on in a similar way in prose or mathematics?" No reader wishes to have the annual figures of income between 1900 and 1980 when the issue in question is the growth of income over the whole span. And if he is discriminating the reader will not want statistics in a number of significant digits more than they in truth have. The eight digits generated by the computer are irrelevant: the elasticity is about $3\frac{1}{7}$ not 3.14159256.¹² Titles and headings in tables should be as close to self-explanatory as possible, a rule that guides some book publishers and should guide more journal publishers. Use words in headings, not computer acronyms requiring another step of translation by the reader.

The same principles should guide graphs and diagrams. Edward R. Tufte's recent book, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* is a good guide, with such precepts as "Mobilize every graphical element, perhaps several times over, to show the data" (Tufte, 1983, p. 139; Tufte is not to be taken as a guide to prose). Use titles for diagrams and for tables that make the point, such as "All Conferences Should Happen in the Midwest" instead of "A Model of Transport Costs." Use meaningful names for lines, points, and areas, not alphanumeric monstrosities: "Rich Budget Line" instead of "Locus QuERTY."

So too for displayed equations. It is much clearer to say "the regression was Quantity of Grain = $3.56 + 5.6 (\text{Price of Grain}) - 3.8 (\text{Real Income})$," than "the regression was $Q = 3.56 + 5.6P - 3.8Y$, where Q is quantity of grain, P its price, and Y real income." Anyone can retrieve the algebra from the words, but the reverse is pointlessly harder. The retrieval is hard even for professional mathematicians. Halmos said: "The author had to code his thought in [symbols] (*I deny that anybody thinks in [such] terms*), and the reader has to decode" (Halmos, 1973, p. 38; italics mine). Stanislaw Ulam, with many other mathematicians, complains of the raising of the symbolic ante in recent years: "I am turned off when I see only

12. The point is widely misunderstood. Read Oskar Morgenstern, 1963, pp. 8-9.

formulas and symbols, and little text. It is too laborious for me to look at such pages not knowing what to concentrate on" (Ulam, 1976, p. 275f). Tables, graphs, diagrams, and displayed equations should elucidate the argument, not obscure it.

16.) *Footnotes Are Nests for Pedants*

A footnote should be subordinate. That is why it is at the foot. In academic writing, however, the most important work often gets done in the small print at the bottom of the page. The best sustained example in economics is Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*, in which the liveliest prose and the strongest points occur towards the end of footnotes spilling over three pages. The best single instance I know is a rightly famous paper by Dale Jorgenson, "The Embodiment Hypothesis," which buries the (brilliantly simple) main point in a footnote, showing, namely, that the duality of price and quantity measures of productivity change arises from the accounting identity that revenues from output equal expenditures on inputs (Jorgenson, 1966, p. 3f). Footnotes should not be used as a substitute for properly organizing the text. If the idea does not fit maybe it does not belong. Cluttering the main text with little side trips to the bottom of the page or, in this age of penury in publishing, the back of the book hundreds of pages from where the reader stands, breaks up the flow of ideas, like the footnote¹³ attached to this sentence.

Footnotes, then, are sometimes misused to provide organization where it is not. They are also misused to provide authority where it is not. Pedantry governs the ugly little world of footnotes, especially in footnotes by the young (the old are by now unable to find the citations anyway). Footnotes should guide the reader to the sources. That is all. When they strain to do something else something usually goes wrong. It is pedantic to use them to display one's erudition, and, especially hazardous to try to display it when one doesn't have any, the modal condition of the young. The attempt to assume the mantle of The Scholar looks foolish when the best one can do is cite the textbook. Citing whole books and articles is anyway a disease in modern economics, arising from pretension combined with sloth, an ugly combination, and encouraged by the author-date citation, such as that used by this journal. It is easier for the author to write "See *The General Theory*" than to bother to find the page and sentence where Keynes, fatally, adopts the mistaken assumption of a closed economy. And by not bothering the author misses the chance to really know whether Keynes did.

13. Inviting the reader to look away is not wise. And practically never is it a good idea to do what this note does, breaking a sentence. The place for distractions, if anywhere, is the end of a sentence or, better, the end of a paragraph. But chiefly you should avoid distracting the reader. This footnote should have been woven into the text, if it said anything, which it does not. An extended and most amusing footnote on the matter, viewing it more cheerfully, is G. W. Bowersock, 1983/84.

17.) *Make Your Writing Cohere*

Behind such rules on what to avoid in paragraph-length slugs of prose in tables, graphs, footnotes, and paragraphs themselves lies a rule on what to seek. It is the Rule of Coherence: make writing hang together. The reader can understand things that hang together, from phrase up to book. He cannot understand things filled with irrelevancies.

Look again at the paragraph I just wrote. It is no masterpiece, but you probably grasped it without much effort. The reason you did (aside from the simplicity the ideas expressed) is that each sentence is linked to the previous one. The first promises a "rule." The second names it, repeating the word "rule"; after the colon the next sentence (which is what it is, functionally) delivers on the promise of the name, using the phrase "hang together." The next tells why it is a good rule, reusing "hang together" and introducing a character called "the reader," saying that he "can understand" certain "things." The final sentence emphasizes the point by putting it the other way, saying what *things he* [the same] can *not understand*. The paragraph itself hangs together, and is easily grasped by the mind.

Its structure is (AB)(BC)(CD). Note the linkages of repetition. Economists would call it "transitive" writing. To write like this you must violate blatantly the schoolmarm's rule of not repeating words. Verily, you *must* repeat them to link sentences, using pronouns like "it" or "them" to relieve monotony. The linkages can be tied neatly, if not too often, by repeating words with the same root in different versions (the figure is called in classical rhetoric "polyptoton") as was just done with the verb "link" in the previous sentence and the noun "linkages" in this. There are other tricks of cohesion.

If you draw on the tricks you will be less likely to fill your prose with irrelevancies: (AB)(BC)(CD) looks pretty, is easy to understand, and is probably reasonable; (ABZYX)(MNOP)(BJKLC) looks ugly, is impossible to understand, and is probably nonsense. A newspaper editor once gave this advice to a cub reporter: "It doesn't much matter what your first sentence is; it doesn't even much matter what the second is; but the third damn well better follow from the first and second." If you once start a way of talking—a metaphor of birth or a tone of patient explanation—you have to carry it through, making the third sentence follow from the others. You must reread what you have just written again and again, unifying the tenses of the verbs, unifying the vocabulary, unifying the form. That's how to get unified, transitive paragraphs.

Yet, a clumsy way to get transitive paragraphs begins each sentence with a linking word. Indeed, good Latin prose in the age of Cicero had invariably this feature. Furthermore, Greek had it, even in common speech. In English, however, it is not successful. Therefore, the Ciceronian and Hellenic adverbs are untranslatable. To be sure, the impulse to coherence is commendable. But on the other hand (as must be clear by now), one tires of being ordered about by the writer, told not only when you are to take a

sentence illustratively ("indeed"), but also adversatively ("however"; "but"), sequentially ("furthermore"; "therefore"), or concessively ("to be sure"), pushed to and fro by clanking machinery like "not only . . . but also." The impulse to introduce a machinery of outlining and summarizing has similar results. It is not the genius of English. English achieves coherence by repetition. Repeat, and your paragraphs will cohere.

18.) *Use Your Ear*

Rhythm is important, too. Listen for it. If every sentence is the same length and construction the paragraph will become monotonous. If you have some dramatic reason for repeating the construction the repetition is good. If you have no good reason for doing so the reader will feel misled. If you talk always in sentences of precut form the paragraph will have a monotonous rhythm. If you have been paying attention recently the point will have become clear enough.

John Gardner gave some good advice on handling a variety of sentences (Gardner, 1984, p. 104f). Become self-conscious, he said, about what you're cramming into each part of the sentence. Grammatically speaking an English sentence has three parts: subject, verb, object. Thus: subject = "an English sentence"; verb = "has grammatically speaking"; object = "three parts: subject, verb, object." Vary your sentences by how much you put into each part (subject (in this one: absent but understood = "you"); verb ("vary") complexly modified by "how much you put in each part"; object quite simple, though not as simple as the subject). Gardner, who wrote novels, too, uncovered with his simple principle of the three sentence parts which we have just discussed and could discuss more if it were a good idea, which it is not, the graceless rhythm that results from an overburdened sentence such as this one, in which every part has much too much in it, which exhausts the reader. It can ruin a whole paragraph.

19.) *Avoid Elegant Variation*

Which leads to the sentence. The first duty in writing a sentence is to make it clear. The way to make it clear is to use one word to mean one thing. Get your words and things lined up and keep them that way. The positive rule is Strunk and White's: "Express parallel ideas in parallel form." (An example will be given in the next sentence.) The negative rule is Fowler's: "Avoid Elegant Variation." The two ideas are parallel and are expressed in parallel form: "The positive rule is Strunk and White's" leads the reader to expect "The negative rule is Fowler's." The reader knows what to expect. He can fit the little novelties into what he already knows.

Elegant Variation uses many words to mean one thing, with the result that in the end no one, not even the writer, really knows what the thing is. A paper on economic development used in two pages all these: "industrialization," "growing structural differentiation," "economic and social development," "social and economic development," "development," "economic growth," "growth," and "revolutionized means of production." With some

effort one can see in context that they all meant about the same thing. The writer simply liked the sound of the differences, and had studied elegance too young. A writer on economic history wrote about the "indifferent harvests of 1815 and calamitous volume deficiencies of 1816." How long did it take you to see that both refer to how bad the crops were? Notice that in these cases, and in most, the Elegant Variation comes draped in five-dollar words ("growing structural differentiation" = new jobs in manufacturing; "calamitous volume deficiencies" = very bad crops).

Some people who write this way mistake the purpose of writing, believing it an occasion for display. They should realize that the eighth grade is done. Most do it out of mere ignorance that parallelism is a virtue, as in this example: "the new economic history is concerned not only with what happened but also with why events turned out as they did." A good writer can hear something wrong, the logic being that the reader thinks fleetingly that "what happened" and the "events [that] turned out as they did" are different things, and must give thought to whether they are. This is what is wrong with Elegant Variation. If the reader's attention strays a little—and it is always straying, a lot—he will come away from the sentence without knowing what it said, which is: "the new economic history concerns not only what happened but why it happened."

20.) *Check and Tighten, Rearrange and Fit*

The pursuit of parallelism and the avoidance of elegant variation, like other rules of rewriting, do not make the writer's life easy. But easy writing, remember, makes hard reading. Samuel Johnson said, "What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure." Like effort in any work, such as sewing or auto repair, you must check and tighten, check and tighten. In short sessions the exercise of such craft should come to please you. It is good to do something well. The tight, neat seam in a dress or the smooth, clean joint in a fender revive the spirit worn from the effort. Still, before the end it is tiring, and the result will seem too obvious. Do nouns and verbs link successive sentences? Have I used one word to mean one thing? Have I used parallel forms to emphasize parallels of ideas? Check and tighten.

The care extends to tiny details. For instance, you must choose repeatedly whether to carry over words from one construction to its parallel. It's either "the beautiful and *the* damned" or "the beautiful and damned." Such choices will occur hundreds of times in a paper if written in lucid parallels. Fitzgerald, seeking elegant variation, could have written "the beautiful folks and those people who are damned," in which case the choice would not have been posed, and you would probably never have heard of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Other tools to line up word and thing are singulars and plurals, masculines and feminines. Unlike the inflected Latin and Anglo-Saxon from which it descends, English does not have cases and gender to keep related words hitched. Make use of what paltry resources we have. The following sentence, for example, is ambiguous because "them" can refer to

so many things: "Owners of the original and indestructible powers of the soil earned from *them* [powers or owners?] pure rents, and that tenant farmers were willing to pay *them* [the rents? the owners? the powers?] indicates that these powers of the soil were useful." The singular and plurals here are not essential to the meaning, and so they can be exploited to make it clear: "An *owner* of the 'original and indestructible powers of the soil' earned from *them* [now unambiguous because it agrees with the only plural referent available: the powers] pure rents, and that the tenant farmers were willing to pay *him* [unambiguous: the owner] indicates that these powers of the soil were useful." The use of "she" alongside "he" can in like fashion become an advantage for clarity of reference as much as a blow for sexual equality. Capitals are advantageous, too: you make a word into a Proper Noun by capitalizing it, which is useful for reference and especially for reference to a Point in a diagram.

The inflected languages have more freedom of order than English. *Homo canem mordet* means the same thing as *canem mordet homo*, with only a difference of emphasis, but "man bites dog" and "dog bites man" are news items of different sorts. Yet much can be done with the order of an English sentence. With the order of an English sentence much can be done. It's mainly a matter of ear: proper words in proper places. Tinker with the sentence until it works. The problems come with modifiers, especially with adverbs, which are free floating in English. The phrase "which is *again merely* another notation for . . ." should be "which *again* is *merely* another notation for . . ." Moving the "again" prevents it from piling up against the other modifier. Or: "the elasticities are *both with respect* to the price" should be "both elasticities are with respect to the price."

You should cultivate the habit of mentally rearranging the order of words and phrases of every sentence you write. Rules, as usual, govern the rewriting. One rule of arrangement is to avoid breaking the flow with parenthetical remarks. Put the parenthetical remark at the end if important and at the beginning if not. Another rule is to delete as many commas as you can. Many people think that one must hedge off all preliminary remarks with commas. When applied too enthusiastically the excess comma results in the subject being hedged off from the predicate. In revision the trick is to delete any comma before "the," as I just did after "In revision": the "the" signals a new phrase quite well enough without the clunk of a comma.

The most important rule of rearrangement is that the end of the sentence is the place of emphasis. I wrote the sentence first as ". . . is the emphatic location," which put the emphasis on the word "location." The reader leaves the sentence with the last word ringing in his ears. I wished, however, to emphasize the idea of emphasis, not the idea of location. So I rewrote it as ". . . is the place of *emphasis*." You should examine every sentence to see whether the main idea comes at the end—or, secondarily, the beginning. Dump less important things in the middle. A corollary of the rule is that putting trivial things at the end leads to flaccidity. It would be grammatical

to write "that putting trivial things at the end leads to flaccidity is a *corollary of the rule*." Yet it shifts the emphasis to something already finished, *the rule*. The clear way puts the emphasis on the novelty, the idea of *flaccidity*, by putting it at the end.

Rearrangement serves grace as well as clarity. It doesn't hurt to have a good ear, to be able to recognize a clumsy sentence that needs reworking. But the ear can be trained by exercise. For one thing, read Orwell and the rest, not as an assignment but for pleasure. Your ears should ring with phrases from the literature of our tongue. Close study of *Time* and the *Wall Street Journal* does not suffice as an education in literacy. For another, read your sentences out loud. Listen for unintentional rhymes (at times your lines will chime); listen for sentences that are monotonously long or short; listen for stragglers, as from That foolish young man of Japan, / Whose limericks never would scan. / When asked why it was / He replied, "It's because / I always try to get as much into the last line as I ever possibly can." Adding one more idea at the last minute causes straggling, which comes even in a perfectly grammatical sentence like the present, making the sentence hard to read, which will cause the reader to stop reading after he has tried a couple of sentences like this one, which straggle, straggle, straggle. Remember Gardner's rule of subject, verb, object. The weight of the sentence should be at the end, although the rule will often conflict with the rule of putting the important matter at the end. At a minimum you should be aware of weight and try it out on different portions of the sentence. The success of those eighth-grade ornaments, the doublet and the triplet, depends critically on shifting weight to the end: "Keynes and the Keynesians' works, The Keynesians and Keynes" does not; "faith, hope, and charity" works, "charity, faith, and hope" does not.

Doublets and triplets are juvenile when overused. The writer addicted to them can probably be saved, because he knows at least that words are forces for good or ill. But you cannot use the rhetorical triplet more than once on a page unless you are Edward Gibbon, or at least Tom Wolfe. Economists do not overuse doublets too much. If they do, they do it because they believe and feel incorrectly and unthinkingly that two or a pair of ideas or phrases are more accurate or more elegant than a single and solitary one. It is more commonly an affectation of the literati, among whom economists do not normally travel, to claim such delicacy of sensitivity that no single English word is quite capable of hitting the target. George Steiner, who has an otherwise brilliant style and penetrating mind, writes unreadable books because he says everything twice. Words in modern English style should come out of a rifle, not a shotgun.

21.) *Should You Use Rhetorical Questions?*

Don't you agree that another piece of eighth-grade elegance is the rhetorical question? Isn't it easy to overuse it? Doesn't it add an air of contrived drama to the prose? Isn't it a clumsy device for transition to a new subject? Isn't it a cheap way of organizing the disorganized? Doesn't it chop up the

paragraph? Don't you wish I would stop? James Thurber wrote of a fellow student of journalism at Ohio State with limited gifts, whose every sentence was dull. Ordered by his editor to start "snappily" on a story about the university horse barn, he chose of course that snappiest of figures: "Who has noticed the sores on the tops of the horses in the animal husbandry building?"

22.) *Use Verbs, Active Ones*

You should make sentences that hit the target in the middle. Write therefore with nouns and, especially, verbs, not with adjectives and adverbs. Carry a rifle. In revision the adjectives and adverbs should be the first to go. As Sydney Smith said, "In composing, as a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigour it will give to your style (Bartlett, 433:14)." He might have followed his own advice more fully, and would have done so if writing nowadays: "Run your pen through every other word; you have no idea what vigour it will bring." Use active verbs: not "active verbs should be used," which is cowardice, hiding the user behind a screen. Rather: "you should use active verbs." Or use the imperative, as here, which is especially useful for taking a reader through mathematical arguments: "then divide both sides by x " instead of "both sides are then divided by x ."

Verbs make English. If you pick out active, accurate, and lively verbs you will write in an active, accurate, and lively style. You should find the action in a sentence and express it in a verb. Expressing it in a phrase functioning as a noun saps vigor. The disease is called "nominalization," and it afflicts most academic prose (mine, for instance). Joseph Williams, who discusses it at length, gives an example that might have come from economics: "There is a data reanalysis need," in which the only verb is the colorless "is," and the real action is buried in the nouns "need" and "reanalysis" (1981, p. 12). You can fix such a sentence by using verbs: "We must reanalyze our data." Notice that a real verb requires a real subject. There's no place to hide. The "data reanalysis need," by contrast, merely exists, blessedly free from personal responsibility (the freedom from responsibility makes nominalization popular among bureaucrats). The general rule is to circle every "is" and try to denominalize the sentences containing them. Find the actor and the action. Follow the general rule: delete "is" when you can. You have no idea what vigor it will bring.

Before you sell a sentence for some poor reader to ride, then, check it for signs of life. Every rule of checking horses or sentences can have exceptions: the lack of parallel teeth or parallel expressions may have a good excuse, or may be compensated by some other virtue. But the flaws we do not recognize are so numerous that we had better get rid of all those we do.

23.) *Avoid Words That Bad Writers Love*

Finally, words. The snappiest rules about writing concern these things. If economic prose would simply drop "via," "the process of," "intra," "and/

or, "hypothesize," "respectively," and (a strange one, this) "this" the gain in clarity and grace would be substantial. Because it is easy at the level of the single word to detect and punish miscreants the legislative attitude towards prose reaches its heaven in lists of Bad Words. Some perfectly good English words have died this way; for instance, "ain't." But even good writers have such lists, often with good sense. And at a minimum certain words tag you as a barbarian simply because good writers have decided so. It's unfair to people lacking good educations, and there's nothing in the nature of the linguistic universe to justify it, but you might as well know for instance that in some company if you use "hopefully" to mean "I hope" instead of "with hope" you will be set down as thoughtless. Hopefully General Booth entered heaven.

The best practice provides the standard. George Orwell would not write "and/or" (or "he/she") because he wanted prose, not a diagram. Some others that I'm sure he would have disliked appear in my personal list of

Bad Words

Vague nouns and pronouns

"concept": a vague, latinate, front-parlor word; consider "idea," "notion," or "thought."

"data": over- and mis-used in economics. "Data" are plural, although it is clearly on its way to becoming singular in the language. "Data" means "givens" in Latin, and that is how you should use it, not as a do-all synonym for "facts," "statistics," "information," "observations," and so forth. The word embodies, incidentally, a scientifically disastrous attitude towards observation—that it is "given" by someone else—but the point here is one of style. "Datum" is one "data."

"function": in the sense of "role" is latinate.

"situation": vague. "Position" or "condition" are better, depending on the meaning.

"structure": vague. There are no obvious alternatives because the word generally means very little when it is used. On this word and other fashionable words in economics, see Fritz Machlup, *Essays in Economic Semantics*.

"process": usually so empty that it can be struck out (along with its "the") without changing the meaning, as in "the economic development process" or "the transition process." Try it.

"the existence of": strike it out, and just name the thing.

Pretentious verbs:

"critique": Elegant variation for "criticize" or "to read critically" or "to comment on."

"implement": Washingtonese, a rich and foolish dialect of Economese.

"comprise": Fancy talk for "include" or "consist of."

"analyze": Over- and mis-used in economics as a synonym for "discuss" or "examine." Look it up in your dictionary.

"hypothesize": For "suppose" or "expect." This word tags you (similar

words: "finalize," "and/or," "time frame").

"finalize": Boardroom talk. See "hypothesize," which is academic boardroom talk.

"state": in the sense of "say"; why not say "say?"

Pointless adjectives

"former . . . latter": "the above"; "the preceding": useless words, which request the reader to look back to sort out the former and latter things. Never request the reader to look back, because he will, and will lose his place.

"interesting": A weak word, made weak by its common sarcastic use and by its overuse by people with nothing to say about their subject except that it is interesting. It arouses the reader's sadism.

Useless adverbs:

"fortunately," "interestingly," etc.: Cheap ways of introducing irrelevant opinion.

"hopefully": A marker of poor taste when used to mean "I hope," as I have noted.

"Respectively": as in "Consumption and investment were 90% and 10% of income, respectively." What lunatic would reverse the correct order of the numbers? (Answer: a lunatic who doesn't express parallel ideas in parallel form.) Drawing attention to such a bizarre possibility by mentioning explicitly that it did *not* take place is a bad idea. When the list is longer, distribute the numbers directly; "Consumption was 85% of income, investment 10%, and government spending 5%."

"very": The very general rule is to think very hard before using "very" very much, and to very often strike it out. It is a weak word.

Misused conjunctions, prepositions, and miscellaneous phrases

"hence"; "thus" use sparingly.

vis a vis: means "face to face"; use it to mean this, not "relative to" or something even more vague. I have seen it spelt "viza vi"; someone was not using the dictionary.

"due to": usually signals a clumsy phrase, due to not arranging the sentence to sound right.

"via": plain "by" is the word wanted; "via" is a favorite of the UCLA Econ.

"in terms of": clumsy and vague; cf. "due to."

"for convenience": As in, "For convenience, we will adopt the following notation." An idiotic phrase, when you think about it. All writing should be for convenience. What would be the point of writing for inconvenience?

"kind of," "sort of," "type of": vague, vague, vague. Use sparingly.

"time frame": means "time"; it originates in the engineer's dim notion that "time" means "passage of time" alone, and not segments of time. But the notion is false. "This point in time" is the correlate phrase. Another marker of faulty taste.

"intra/inter": in coinages, do not use. Do not present verbal puzzles to your reader. Everyone has to stop to figure out what these prefixes mean. Use "within" and "between." "International" and "intramural" are fine, of course, being well domesticated. But "The inter- and intra-firm communication was weak" is silly. Fancy talk.

24.) *Be Concrete*

There are general principles. The main one is Be Concrete. The singular is more concrete than the plural (compare "Singulars are more concrete than plurals"). Definiteness is concrete. Prefer Wonder Bread to bread, bread to widgets, and widgets to X. Bad writers in economics sometimes use abstraction because they have nothing to say and don't want the fact to become too plain, in the style of the people to whom we have entrusted the education of our children. Mostly, though, they use abstraction to attain generality. They do not believe that the ordinary reader will understand that "Wonder Bread" stands for any commodity or that "ships" stand for all capital. Secret codes use the principle that translation is often easier in one direction than the other. A reader finds it harder to translate abstractions down into concrete examples than to translate examples up into abstract principles. Consequently, much economic writing reads like a code.

Professional economists develop into professional code breakers. To an economist this sentence doesn't sound so bad: "Had *capital and labor* in 1860 embodied the same *technology* that they had in 1780, the *increase in capital* would barely have offset the fixity of land." But here is a better way, which someone whose brain has not been addled by incessant reading of economics can make something of: "Had the *machines and men* of 1860 embodied the same *knowledge of how to spin cotton or move cargo* that they had in 1780, the *larger numbers of spindles and ships* would have barely offset the fixity of land." In a paper on Australia the phrase "sheep and wheat" would do just fine in place of "natural resource-oriented exports." In a paper on economic history "Spanish prices began to rise before the *treasure came*" would do just fine in place of "the commencement of the Spanish Price Revolution antedated the inflow of treasure." Writing should make things clear, not put them into a code of abstraction.

25.) *Be Plain*

The encoding often uses five-dollar words to support a pose of The Scientist or The Scholar. The pose is pathetic: science and scholarship depend on the quality of argument, not on the level of diction. "The integrative consequences of growing structural differentiation" means in human-being talk "the need for others that someone feels when he buys rather than bakes his bread." Anglo-Saxon words (need, someone, feels, buys, bread, bake) have often acquired a homely concreteness through long use that more recent and more scholarly coinages from Latin or Greek have not (integrative, consequences, structural, differentiation: all directly from Latin, without even a domesticating sojourn in French). "Geographical and cultural factors function to spatially confine growth to specific regions for long periods

of time" means in Anglo-Saxon and Norman French "it's a good bet that once a place gets poor it will stay poor."

Five-dollar words are not without their charm. In the hands of a master they transmit a splendid irony, as in Veblen's analysis of sports, which "have the advantage that they afford a politely blameless outlet for energies that might otherwise not readily be diverted from some useful end." But you've got to be Veblen to get away with such stuff. In most hands it is simply polysyllabic bullshit: "Thus, it is suggested, a deeper understanding of the conditions affecting the speed and ultimate extent of an innovation's diffusion is to be obtained only by explicitly analyzing the specific choice of technique problem which its advent would have presented to objectively dissimilar members of the relevant (historical) population of potential adopters." Come off it.

A lot of economic jargon hides a five-cent thought in a five-dollar word. We've forgotten that it's jargon. "Current period responses" means "what people do now"; "complex lagged effects" means "the many things they do later." "Interim variation" means "change," "monitored back" means "told." Economists would think more clearly if they recognized a simple thought for what it is. The "time inconsistency problem" is the economics of changing one's mind. The "principal/agent problem" is the economics of what hirelings do.

The great jargon generating function in economics is what may be called the Teutonism, such as der Grossjargongeneratingfunktion. German actually invents words like these, with native roots that no doubt make them evocative to German speakers (classical Sanskrit did it, too, using as many as twenty elements). But again it does not suit the genius of modern English. A common one is "private wealth-seeking activity," which is a knot in the prose. Untie it: "the activity of seeking wealth privately." When laid out in this way, with the liberal use of "of," the phrase looks pretty flabby. "Activity" is pointless (note that nothing happens when you strike it out), "private" is implied, and, by the same principle of untying the knot, "the seeking of wealth" is what is left. The trick lies in reintroducing "of": "factor price equalization" is muddy, though a strikingly successful bit of mud; "the equalization of the prices of factors of production" is clearer, if straggling. Most teutonisms do not make it as attempts to coin new jargon. "Elastic credit supply expectations rise" is too much to ask of any reader: he must sort out which word goes with which, whether the supply or the expectations are elastic, and what is rising. Hyphens help, but impose more notation. The reader can digest "The long-run balance of payments adjustment" much easier if it's put as "the adjustment of the balance of payments in the long run." The result is inelegant, but no less elegant than the original, and clearer. The following are exercises for the reader, but should not be:

"anti-quantity theory evidence"

"contractually uniform transaction cost"

"initial relative capital goods price shock"

"any crude mass expulsion of labor by parliamentary enclosure thesis"

- "community decision making process"
- "Cobb-Douglas production function estimation approach"
- "alternative property rights schemes"

The possessive, unless attached to a proper noun (Samuelson's genius, Gary's pride), is not much used by good writers. It is greatly overused by poor writers, who delight in phrases like "the standard economist's model." The possessive is a teutonicism maker, and has the teutonic ambiguity: what is standard, the model or the economist? You should reexamine any phrase with more than one adjective and should watch especially for nouns used as adjectives. It is the genius of English to let verbs become nouns and nouns adjectives. You go to the club, get a go in cribbage, and hear that all systems are go at the Cape. What is objectionable is piling up these nounverbadjectives teutonically.

26.) *Avoid Cheap Typographical Tricks*

Another objectionable practice is the acronym, such as "Modigliani and Miller (henceforth M&M)" or "purchasing power parity (PPP)." Besides introducing zany associations with candy and second-grade humor, the practice pimples the page and adds a burden of excess notation on the reader. The demands of the computer have worsened the situation. Resist, remembering that even expert mathematicians do not think in symbols. An occasional GNP or CAB won't hurt anyone, but even such a commonplace as GDCF pains all but the most hardened accountant. "Gross domestic capital formation" is fine once or twice to fix ideas, but then "capital formation" or (after all) plain "it" will suffice. Believe me: people will not keep slipping into thinking of it as GDCF or GCF or GC. The point is to be clear, not to "save space" (as the absurd justification for acronyms has it: the acronyms in most papers save a half dozen lines of print, less than the table-of-contents paragraph). As usual, bad writers set the standard of what not to do. Military officers and public school principals do it to excess. A word from the foolish suffices.

Certain other typographical devices need careful handling. Use these "devices" sparingly, they add an "air" of (henceforth "AAO") Breathlessness or Solemnity or *Coyness*! The point is that they *add* something, *instead* of "letting it speak for itself" (LISFI). They are, so to speak, *sound effects*! The reader "understands" this, and doubts *everything* that is said!! LISFI is better. Using these "devices" instead of LISFI suggests that something is wrong with the prose as is. If you use *italics* (underlining) to make your point clear it is probably because the sentence is badly set up to give emphasis *naturally*. Fix it. If you use "quotation marks" all the time when not actually "quoting" someone, it is probable that you wish to "apologize" for the "wrong" word, or to sneer at "it." Don't. It's impolite to cringe or to sneer.

27.) *Avoid This, That, These, Those*

Another plague is this-ism. These bad writers think this reader needs

repeated reminders that it is *this* idea, not *that* one, which is being discussed. The "this," however, points the reader back to the thing referred to. No writer should want his reader to look back, for looking back is looking away, interrupting the forward flow and leaving the reader looking for his place. The rule is to query every "this" or "these." Take them out. The thises and thats are demonstrative pronouns on the way to becoming the definite article. But we already have one. Often the plain "the" will do fine, and keep the reader reading.

28.) *Above All, Look at Your Words*

Beyond such matters of taste lies idiom. You must write English, which is no easy matter. The prepositions of English, its substitute for grammatical cases, cause endless trouble. Try experimenting with them to get the right one: is it "by" an increase "of" supply or "because" of an increase "in" supply? God, and Orwell, knows. Verbs come often preposition-enriched: write down, write up, and so forth. Pare the prepositions away if they are not essential. Words often come in couplets: one "overcomes," not "cures," one's ignorance. On the other hand, thinking in word pairs leads to the cliché. Break away from it when a more original word says it more precisely and more vividly. Observe what varied thoughts about "the pursuit of profit" are suggested by fleeing the cliché: seeking or finding or having or uncovering or coming upon or bumping into profit; and pursuing gain or maximum wealth or opportunities or stimuli or satisfaction or success. New words imply new thoughts. Wordthought is a part of thinking.

One should think what the word literally means and what it connotes. Get in the habit of asking each word whether it belongs. Half of the words you write in draft do not. English is jammed with dead metaphors, easily brought to life with incongruous effect, as in this sentence. Good writing examines the words for their literal meaning, to make sure that the metaphors remain dead or are at the least brought to life in a decorous way. Look at what you have written: are the words literally possible? "The indicators influenced the controls." How does an indicator influence a control? Someone wrote "the severity of the models," which is senseless; what he meant is "the models make assumptions that are hard to believe." Apparent absurdities are as distracting as actual absurdities: "absolutism is a relative term" is unacceptable, unless you have established with the reader a reputation for verbal clowning.

There is no end to word lore. Study of dictionaries and style books and the best writing of the age will make you at least embarrassed to be ignorant. You should already know, as an adult scholar, that "however" works better in a secondary position. You should already know that "in this period" is usually redundant, that lists are clumsy, that "not only . . . but also" is a callow Latinism, that "due to" is bureaucratese, that the colon (:) means "to be specific" and the semicolon (;) means "furthermore," that use of "regarding X" or "in regard to X" is definite evidence of miseducation. But

be of good cheer. You have plenty of company in such juvenilities. We all have much to learn.

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Good style is above all a matter of taste. Adult economists share with college sophomores the conviction that matters of taste are "mere matters of opinion," the notion being that "opinion" is unarguable. A matter of taste, however, can be argued, often to a conclusion. The best argument is social practice, since that is what taste is. That so many people with a claim to know have listed the same rules for writing English in the late 20th century is itself a powerful argument. The Blessed Orwell, for instance, laid out a mere six rules, all familiar now, which would revolutionize economics if enforced by the editors of journals:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

The editors in economics, unhappily, are not doing their job of applying such rules for the salvation of readers.* It is being left to the authors. Please begin.

To improve in writing style at all you must become your own harshest editor, as you must become your harshest critic to improve in thinking generally. Good writing is difficult. But economics is too fine a subject to be left in a verbal mess out of mere sloth. And what is at first difficult becomes a pleasure in the end, like any skill of civilization.

We can do better than the say-what-you're-going-to-say, elegant variation, inefficient exposition, boilerplate, incoherent paragraphs, impenetrable tables, flaccid word order, straggling sentences, contrived triplets, verbosity, nominalization, passive verbs, barbaric neologisms, abstractions, five-dollar words, teutonisms, acronyms, this-es, and fractured idioms of modern economic writing. The gain to science will be large.

*Editor's note: The reader should ask why such alleged indifference to copy editing survives despite the competitive nature of scholarly publishing in economic journals. Though McCloskey's paper is testimony to our belief that the writing economist needs a great deal more guidance than he or she has generally been given by editors, we are convinced that shifting expository responsibility to the author is *efficient*. It amuses us that one of Professor McCloskey's prime authorities on scholarly literacy, Jacques Barzun,

argues that copy editors are too interventionist. ["Behind the Blue Pencil: Censoring or Creeping Creativity?" *The American Scholar*, Summer 1985, 385-88.] We submit that editorial efforts in the profession are *optimal*. Authors like all recipients of unpriced but scarce services want more (or less) of it. We hope this intrusion puts the proper shadow price on such scholarly grumblings.

—T.E.B.

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Miscellany

Writing and Reading in Economics

In the past several months I have spent much time reading manuscripts written by my professional colleagues. Although this activity has taught me some economics, as one might expect, it has not been an unmixed pleasure. At some times, to be frank, it has been rather trying.

What has made it trying is that too much of the writing I have read is clumsy or worse: nearly incomprehensible. Crimes of violence are committed daily against the English language and the helpless reader is too often frustrated in his effort to understand the message. Frustration is what has goaded me into expressing my thoughts on this subject to you. The relief of self-expression is my purpose. If any manuscript benefits, that result will be welcome, but I don't expect it.

I fully recognize, as all economists must, that even the clearest expression of some of our thoughts cannot make them easy to understand. In economics, we deal increasingly with ideas and relationships that are complex and inherently difficult to grasp. For example, we must often use technical words to denote objects or concepts for which no other words exist. When a writer has good reason to use a technical word, however, he does have the duty of explaining its meaning when he first uses it, if he wants to be understood by a non-professional reader.

I do not quarrel with the use of technical words when their use is necessary. Indeed, I see no objection to using them even when, although not necessary, they are convenient and when the author can reasonably assume that his readers will understand them because he and his readers speak the same language. If somebody for whom an article is not intended objects that he cannot understand such words, his objection has no more merit than that of the proverbial English traveler in France who objects that Frenchmen do not speak English.

As far as we economists are concerned, however, when we want to be understood by people who are not specialists, the gain in convenience must be very great to justify our using technical words and we should

take a good deal of trouble to avoid them. We should accept that burden rather than place upon the reader the burden of understanding the unfamiliar.

Let me also say that I am not criticizing the use of mathematics when it is necessary. The answer to the complaint of the proverbial Englishman in France also applies to complaints about the necessary use of math. In fact, such use of it is merely a special case of the use of technical language. Muriel Rukeyser, in her biography of Willard Gibbs, the great Yale mathematician, physicist, and chemist, tells us that this reticent man, in all his thirty-two years on the faculty of Yale University, is remembered to have spoken only once at a faculty meeting. The faculty was engaged in a long debate on elective and required courses, including the relative emphasis to be placed on mathematics and languages. Gibbs rose and said, "Mathematics is a language," and sat down. That profound observation is, I think, now generally recognized to be true. What is significant for my present purpose is that mathematical language permits saying some things that, even if they could be said otherwise, could be said only at such great length and inconvenience that it is really not sensible to say them in words. When that is the case, people who cannot understand mathematical language are just out of luck.

But please notice that many things that can be, and often are, said in mathematical language could equally well be said in English. Until a great many more people speak and read Mathematics as well as they speak English, there is no excuse for using mathematical symbols where words will do. Later I shall cite examples of mathematical statements that could have been made in English, not only equally well but much better and more concisely.

My main target is obscure or clumsy writing. It results from poor thinking or a feeble grasp of the principles of clear expression. Of course, the first requirement of clear writing is that the writer must know what he wants to say and say it in logical order. I would have assumed that this elementary fact did not need to be stressed if I had not seen evidence that it does. I have read manuscripts in which important points are in footnotes and unimportant ones are in the text. If your thoughts do not proceed in a logical sequence, no elegance or grace of language will make your writing clear. I might say, parenthetically, that while skilful manipulation of words cannot make clear what is unclear, a sufficiently skilled writer unfortunately can make the unclear or meaningless appear clear. But I do not believe that our profession includes many writers who combine that much skill in writing with that much muddleheadedness. Our problem is that many people cannot formulate clearly what they want to say and how to say it until they get something on paper. For them the unbreakable rule is: Never impose your first draft on anyone else.

I think it should be taken for granted that before one begins to write,

he should have in mind—and most of us need to have on paper—an outline of what he is going to say. That will enable him to see his article or book as a whole and to see if the points he wants to make are relevant to his message and are stated in logical order. If, while writing, the author becomes aware that he has deviated much from his outline, he should make an outline of what he actually has written and see if it, although different, is equally logical.

I do not seek to instruct anyone else about the details of style that make for excellence in writing. I am not capable of doing that, and even if I were, many books have been published on that subject already. Most of these books do not try to make literary artists. They state what is necessary to make writing merely clear and forceful—but that is not so “mere.” Some of these books, such as *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White, illustrate well the principles they set forth and the advice they offer. My purpose, apart from voicing sorely felt grievances, is more modest. It is merely to point out some of the pitfalls that should be avoided if one is to make his writing reasonably comprehensible. In doing so, I shall concentrate on sins that are peculiar to technicians, and especially to those who have fallen into the ways of the bureaucrat. That, I may say, includes some people who have never been bureaucrats themselves. While I shall concentrate on those sins, I shall also take the opportunity to indulge a few pet peeves.

Words and Their Meanings

I begin with the basic unit of language, the individual word. The English language has a number of words that mean similar but not precisely the same things. Writers with respect for the language preserve the distinction between such meanings. People who pride themselves, as most economists do, on their analytical power ought to be able to see these differences of meaning. They should also be able to see how much better it is to have different words for different thoughts or concepts, however slight the difference, than it is to use one word that does not say precisely what is meant when another one that does is available. As such misuse of words comes to be widely accepted, we lose a way of saying precisely what the misused word originally meant and gain merely a second word to say what we were already able to say otherwise, which is no gain at all. That is a waste—in the language of our trade, a cost without a benefit, a misallocation of scarce verbal resources. Economists above all should be eager to avoid it.

My favorite illustration of the distinction between meanings takes the form of a story—undoubtedly apocryphal—about Noah Webster, the lexicographer. It is said that Mrs. Webster returned home one day to find her husband embracing the maid. She said, “Noah. I am surprised.”

Webster, without relaxing his grip, looked up and said, "No, my dear, *I* am surprised. *You* are astounded."

Perhaps the distinction is too refined, or now obsolete. But it challenges you to think about what words really mean.

One example of a distinction almost universally ignored by economists is the use of "anticipate" as though it were a synonym for "expect." The *Survey of Current Business* gives official sanction to this misuse when it reports businessmen's expectations about sales. To anticipate something is not merely to expect it but to do something as a result of that expectation. Thus, if one says a businessman anticipates a rise in the prices of his raw materials, one does not, or should not, mean merely that he expects their prices to rise but that he buys larger supplies now than he otherwise would, or does something else as a result of the expectation. It is correct to describe that as "anticipatory" inventory accumulation, however lacking in grace that expression is.

Another example, perhaps also a refinement, is like the one I have just mentioned in not impeding understanding but in wasting a word. It is the confusion between "typical of" and "characteristic of." The expression "typical of," as its derivation from the word "type" suggests, means an attribute that is representative of a class, while "characteristic of" refers to something representative of the attributes of an individual member of a class.

Again, the word "hopefully" is not a synonym for "I hope." It means "full of hope" and refers to the state of mind of the person referred to by the noun it stands next to. Thus, if I were to say, "Hopefully you are listening to what I am saying," my meaning should not be that *I* hope you are listening—although I do—but that *you* have hope while you are listening. That statement may be false but that interpretation is correct. If I want to say *I* hope you are listening, I should say just that. In the light of the correct use, you can see how absurd it is to say, "Hopefully, the equation will give us a good forecast." The econometricians can do much with an equation, but they have not yet endowed it with the capacity to hope.

Another distortion of meaning is the confusion between "imply" and "infer." The difference between the meanings of these two words may be made clear by an explanation I devised for my children when they were very young ham-radio fans. The relation of "imply" to "infer" is the same as the relation of "transmit" to "receive" in broadcasting. The sender of the unstated message *implies* it. The receiver, who thinks he gets the message, or who deduces one does the *inferring*. If you do not know the difference between transmitting and receiving, you should turn in your license.

And "disinterested" does not mean not caring. It means not having a personal interest in the outcome or, more generally now, just being impartial.

Words have other attributes besides meaning. For example, they are parts of speech. I hope it is not news to anyone here that there really *are* different parts of speech—nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on. Unfortunately, these differences are often overlooked. One confusion is between adjectives and adverbs. Confusion between their roles is not common, but in the past few years the word “otherwise” has been increasingly abused. Apparently its correct use became Top Secret sometime during the 1950’s, along with many other things that need not have been classified. But I authorize myself to declassify it and say out loud that it is an adverb, not an adjective, trusting that you all know the difference. For example, it is just plain ungrammatical to say, “Most countries have barriers to imports, whether tariffs, quotas, or otherwise,” although it would be correct to say that most of them impede imports by tariffs, quotas, or other methods.

A more common confusion between parts of speech—and one that can make prose very clumsy—is the confusion between nouns and adjectives. In general, nouns should be modified by adjectives. One would hardly guess that this is the rule from reading some of the manuscripts I have read recently. The authors seem to think that a noun should be modified by another noun.

The rule is general rather than universal, because some nouns have been used to modify other nouns for so long that such a use is imbedded in the language. It would be absurdly pedantic to object to that use now. For example, it would be absurd to insist that one should say “telephonic conversation.” Similarly, it is shorter and acceptable to refer to an “input matrix,” although the general rule suggests “matrix of inputs.” But I would suggest one rule, lenient in substance but to be scrupulously observed. If you must use a noun to modify a noun, do not use more than one or, at most, two.

I have been reading manuscripts that assaulted the reader with three, four, and even five nouns placed consecutively. All but the last were intended as adjectives or parts of an adjectival phrase. For example, in one manuscript, I found within a few pages of each other all of the following: “high risk flood plain lands,” which presumably means plain lands in which the risk of floods is high; “aircraft speed class sequencing,” which uses three nouns to modify a word that might be a noun if it existed but does not really exist; and then, to top it off, “terminal traffic control program category,” which contains five consecutive nouns. I leave it to you to figure out which of these words modifies which. There is no reason to obscure thought by using such elephantine language. “High risk flood plain lands” does have one adjective, namely, “high.” Which word is it supposed to modify? Is it the lands that are high? One might even imagine that the floods are high. Only because “risk” standing by itself would make little sense can we tell that it is the risks that are high, not the floods

or the lands or the plain lands. The reader must study the sentence to know what the author means. He is put to that trouble only because the author did not take the trouble to use the few necessary extra words.

If you must use a collection of nouns or a compound noun to modify another noun, at least put the reader on notice by putting hyphens between the nouns or phrases that you use as adjectives, for example, "balance-of-payments discipline" or "balance-of-payments considerations." Hyphenation is less important than sticking to the rule against using more than two nouns to modify another noun, and preferably using no more than one.

A third abuse of English words extends also to phrases. The abuse is not in the use of words or phrases in a sense different from their common meaning, but in their use in no clear or precise sense at all, so that they tell the reader nothing, except that the writer was either too fuzzy or too lazy to say precisely what he meant. One word that is now—I dare say I catch me saying "presently"—used increasingly but has no clear meaning at all, as far as I can tell, is "fund" when it is used as a verb referring to a program of expenditure. I know the word has something to do with money, but Lord knows, there is nothing special about that. The dictionary gives four definitions of it as a verb. One, familiar to those who know financial history, is "to convert into a more or less permanent debt bearing regular interest; as to fund a floating debt." That is not what is intended in the use I have in mind. A second is "to provide a fund to pay interest; does not mean that. A third meaning is "to place in a fund; to accumulate." It does not mean that either. The fourth meaning, "to finance," is labeled obsolete. That comes closest to its meaning in the usage I refer to. I do not object to reviving the obsolete, but this meaning is too vague. Financing something, especially in government, as Washingtonians know well, is a process that includes many steps—authorizing, appropriating, budgeting, obligating, and paying. As it is now used, the word does not distinguish between those steps. In Washington, a city which should be better than any other in the differences between these steps, this vague use of the word should be more scrupulously avoided than anywhere. In Washington it flourishes. At Brookings, where we have two former directors of the Budget and one assistant director, let us bury it. If we do so, the only thing we have to fear is that it will be replaced by another word that will be longer and sound worse, and will not mean more. As a possible winner "authopropligate."

Another example is the use of the word "area" to mean any subdivision of any thing, whether the dimension of the classification is geographical space or anything else. Here is an example: "Development programs which will accomplish a specified purpose is an area to

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analysts, when devising programs, should devote more attention to providing incentives for whatever the author was talking about.

Actually, the original sentence contained other sins; it also implied that systems analysis rather than systems analysts had the ability to "devote attention." The author thus attributed consciousness to systems analysis—a claim that far exceeds even those previously made for it. By doing so, he put it in a class with those equations that were forecasting so hopefully. Moreover, the subject of the sentence that yielded this sample is eighteen words long, which makes it something less than poetic. This combination of sins led, in fact, to the following sentence: "Devising programs which will provide incentives for decentralized decision makers to pursue overall program objectives effectively and efficiently is an area to which systems analysis should devote increasing attention."

I have an equal prejudice against the use of "overall," which I once thought was a form of apparel. But perhaps this prejudice is purely personal. While the word "total" or "aggregate" or some similar word will usually say what the writer means, I concede that in some uses a synonym in better standing is hard to find.

Another fuzzy phrase is "in terms of." Although here, too, one must sometimes work hard to find an alternative, the use of this phrase is, in most cases, unnecessary and a result of sloppy thinking, faulty sentence structure, or laziness.

The sentence I quoted with the eighteen-word subject combined a number of sins against gracefulness. But grace is not the only matter at stake when these sins are committed. Clarity is at stake, too. If one combines the use of fuzzy phrases, technical jargon, nouns as adjectives, and non-stop phrases, one can make obscure what could be perfectly clear. For example: "Procedural changes in handling aircraft arrivals and departures yield very high cost effectiveness results in terms of reduction in average delays." Why, I ask myself, do those procedural changes have to "yield very high cost effectiveness results in terms of reductions in average delays"? Why cannot they just greatly reduce average delays?

I might add, incidentally, that the writer of this sentence suggested one procedural change that would speed things up. His suggestion would help—if you could tell what it was. He suggested a change in "priority procedures for arrivals relative to departures, using aircraft speed class sequencing." The use of "aircraft speed class sequencing" may reduce the delays of people who fly, but it greatly increases the delay of people who read.

As long as I am talking about the nuts and bolts of writing, let me say a single word about punctuation. Commas are helpful when correctly used. They tell the reader when to pause. But sometimes they are not merely helpful but indispensable. For example, it sometimes makes a big difference whether the clause introduced by "which" is preceded by a comma.

The Sunday book review section of the *New York Times* of June contained a letter that brought out the importance of commas very effectively. I quote it in full:

To the Editor:

I write in reference to the intriguing first sentence of Wils McWilliam's review of Gladwin Hill's book "Dancing Bear." "Gladwin Hill knows that there is more to California than the mask of the bizarre behind which the state hides." I would appreciate your asking Mr. McWilliams just what makes him think that California is hiding a mask of the bizarre behind the thought, that, on the contrary, they had sent it to Washington for display in the U.S. Senate but if he has other information he would appreciate his sharing it with me.

Ernst Pawel
Great Neck, New York

If that does not make sufficiently clear the power of the comma, consider the classified ad that was intended to say, "Secretary, about to be married, urgently needs a two-room apartment." As the ad was printed it said, "Secretary, about to be married urgently, needs a two-room apartment."

Carelessness is not confined to punctuation, and neither is the misunderstanding that carelessness can cause. Indeed, carelessness is probably even more common and its results equally serious in the misuse of pronouns. Sometimes they appear with no antecedents at all. More commonly the antecedent exists, but instead of being a single word, it appears to be the whole preceding idea. A writer may develop a thought or a series of thoughts in a whole paragraph and then begin the next paragraph by saying, "This is incorrect," leaving the reader with no precise idea of what is incorrect. It is a good principle to avoid using "this" and "that" as pronouns. If you use them only as adjectives, the nouns they modify will make your meaning clear.

While the absence of an identifiable antecedent may lead to no misunderstanding at all, either correct or incorrect, use of a pronoun that can refer to two or more possible antecedents may lead to positive misunderstanding. My former colleague, Roderick Riley, once said of another colleague who sinned in this way that he was a man of dubious antecedents. The misunderstanding that can result from dubious antecedents can even be fatal. You must have heard about the steelworker who was teaching an apprentice how to rivet. "I'll hold the rivet," he said, "and when I nod my head, you hit it with the sledge hammer." The apprentice did. His instructor left a widow and three children.

Another source of confusion is the dangling participle. The participle implies a subject. That implied subject should be the same as the subject

of the clause to which the phrase is attached. The phrase is said to "dangle" when the two subjects are different. Here is an example taken from a discussion of the U.S. program to control capital outflows: "By instituting the voluntary foreign credit restraint program, foreigners found access to trade finance more difficult." Of course the writer of the sentence knew perfectly well that the voluntary credit restraint program was not instituted by foreigners. Fowler, both in his *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* and in the book he wrote with his brother, *The King's English*, gives many illustrations of the dangling participle.

Mathematical Language

I now come to the problem which I consider most serious in manuscripts prepared by modern economists. It is generally referred to as the use of mathematics in the exposition, but the word "use" in that description is rather loose. Very often the mathematics is not really being used; all that is being used is mathematical notation. In other cases the mathematics is being used, but there is the question of whether its use is justified. Both abuses raise serious problems of communication. For one thing, if the abuses survive the editorial process and appear in what is finally published, they limit the writer's audience and alienate some of those who remain in it. Second, they are more likely to survive the editorial process than are other abuses; few, if any, staff editors are able to judge when the use of mathematical notation is necessary, and few have the confidence even to press the author to eliminate or substantially reduce it. Finally, the problem is serious because the practice, or the malpractice, is growing rapidly.

Let us first consider the use of mathematical symbols when no mathematical operations are being performed. The crudest use of such symbols is their use as substitutes for words in a prose sentence, as shorthand because the writer wants to avoid the trouble of writing the word for which the symbol stands. Such uses of symbols will ordinarily not get by editors. Their vigilance protects readers of the published work. But the writer who indulges in this practice is still victimizing his colleagues who read the manuscript before the editors have had an opportunity to do their work. You might suppose that the use of symbols as shorthand would not burden those who are asked to read the draft, because they are experts. But if the author uses more than a dozen symbols and uses them in a way that is not standardized and therefore familiar to experts, the reader must remember the author's definitions or, if he cannot, he must find them. If, in addition, these definitions are scattered throughout the preceding pages, the reader is like a man using a dictionary in which the words, instead of being arranged alphabetically, are in random order. Of course, there is no excuse whatever for using symbols without defining them at all. We are not writing *only* for mind readers. But it is necessary to say that there is very little

excuse for using symbols at all merely as shorthand. If mathematics are used, mathematical expressions are generally unnecessary and the need of defining symbols need not arise. If symbols are used, all the definitions should generally be placed together or, if the symbol was last used some time before, its definition can be repeated.

A more common practice than using symbols as shorthand within sentences is to use equations as shorthand for whole sentences that could be said equally well in words. This practice presents no obstacles to some readers but it does to others, and it contributes nothing. The reason writers indulge in this practice is probably not that they are lazy but that they have been thinking in mathematical terms and that the use of symbols and non-verbal equations is more natural to them. Although a writer who does this is perhaps not being lazy, he is being inconsistent. The costs of this practice may be low, but the benefits are nil. I can think of only one situation that justifies this practice, and I think it is rare. Casting a statement in mathematical terms is justified if the statement of the equation or the inequality would be more compact or as unfamiliar to the reader as the mathematical statement. In that case, nothing is lost by using mathematical notation and something is gained.

I now come to the use of mathematical operations, as distinguished from mere notation. Whether this use of mathematical language is justified is a less clear-cut question, and the answer involves judgments. But a few statements appear justifiable to me.

Mathematical operations are sometimes performed to derive propositions that would be obvious to anyone interested and intelligent enough to care about what the author has written. In such cases, the use of mathematics does not clarify the proposition. Indeed, it may even obscure it, because the reader, making the reasonable assumption that something not banal is about to be demonstrated, looks for it in vain. Here is an example:

In this section we shall present the results for the level of changes in the value of direct investments based on the first set of foreign funds models: $\Delta F_t = f_t \Delta A_t + u$. To derive an expression for the change in the value of direct investments, we use the first equation for foreign funds and the accounting identity (7) to obtain: $\Delta V_t = (1 - f_t) \Delta A_t - u$.

In this passage, the author uses the first equation and his accounting identity (7), which one has to look for in an unidentified preceding paragraph, to derive the second equation. The reader might reasonably suppose that the second equation is not an obvious corollary of the first one but can only be inferred from it by use of mathematics. In fact, the author was simply stating merely that if the non-American proportion of the total funds that fo

subsidiaries use to finance acquisition of assets is constant, then the proportion they finance with American funds is also constant.

I can see only two possible reasons why a writer should take his readers through such exercises to derive such propositions. One is that he thinks a proposition that appears obvious by intuition may not be precisely correct and wishes to demonstrate either that it really is or that the necessary and sufficient conditions for its validity differ from what the reader is likely to have thought. To those who, thinking they must prove absolutely everything, go to extremes of accuracy and rigor and force their readers to go with them, I can only tell a story about Mark Twain. When he was a young reporter, his editor instructed him never to state as a fact anything that he had not personally verified. Upon being sent to cover an important social event soon afterward, he wrote the following: "A woman giving the name of Mrs. James Jones, who is reported to be one of the society leaders of this city, is said to have given what purported to be a party yesterday to a number of alleged ladies. The hostess claims to be the wife of a reputed attorney."

The other possible reason for going to extremes in proving things that do not need proof is to show one's own ability to use one of the tools of the trade. Whether consciously or not, the producer of such a manuscript is serving himself rather than the reader, and he is doing so at some expense to the reader. Such pride in tool using for its own sake and such eagerness to demonstrate one's ability to use the tool at the expense of the people one is supposed to serve remind me of a charwoman in a large New York bank who was proud of her proficiency as a polisher of floors. She said, "When I started to work here the floors was in bad condition. But since I've been doing them three ladies has fell down."

Of course there are times when mathematical operations really have to be used to reach a conclusion. In such cases, the decision about using mathematics in the text should depend on the nature of the intended audience. But it is certainly a good rule for all publications that are not intended only for a professional audience to say in words both the conclusion and whatever can be said about the reasoning, and to confine the mathematics to an appendix. This principle can be followed without much strain. The author who follows it will still have the opportunity, if he wants it, to tell the mathematical reader how he reached his conclusions, and he will gain a wider audience.

Let no one think that application of this principle is beneath his professional dignity. Some very good economists who can handle mathematics have demonstrated that they can state complex propositions in clear English. The Irving Fisher Lecture by James Tobin, "Economic Growth as an Objective of Government Policy," is an example, and there are many others. Some leading economists—for example, Fritz Machlup and Tibor Scitovsky—pay a great deal of attention to how they say things.

Apparently words can express not only propositions of economics that are derived mathematically but, according to the late Stefan Matychuk, those of econometrics, too. In the Preface of his textbook *Econometrics*, he expresses this opinion in one sentence: "If anything in Econometrics (or in any other field) makes sense one ought to be able to put it in words." Copies of this statement suitable for framing should be freely available to all members of our profession.

Grace and Force

So far, my remarks have dealt with rather elementary requirements of clarity, which is an essential requirement of all writing. Still, I shall refrain from saying a word or two about grace and force in writing. I shall refrain from reporting the result of a bit of statistical research bearing on the element of style. Even if clarity should be our first aspiration, we should aspire to more—for example, to conciseness, force, and even vivacity.

Merely to achieve clarity one need not pay much attention to how one's prose reads, although the two qualities are related. Still, ease of reading does help the reader retain his presumed original interest in a manuscript. You can take a long step toward making your manuscript not only clear but easy to read if you avoid using strings of nouns like those I mentioned early in my remarks, such as "aircraft speed class sequencing," and if you avoid fuzzy phrases such as "in the area of" and "in terms of." If, in addition, you pay attention to how the words sound, you may even make the reading of your manuscript enjoyable. At a conference in Bellagio, someone asked Fritz Machlup why he had used one word in a draft rather than a longer one that the questioner thought more appropriate. Machlup replied, "Because it is more euphonious." On being asked if he really paid attention to that criterion when he wrote, he said, "Absolutely not, myself. 'Does it sing?'"

Some habits that are not serious vices help keep writing from becoming "clean." I shall cite only one, and I shall commit the misdemeanor of describing it. There are many people who use the locution "there is (or are) . . . who (or which). . . ." I should have said, " . . . people use the locution" The use of "there is (or are) . . . who (or which) . . ." is usually useless, heavy-handed, and windy. In one manuscript I read recently, that construction was used three or four times on one page.

Another simple way of avoiding clumsiness is to prefer the short word to the long one and to avoid the unfamiliar word if a familiar one is found that is equally correct, specific, and concrete. (Incidentally, the qualities of being specific and being concrete are not the same. For an explanation of the difference, see *Fundamentals of Good Writing* [Lancelotti Dobson, 1952] by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, pp. 338–42.) Length, unfamiliarity, abstractness, and generality are

together in the phrase "maximizing the additivity" of something. The sad truth is that the writer who used those words combined them with "in terms of"; he really did say "in terms of maximizing the additivity." And he is not a fuzzy thinker. He knows what he wants to say. He just did not, in the draft I read, take the time to find a better way to say it. There must be a better way.

That the length of words affects the cleanness and force of writing is not news. The powerful effect of short words hits one most forcibly in Ernest Hemingway's prose. His sentences strike like bullets. All are clear-cut and forceful. It is remarkable how many are built entirely of words of one syllable. Indeed, I found nearly a whole page of his writing that contained hardly a word of more than one syllable. Recalling this finding, it occurred to me to measure the length of words used by a few economists, using the number of syllables as a measure of length. Of course one should allow for the more technical nature of most economic writing. Still, I daresay that some of us could describe a bullfight in a way that would make it as difficult to understand as an econometric model of the American economy. In order to avoid loading the dice against the writing that has goaded me into making these observations, I have compared one of these writings not only with Hemingway's but with those of two of the better writers among economists. To get a reasonable sample of each man's writing I have counted the words used in a few paragraphs of each manuscript or published book, one or two from portions that do not deal with technical matters, and one or two from portions that do. I do not claim that the sample was chosen scientifically. The results, for whatever they are worth, are summarized in Table 1.

The difference among the economists is perhaps not very great, although if one remembers that the minimum possible number of syllables per 100 words is 100, the difference between 175 and 163 is not negligible. The difference in ease of reading of Economist No. 1 and the other two economists exceeds what the difference in their syllable counts suggests. That fact shows that such a count has only a limited value. But it is striking that the Hemingway samples have only 122 syllables per 100 words and that only 4 per cent of his words contain three or more syllables.

TABLE 1

WRITER	PERCENTAGE OF WORDS HAVING:				NUMBER OF SYLLABLES PER 100 WORDS
	One Syllable	One or Two Syllables	Three Syllables	Four or more Syllables	
Economist No. 1 . .	57	76	18	6	175
Economist No. 2 . .	52	81	14	5	173
Economist No. 3 . .	64	81	13	6	163
Ernest Hemingway* .	83	96	4	0	122

When words are not only long but general and abstract, the combination is deadly. The difference between such words and short, specific concrete ones is strikingly brought out by George Orwell in his "Politics and the English Language," to which Herbert Morton, for years the director of publications at Brookings, called my attention. Orwell quotes a passage from the Bible and then paraphrases it in what he calls "modern English of the worst sort." I shall reverse that order and give you his version first. You will probably not find it notable in any way because it is written in the style we read every day. Here it is in modern English:

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena can lead to the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable invariably must be taken into account.

Now here, with a few introductory words omitted, is how the same thought is expressed in Ecclesiastes:

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Apart from the "neither yet," the "nor yet," and "happen" which give this version its touch of the archaic, this *could* be written by any good modern writer on poverty. But you will all know how to bet on which version will be more closely approached by those who are now writing on the subject.

If we all aspired to be Hemingways, we should have to work at least as hard on our writing as he did. In *A Moveable Feast* Hemingway sometimes took him a whole morning to write a paragraph. When you read that book you will see why. Although it would be a poor use of resources for economists to spend that much time in polishing, it is obvious that many of us should spend a good deal more time in revising our drafts than we do now. None of us has a right, even at the stage of drafting, to impose on others writing that does not meet the requirement of clarity. The writer who does so not only irritates the colleagues who must read what he writes, and wastes their time, but also forgoes the larger audience he might otherwise read what he has to say. He thereby forgoes the influence his work might have.

WALTER S. SALAI

The Brookings Institution

¹ In George Orwell, *Collection of Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 1954).

18 On Writing Scholarly Articles

Louis J. Budd

I will cheerfully admit to a squinting view because I am mostly going to discuss pitfalls, but the writing up of original research or new insights into a text or fundamental theory does bring deep satisfactions, and I intend finally to sound not only helpful but upbeat. I certainly intend to encourage beginners, if only for the sake of their professional self-development, which should include humility. Too many instructors who grade undergraduate term papers tyrannically have never run the gauntlet of their peers, have in fact not subjected their own work to criticism since they finished graduate studies.

I also admit to a hope that nobody will follow my advice blindly. In dealing with editors and, through them, with usually anonymous but very human referees, authors should trust their own reasoned sense of how they would behave from the other side of the transaction. Too many beginners listen gullibly to somebody who, elated by an acceptance (maybe a scratch single or even a bunt), is hot to explain the tricks of hitting a home run every time at bat. The accomplished scholars who have offered advice on how to get an article published don't bother with the tactics of outwitting editors. They know that a veteran editor, like a weathered traffic cop or a ticket-taker at the Super Bowl, has already seen most dodges many times.

Preparing a Manuscript

Although my details and examples draw on the field of literature, I believe that my advice applies more generally, for the humanities anyway. Experienced critics and scholars from many fields will agree on basic principles about content and style. First, and perhaps surprisingly, they will say: submit one article at a time. A common mistake is to add a loosely related but

revealingly detachable section to an already substantial manuscript (which perhaps compresses a Ph.D. dissertation). Likewise, too many manuscripts include tangential mini-essays disguised as footnotes or endnotes. As a mechanical but generally sound rule: if a comment longer than two or three (brief!) sentences does not rate promotion to the main text, it is probably dispensable. In any case, most readers will pay little attention to long notes unless to decide that the article looks too heavy for mental transport. A corollary rule is to avoid inflating notes with information that is just marginally relevant but is "new," that is, supplies a lost fact or obscure linkage that happened to resurface along the research way. A scholarly article is not a personal essay (which is still harder to do successfully) or a "bet-you-didn't-know" kind of chat.

Another overdone feature of the notes is the phrase—literal or implied—that announces "on the other hand," and even "on the other, other hand," suggesting a scholarly octopus. I don't mean to grow supercilious. Sometimes the notes poll a mob of quarreling predecessors because the author wants to acknowledge all debts or, more anxiously, to avoid any hint of plagiarism. But I'm simpleminded enough to believe that anyone at the undergraduate level or above who is trying to operate honestly will refer here and there to the main sources being used and so has nothing to fear. I also believe that plagiarists know exactly what they are up to, no matter how skillfully they play the part of shocked innocence later. And I am content to believe that plagiarism, once published, is always spotted, that the diligent, bleary-eyed scholars who cover out-of-the-way journals will remember where they had already seen some passage. As for deliberately twisting or just bending the documentary sources to make a believable case, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for 6 February 1985 features the attack of senior historians on an assistant professor for, allegedly, this cardinal offense.

The converse of the principles of relevance and unity is to have enough genuinely fresh material for an article, or else, still fresh and up-to-date. The starting Ph.D. is usually assigned a substantial load of students (and, these days, feels lucky to get it). By the time an article gets into the mail, four or six years (surprisingly) may have elapsed since the last careful search of the bibliographies for a dissertation. Referees comment regularly on a lost block of years in the citations. My point here is not to spread nervousness about getting "scooped." That very seldom happens, in fact. But other scholars and critics are, happily for them, working away and, happily for us, do keep adding insights and facts useful for our own immediate project.

As for enough fresh material, some of the submissions to every journal are

dangerously inflated, ready to explode. No doubt, as rumor has it, a harried committee on tenure may be tempted to measure by quantity rather than brilliance. In the humanities, a new idea takes much explaining and defending, and I don't know of any major scholar-critic whose reputation grew out of a one-line equation. But that fact doesn't translate logically or practically into the law that the longer, the better. Most journals give a section over to notes, and that's respectable housing too, more impressive than a note that tries to last as long as a sonata by sounding all imaginable variations or by claiming cosmic reverberations for a down-home fact. But, to follow my own precept here, I now drop this point.

Two narrower matters also concern content rather than form. First, although wit and eloquence ordinarily give pleasure, titles of articles should be not only as short as functionally possible but so descriptive as to make sure that the reader starts out right. Incidentally, punning, ironic, allusive, or otherwise elusive titles can get an essay lost in bibliographies that are coming to depend on keywords for sorting more items than any employee or committee of volunteers can scan closely. Second, and increasingly important as long-range editing projects reach their multi-volume goal, a would-be scholar must use the most dependable text for primary sources. Citing *The Scarlet Letter* from an anthology or a cheap paperback rather than the centenary edition shakes the faith of better informed readers in a scholar's alertness. Or, to argue positively, finding and using the most authoritative text "expresses a simple preference for quality."¹

Forty or fifty years ago, perhaps as a way of striving toward the prestige of the sciences, it was still common to counsel scholars in the humanities to aim for a no frills, objective style. The classic statement, itself enlivened by irony, came from a distinguished researcher and editor:

We ought, I think, at the start to realize that no reader whom we are likely to have will be nearly as much interested in our views or discoveries as we ourselves are. Most of them will be people who are a little tired, a little bored, and who read us rather out of a sense of duty and a wish to keep up with what is being done than because they have any real interest in the subject; in return for our reader's complaisance it is our duty as well as our interest to put what we have to say before him with as little trouble to him as possible. It is our duty because we ought to be kind to our fellow creature; it is to our interest because if the view that we wish to put before him is clearly and competently expressed, so that he understands without trouble what we are trying to say, he will be

gratified at the smooth working of his own intelligence and will inevitably think better of our theory and of its author than if he had had to puzzle himself over what we mean and then in the end doubt whether he had really understood us, so raising in himself an uneasy doubt whether his brains are quite what they used to be!²

This statement proceeds to a set of commandments (No. 7: "Do not try to be humorous") that are still useful to consider although, in practice, editorial boards will grumble about a conspicuous lack of color or verve. The basic wisdom here may be double: authors have to depend on their own judgment, taste, and goals while expecting the usual human variability of response from readers as well as an editor, the immediate lion in the path.

Beyond generalities and tips on niceties of detail, nobody can explain how to compose a publishable article, although a senior scholar-critic has come closest lately, after warning that "there is no formula."³ Most cogent of all are his rule that beginners "assume too little and tell too much" and his advice that rather than worry that somebody may have scooped them, they should think in terms of joining a "dialogue" about their subject. My own gloss on that latter point warns against quickness to scold someone known only as a signature to published work. The young scholar may eventually meet that victim with embarrassment and, in some instances, with a blocked chance for interplay. The wisdom of diplomacy aside, none of us should cry up our own originality by running down predecessors. Indeed, we should blow the annunciatory trumpet lightly, if at all. The experts, our key audience, know what's already in print, and the other readers will infer that the fact of publication certifies some degree of firstness. As a related misstep, beginners are too quick to conduct a census of the relevant bibliography in the opening paragraph or first note. The expert audience knows all that, and the cogency and balance of any article should quietly testify throughout to mastery of the recorded scholarship.

Two other tangential issues on content. First, the "most consistent reaction" of editorial boards is to call for "substantial cuts."⁴ This call is not made automatically and should not be anticipated by the tactic of submitting forty pages while expecting to come down to twenty-five. Editing a journal uses a more direct approach than selling used cars, and we all need to stay aware that wordiness and overkill are standard mistakes. Second, my decades (I'm sorry to be able to say) of scanning journals in my field lead to advice against invoking the latest innovators of theory; the pollster would discount their eminence for the recency effect. An idea is sound not because a sage said so

but because our minds accept it. Though we want to give credit where due, our readers will sense the difference between integrity and the urge to flaunt some name; especially glaring are those notes that conduct a mini-course in trendy wisdom. The guru-worshipping article will sound outdated sooner even than young scholars will hear a new instructor addressing them as "sir" or "ma'am."

The job-seeking ABD may wonder if a term paper is publishable right off. While real-life cases answer "Yes," one accomplished veteran, putting himself on the schedule of the seminar he was directing, found that he could not create a mailable article from scratch. Besides the pressure of time, it is most unlikely that a paper shaped for a seminar of one's peers or just its ayatollah will suit the editors as well as the format of some journal or—far more fundamental—will have squarely matched the gestalt of standards, tone, and niceties currently favored by the subprofession involved. Another veteran warns both young and old: "Resist the desire" to mail out an article "right away. After a week or two much which looked like very oak may well turn out to be slash pine instead."⁵ To be sure, the job market pushes even ABDs into print, but if they recognize the underlying dilemma, they may decide more shrewdly: the home department often prefers speed and quantity, while out in the profession and for the long run, quality counts much more. In any case, no pressure for speed can excuse a submission that carries half-erased, term-paper stigmata such as the professor's red pencilings.

The fresh-minted Ph.D. may have to decide whether to aim for a book from the dissertation or to mine a few chapters. Again, the answer will differ from campus to campus. Where quick results are needed, it's not likely that a single article can condense a dissertation yet hold to an acceptable length, which very definitely includes the notes. It's plain improbable that any single chapter as once written will make a successful article; it will have to be reworked to look and sound freestanding. Then, like a revamped term paper or, indeed, any manuscript, it needs a critique from a tough-minded, candid friend. The editorial board can get still tougher, though not because the author is a beginner. In spite of rumors of cronyism, referees and editors can come down hardest on their peers who "ought to know better by now."

Submitting the Article

After the pressures and anxieties of getting an article ready, the author should stay keyed up for the decision of where to submit it. In the field of literature the *MLA Directory of Periodicals* can help you choose among

scores of possibilities; for example, some journals refuse to consider note-length item whereas others especially welcome it. Here and elsewhere as I apologized at the beginning, common sense should make detailed advice superfluous. Choosing a journal that the author reads regularly should prevent an obvious misplacement.⁶ Just leafing through several issues of a journal will reveal, for instance, that the *Sewanee Review* will "seldom publish analyses of single works (and never of short stories and poems)." *American Studies* warns that many manuscripts are rejected "not because of their quality but because they are too narrow for use: their authors seem unfamiliar with our editorial policies and the nature of our readers' interests." On the immediate level, someone who's been too busy getting through graduate school to feel surefooted among a forest of journals should consult an older colleague about the best matchup. In the longer run of course, the would-be author has to keep up with the relevant journals and books to nurture a realistic sense of what is publishable and where.

To come back to the rumors of cronyism, I state flatly: it's worthwhile for anybody to try the most prestigious journals. As calm analysis shows, they publish many first-time authors. Money, furthermore, is not a problem; no journal in the humanities exacts a fee for submission or "page charges" for printing. (On the other hand, very few journals pay at all and none pay handsomely for either articles or book reviews; anybody needing immediate income will earn more by selling encyclopedias door to door.) In choosing the level to try, however, the author has to judge realistically whether the manuscript itself is major or minor, whether—to adapt Herman Melville—it deals with a whale or a flea. But what if the subject is so major that some desirable journal has lately carried two or three articles related to it? *American Studies* takes the trouble to assert: "Articles are accepted or rejected because of our perception of their worth, and not because we have run too few or too many on given subjects." To put the matter positively, some editors believe that their subscribers like a cluster of articles, particularly on a major subject.

About ten years ago the younger cohort began pressing for anonymous submission. A few journals do now carefully hide the names of authors from the referees, but nobody has yet proved that such a policy raises the rate of acceptances for any group who consider themselves outsiders. Although *PMLA* had its first "all-female" issue in October 1984, its male editor doubted that anonymous submission made even part of the reason for that. Blind refereeing (no slyness intended) has the possible virtue of letting the young or otherwise supposedly excluded feel less suspicious. Still, in considering

where to submit an article, I would not use this policy as a criterion.

To put another increasingly live matter as negatively as possible, nobody should even contemplate making a double (or multiple!) submission. After growling that "we strongly resent" it, *American Studies* threatens that "our policy when we identify" it is to "notify the [would-be] contributor's academic dean or chairman," who will, I predict, side grimly with the editor. Of the double-dealers who pretend surprise that anybody could object, I merely ask that they inform all editors concerned. A problem more cheerful and even amusing to those who look up from the bottom rung is whether it's wise to appear in the same journal a second or third time. As a yuppie might ask, should we diversify our portfolios? If that journal has at least average standing, I would seize the day. In the long run the quality of the article counts much more than its former companions.

Although I am focusing on articles, the tenure-track scholar will wonder about their payoff relative to a book. Coffee-break wisdom used to make six (or whatever) "solid" articles equal to a solo in hardcovers, but I seldom hear any such formula lately. Now the grimmest sages warn, "Go only for a book!" That's dismaying to those who don't believe they have as yet developed a line of thought that deserves and will find such a berth. But only the very attractive departments can insist on so high a price for tenure.

A specialized anxiety asks, "How much does an edited book count?" Even a showily decisive umpire would have to answer, "That depends." Depends on the variety of editing and on the person counting. Mere compilation rates close to zero while sophisticated handling of texts that pose intricate problems will impress anybody except the loftiest metatheorists (who could respond that a few textual enthusiasts deride analysis and speculation as ersatz whipped cream). In big-league calculation the ordinary textbook counts low and even may arouse scorn hiding envy of royalties. Getting back to articles, papers read at conferences may count much less with more dignity. However, if published later their tenure points will vary directly with the quality of the symposium and its publisher or the journal that prints it. As for the relative prestige of journals, there is probably measurable agreement among the members of any specialty.⁷ But I grow uneasy as questions keep arising: "How's the Dow Jones on coauthors? on coeditors?" In such dogged calculating the figures can add up to a humanly wrong answer. I am idealistic enough to predict that young Ph.D.'s will find the most satisfaction—and material success, quite possibly—by allowing much to their own personal grain as well as that of the project itself.

For nitty-gritty details, the ideal is professionalism without bells and whis-

ties. Because any would-be contributor to an established journal is bucking the odds, having all zippers secure can help in borderline decisions. For example, since editors do retire eventually or just choose another incarnation, an author should check the latest masthead before addressing a cover letter. The target journal will state or show what system of documentation it follows although most editors waive such criteria until acceptance is likely.⁸ While neatness is desirable, editors understand that retypings to achieve supercleanliness will slip errors past the tiring author who has almost memorized the text. Sending the ribbon-copy (so long as that term still has meaning) tends to reassure all concerned and pleases the copy editor when the transaction gets that far. Word processor texts have graduated to full respectability and soon will rate as the natural format among those who have played with computers since kindergarten. Whatever the technology of the printout (or tape or disc), I can't imagine the day when editors won't want everything double-spaced. Everything, even the block quotations? Yes, everything! While as dazzled as anybody by electronic agility, editors also want the manuscript printed on one side of the sheet only. The savings will come in their bill for over-the-counter drugs.

Shifting to *don'ts* for emphasis, I repeat that an author merely wastes time by playing games with an experienced editor who long ago saw, for example, the trick of hiding length with margins so narrow that the copy editor will have to sit sideways to use them. Authors should not devise a table or diagram without realizing that it means added expense—higher than they're likely to estimate—for any journal. They are probably wiser to draw the diagram verbally or to tell readers where to find a painting already reproduced elsewhere. But I don't mean to make authors approach the editor on their knees. Publish or perish applies to a journal too, and it depends on volunteered articles. Furthermore, editors are just as upward-striving as the most ambitious author and will tolerate many annoyances in order to produce a better issue. Nevertheless, editing a journal entails borderline choices, just like shopping for tomatoes or selecting a patient for an artificial heart. In a few cases the editor has to decide irritably, at midnight, whether some article is worth all the niggling labor needed to tidy it up.

Editors, I must confess, tend to grin wryly over many a letter of inquiry. Too often it betrays that the writer has not bothered to read the journal or even the inside cover. Sometimes it tries for an advance commitment, which no editor of a refereed journal would dare to make; the only immediately definite answer can be "No." An offer of a rough draft is only slightly more welcome than a letter bomb. Offers of a sprawling manuscript that the editor

would be free to trim are welcome only if signed by either Thomas or Tom Wolfe. An admirably scrupulous author may wonder if a seminar paper must confess that it was lately waxed and buffed into an article. I see no obligation or hope of benefit for doing that.

Editors, I confess further, laugh out loud at a few covering letters for the manuscript. Since one veteran flatly warns that the letter can do more harm than good, the safest tactic is to keep it short and of course mildly sweet. Editors do understand why an author might expect them to want a brief autobiography, a list of medals, or even a c.v., but their minds fasten on the self-contained manuscript. Its author can raise distracting hackles by quoting Professor Goodheart's praises, by pressing for a quick answer (through being jumped to the head of the queue), by threatening double-submission (if the wait for response grows "excessive"), or by puffing the article as the chapter of a soon to materialize book. Ironically, journals with a high rate of rejection judge that they serve the profession best by not squandering their pages on an article scheduled soon for hard covers.

Three *do's* for a covering letter, the first to the author's benefit alone. It should explicitly ask for any criticism the editor can find time to transmit. Having felt the sting of rejection themselves, editors tend to filter out the harsher commentary from the referees, and to transmit all of it only when urged. I'm not preaching masochism, but in order to revise effectively the author needs the frankest critiques. A second positive feature for a covering letter is to show, where necessary, alertness to problems of quoting restricted materials. Although the author will have to accept the legal responsibility in writing, journals balk at any chance of getting drawn into litigation over copyright. Therefore, authors must remember to honor those forms that a repository of manuscripts presents for signature at the door. The tenured cohort will line up against a colleague who breaks such a vow because the research library is their temple. Third, a covering letter should fit the particular addressee rather than revealing that it perhaps serves for a variety of journals.

Waiting for a Response

There's a relief when the article flies off in the mail along with, ominously, a stamped, self-addressed envelope. But after a well-run journal acknowledges safe arrival, the next problem sprouts: how to behave while the jury is out. Usually its verdict will take at least three months. After six months a simple inquiry, undisguised as a concern for the editor's happiness, is forgiv-

able, although, ordinarily, some referee is the bottleneck. Phone calls can be annoying unless the editor happens to live inside the filing cabinet and has everything within reach. However long the delay, editors seldom bawl out a referee, who is by definition a busy scholar, and they cannot withhold a salary adjusted at zero.

But all sides deserve empathy. The author suffers with no assured date of relief and perhaps with a decision on tenure grinding toward its deadline. What about trying to withdraw the article and resubmit it elsewhere? I say "trying" because it is probably out in the pipeline and the editor can't recover it quickly. Another dilemma: to withdraw is to waste months of waiting, perhaps just a week short of a verdict. With most journals the sufferer will do best simply to meditate upon the relativity of emotional time. Or the action-oriented mind should draft another article. But what if the author tinkers meanwhile with the one creeping through the mail and discovers major flaws or just improvements? Should these be rushed off to the editor? Theoretically, perhaps. In practice, however, the ongoing round may as well finish up. The editor will feel delight, not chagrin, at learning that an article just accepted will upgrade itself. In the gloomy case, the author should feel that the particular journal has devoted as much effort as one article has a right to ask. In other words, if rejected the rebuilt manuscript should go elsewhere without an appeal.

Responding to the Response

To take the darker but more likely result, a familiar envelope comes back eventually. Then, as Hyman Rodman asks, "What shall I do if my excellent article is (foolishly, mistakenly) rejected?" First, I remind myself that the odds were against me. Second, I remember that eminent scholars have confessed to having tried two or three or more journals before an acceptance. Editors presume that now and then an article has rebounded from another journal, and they have had many chances to marvel at conflicting judgments, even as they may believe the real blunders occur elsewhere. Because they trust the collective judgment of their own referees, they don't try to discover the previous travels of a manuscript. On the other hand, the author, who has no obligation to describe those travels, can consider it courteous rather than shrewd to remove any signs of a world tour, if only by running off the first page to match the next journal's format for titles and the name of a contributor.

The author who believes in an article (and therefore feels ethical in burdening unpaid referees) will keep resubmitting it elsewhere with deliberated

speed until the criticism grows convincing. A cleverly sardonic letter of protest will change not a rendered verdict but the writer's reputation with the addressee. Anybody who asked to hear any and all criticism has implicitly promised to take it without a whimper. Likewise, demanding to know the identity of the mistaken referees is pointless. If the editor did not include that fact routinely, it's because they have been promised or have requested anonymity to avoid a time-consuming and mostly futile debate. Another unwritten principle bars resubmitting even a basically improved article to the same journal. The absence of a specific invitation is in fact a genteel version of "Don't call us; we'll call you." Nevertheless, editors remain sincerely open to a different submission from any author who has behaved with at least minimal courtesy. I repeat: editors want good articles to accept. At their desk they don't see any humor in the gag: "Who won the beauty contest? Nobody."

So the author reenters the process of choosing a target, quicker this time perhaps. But not too quick! First, those causes for rejection must be considered—not supinely adopted, yet pondered, pondered. But perhaps not even that quick! One veteran challenges the author to achieve the discipline of rereading the article before taking in the letter of rejection.⁹ Less heroically, I warn against assuming that the editor's report covered all the flaws. Now that time has distanced the article mentally, the author should struggle to judge it impersonally. If the criticisms still look wrong, then a qualified colleague could break the tie. But the votes must be counted honestly, not by a beginner who daydreams about proving to be the scholars' Billy Arnold or Francis Coppola. And the voters must be honest—not a Willie Loman desperate to be well liked nor a tweedy Boss Tweed.

Although that manila envelope eventually returns, sometimes it carries an acceptance. If it only breathes come-hitherness, how often did all the judges award a ten during the 1984 Olympics? A bill of revisions is an omen of eventual acceptance, especially if the author takes them up reflectively—not conforming humbly but not turning pigheaded either. Four more *don'ts*. First, a gullible author should not listen to the dopest's wisdom that suggestions for changes are just wordplay because editors want to flaunt their authority and will accept whatever comes back. Second, a weary author should not sag into simply correcting the article to mollify a superteacher. As I said, editors are delighted to let an article rise to greater excellence than they asked for. Third, the anxious author must not hurry just because the journal might fold or the editor might have a change of mind or scholarship might go out of fashion. So far only the first disaster has happened, rarely. Fourth, the triumphant author must not skimp when the call for rechecking

of fact and style brings back the superbly crafted article too. Surprisingly many authors turn careless after the precision and effort needed to get it far. Errors have inevitably crept in between taking notes and polishing typescript, and, fairly or not, readers will blame even the flagrant typos more on the author than on the editor.

Not all journals now incur the expenses of sending out a set of proofs. Authors lucky enough to get it should assume that it will contain typographical errors to be hunted down. They must prepare to hunt stoically and because some phrasings will cry out for improvement. But a subsidized journal cannot run up its bills to indulge the writer who didn't take the rechecking stage seriously. Any tinkering with the proofs cost money. Always remember the request for very late changes if they "are not too much trouble for the printer." It visualizes an editor strolling to a ramshackle shop where an old-timer ("Doc" or "Pop") wearing a green eyeshade picks typos out of a case and makes changes free of charge while chatting laconically. I steal from Mark Twain, I wish the world could be that young again. Changing "just one word" in a plate done through a computer may cost still more than casting and inserting a slug of linotype: an expert has to instruct a very expensive machine how to search its circuits while the savings promised by new technology keep slipping away like a balanced federal budget. More generally it is helpful to remember that every journal has to stay within its income-plus-subsidy.

Breaking into Print

But we do achieve some of our dreams. A copy of the glorious issue will turn up followed months later by offprints, either free of charge or else at cost. If at cost, how many to buy? or how many to photocopy? The answer could dodge behind another, embarrassing question: How many friends do you have? I have never managed to send out many more than thirty offprints to friends and fellow specialists. The proud author who waits for requests will save handsomely on postage.

Having joined the side of editors and publishing scholars, the author may even start thinking in terms of solidarity. In positive terms that include urging overly modest colleagues or students to aim for the pleasures of breaking into print. However, true solidarity also forbids encouraging the unready as a way of building a local image for kindness. Every journal gets submissions that don't rate so high as amateurish. Whoever encourages them should pray that the covering letter did not identify him or her. On

the rarest undergraduate paper deserves to travel beyond the campus. A teacher can lavish enough praise, greedy as we all are for it, without causing work and expense for a subsidized journal. Another path toward solidarity with the profession leads to giving a frank and prompt critique if a colleague asks—and seems able to accept it.

Book Reviewing

My biggest surprise as managing editor of a quarterly has been the flow of offers to review books. Do journals welcome an unsolicited review? Categorically, no. Besides, because they receive their copies early they have already lined up a reviewer. Is it worthwhile applying for a specific review? Though the answer should again be “no,” editors are always looking for qualified recruits and may gamble on having allowed press agency or having seconded a vendetta. Before applying, check to see whether the journal designates an editor especially for book reviews; also, consider that the few journals that give all their space to reviewing are more likely to need volunteers. More specifically, is it worthwhile to submit a curriculum vitae or a statement on areas of strength? That can often bring results. But—the most important question by far—is it worthwhile for an untenured academic to do any reviewing at all? That answer depends on the home department, which can range from beaming proudly at any sign of print to deducting points for popping small corn. Finally, doing a review just to get a free copy of a book really means working far below the minimum wage.

The scholar who publishes several good articles will probably be offered more than enough reviewing. Even when moved solely by altruism, anybody who accepts a book should meet the deadline; if simply out of pity for the author, who hasn't been so impatient since childhood over how slowly time can pass. The reviewer should also honor the limit on words set by editors, who agonize over the deserving books that the journal can't make room for and who will bristle at excuses that the assigned length was unfair to the author, the subject, the large field, or—most deplorably of all—the reviewer.¹⁰ While editors dislike having all the reviews wallow in kindness, they realize that usually more effort pours into a book than a gaggle of articles. Therefore, they welcome only the severity that is clearly deserved, and they know that the acrid reviewer will suffer through keeping poised to stroll the other way while scanning nametags at a convention.

Thinking Positively About Editors

I hope that nobody will avoid or else snub editors. There's no benefit in feeling resentful toward them. As publishing scholars they have learned that rejections hurt and that revising can feel like swimming in army boots. Editors who enjoy sadism soon get run out of the office. Those who last will commit errors of kindness, inconsistencies, oversights, and stupid mistakes, all of which are inevitably pointed out because they are so public. Editors have to apologize for any bloopers they helped to cause while silently digging out perhaps worse and certainly more frequent errors. They have to console themselves privately that they also helped an author to add effectiveness as well as missed sources.

A former adviser on scholarly publication to the American Council of Learned Societies has philosophized:

Scholarly editors seem not infrequently to be harassed by the very people who should be their pride and joy, the apples of their editorial eyes—their contributors. And this is strange, because, much as the editor needs his contributors, the more do the contributors need him.

For this reason, the maintenance of an editor in good health and humor is not only a worthy but a very practicable pursuit. He is a man who gives up to this work a good deal because he has probably long neglected his own research because of it: who is often unpaid or underpaid for his editorial services: who is assisted, if assisted at all, by colleagues half a country away; who is continually forced to argue with his treasurer or his university press or provost over his printing bills; and who on top of all this quite rarely receives manuscripts in really top condition, written with the style of his journal in mind, in good English, clear, clean and succinct.¹¹

I am trying to fan not sympathy but empathy: to humanize editors in the mind of the author, who should see them as allies and who should recognize that they will respond to candid sincerity. They are particularly eager to hear what the profession is thinking and saying about their journal.

To finish where I began, I apologize for any dampening effect. Still, I don't intend to persuade the cynics to enlist. If they are not moved to publish for idealistic reasons, in good part anyway, then they won't write much that's worthwhile. Rather, I mean to assure the willing beginner that in spite of the pains there's much pleasure in conducting research and then promoting it into print. Hang gliding may carry sharper thrills, but scholarship can anchor a lifetime.

Notes

- 1 Terence Martin, "Meditations on Writing an Article," *American Literature* 55 (Nov 1983): 74. Hershel Parker's *Flawed Texts & Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1984) recurrently makes point among much more substantial reasons.
- 2 From "Form and Matter in the Publication of Research"; published first in *Review of English Studies* in 1940, it gained semiofficial status by being reprinted in *PMLA* (1950) and then as part of a pamphlet from the Modern Language Association; it is best available in John Philip Immroth, *Ronald Brunlees McKerrow: A Selection of Essays* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974), pp. 195-202.
- 3 Martin, "Meditations," p. 76. Barbara R. Reitt, "An Academic Author's Checklist," *Scholarly Publishing* 16 (October 1984): 65-72, gives an excellently practical and compact of guidelines; she also recommends other sources of advice.
- 4 "Editor's Column," *PMLA* (October 1984).
- 5 Henry M. Silver, "Putting It on Paper," *PMLA* 65 (April 1950): 14.
- 6 This and other pointers appear in Hyman Rodman, "Some Practical Advice for Journal Contributors," *Scholarly Publishing* 9 (April 1978), 235-41.
- 7 In *College English* (April 1980) Michael West rated journals mostly in the field of British and American literature; the December 1980 issue carried a storm of responses.
- 8 In the field of literature and languages, many journals have adopted the latest *MLA* manual for style. But surely those journals keeping an older form will not insist on it before a reading.
- 9 Murray F. Markland, "Taking Criticism—and Using It," *Scholarly Publishing* 14 (February 1983): 139-47.
- 10 I amplify this point in "Bootcamp for Book Reviewers," *American Literature* 54 (October 1982): 277-83. More generally useful is Roy S. Wolper, "On Academic Reviewing: Common Errors," *Scholarly Publishing* 16 (April 1985): 269-75; Wolper contains references to other sources, furthermore.
- 11 Silver, "Putting It on Paper," p. 11.

19 Publishing in Science

Boyd R. Strain

This essay addresses the problems experienced by young scientists in publishing the results of their work. Why publish and how does one go about it?

Several handbooks and manuals have been published on the subject. The most useful is *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*. The second edition of this little book by Robert A. Day appeared in 1983. It is up-to-date, even including a chapter on the electronic manuscript, and contains sound advice from an experienced managing editor of a major scientific journal. The bibliography of this handbook lists several other publications that provide additional information on the issues presented below.

Purpose of Scientific Publishing

The purpose of publishing scientific papers is to complete the task of doing research. A scientific experiment, no matter how spectacular the results, is not completed until the results are published. Knowledge gained by the scientific method but not passed on to society by scientific writing is of no more value and is no more reliable than the folk stories of prehistoric tribes.

Why Publish Scientific Papers

There are primary motivating forces that encourage scientists to complete their research efforts. One of these is the scientific establishment. In 1974 the official government policy of the Federal Council of Science and Technology stated: "The publication of research results is an essential part of the research process. This has been recognized in part through"

tion to pay publication costs from federal research grant and contract funds." The scientific establishment demands that research results be published. The investigator who does not publish will not be retained within that establishment. The nonpublisher will be barred from normal vehicles of scientific interaction, that is, meetings, invited oral and letter symposia, and cooperative book-writing projects. The nonpublisher will not continue to receive external grant or contract funds awarded through the peer review process. The scientific establishment soon excludes those who fail to complete research by writing scientific papers.

A second force that encourages individuals to publish scientific papers is the simple fact that people like to be recognized. Individuals become known to the scientific community by publishing the results of their research. It is a great feeling to see your work in print; it is even more pleasing to have others contact you to discuss your research results after a paper has appeared in print. Thus, for some people, a personal sense of gratification is obtained from seeing their name and their research results and ideas in print.

In contemporary academia, there is a third reason for publishing. The investigator who does not believe it is necessary to publish to complete research, who neither expects nor desires personal attention, or who feels that his/her research is not yet ready to appear in print, frequently learns firsthand of the dictum *publish or perish*.

Universities and research institutes expect employees to do research and to carry it through to publication. Basically the employers believe that research unpublished is research not completed. Investigators are expected to organize their research so that it can be completed in units with some reasonable time scale. The average number of research papers your chairman expects you to publish per year varies with discipline and with institution. The "wise" young professor at a major research university, however, will strive to have six to nine senior-authored titles by the end of the third year of his or her initial appointment.

The Form of Scientific Papers

Writers of papers to be published in scientific journals do not have the freedom to arrange their papers in unique ways. By three hundred years of tradition, enforced by the need to communicate precisely and concisely, scientific writing has become rigidly stylized. Every scientific paper will have a title, an author with address, an abstract, an introduction, a section on methods and materials, a section on results, a discussion of those results,

and a list of references cited in the paper. Lengthy papers may have additional sections or appendixes, but these too must fall within traditional guidelines. Very short research papers may be published without all of the section headings, but the information must be arranged in the above or below order. Some scientific journals have adopted modifications of this order, and the authority to determine the actual form to be published is the editor-in-chief of the respective publication. Therefore an author may partially control the form of the paper by selecting a journal that uses an acceptable style. Rarely, however, can an author diverge from the traditional style of a given period, and rarely do journals differ significantly from the historical norm.

How to Write Scientific Papers

Since the objective of publishing a scientific paper is to complete a study by communicating the new discoveries, a paper should be direct, concise, and uncluttered with extraneous information. If a paper reports new and original results, it will be necessary to completely introduce the subject, state the objective, clearly describe the methods and materials used, state the results in sufficient detail to allow others to judge the adequacy of the discussion and the accuracy of the conclusions. A paper may be shorter if it is reporting results of a study conducted to repeat or confirm a previously published observation.

All scientists develop their own procedures for the preparation of papers. Many people prefer to write the results section first, but I begin with the section on methods and materials. This serves to get the easiest part of the paper done and to get me motivated. Then I write the section on results. The discussion flows naturally from writing the details of the results. The major conclusions can be stated in an itemized summary or in narrative form. Preparing the reference list is a purely technical operation and should follow the requirement of the journal to which the paper is to be submitted. This step should be postponed until the journal selection has been made. Experienced scientists may be able to select a journal style before preparing the first draft, but the beginner will need a draft in hand before advice can be sought on an appropriate journal.

After completing these sections, an introduction can be written that specifically addresses the paper as it will go out for review. If you attempt to write the introduction first, you may have difficulty staying on track. If the project is complex, it will be difficult to know how to introduce the paper until the content sections are finished.

Now, one has only to write a concise abstract and finally to select an informative and specific title. Titles and abstracts are the most read sections of all scientific papers. Consequently, both should be prepared very carefully. A good title contains the fewest possible words that adequately describe the content of the paper. Its purpose is to inform readers that something was done in a specific research area. If the reader is interested in that area, he or she will take the time to read the abstract. A good abstract will inform the reader of the basic content of the paper and will enable the reader to decide if the paper should be studied in more detail.

*How to Complete a Paper and to Prepare It
for Submission to a Specific Scientific Journal*

Once a paper has been completed as explained above, it should be circulated among your colleagues and students for help in revisions. All papers will benefit from revision, revision, and more revision. You need assistance in clarifying sentences, finding redundancies, and discovering missing critical information. Ask your reviewers to consider the paper as if they had received it for an anonymous review from a journal editor. Take their suggestions seriously and improve the manuscript as much as possible. Avoid spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors. If you have figures, draw them neatly and carefully to insure that the manuscript "looks" professional. A reviewer with confidence in style will tend to have confidence in content.

It is now time to make the final decision on the journal to which the manuscript will be submitted. Several factors must be considered in making a journal selection. List the journals that have been publishing papers in your subject area. Scanning recent issues of *Current Contents* may help if you are not certain.

To determine if the editor of a given journal may be interested in your material, read the masthead statement in a current issue, review the table of contents of several recent issues, and read the "Instructions to Authors" usually provided inside the front or back cover of each issue. It is also appropriate to ask the editor if your material is suitable for the journal in question.

Of those journals that publish in your field, what is the average time from the date of first receipt by the editor to the date that the paper appears in print? Some scientific journals now have a two-year lag-time while the total elapsed time in others is less than six months. A young professor cannot afford to submit to a journal that takes a year or more to decide on publishability.

From those journals that you deem to be appropriate for your paper, select the journal that has the best prestige factor. Generally the highest prestige occurs in the journal of the major society in your discipline. Unfortunately, journals of the major societies are frequently the slowest in receiving and publishing. Another unfortunate fact is the high rejection rate of prestigious journals. Some major journals must reject 60 percent or more of the manuscripts received for review. You will have to weigh prestige against lag and the probability of acceptance to make your final selection.

Once you have determined the journal, obtain a copy of the "Instructions to Authors" for that journal. Usually instructions are printed in at least one issue of each volume. Also instructions may be obtained by writing to the printer or the editor following instructions printed in the journals. Follow these instructions as closely as possible. Study papers similar to yours published in recent issues of the journal. Carefully prepare your paper following instructions on length and style, graphs, tables and illustrations, citation style. As stated above, most prestigious journals receive more manuscripts than can be accepted. Reviewers and editors do not have much patience for authors who do not follow instructions. Do not forget that your manuscript can be rejected for any reason. Do not give the editor the opportunity to reject your manuscript on the basis of style alone.

Submitting the Manuscript

Follow the instructions to the letter. Send the number of copies with all materials in the exact form and size required. If instructions call for graphs to be submitted in three copies on glossy photographic paper in a size to be reduced 50 percent for printing, do just that!

Provide a covering letter addressed to the editor or as instructed by the journal. Include the title of your paper and any information that you think the editor may need to manage the review. I recently advised a student to include in his paper a lengthy and detailed review of the assumptions required to utilize his methods but to tell the editor in the covering letter that this material could be deleted if the editor considered it to be unnecessary for the average reader of the journal. If you will be at a different address from the one given on the manuscript when the editor will have to communicate with you, give complete mailing and telephone information with appropriate details in the covering letter.

Response to the Review

A frequent response from scientific editors these days is that the material is appropriate for the journal but that the paper will have to be revised and shortened before it can be published. My advice is to make every change required and to return the corrected manuscript within two weeks. Delays in resubmitting the manuscript will increase the probability that the editor will send it back to the reviewers or even send it out to additional reviewers. It is sometimes possible to argue a point of disagreement on a required revision, but unless the change introduces an error you should not pursue the issue. If you disagree with an editor's decisions on revisions to the point that you cannot change the manuscript as suggested, my advice is to retype the paper in the form required by another journal and send it there. Unless you can conclusively prove your point, the editor will not change the decision. Remember, most top journals are rejecting good manuscripts on the subjective decisions of the editors. You seldom will win in a disagreement on style or emphasis.

If your paper is rejected, revise it to correct problems detected by the reviewers, clarify material where necessary, and prepare it for submission to another good journal. Even though science is supposedly an objective enterprise, decisions on approach and significance are subjective matters. Material that seems mundane and boring to one scientist may seem critically important and carefully done to another. You are an expert in your field, and your subjective opinions are as good and as justifiable as those of other experts. Rather than enter into a frustrating and sometimes lengthy dialogue with dissident reviewers and editors, it is advisable to simply try another journal and keep trying. If necessary select a journal of less prestige, especially if the tenure decision is coming up. A publication in any journal may be preferable at this stage to no publication.

Reading Proof

After your manuscript has been accepted it will be sent to a printer to be typeset. At some point you will receive page proofs or galley proofs with instructions on how to read and correct the proofs. You will also usually receive instructions to change only those items that are incorrect. Printers' errors in typesetting will be corrected and minor changes made by the author will be made at no charge to the author.

Significant changes required after the type has been set will only be made

if the text is in error. If the error was on the manuscript sent to the printer, the author may be required to pay a charge for resetting the type.

Most printers send detailed instructions on how to mark the proof. Follow these instructions as closely as possible. The *CBE Style Manual* (1978) has extensive instructions for editing proof copy. If specific instructions are not provided by the printer, find a style manual appropriate for your field and follow it to the best of your ability.

Many errors can creep into a manuscript in the typesetting process. You must read proofs with all of the care that you can muster. My technique is to have a coauthor or other knowledgeable person read the manuscript to me while I follow along studying every word and symbol on the proof. Another technique is to compare the proof to the manuscript reading the entire paper backwards one word at a time. I have never had the patience for this procedure, but some people use it. One of my colleagues swears that he gives the proofs to a graduate student along with the threat that the student will never graduate if that paper contains a printing error when it appears!

Remember, your published papers are the permanent record of your contributions to your discipline. A mistake that appears in print in a scientific paper will be there forever. You are the final authority for your published work, and the ultimate responsibility for its quality is yours. Reading, correcting, and approving proofs is your final opportunity to get it right.

Proofs should be corrected and returned to the printer by return mail. Some journals allow only forty-eight hours to correct and return proofs. If you cannot meet the designated time, write or call the person to whom proofs are to be returned and give them the date that the proofs will be returned.

Ordering Reprints and Paying Page Charges

You will be offered the opportunity to purchase reprints of your article when the proofs are returned to you. Payment will be due when the reprint order is submitted or a university purchase order must be supplied. Currently a six- to ten-page paper will cost about \$100 per 100 reprints. The number of reprints to be ordered depends on the popularity of your subject and on the availability of funds. Some journals provide 25 or 50 free reprints. I usually order 300 reprints. Your published papers are the best advertisement of your work. Order many reprints and distribute them liberally. Your professors should send unsolicited reprints to well-known scientists in the field.

Page charges have been levied by most societies for publishing in the

societal journals. Some societies allow five to ten free pages per member per year and then charge \$40 to \$60 per page beyond the free limit. Most societies also provide the option to apply for a page charge waiver if no research funds are available to pay the charges.

Not all journals make page charges. This is usually a factor to be considered when journals are being compared. Therefore, if funds are limited and paying page charges will be a problem, this factor may affect your choice of journal for the submission of your manuscript.

Authorship of Scientific Papers

Multiple-authored papers have become commonplace in science. Modern research is often complex and may require two or more experts to design and conduct the experiments. Laboratory heads sometimes add their names to every paper originating in their laboratory. Professors frequently expect to join their students as coauthors because of their conceptual and financial inputs into the work. As a professor, you should explain your policies to each of your students.

In multiple-authored papers, the order of listing the authors should be determined and agreed upon at the beginning of each series of experiments leading to a publication. The first listed author should be the person who actually did most of the work and writing. Second or third authors should be listed in decreasing order of time and effort put into the study. The last named author is traditionally the laboratory director or the major professor who may have been instrumental in framing the overall research direction and capabilities of the group. Paid technicians normally should not be listed as authors unless they have made significant contribution to the conceptualization, interpretation, and writing of the research.

Acknowledgments

You should acknowledge colleagues, associates, or students who loan equipment, collect material for the experiment, help integrate the results, or review the manuscript. Acknowledgments of financial support from grants or contracts are also appropriately made in scientific papers. Institutional service people (e.g., technicians, typists, draftsmen) are paid to perform their services. Normally it is not necessary to acknowledge routine technical contributions to the preparation of research papers. Each journal has its own style for the inclusion of acknowledgments in the manuscript.

*Other Considerations in Scientific Publishing***REVIEWING MANUSCRIPTS**

Most journals utilize unpaid peer reviewers to read and comment on the publishability of scientific manuscripts. Reviewers are usually anonymous. As a beginning scientist you will occasionally be asked to review manuscripts. If you do a good job and do it quickly, your name will soon move into the "good reviewers" card file of several editors. Before you know it you will be receiving more manuscripts than you care to read. If you begin to receive more invitations to review than you can comfortably manage, decline them. Do not delay manuscripts because of lack of time to complete good reviews.

Conceptually, all manuscripts should be reviewed from a completely objective viewpoint. Practically, however, there are two primary approaches to the review of scientific manuscripts. One approach assumes that every manuscript is weak, contains errors, and should be rejected. Your responsibility as an anonymous reviewer is to find the problems and explain them to the editor so that the manuscript can be rejected. A second approach assumes that every manuscript reports good research, properly done, that should be published as quickly as possible. Your job is to identify the strengths of a paper and make suggestions for improvement where possible. Only those manuscripts that cannot be salvaged by detailed revision are recommended for rejection.

The former class of reviewers exists in a subsection of the card file of editors entitled "hatchet reviewers." If the editor is predisposed to reject your manuscript for any reason it will be sent to "hatchet reviewers." This is a primary reason for you to submit the most perfectly prepared manuscript possible. Carefully follow the "Instructions to Authors" for the particular journal to be used.

My advice is to be the second class of reviewer but to not accept manuscripts outside of your area of expertise and do not accept more than you can comfortably handle. We all must do our part to keep the peer review process working in scientific publication. Do not go overboard with this common service, however. Your primary obligation as a young professor is to your own work. Help the system where you can but remember your priorities. Guard your time well to ensure that your own work gets done.

BOOK REVIEWS

Writing book reviews does not count in the credit column of your promotion or perish ledger. A book review is not a scientific publication. If you are to study a new book in detail for some other reason, summarizing

findings in a published book review may be a desirable by-product. But do fall for the temptation to write book reviews in order to obtain free books. Writing a good book review requires many hours. When you divide the \$60 to \$80 price of a new reference book by the ten to fifteen hours that a worthwhile book review requires, your time was worth \$4 to \$8 per hour. You are better off to buy the book and use the time for jogging.

ETHICS IN PUBLISHING AND REVIEWING

An original scientific paper can be published only once in a scientific journal. If the same material is to be published in another journal it must be clearly marked and the original source cited. A copyright release must be obtained. Dual publication in primary research journals is basically unethical. If it can be justified, it must be done with the full awareness of all editors, publishers, and coauthors involved. Most scientific journals carry a statement that informs the authors that submission of a paper to that journal implies that the information is original and that it is not being submitted for publication to any other scientific journal. Previously published information can be republished in scientific reviews, but here also complete citation must be given and copyright laws must be honored.

Scientific writers must exert every effort to cite prior publication of concepts or results. Individuals who may have contributed ideas to a given original study should be acknowledged in the paper. It is not always possible to remember all of the stimuli leading to a scientific breakthrough, however. We must always be aware that our understanding is cumulative and is built from all of the experiences we have had. The individual components that lead to a new idea on your part may not all be remembered or identifiable. Don't forget they are there, however, and acknowledge or cite as many as possible.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

As a peer reviewer of manuscripts and proposals you will become aware of data and concepts before they are published. The use of this information before it is printed or without the consent of the original author is unethical.

I can only hope these few remarks on publishing will be helpful to those scientists (and nonscientists) about to embark on their publishing careers. If they are, of course, I will be doubly rewarded: in the knowledge that I have provided for you and in the knowledge your own work will shortly provide for me.

20 The Scholar and the Art of Publishing

Richard C. Rowson

To paraphrase a thought expressed by Stanley Hauerwas elsewhere in this volume, good publishing scholars are not those who know how to interest readers, but who write what is interesting because it is crucial to their disciplines. Publishing is the art of helping a scholar say something new and important that changes the way people think about a given problem or subject. As another author in this volume, Frank Lentricchia, said in commenting on the "central activist conception of the intellectual" in the United States, "it is not enough to interpret the world: one must try to change it as well." Good books do just that.

So, in introducing the subject of publishing to the budding scholar, it is not the "techniques" nor even the skill of communicating, but the quality of scholarship that is the controlling factor. Just what is the "quality of scholarship" that a publisher looks for in an offering from a prospective author? In a marvelously well-informed article entitled, "Scholarship: A Sacred Vocation," Professor Jaroslav Pelikan, an eminent Medieval and Renaissance scholar at Yale and formerly chair of the Yale University Press Publications Committee, offers these salient points.

First, Pelikan speaks of the need to bring the perspective of history to scholarly writing so that the reader not only learns *who* his "intellectual ancestors are," but *why* they merit such a distinction and *how* their ideas evolved. He writes: "It is one of our obligations, both as scholars and publishers, to introduce each succeeding generation of scholars to their intellectual ancestors"—rather than learning the "latest trendy jargon" or newest hypotheses—"so as to instill scientific and scholarly discipline as an intellectual virtue, without which scholarship would be only a job, not a sacred vocation."

Second, Pelikan speaks of the need for "imagination" in the interpretation

of data and in determining the meaning of findings across and among disciplines; imagination, he argues, is the essential difference between "significant and trivial research." He admonishes the publisher to seek out and encourage the scholar whose work goes beyond the normal standards of good research and brings to his findings a new vision of his subject and of its true importance.

He adds an important corollary to this point: "Scholars and presses need to become themselves the communicators of the outcome of research . . . don't leave this task to the authors of textbooks, to trade publishers, and to the *New York Times Magazine*." In other words, a scholarly author, as any other author, should "keep it simple," and lend his ideas and findings the importance they deserve by utilizing language comprehensible to the widest possible readership. As a former member of an editorial review board for a university press, Pelikan confesses to being "distressed [over] how many manuscripts are written more with the reviewer than with the reader in mind." As any good scholarly publisher knows, and as all scholarly authors must remember, a work that speaks to a broader audience in understandable language always will be selected over one that treats the same subject with the same level of scholarship, but limits its readership by the use of unnecessarily complex means of presentation.

Third, he links this need for "imagination" and clarity to the responsibility of the scholar to *teach* and argues thereby that the need to publish does not conflict with the need to teach. "The difference between bad scholarship and good scholarship is the result of what we do in graduate school, but the difference between good scholarship and great scholarship is the result of what we do in college." For this reason, he suggests, it is the responsibility of the accomplished, senior scholar to teach the freshman survey course and to bring to the undergraduate the fruits of his extensive research and publication.

Finally, Pelikan places the injunction to "publish or perish" in the context of the university's overall mission and properly, I believe, divorces it from the pejorative connotations of "tenure-track" attainment and advancement. "Publish or perish!" he writes, "is a fundamental, psychological, indeed physiological, imperative that is rooted in the very metabolism of scholarship as a vocation." It is what keeps researchers honest by exposing their processes and findings to the criticism of other scholars. To Pelikan, a community of scholars in critical dialogue with one another is the sine qua non of any university. And to that extent, it can be argued that publishing is not only integral to the scholarly activities of the university, but constitutes an essential part of its organic wholeness.

Types of Publishers and Kinds of Books

Thus far, I have addressed scholarly publishing, but the partnership of scholar and publisher need not be limited to university press publication nor to other nonprofit enterprises. I began my publishing career with a commercial publisher whose house motto was "Books that Matter." We published scores of scholarly works each year and did so quite profitably — so profitably in fact, that another publisher bought us out. There exist many specialized publishing houses that operate commercially and that offer special advantages to the scholar in terms of prompt, effective, and respected publication.

In addition, the scholar should not ignore the much larger number of commercial publishers who will seek his work if it has the potential of reaching a large market. For example, a scholar who seeks to reach a straight textbook market with major course adoptions in prospect will want to consult *Literary Market Place*, published by R. R. Bowker. This work categorizes publishers by "function" and subject matter interests. Or, should a scholar have written, or contemplate writing, a major work on an important public issue or about a significant scientific subject of interest to a large readership or should he be a fiction writer, then seeking out an appropriate commercial publisher may serve his interests better than would a scholarly press.

Before turning to the nuts and bolts of publishing with these various types of enterprises, it is important to sort out the kinds of books that a scholar may choose to write. A summary of these types and an evaluation of their relative importance to a scholar's career follows:

Scholarly monographs. These are the "stock in trade" of university presses and represent the majority of studies undertaken by scholars. They contribute to the mainstream of scholarship and as such command the serious attention of other scholars and tenure committees. They normally have very low print-runs of one thousand or fewer copies and are relatively high-priced, cloth editions. Illustrative subjects: Euripidean criticism, new musical interpretations, normal aging, a biographical study on statecraft.

Scholarly studies with textbook or general readership potential. The nature of the subject matter, or its topicality or design for student use, makes these books appeal to a larger readership, although the research base and analytical approach found in scholarly monographs also pertain here.

These studies range from fifteen hundred copies printed to a few thousand, often in simultaneous paperback and cloth editions. The "recognition" factor is greater for this type of book, but given their nature and intended

use, the scholarly kudos are not apt to be so great. Books in this category might cover: NATO, the First Amendment, world politics and international law, economic thought, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, or psychology and the arts.

Series. In an incisive but humorous article in *The American Scholar*, Robert Darnton, former member of the editorial board of Princeton University Press, in addressing the question, "how to get published?" says: "Don't submit a book. Submit a series . . . as far as I know we have never turned down a series, and we took on a half dozen during my four years on the board. Propose a series and slip in as its first volume your monograph on Jane Austen or urban politics in the Midwest." Examples: a series on the ecology of the U.S. coastline, or one analyzing literary trends and ideas, or an annual survey of the USSR and Eastern Europe. To serve as the editor of a series establishes one as a leading expert in the field covered. However, the responsibility tends to dissipate a scholar's creative energies on the arduous and time-consuming task of editing the material of others into publishable form.

Bibliographic. This is a field by itself and vital to scholars. Examples might include a bibliographic literature guide or an annotated review of autobiographical studies.

Trade. Scholars are perfectly capable of writing books that appeal to the general readership and sell, therefore, in bookstores as "trade" books. Such titles can merit print-runs of several thousand (in cloth only or with a follow-on or simultaneous paperback). However, unless you are a fiction writer in the English department or have the ability to popularize your subject area as in a book such as *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher* by Lewis Thomas (Viking Press, 1974), this is a very risky use of a young scholar's time.

Submitting a Manuscript

Turning to the business of submitting a manuscript and getting it published, Robert Darnton's article, "A Survival Strategy for Academic Authors," cited above, is instructive:

First, dear author, you should know that the odds are stacked against you. I figure them at nine to one, or ten to one, calculating the number of manuscripts submitted against the number accepted (at Princeton Press, which may be on the high side, in 1981, 1129 submissions and 120 books published) . . . [your manuscript] must clear a series of

hurdles. It must catch the eye of an editor, win the favor of two or sometimes three readers, make a preliminary cut at a pre-editorial board meeting, and survive the final selection at a monthly meeting of the editorial board, when four professors will choose a dozen manuscripts from a field of fifteen to nineteen.

An important aside is in order here regarding the publication of your dissertation. A very good article on this subject appeared in the 5 February 1986 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE)*. My own advice, based on the review of hundreds of recently minted scholars' *magna opera*, is to wait, contemplate, and reexamine your work. Stand back from it and consider how further research in more specific (or broader) areas of the subject matter could enhance its value to the scholarly world.

If you do decide on publication, keep these points in mind:

1. Revise your manuscript for the wider readership a "book" for scholars in your field may expect to reach by taking out extensive documentation and your "review of the literature," whose eruditeness may have impressed your dissertation committee but will be considered a "bore" by your other readers. Keep in mind the key question: "Does it tell the informed scholar something he doesn't know?"
2. Evaluate which scholarly presses specialize in your area and go straight to those, avoiding broadside submissions.
3. You may wish to seek out former university press editors who specialize in assisting untenured faculty members with the publication of their work (see *CHE* article cited above).
4. Consider rewriting or parceling out your dissertation in article form for various journals.
5. Keep these styling points in mind:
 - write for a specific reader, including information that person needs to know, omitting the rest.
 - avoid chronological organization; rather, seek out the key points and build around those.
 - keep the book as short as possible, avoiding reiteration of materials already familiar to your readers.
 - avoid buzz words or in-words in your field; use plain English.
 - prepare your manuscript carefully, including your notes, and double-space *everything* using wide margins.
 - prepare your presentation to a publisher as outlined elsewhere in this

chapter; go, personally, to see the editor at the press if you can do so, as a "face" tied to the manuscript tends to tilt consideration in your favor.

Now, returning to the original point, submitting your manuscript, how should you decide which publisher to approach? *First*, get the facts straight regarding your book and be clear as to the type of book you are offering (see some of the possible categories above) and which publishers handle the kind of book you have written. Check publishers' catalogs in your library; take a look at their books in your subject area, speak with other scholars, check out publishers' exhibits at scholarly meetings, and consult *Literary Market Place*, which, in addition to categorizing publishers, lists names of editors, addresses, and phone numbers. *Second*, choose the best press for your needs, judging list orientation, marketing capabilities, financial terms, and reputation in your field. Consider your own university press, if you have one, and be rigorous in applying to it the same criteria you do to other presses. In weighing the pros and cons of publishing at home or away, keep in mind these additional considerations: (a) the convenience of firsthand consultation with your own press on editorial, production, marketing, and other matters; (b) the value of supporting your own university's academic publishing effort; and (c) that you may expect from the press of your own university a full peer review and not simply a peremptory or superficial consideration of your manuscript. Incidentally, the same oftentimes applies to the press of the institution from which you have recently graduated. Your choice of your own or another university press must also be considered in light of its possible impact on tenure review. I have known of situations where tenure was denied ostensibly because of some doubt as to the rigor one's own university brings to its examination of the work of one of its own scholars. On the other hand, I have also observed situations where the publication of a scholar's first book by his own university press was considered so advantageous that a second book was sought for home publication and as evidence of qualification for tenure, even though the author had changed his academic affiliation to another institution in the interim. *Finally*, your choice may be significantly affected by whether this is your first book, second, or third, and by whether it is the first press with which you have published, the second, or third.

Once you have selected a prospective publisher, follow these general guidelines. [Note: It is usually wise and considered fairer play to approach one publisher at a time unless you consider yourself author of a competitive work and you let those being approached know of your multiple submission]:

(1) Write to a person, not to a title. *Literary Market Place*, *Writer's Market*, and other directories (noted in the Selected Further Readings) list the

editors of all major university and commercial publishers. Keep in mind that in many presses the director is also an editor. Gather what information you can from your colleagues who have published with a particular press as to the subject area specializations of various editors and/or of the director. It is not wise to telephone, as publishers are readers and prefer to have something in front of them when considering a proposal.

(2) Do not send a manuscript unsolicited. Instead, send a short, explanatory letter with your book's title clearly indicated. Enclose a preface explaining the origin of your work, a table of contents or outline, your manuscript completion date (if the manuscript is not complete), its length, and your biographical sketch or curriculum vitae. Never submit a book without a preface; it or an introduction should summarize the argument so that the reader knows where you are going. Editors (and librarians and others) read prefaces. If the publisher responds by requesting completion of the now fairly standardized Author's Questionnaire, reply promptly and take special care in describing your book's contents (but be brief), its unique contribution to the literature, and its potential readership.

(3) If the manuscript, or sample material, is requested, be sure you send a clear, neat, readable (this means also typed on only one side), double-spaced copy that is paginated and includes a table of contents, also paginated. It is amazing how many authors paginate by chapter only, or fail to indicate chapter pages in the contents. This is very aggravating to the editor or reviewer, who must know the manuscript's length and be able to locate particular chapters easily. Volunteer to prepare an index; this is especially important for university presses, which are generally short on funds and indexing resources. Remember that most books require an index and your failure to provide one works against fair consideration of your work.

(4) It is perfectly proper to suggest some potential reviewers from whom the publisher can select, anonymously. If you can, include addresses and phone numbers. Do not send the publisher reviews from your friends or from colleagues from whom you have solicited comments, as they count for little in the publishing decision.

(5) It is unlikely that a press will make a publishing decision, that is, offer a contract in advance of the final manuscript submission to a new, untried author or even to a previously published author, if only a prospectus or partial manuscript is offered, except under special conditions, such as: you are editing a work based on a major grant or research project in which many experts are involved and/or are contributors and an advance contract is the *sine qua non* for creation of a manuscript; the publisher believes the only way

to acquire the book against competing publishers is to offer a contract in advance; the evidence of quality and potential publishability is so strong that the risk of nondelivery of an acceptable, final manuscript is reduced to near zero. Of course, even in such a case, your manuscript will still be subjected to final review when completed. Keep in mind that any reputable scholarly publisher must review your final manuscript before acceptance, even if you have been offered a contract up front, so you must go through the peer review process sooner or later anyway, with all of its by-products and consequences: rewriting, cutting or adding material, and reorganizing. Also, remember that rarely will a reviewer make a firm recommendation to a publisher on the basis of a partial manuscript; hence, this precludes an editor from recommending a partial manuscript to the press's editorial board for final approval.

(6) Your reaction to the reviewers' reports is most important. Keep in mind that this is an important part of the publisher's service to you as an author, as well as a means of judging the publishability of your work. Take very seriously all suggestions and criticisms, replying to each with clear indications of the action you propose to take or giving sound reasons for rejecting reviewers' criticisms. Defend against specious criticisms, as you view them, with concrete arguments based on well-informed positions—reviewers can be wrong, too. When resubmitting your revised manuscript (if that is called for), send along a letter explaining what you have revised and why, in direct response to the reviewers' specific points of criticism. This assists the re-review process and is most important to the editorial board, which will make the final decision.

The Press Decision

So, the decision on your proposal finally comes through. How do you handle the various options you may face then? First, the difficult one, *rejection*! If this comes prior to review, depending on the nature and tone of the rejection letter, you may wish to challenge it. However, if the letter says "not suited to our list," "we're overbooked in this area," "the work is too specialized," or some such comment, accept the decision and go to your next choice. If the publisher is a good one, you probably will receive advice on other avenues of publication, especially if your work has been favorably reviewed by at least one reviewer. A subsequent publisher may request reviews from your first publisher, but that publisher must first obtain permission from the reviewers, and can never reveal reviewers' names without

permission. Usually, it is preferable to start over with a second publisher with a clean slate, but depending on the reasons given for the initial rejection, you may choose to reveal it.

Second, the long-awaited response *approving* your proposal and offering a contract. At this point, you may expect to receive an actual contract from your publisher which, when signed by you, transfers to the publisher your rights to your work. That is, the copyright that is vested in you by law because of your act of creating the work is, by contract, transferred to your publisher. So read your contract carefully. Most of the stipulations in it are standard, but check for these points: (a) the title (usually tentative) of your book and the order of authorship or editorship; (b) your manuscript due date; (c) the number of complimentary copies given upon publication (the norm is ten to the author) and the discount you are allowed on the purchase of additional copies (usually 40–50 percent); (d) your responsibility for preparation of an index; (e) your responsibility for paying for author's alterations (usually you are allowed 5 percent changes before you need pay the publisher); (f) whether you are required to submit any illustrative material (e.g., charts, graphs, figures) in camera-ready form or have to pay the publisher to do this for you; (g) royalties; *note*: oftentimes in the case of a scholarly work, particularly if very specialized, no royalties will be offered on the first printing or until production costs are earned back by the publisher (this is usually after the sale of five hundred copies or so). A book with a larger prospective sale might carry say, 10 percent royalties on net receipts (what the publisher receives from sales after discounts he offers purchasers) and 5 percent on any paperback editions. Foreign sales carry lower royalties (usually one-half of domestic) because of higher sales costs. On a "large" sale book, graduated royalties rising as high as 15 percent, as sales rise, may be expected.

It is important to remember that all publishers' contracts are contingent upon *acceptance* of your final manuscript by the publisher. This means that you must accomplish all revisions called for by your reviewer and publisher to the latter's satisfaction and that your final manuscript is complete in every respect (except for the index, normally prepared and submitted at the point you receive the composed pages of your book from the publisher), again as judged by your publisher. Not until acceptance is the publisher bound by your contract to publish your manuscript, so be sure you receive this final word from the publisher as it triggers the actual book production process.

So that acceptance of your manuscript for publication is ensured, be certain that *all* material is double-spaced (especially footnotes, references,

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The Author-Publisher Relationship

In your dealings with your publisher, keep in mind that you have entered a form of partnership in which each party is very important to the other. This is not the place to discuss in detail the business side of publishing but keep in mind that you are working with a professional who is, in his/her line of business, just as expert as you are in your chosen field of scholarship. So while it is your responsibility to place in your publisher's hands all relevant information regarding the potential readership (the market) for your book, it is the publisher's responsibility to translate this into a suitable book price, an economically sound print-run, a decision as to cloth and/or paperback editions, a marketing budget, the book design, and the like. You place your life's work in his hands, he places at risk his financial resources, his professional time (and that of your peer reviewers), as well as his publishing reputation, when placing the name of his press on your work.

So, the old adage pertains: "A rising tide lifts all boats." In short, publishing is a teamwork process. Consider your publisher your partner, not your protagonist.

Also keep in mind that you (and all authors) are your publisher's most important asset; how your publisher handles your work is obviously of crucial importance to you personally and to your career. Through the medium of scholarship and your publisher's appreciation of its significance, you may even become close friends. Many times I have met authors years after our initial association by mail and have felt an instant rapport despite the absence of any previous personal contact.

A final word is in order concerning the responsibility of the scholar for peer review of other scholars' work on behalf of a publisher. Publishers, as well as potential authors, must rely on the expertise and the goodwill of scholarly colleagues for the execution of this useful, sometimes satisfying, but often difficult task. As suggested in the introductory portions of this paper, the peer review process lies at the heart of the "sacred vocation" of the scholar. Hence, it is as important for you as a scholar to be responsive to a reasonable request from a publisher for review of a work relevant to your field or discipline, as it is for you to have your own work reviewed for prospective publication. When you are next approached with the request for a review and accept, keep in mind how important it would be to your own work to have that review completed promptly by the deadline indicated by the publisher. Consider also how valuable a careful, intelligent, and constructively critical review will be to the author. You will not find yourself enriched financially by your reviewing tasks, but you deserve and should expect a reasonable reader's fee. Most presses today offer an option: either a nominal cash fee or a selection of twice that amount from books on the publisher's list. Most important of all, your effort in reviewing the work of your peers will have made a vital contribution to scholarship and to the all-important process of its dissemination.

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The growing interest in the sustainable use of natural resources and a general awareness of global change issues has led to increased interest in environmental research and a need for published information on the subjects involved. AMBIO aims to serve the important function of putting into perspective significant developments in environmental research, policy and related activities, and to reach specialists, generalists, students, decision-makers and interested laymen around the world with this information.

AMBIO is owned and administered by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and run on a nonprofit basis. AMBIO receives support from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, the Swedish Council for Forestry and Agricultural Research and the Swedish Natural Science Research Council. Additional support for special issues is obtained from national and international organizations and institutions.

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Articles should examine specific issues or projects in a comprehensive fashion, provide environmental overviews, etc. Reports should summarize findings from recent, previously unpublished, experimental or investigatory research. Synopses should deal briefly with

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AMBIO
Royal Swedish Academy
of Sciences
Box 50005
S-104 05 Stockholm, SWEDEN
Telephone: (+ 46 8) 673 95 00
Direct telephone:
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Telex: 17073 Royacad S.
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Ambio in 1995

In writing my editorial for Ambio #8/94, the last issue of the year, I am sorely tempted to simply put before our readers a list of the journal's accomplishments over the past year, however, looking back would be less productive than looking ahead; what is important is to use the knowledge gained in 1994 as impetus for our work in the coming year.

Ambio is a product of its authors, peer reviewers and readers, of its Executive and Editorial Boards, and of its small, but devoted and diligent editorial office, but above all else Ambio's strength lies in the scientific dynamism generated by its founders and its publisher, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Since 1991 Ambio has also been distributed to scientists, libraries and institutions in many developing countries, i.e. to those who need but can ill afford high quality environmental information. In addition to receiving free subscriptions to Ambio, researchers in these countries are encouraged by the Ambio office to submit the results of their work to the journal, and special efforts are made at Ambio to make the process of publication as smooth as possible. This has been accomplished thanks to generous financial aid from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Similar efforts were made to raise funding for distribution of free copies of Ambio to Eastern and Central Europe and this is now become possible by funding from The Rockefeller Foundation. Both of these organisations are to be commended for recognizing the importance of the scientific journal as a link between scientists and decision makers wherever they are in the world.

The staff at Ambio's small office at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Commission for Integrated Survey of Natural Resources, is operating with the same enthusiasm as the home office in Stockholm. Today, ca. 2500 copies of the Chinese version of Ambio are printed and distributed throughout China. The success of this cooperation is evidence of what can be accomplished by the will and determinism of a few highly motivated individuals.

It is with enthusiasm, optimism and purpose that Ambio moves forward into 1995: the year of two major United Nations conferences, The UN World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 1995 and the UN 4TH World Conference on Women, September 1995, Peking, China, and also of The European Nature Conservation Year, ENCY '95.

Over the coming 12 months Ambio will continue to work for international cooperative approaches to environmental problems and will also endeavour to provide information on the economic and social implications of local, national, regional and international research, and to disseminate this information to as broad a readership as possible. These are our goals, make them yours too for the coming year.

Elisabeth Kessler
Editor-in-Chief

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All manuscripts and editorial correspondence, except as noted below, should be addressed to the incoming editor,

Michael K. Wohlgenant, Editor
American Journal of Agricultural Economics
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
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American Journal of Agricultural Economics
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
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ASIAN

Journal of Environmental Management

Vol 2 No 1 May 1994

Special Issue: Community-Based Urban Environmental Management

Guest Editors: Michael Douglass, Yok-shiu F. Lee and Kem Lowry

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NUMBER 2

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ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

The Journal of the International Society
for Ecological Economics

Vol. 11 No. 2

Contents

November 1994

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ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

The Journal of the International Society
for Ecological Economics

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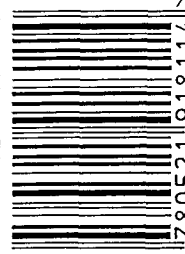
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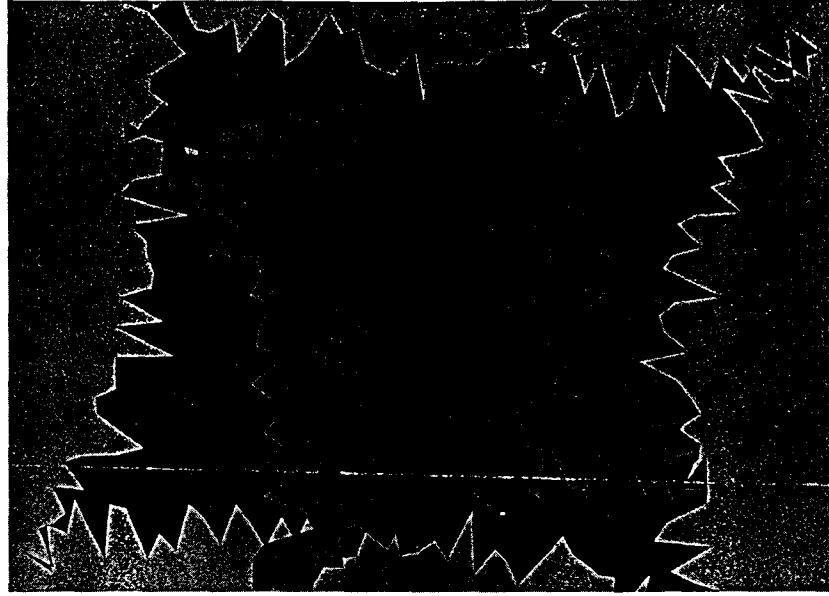
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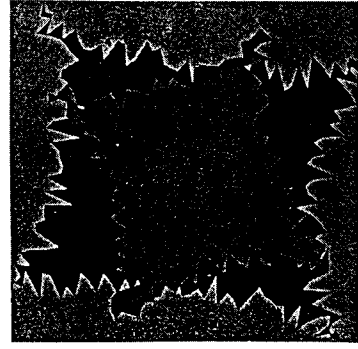
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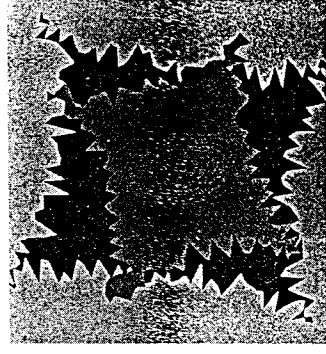
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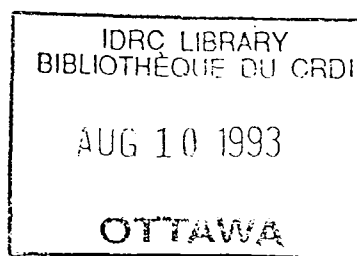
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The Wessex Branch of the Institute of Biology are holding a meeting in Winchester at 7pm on 20th October 1992 on "The Ethics of Environmental Decision Making: Values and the Evaluation of Nature". The speakers will be Professor Colin Spedding, Dr. Ian Spellerberg and Dr. Wendy Le-Las. Further details are available from the Hon. Secretary, Peter Walker, 10 Cambridge Close, Salisbury SP1 3BW, to whom bookings should be sent before 23rd September. There will be a buffet supper before the meeting.

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CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

The proceedings of a conference at the Royal Society, London on "Sustainable Livestock Farming into the 21st Century" are now available from The Centre for Agricultural Strategy, University of Reading, 1 Earley Gate, Reading RG6 2AT, UK, price £15.50 per copy.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

A new annotated bibliography of the field of environmental ethics has been published in *Research in Philosophy and Technology* by Eric Katz, Director of the Science, Technology and Society Program at New Jersey Institute of Technology. Reprints of this and his previous bibliography are available from the author at New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey 07102, USA. He also invites readers to send reprints of material published in environmental philosophy from 1990-93, for inclusion in the next instalment of the bibliography.

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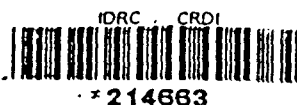
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MANAGING EDITOR
Ronald G. Cummings

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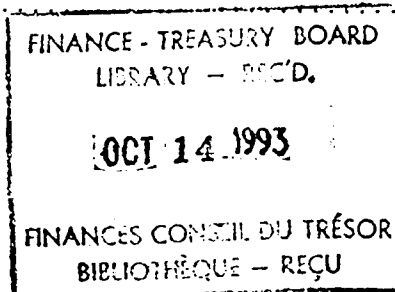
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SOCIETY & NATURAL RESOURCES

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Donald R. Field, Co-editor in Chief

School of Natural Resources
1450 Linden Drive, Room 146
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706 U.S.A.
Tel. (608) 262-6969 • Fax (608) 262-6055
e-mail: donald.field@mail.admin.wisc.edu

Rabel J. Burdge, Co-editor in Chief

Institute for Environmental Studies
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
1101 W. Peabody Drive
Urbana, IL 61801 USA
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- c rate of soil accumulation, m/yr.
- d median grain size of water-deposited material, μm .
- D distance of the locus of points, m.
- h elevation of the rock stream channel at a particular time t_i , meters above base level.
- H_f maximum vertical displacement of the fault associated with an earthquake, m.
- H_f' amount of vertical displacement of the mountain-bounding fault, m.
- z vertical coordinate of the model grid system.
- β parameter equal to $b/\log_{10} e$
- γ mean peak flow rate above base flow of stream, m^3/s .

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and Industries

Report 1: Strategies and Techniques for Effective Op-Eds

In this period of increased democratic space, the playing field for policy making has broadened. Whereas before, the policy-making process was confined to the executive branch and was relatively easier to reach as far as research utilization was concerned, the new field has several actors to contend with. There are politicians responding to their constituents' needs, various nongovernmental and people's organizations, the private business sector, and the media, whose agenda-setting role grows in importance every day.

How does a policy research institute like the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) fit into this scenario?

It has to be even more active in disseminating its research results in order to influence the policy-making process. This entails heightened advocacy-type of dissemination activities to make sure that the results do not simply reach the target audience, but more importantly, are considered and utilized by the policy makers in their deliberations.

JENNIFER P.T. LIGUTON
Director, Research Information Staff
Philippine Institute for Development Studies

Educating the Public, Policy Makers, and the Media

The term "op-ed" (opinion-editorial) refers to editorials, columns, letters to the editor, and essays that express the opinion of the writer and function to persuade others. As public participation in policy formulation has grown with the deepening of democratic institutions around the world, op-eds have become a key component in the media strategy of policy research institutes. Seldom now is it sufficient to direct one's efforts at a few top government officials. Policy shapers the world over increasingly recognize the importance of public education and advocacy in building community support as crucial elements in implementing and sustaining policy reform initiatives.

A strategy using op-ed essays in the newspaper can help policy research institutes achieve many short- and long-term objectives. Op-eds can greatly increase your organization's visibility, credibility, and effectiveness in having an impact on policy and public opinion. Op-eds in selected publications can be an efficient way to convey the results of policy research projects to policy makers and to the general public. By reaching broad sectors of the general population through large circulation papers, an op-ed can raise public awareness and understanding of even a complex public policy issue, thus helping to build broad-based support for policy recommendations. Alternatively, specific interest groups or selected segments of society can be reached by highly-targeted publications that address issues and arguments directly to them.

Op-eds also educate and persuade policy makers. Editorials offer an unparalleled opportunity to analyze and suggest innovative solutions to economic and social problems to major sectors of society. These opinion pieces can sometimes accomplish their mission by delivering a sophisticated message to just one or two key decision makers. The Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Croatia used an op-ed entitled "How to Find a Buyer for a State Property" as a major component of its communication strategy in its campaign to change Croatian government thinking on how to privatize. In the parliamentary debate on the issue, which followed IRMO's campaign, the legislators made reference to IRMO's report and a leading party proposed adoption of its recommendations, which were subsequently endorsed by the government.



Op-eds also have an impact on policy making by **demonstrating growing public awareness and support for a given policy initiative**. If properly framed, they can potentially serve as position papers or political platforms for politicians. In addition, op-eds can fill a huge vacuum in issues research for presidential campaigns. One well-respected correspondent institute used an "Open Letter to the President" published in the leading national daily to propose an "Agenda for Reform" of trade/investment regulation for the new president. One year later, in an open letter entitled "The Unfinished Agenda," the institute again raised the issues to congratulate the government for the steps it had taken, and to urge action on those items not yet addressed.

Finally, op-eds **educate reporters, editors, editorial writers, and columnists** about an issue as well as about the sponsoring institution. A few correspondent institutes have successfully used a series of "media briefing" sessions which precede their op-ed releases to educate the media about a particular policy issue, helping to improve the quality of reporting on economic issues. As part of an op-ed strategy, this may help to establish an institute as a source of valuable information and analysis for reporters and allow it to cultivate a relationship with the press by providing an important "educational" service.



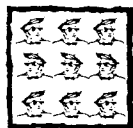
Seven Key Elements to Developing an Op-Ed Strategy

1. Set the Goal of the Campaign



The goal may be as general as educating the public about a growing problem and calling upon leadership to deal with the issue, or as specific as gaining passage of a piece of legislation. A specific and realistic goal for the campaign is critical. One correspondent institute used a campaign of editorials about corruption specifically in order to identify themselves with the issue and thus capture the agenda for that issue in their country.

2. Define the Audience



A well-defined goal for the op-ed campaign clarifies who the target audience or audiences should be. Selection of the intended audience will determine everything from the type of arguments and language used to the best media outlets for the pieces. The target may be national opinion leaders, local policy makers, voters, farmers, workers, or all of these constituencies. If a particular region, group, or sector of society has been resistant to a policy reform initiative, they may be targeted with new arguments that reframe the issue in terms more persuasive to them. The critical factor is to use language and arguments that will have meaning and resonate with your target audience.

A classic example of the importance of word meanings was Hernando de Soto's use of the term "informal entrepreneurs" in his dialogues with businesspeople who had previously been known largely as an illegal scourge. In these interviews, it became clear that these microentrepreneurs did not consider themselves, as de Soto did, to be members of the "private sector." Furthermore, the term "capitalist" to them referred not to market-driven entrepreneurs, but to an oppressive class of business elites who controlled access to markets. Careful attention to the words he used enabled him to connect with, rather than alienate, his target audience.

The above approaches refer to direct targeting. It may also be helpful to consider an indirect approach, designed to reach those who *influence* the ultimate target. For example, if an effort is being made to reach certain members of parliament, their constituencies may be targeted with information in order to bring indirect pressure to bear on those parliamentarians.

Key Elements to Developing an Op-Ed Strategy:

1. Set the goal of the campaign
2. Define the audience
3. Identify the appropriate media outlets
4. Establish the timing of the campaign
5. Identify an original / innovative approach
6. Determine the scope of the campaign
7. Select the best author

3. Identify the Appropriate Media Outlets



Determining the audience will, in turn, help to establish the target media for the campaign. If, for example, the target audience is national opinion leaders, national media outlets such as the leading daily newspaper in the capital, a sophisticated business journal, or a respected weekly news magazine are likely to be the most appropriate media outlets. If the target is specific interest groups, such as farmers or businessmen, the outlets most frequently read by members of that particular group should be utilized. If the goal is to educate a broader public, however, the target may be the more popular local or regional media

4. Establish the Timing of the Campaign



Frequently, timing is dictated by external events, such as a pending election or vote on legislation. Or the release of the op-ed may be linked to the release of a new research report or an important conference. The critical factor is to make the op-ed as "newsworthy" as possible and thus more interesting to editors and to the public.

It is generally good practice when sending an op-ed to editors to allow at least two weeks for the media to use the piece and several more weeks after publication for the ideas in the article to affect policy makers and other members of the target audience.

5. Identify an Original / Innovative Approach



Newspaper editors, reporters, and the public are seeking fresh and innovative ways of looking at issues. Therefore, institutes need to look for a new perspective on an issue. Is the argument original or the timing creative? Is the information fresh or groundbreaking? Has a recent study that you conducted revealed something new and newsworthy about an issue that will allow you to reframe the debate? These are all elements that will increase the impact of an op-ed on public opinion

6. Determine the Scope of the Campaign



For most policy research institutes, the scope of an op-ed campaign—the number of outlets you attempt to reach and the intensity with which you attempt to reach them—will be dictated by the selection/concentration of your target audience. Are most of the businesses in one or two cities? Is the agricultural industry widely dispersed throughout the country or concentrated in certain regions? Is one national daily widely read by a broad cross-section of the population? Should you run one op-ed designed to be controversial, or a number of articles to slowly build understanding and acceptance?

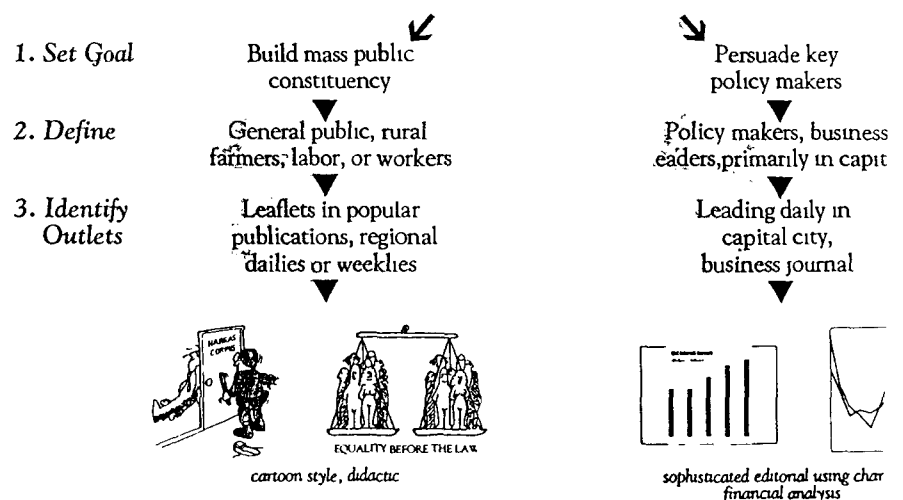
7. Select the Best Author



Selecting the best author, or signer, for the op-ed is critical to maximizing the use and impact of the article. Although it may be written by institute staff, its impact will be maximized if it appears under the name of the most credible and best-known individual. The director of one correspondent institute, although well-known in his country, frequently writes articles as an advisor to a national business association, which then publishes the articles under that association's name. This lends the support of a large, well-respected constituency to the issue and diversifies the source of the opinion. It also prevents him from over-saturating the media with articles or opinions in his name, which would diminish the impact of his own pieces.

The media and the public are almost always more receptive to experts who come from their own communities. Therefore, it is important when distributing an op-ed outside of the local community to find someone from the local communities where the article will appear to be the author (or co-author) of the piece.

The following illustration demonstrates the relationship between the first three critical elements of an op-ed strategy designed with different goals and therefore different audiences and outlets





Writing an Op-Ed

Research and advocacy institutes generally have a wealth of information that editors and the public would be interested in. Position papers, research findings, newsletter articles, or even speeches outlining your institute's position on an issue may be the basis for a strong op-ed piece. The challenge is to make the issue timely and the presentation alluring and persuasive. Analysis of op-eds which have produced results suggests that successful editorials contain the following attributes:

- the authors use their credentials—academic, professional, or personal—to lend credibility to their article
- the essays use facts and figures to make their point and avoid rhetoric
- the ideas are original and solutions are innovative
- the writing is top-quality

Responding to an Op-Ed

You may arouse some opposition; *think ahead!* Who would take an opposing point of view? Why? What would their arguments be? How can you respond?

The Strategic Training Resource Guide Reports are produced by the International Center for Economic Growth (ICEG) whose mission is to enhance the capacity of indigenous policy research institutes to develop sound economic policy analysis and to deliver it effectively to the policy process. The Strategic Training Program provides tools and training, particularly in communications, as a service to ICEG correspondent institutes to ensure that the products of policy research are used effectively in the policy reform process. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Nancy Sherwood Truitt Mara-Michelle Batlin
Director Associate Director

Strategic Training Program—
International Center for Economic Growth
720 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 981-5353, ext. 229; FAX: (415) 433-6841

Here are a few tips for writing persuasive op-eds that produce results:

- ✓ Keep your **OBJECTIVE** in mind at all times. Is your goal to educate, inform, or persuade? As you write, be sure that your piece will accomplish your objective. Will the readers understand it and sympathize? Are your arguments compelling? If the purpose of your essay is simply to bring new information to light, explain how this information changes the policy equation and why it's important to the members of your audience.
- ✓ Also have your **AUDIENCE** in mind at all times as you draft your piece. What are their concerns and how do you make them care about this issue? For example, how does the issue affect the wallet of the average taxpayer or the investment opportunities for businessmen? Try to frame the issue in terms of a cost-benefit analysis.
- ✓ Introduce your central theme early, usually within the first paragraph. You might begin with a one or two sentence vignette illustrating how the issue affects an individual or group of individuals. This will humanize your piece and make it relevant to your audience.
- ✓ Engage your reader early with humor, exaggeration, or controversy. Avoid giving a history lesson or retelling a chronology of events. Don't spend too much time giving a background or your reader will lose interest and stop reading before you have made your point.
- ✓ **BE CURRENT!** Op-eds need immediacy. Tie your points to the latest political and economic developments. This will make it newsworthy, topical, and interesting to a broad spectrum of readers.

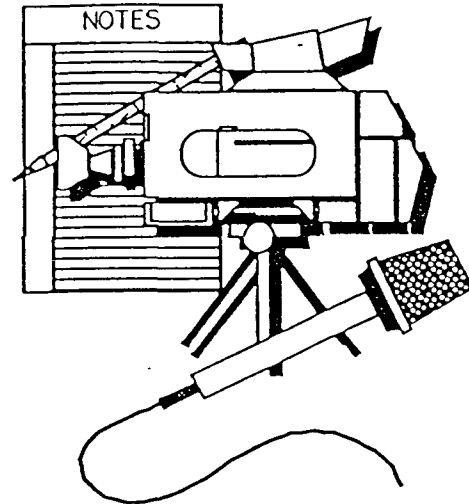
*Percentage of Data the
average person retains,
after three days,
by source*

Verbal Written Visual

- ✓ **SHOW THEM!** Studies show that people remember visual stimuli much better than any other input. Charts, graphs, cartoons, and illustrations all make powerful statements and are retained by readers long after the rest of your editorial has faded from their memories. *Remember: A picture is worth a thousand words!*
- ✓ The use of specifics to make your case — numbers, percentages, anecdotes — is far more effective than rhetoric. Rhetoric is not new, it does not improve your image, and it is generally not convincing.
- ✓ Do not use technical jargon or words that you use regularly in your institute or among policy-sophisticated people that may have no meaning or a different meaning to the general public. Remember, your objective in communication is not to show how many complicated phrases you know, but to have your audience understand you and believe in your position. Ask someone who is not affiliated with your institute to read your draft and see if they understood what you were trying to say. You may be surprised!
- ✓ Start with an outline to organize and focus your argument.
- ✓ Keep your sentences and your paragraphs short.
- ✓ Keep your essay to roughly 750 words.
- ✓ Use bullet points (*like this*).

ENCOUNTERING THE MEDIA

Pocket Tips



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EXECUTIVE TRAINING CONSULTANTS

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to serve as a handy reference to prepare more effectively for media interviews.

After you read it, we suggest you carry it with you for quick reference.

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NOTES

WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

When a reporter calls, begin by asking a few questions to learn more about the reporter's "agenda" and to make sure that you are the appropriate person to be interviewed.

Questions for you to ask

1. What did you say your name is? From which station (publication)?
2. What subject, and what particular aspect interests you?
3. Will you be talking to other people about this?
4. When will the story run?
5. What is your deadline?

Remember:

Don't say anything to a reporter that you don't want repeated. Even if you are invited to speak "off the record" — resist the temptation. It could come back to haunt you.

Negotiate For Time

Before you agree to an interview, begin by negotiating several key points. First, negotiate time to *prepare* for the interview. There are several very good reasons for doing so: "I'd like a few minutes to...

... pull together the documents."

... refresh my memory on it," etc.

YOUR NEWS MESSAGE

It is important that you decide, before the interview begins, the key idea to be communicated. The key idea is your news message.

The news message is *not* :

- ☐ an itemization of all the elements;
- ☐ the background arguments;
- ☐ the detail around the issue.

Rather, the news message is:

- ☐ why this issue / policy / program is important;
- ☐ what it will accomplish in the real world.

Now, frame your message in newsworthy terms. Ask yourself.

- ☐ what is new and significant about this story?
- ☐ does my message tie in with a current issue in the news?
- ☐ is it a "spin-off" of a larger trend or event?
- ☐ does it add an interesting "wrinkle" to a current news story?

Then, take your news message and turn it into a quotable quote for print or for a broadcast clip (also known as a "sound bite")

In this way, you increase the chances that your news message will emerge in the story.

WHAT MAKES A QUOTE "QUOTABLE"?

Most journalists follow the same unwritten criteria in selecting quotes for publication or broadcast. A good quote:

- ☐ sums up succinctly your point of view;
- ☐ contains enough information to stand alone;
- ☐ uses everyday language, not jargon.

To increase the impact of what you say, make your statements:

- ☐ colorful or metaphorical, eg. "Deficits are a deadly poison. They make economies shrivel up and die";
- ☐ passionate or energetic, eg. "I believe in my heart that this is not only right, but fair";
- ☐ direct, not indirect, eg. "We must deal with this" rather than "This issue, once it has been discussed by all the parties, must be addressed";

How much time do you have? The average:

For television and radio ... 10 to 15 seconds;

For print ... 1 or 2 sentences.

TARGETING YOUR AUDIENCE

The audience for your message may be composed of three broad groups:

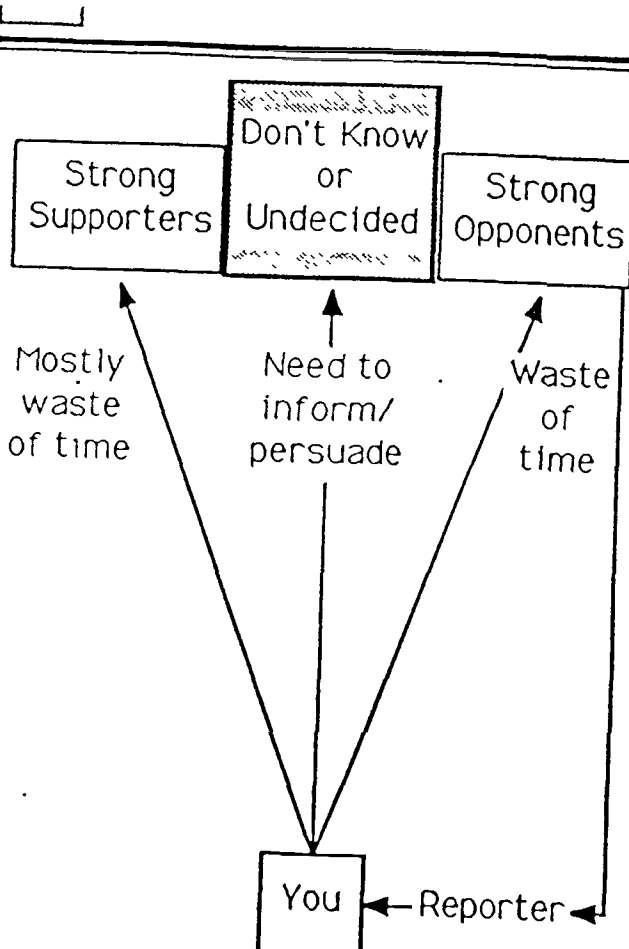
- ☐ Strong *supporters* of your point of view;
- ☐ People who don't know much about the subject, or are undecided.
- ☐ Strong *opponents* of your point of view;

Your message should be directed to an individual who represents the group in the middle because that is the person most open to your message.

Even if a reporter's questions reflect critical opinions, aim your answers at the middle ground.

Visualize an actual person who represents that target audience and imagine that person sitting in his or her livingroom — reading, viewing or listening to your message. Focus on communicating to that one person.

The diagram on the following page represents this concept visually.



INTERVIEW STRATEGY

Once you have targeted (and envisioned) your audience, your goal is to exercise control over the nature and scope of the interview.

You want to:

- ☐ avoid side tracks;
- ☐ get your message across;
- ☐ stay in control of your answers;
- ☐ have the reporter respond to *your* agenda.

In order to do that:

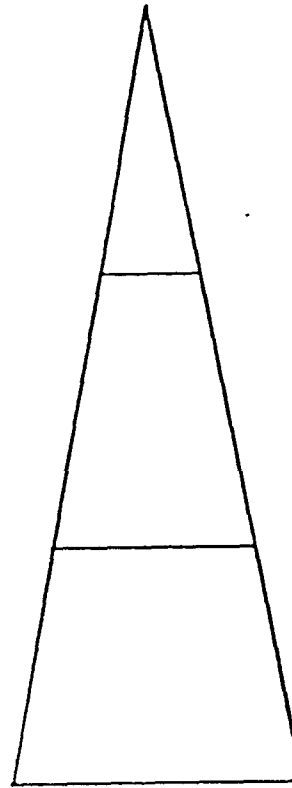
- ... *wedge* your answers;
- ... *bridge* away from troublesome tangents over to *your* agenda;
- ... *deflect* hostile or persistent questioning.

WEDGING YOUR ANSWERS

It is useful to think of your response to a reporter's question as a "wedge" composed of three elements:

- ☐ an **Initial answer** that captures the essence of your message, leaving a clear, memorable impression on the audience.
e.g. "Our concern is to ensure that everyone is given a fair hearing. The challenge to us is to find the best way to ensure fairness." STOP.
- ☐ a **follow up** that elaborates on the theme, explaining the objective or providing evidence.
e.g. "We have discovered only recently that some applicants are refused a hearing simply because their documents are incomplete. That is clearly unfair. We want to ensure that all applicants receive the same consideration." STOP.
- ☐ a **further expansion** — possibly an example or analogy, to drive home the message.
e.g. "Let me give you an example. Recently we had an applicant who was illiterate. He couldn't fill out the forms. So, we offered him assistance. In that way he wouldn't be deprived of a chance to apply." STOP.

The McLoughlin Wedge



Initial Answer:

- positioning statement
- key message or theme
- one or two sentences

Follow Up:

- rationale
- explanation

Further Expansion:

- example
- analogy

Initial Answer

Regardless of the exact Initial question, position yourself or your organization on the issue, or place the question in a fuller context.

eg. "This is part of a larger problem facing many organizations today."

Or, communicate the issue / problem / concern.

eg. "The issue is fairness."

Or, give your key message right here in quotable form when the reporter is paying the most attention.

eg. "What they're doing is taking blood out of one arm and putting it back into the other."

Note:

Stop talking. Let the burden of the interview shift back to the reporter. Don't overtalk by giving your rationale or explanation here. Save it for the follow-up question. In this way you control the agenda.

Follow-up

To follow up your Initial positioning statement, theme or key message, give *evidence* to back it up.

This may include:

- ☐ key facts and statistics;
- ☐ description of a specific program;
- ☐ explanation of what you are *doing*.

It is useful to have key facts written down and at your finger tips for use during the interview.

This is your opportunity to *persuade* the viewer, listener or reader with a supporting point.

This is where you explain *why* you made your initial statement or *what* your initial response meant specifically.

Further Expansion

Viewers, listeners or readers will remember a real-life example or analogy long after they have forgotten the rhetoric or the carefully formulated points.

Try, in advance, to think of examples or analogies that will drive home the point you are trying to make.

Example:

"For instance, if a consumer is dissatisfied with the product, this law will allow him or her to return it within 10 days of purchase."

Analogy:

"It's like when you're in a line-up for a movie and someone butts in ahead of you. It's annoying — and it's the same with this situation..."

Remember:

Examples and analogies are infinitely quotable!

DEFLECTING HOSTILE QUESTIONS

When hit with a tough, hostile question, divide your answer in two.

e.g. Question: "Why has your organization done nothing about this problem?"

Answer: "Quite the opposite. In fact, we've made significant progress..."

Deflect:
"Quite the opposite."

Introduce positive message:
"In fact..."

Don't respond with hostility!

Be calm, polite and firm.

Don't lose your cool.

BRIDGES: GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

If you find that the interviewer is steering the conversation away from the subject area that you feel comfortable discussing, bring it back by using *bridging phrases* that lead to *your message*:

Common Bridges:

- ☐ "Let's look at it from a broader perspective..."
- ☐ "Another way to approach it is..."
- ☐ "There is another more important concern and that is..."
- ☐ "Let's not lose sight of the underlying problem..."
- ☐ "Have you considered a more important question? And that is..."
- ☐ "That is not the real issue. The real issue is..."

STAND-UP INTERVIEWS

Following a newsworthy event, you may find yourself confronted by a microphone or two thrust in your face.

In that setting, keep these do's and don'ts in mind:

Do's

- ☐ Be succinct in response to each question. Otherwise, the message gets blurred;
- ☐ Answer only the aspect of the question that you feel comfortable with — or respond to the general thrust (but don't blatantly ignore any question);
- ☐ Practice putting your head down when listening to a question. Keep it down until you think of an answer, pause and then look up and deliver a clean, self-contained clip;
- ☐ Slow down the pace. Pause before you begin to answer;
- ☐ Look directly at the reporter asking the question for the full duration of your answer;
- ☐ If a key point has been missed, raise it yourself: "I want to stress a very important point..."

Continued over page ..

Don'ts

- ☐ Don't be afraid to repeat the substance of your message in response to a later question — but be consistent;
- ☐ Don't refer to earlier answers — it's irrelevant and spoils the clip;
- ☐ Don't use a reporter's name in your answer — it discourages other reporters from using the clip;
- ☐ Don't number or letter your answers ("one...two" or "a...b"). It may spoil a potential clip;
- ☐ Don't repeat emotionally-loaded words in a reporter's question, eg. Q: "Do you think they're just being greedy?" A: "Greedy? Not necessarily greedy..."

Remember:

The reporter is looking for a quotable quote. The sequence and repetition of questions and answers are irrelevant. The question is rarely included in the final clip. Therefore, each point that you want to communicate should be self-contained.

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OVERCOMING NERVES

If you suffer from attacks of nervousness, reserve about 10 minutes in advance of an interview to calm down and relax yourself.

To ensure that you get all the oxygen you need, practice slow *stomach* breathing for approximately five minutes before your interview:

- ☐ Expand your stomach as you breathe in;
- ☐ Flatten your stomach as you breathe out;

Stomach breathing helps to expand your lungs fully when you inhale, and to exhaust them completely when you exhale. Your body calms itself because it is getting all the oxygen it needs — and is ridding itself of unwanted carbon dioxide.

Physical Relaxation

As you work on your breathing, deliberately relax your body:

- ☐ Drop your shoulders (a lot of unconscious tension is trapped in raised shoulders);

continued over page

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-
- ☐ Gently massage areas of tension around your eyes, forehead and neck;
 - ☐ Stamp your feet (to aid circulation and to give you a "grounded" feeling);
 - ☐ Let your arms hang by your sides and shake them loosely.

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DRESSING FOR TELEVISION

In a television interview, the audience's first impression will be of what you wear, not of what you say. For that reason, it is important that your clothing should work for you and your message, not against.

FOR MEN

Your clothing should match the image that you and your organization are trying to project. The viewer has a built-in "data-bank" of visual associations: if you want to project the image of a working man, don't wear a blue suit.

However, if you want to look business-like, a dark (blue or grey) well-tailored wool suit is ideal. If you wish to look a little less formal — more like an academic — a navy blue blazer and grey flannels or slacks can be very effective.

- ☐ Avoid three-piece suits. They tend to look stuffy, stereo-typed and overly formal;
 - ☐ Avoid black suits. They project mistrust;
 - ☐ Stay away from green at all costs. It transmits low authority. Brown, too, projects a "low power" look;
 - ☐ Avoid extremes of color, pattern or style.
-

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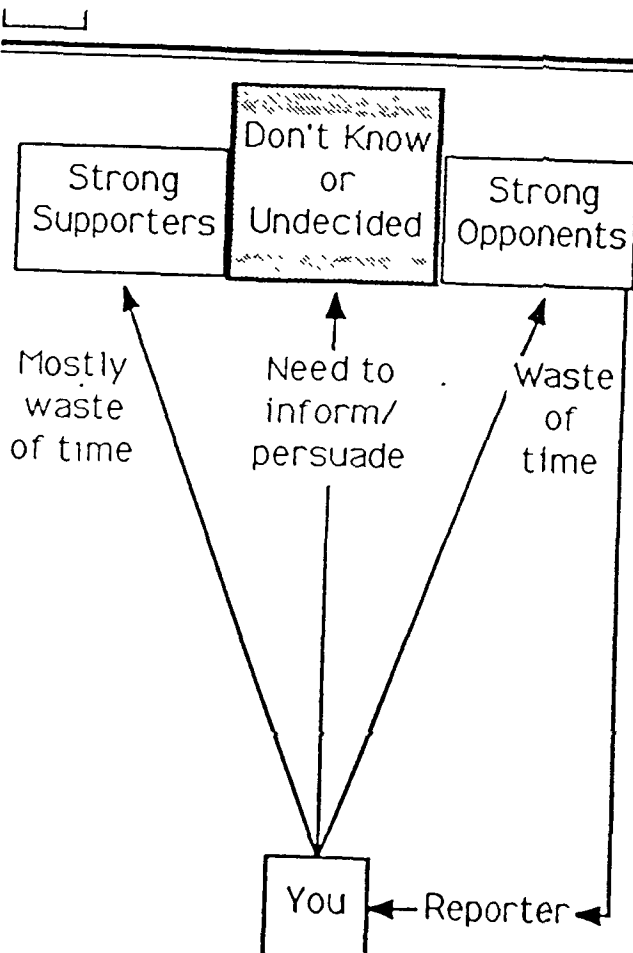
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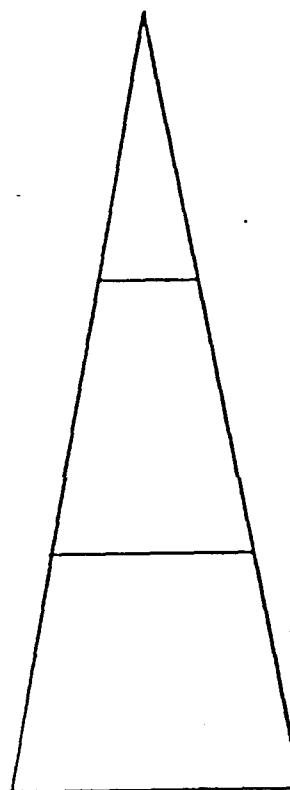
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Stop talking. Let the burden of the interview shift back to the reporter. Don't overtalk by giving your rationale or explanation here. Save it for the follow-up question. In this way you control the agenda.

Follow-up

To follow up your Initial positioning statement, theme or key message, give *evidence* to back it up.

This may include:

- ☐ key facts and statistics;
- ☐ description of a specific program;
- ☐ explanation of what you are *doing*.

It is useful to have key facts written down and at your finger tips for use during the interview.

This is your opportunity to *persuade* the viewer, listener or reader with a supporting point.

This is where you explain *why* you made your initial statement or *what* your initial response meant specifically.

Further Expansion

Viewers, listeners or readers will remember a real-life example or analogy long after they have forgotten the rhetoric or the carefully formulated points.

Try, in advance, to think of examples or analogies that will drive home the point you are trying to make.

Example:

"For instance, if a consumer is dissatisfied with the product, this law will allow him or her to return it within 10 days of purchase."

Analogy:

"It's like when you're in a line-up for a movie and someone butts in ahead of you. It's annoying — and it's the same with this situation..."

Remember:

Examples and analogies are infinitely quotable!

DEFLECTING HOSTILE QUESTIONS

When hit with a tough, hostile question, divide your answer in two.

e.g. Question: "Why has your organization done nothing about this problem?"

Answer: "Quite the opposite. In fact, we've made significant progress..."

Deflect:
"Quite the opposite."

Introduce
positive message:
"In fact..."

Don't respond with hostility!

Be calm, polite and firm.

Don't lose your cool.

BRIDGES: GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

If you find that the interviewer is steering the conversation away from the subject area that you feel comfortable discussing, bring it back by using *bridging phrases* that lead to your message:

Common Bridges:

- ☐ "Let's look at it from a broader perspective..."
- ☐ "Another way to approach it is..."
- ☐ "There is another more important concern and that is..."
- ☐ "Let's not lose sight of the underlying problem..."
- ☐ "Have you considered a more important question? And that is..."
- ☐ "That is not the real issue. The real issue is..."

STAND-UP INTERVIEWS

Following a newsworthy event, you may find yourself confronted by a microphone or two thrust in your face.

In that setting, keep these do's and don'ts in mind:

Do's

- ☐ Be succinct in response to each question. Otherwise, the message gets blurred;
- ☐ Answer only the aspect of the question that you feel comfortable with — or respond to the general thrust (but don't blatantly ignore any question);
- ☐ Practice putting your head down when listening to a question. Keep it down until you think of an answer, pause and then look up and deliver a clean, self-contained clip;
- ☐ Slow down the pace. Pause before you begin to answer;
- ☐ Look directly at the reporter asking the question for the full duration of your answer;
- ☐ If a key point has been missed, raise it yourself: "I want to stress a very important point..."

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Don'ts

- ☐ Don't be afraid to repeat the substance of your message in response to a later question — but be consistent;
- ☐ Don't refer to earlier answers — it's irrelevant and spoils the clip;
- ☐ Don't use a reporter's name in your answer — it discourages other reporters from using the clip;
- ☐ Don't number or letter your answers ("one...two" or "a...b"). It may spoil a potential clip;
- ☐ Don't repeat emotionally-loaded words in a reporter's question, eg. Q: "Do you think they're just being greedy?" A: "Greedy? Not necessarily greedy..."

Remember:

The reporter is looking for a quotable quote. The sequence and repetition of questions and answers are irrelevant. The question is rarely included in the final clip. Therefore, each point that you want to communicate should be self-contained.

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- ☐ Gently massage areas of tension around your eyes, forehead and neck;
- ☐ Stamp your feet (to aid circulation and to give you a "grounded" feeling);
- ☐ Let your arms hang by your sides and shake them loosely.

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OVERCOMING NERVES

If you suffer from attacks of nervousness, reserve about 10 minutes in advance of an interview to calm down and relax yourself.

To ensure that you get all the oxygen you need, practice slow *stomach* breathing for approximately five minutes before your interview:

- ☐ Expand your stomach as you breathe in;
- ☐ Flatten your stomach as you breathe out;

Stomach breathing helps to expand your lungs fully when you inhale, and to exhaust them completely when you exhale. Your body calms itself because it is getting all the oxygen it needs — and is ridding itself of unwanted carbon dioxide.

Physical Relaxation

As you work on your breathing, deliberately relax your body:

- ☐ Drop your shoulders (a lot of unconscious tension is trapped in raised shoulders);

continued over page ...

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DRESSING FOR TELEVISION

In a television interview, the audience's first impression will be of what you wear, not of what you say. For that reason, it is important that your clothing should work *for* you and your message, not *against*.

FOR MEN

Your clothing should match the image that you and your organization are trying to project. The viewer has a built-in "data-bank" of visual associations: if you want to project the image of a working man, don't wear a blue suit.

However, if you want to look business-like, a dark (blue or grey) well-tailored wool suit is ideal. If you wish to look a little less formal — more like an academic — a navy blue blazer and grey flannels or slacks can be very effective.

- ☐ Avoid three-piece suits. They tend to look stuffy, stereo-typed and overly formal;
- ☐ Avoid black suits. They project mistrust;
- ☐ Stay away from green at all costs. It transmits low authority. Brown, too, projects a "low power" look;
- ☐ Avoid extremes of color, pattern or style.

Conservative styles in the median range of colors — greys and blues in particular — enhance the image. Navy blue is the most flattering color for almost everyone;

- ☐ A light blue or pastel-colored 100% cotton shirt with a button-down or straight collar works best. Stay away from bright white, printed, or short-sleeved shirts;
- ☐ Don't wear polyester: it looks cheap.

Ties should barely touch the top of your pants, with the knot pulled fully up to the collar.

- ☐ Select a conservative tie with a bit of color, such as red or burgundy, to brighten up your suit;
- ☐ Silk or 100% wool works best;
- ☐ Choose a solid color, print, or stripe — as long as the print or stripes aren't too close together. They cause a shimmering (or "moray") effect on camera.

Additional tips:

- ☐ Shave well. A dark, five o'clock shadow has shady associations;
- ☐ Your hair should be neatly combed and groomed.

FOR WOMEN

Women can choose from a much wider range of styles, colors and patterns than men. The key is to choose an outfit which projects credibility and confidence.

Extremes are definitely out. So, you should avoid short skirts, slits, and revealing necklines. Conversely, avoid an overly severe or colorless outfit which may project coldness. Instead, choose either a well-tailored skirt, blouse and jacket, or a classic dress. Aim for a look that is stylish rather than trendy.

Other tips:

- ☐ Keep jewelry to a minimum — it has many negative associations, can be distracting and often creates a glare with the television lights;
- ☐ Avoid sandals and wildly patterned hosiery;
- ☐ Your hair should be off your face;
- ☐ Dress comfortably. If you wear a new outfit, the viewer can sense that you are not entirely comfortable.

PSYCHING YOURSELF UP

Every good performer "psyches up" just before going on stage as a way of focusing his or her thoughts and energy. A good way to do that is to give yourself some verbal cues:

- ☐ "I am going to have an *interesting* dialogue with a *fascinating* individual."
- ☐ "I am going to speak as if I am *responding* to a *fascinating question*."

NOTES

NOTES

Remember:

It requires a lot of practice to be completely comfortable in an interview. So, the more you try it, the better you'll become.

Good luck!

BARRY McLOUGHLIN ASSOCIATES INC.

EXECUTIVE TRAINING CONSULTANTS

HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

LOADED QUESTION:

Q "How much damage has his allegation done to your agency?"

A: "With respect, I don't agree with your premise. In fact..."

- don't accept premise by ignoring it
- instead, challenge premise politely but firmly
- then move to your message

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION:

Q. "What will you do if you don't come to an agreement?"

A: "I wouldn't want to speculate..."

- don't speculate
- label it as speculation

BAIT QUESTION:

Q "Do you think the company is being greedy?"

A: "I wouldn't say that. They're competitive..."

- don't repeat "bait" even to deny it
- refute it without repeating it

PERSONAL OPINION:

Q "What about your personal opinion?"

A: "I don't believe the issue is my personal opinion. The issue is..."

- keep your personal opinion out of it

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SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS:

Q "Why do you think the city decided to do that?"

A: "You'd have to ask the city that."

- refer the question
- speak only on your organization's behalf

QUESTION - DON'T KNOW ANSWER:

Q "How much was the investment?"

A: "I'm not sure, off-hand. I can get that information for you."

- say you don't know/offer to get it for reporter
- never lie; never guess

QUESTION - YOU KNOW THE ANSWER BUT YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GIVE IT:

Q "What was the amount of the offer?"

A: "I'm not in a position to say (that information is confidential) (before the courts) (inappropriate to comment) (given the sensitivity of the issue) (currently under discussion/review/negotiation etc.)"

- give reason why you can't answer

GETTING BOXED IN: (2 options from which to choose)

Q "Are you going to increase funding or maintain the status quo?"

A: "Our goal is to provide quality service."

- ignore 2 options
- begin with straightforward statement or theme

EMOTIONALLY LOADED OR HOSTILE QUESTION:

Q "Aren't you just strangling the customer?"

A: "Not at all. If you're asking will customers have to pay more, the answer unfortunately is yes."

- don't respond with hostility or emotion
- stay cool
- make a quick clean disclaimer - "not at all; not so; quite the opposite; etc."
- re-state with less emotional words

HOSTILE BUT THERE IS SOME TRUTH TO IT:

- Q "Why did you fail to meet the deadline and thus destroy your credibility with the government?"
- A: "It is true that we weren't able to meet the deadline; however, we have negotiated a new delivery date."
- re-state it in your own words

PERSISTENT QUESTIONING:

- Q "Then why won't you reveal the strategy?"
- A: "As I mentioned, the strategy is in place ready to go and we'll announce it at the appropriate time. So with all due respect, it's pointless to go over the same ground again."
- politely but firmly signal you're not going to give in
 - repeat your message

OPEN-ENDED/VAGUE QUESTION:

- Q "Tell me about your company?"
- A: "What specific aspect are you interested in?"
- ask reporter to clarify//focus

RUMOUR:

- Q "There's a rumour that other unions may be interested in applying for certification."
- A: "It would be inappropriate to respond to rumours; we'll just have to deal with that issue if and when it arises."

or

- A: "I've seen no evidence to support that rumour."

MULTI-PART QUESTION:

- Q "What impact will the changes make on your organization and will you be able to continue to provide service to the public at the same fee or will you have to raise user fees?"
- A: "Let me begin with the first part of your question. The changes will make us more efficient and more responsive to the public. With regard to the question of recovering some of the costs..."
- choose one part of the question at a time that is the easiest for you to address
 - you don't have to answer them all at once

GIVING ADVICE OR RECOMMENDATIONS TO YOUR BOSS:

Q "What would you recommend that the Director do about the problem?"

A: "The Director receives advice from many sources and if I'm asked for mine, there are appropriate channels for that."

o r

"I wouldn't want to advise the Director through the media."

- don't give public advice or recommendations to your boss

SYMPATHETIC APPROACH:

Q *"I guess it must be really tough on you with all the problems your organization is facing?"*

A: "Well I don't believe that's the main concern. We're continuing to carry out our responsibilities."

- don't get lulled into agreeing

REMEMBER:

The reporter can't make you say anything you don't want to say. In order to be effective, you must be message-driven, not question-driven.

CONTINENTAL
GOLIN/HARRIS

SPEAKING WITH THE MEDIA

THE MEDIA: Mass and Trade Media

As a spokesperson, you will be dealing with 'the mass media' and, possibly, with 'the trade media.'

The mass media is:

The Broadcast Media:

- Radio
- Television

The Print Media:

- Newspapers
- Magazines

Wire and Syndication Services:

- IE: Canadian Press, Reuters, CTV's DNS, Southam News Syndication Service...

The trade media is a variety of newspapers, newsletters, magazines, and radio and television programs that specialize in providing technical information to narrowly targeted audiences.

While the trade media provides information to people who have strong backgrounds in the subject matter, the mass media provides information to the general public or, at least, to broad segments of the general public. The largest 'mass media' newspaper in Canada is the Toronto Star while another example of 'mass media' is the CBC and its newscasts and public affairs shows like 'the fifth estate.'

The preceding means while the trade journals can use technical language, jargon and trade bureaucratese, the mass media outlets must use common language and must attempt to explain and simplify technical information.

In fact, mass media editors have a basic instruction for reporters writing stories, KISS or Keep it Simple, Stupid! While this is an exaggeration, it is a worthwhile caution when you are trying to talk to a broad audience through mass media outlets like the Toronto Star or Ottawa Citizen.

Also, this means that you will always be disappointed if you hope to see a definitive, technical article contained in the mass media. No article in this media can be complete or even without some simplifications and errors. Your job is to reduce errors and simplifications to harmless or tolerable levels.

At the same time, you will be disappointed if you expect trade journal articles in your field of expertise to capture the attention or the interest of the public. When dealing with the trade media, your hope should be to provide current, in-depth information to others in a limited field of expertise.

THE MEDIA: Its Basic Components

We can break the basic categories of the mass media into finer divisions.

The Broadcast Media provides hard news such as the packages at 6 p.m., 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.

It also provides 'public affairs' programming. Public affairs includes shows such as 'the fifth estate', 'W5', 'Sixty Minutes'. or, on radio, 'Sunday Morning', 'Quirks and Quarks' or 'Dialogue'.

On the fringe of news, the broadcast media also has talk shows, phone-in shows, interview shows and documentary shows.

The Print Media delivers hard news, feature news, analyses, opinion, cartoons, reader response as well as photo journalism. each in its own format.

As a spokesperson, you may take part in any or all of the media formats mentioned here.

YOU AND THE MEDIA

Okay, all that sounds intimidating and complex. It is not. You have this knowledge already. By reading the print media and watching or listening to the broadcast media, you have a good idea of what 'hard news' is: it is the kind of story that reads like an unvarnished, straightforward report:

"John Jones, 31, of Smith Street received third degree burns to his hands today while rescuing his cocker spaniel from a fire at his house."

A feature story has more description and perhaps personal observations of the reporter:

"John Jones says he loves Mutt, his 10-year-old cocker spaniel, "more than anything." And, today, he proved it by saving his dog from a blaze that broke out in the living room of Jones' Smith Street house, even though he literally put his hands in the fire to rescue his pet."

On a talk show, you are expected to talk a lot. Public affairs shows like 60 Minutes often are one-sided and controversial.

See, it's easy, if you use common sense and your own experience, to determine the significant characteristics of each media format.

To aid you in doing this, we provide this brief list of the most important aspects to remember when encountering basic media formats:

THE PRINT MEDIA

Hard News: Keep your comments concise. Be very factual. Do not provide great detail unless asked. KISS.

Feature News: Provide greater detail. Explain finer points. Be aware the reporter may describe you and your surroundings so make them fit your message. (Most magazine articles are feature articles.) This is a suitable venue to explain more complex subjects or to 'educate' the public.

Analyses: Reporters may come to you for in-depth information and use your information to 'analyze' a situation or event. Be especially careful not to offer personal opinion or speculation while speaking on behalf of your organization. Help the reporter to understand the information.

Opinion: Reporters, editorial writers and columnists may give their own opinions in this format. Their opinions may vary from yours. Be prepared to present your case with fact and strong, definitive statements on behalf of the organization.

Reader Response: Usually readers write Letters to the Editor to comment on, complain about or correct previous articles. Your letter should be approved by your superiors if it speaks on behalf of your organization.

Photos: Help photographers to collect accurate information for their cutlines or captions. Often photographers are ignored in the background: talk to them giving factual, brief information as to the significance of the event or situation.

Cartoons: Laugh at them.

BROADCAST MEDIA

News: Most news items are between 15 seconds and 3 minutes in length whether on radio or television. Also, while the reporter depends on your information to write his* own narrative, he will excerpt only a short 'clip' or 'sound bite' of you actually speaking. Be brief (but not monosyllabic). Capsulize the most important points you have to deliver.

Public Affairs: You have more time to explain and expound. Still try to be concise. Remember, public affairs is often one-sided so be alert to bias on the part of the interviewer. Be careful that your clothes and background support your message.

Interview Shows, Talk Shows, Phone-In Shows: If you are a guest, you are expected to talk. Go prepared with good descriptions of your topics, examples, anecdotes and answers to most often asked questions. This is an ideal format for corporate spokespeople creating or improving the board's image.

Documentaries: These are lengthy (half hour, 60 minutes), in-depth treatments of single subjects. If you are asked to participate, you may be committing hours or days of your time. Be exceptionally well prepared.

THE PRE-INTERVIEW

You may be thinking that the interviewer or host will help you out with a pre-interview chat. In this chat, you would expect the person to review questions and answers and to inform you about your upcoming performance.

This is true in some cases. Most interview, talk, phone-in and documentary shows have people who help in these ways. Some other shows aid you as well. Don't depend on it.

In some cases, interviewers hate to talk to an interviewee before the recording: it spoils the spontaneity. In others the interviewers don't have time or interest for such pre-interviews.

In other cases, the interviewer will not pre-interview you so much as pre-edit you: he will listen to you with an ear to how he can manipulate your answers to make them more interesting, more sensational, more in support of his own opinion, etc. While you can go through such an experience, go back to your own 'game plan' when the recording begins. Don't depend on your interviewer, depend on yourself.

*(We are using 'He' throughout as a grammatically correct short form. Please read 'he' as 'he/she' and 'his' as 'his/her'.)

FINETUNING

There is one more division of the media to consider here: the sections into which newspapers, magazines and some broadcasts are separated. All these can be sectioned into topic areas such as City News, Provincial News, National News, International News, Business, Sports, Entertainment, Lifestyles, Housing, Travel, Classified Advertisements and so on.

Often, organizations end up being ghettoized into one section of a newspaper or magazine. News about a major corporation, in spite of the fact it may have more to do with entertainment or sports or lifestyles, usually ends up in the Business section of the newspaper. Similarly, 'government' news often ends up in the front or general news section when it might fit better in the Lifestyles section or the Business Section.

As a spokesperson, you may attempt to redirect certain news about your organization into a section of the publication that will reach a specific audience. You can do this by directing your interview to a certain audience or by stressing to the reporter "This is a business story, rather than a lifestyle story." While this tactic will not work in every instance, it's worth a try if you feel too compartmentalized by the media.

THE NEWSROOM

Each news medium maintains a newsroom. To a large degree this newsroom is an assembly line by which news is collected, assigned to reporters to cover, to editors to edit, to technicians to publish in print or broadcast form and by which analysis, opinion and responses to that news are created or gathered.

This is how the assembly line works on a day-to-day basis.

News flows into the newsroom from a variety of sources.

The most important source of information for the media is the media itself. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations produce news items on a regular basis. Each one of these items is copied by Wire Services or Syndication Services. It is the job of these services then to distribute all this published news to other media outlets that subscribe to these services.

In Canada, the major wire services are Canadian Press and Broadcast News, sister companies serving, in the case of the former, the print media and, in the latter, radio and television.

The media is a giant, worldwide network tied together by these services. This explains why the Globe and Mail can carry the same news items as the New York Times and why the Vancouver Sun quickly copies stories initiated by the Globe and Mail.

In many newspapers, the majority of the news is taken directly from the teleprinter machines that are leased from the wire services.

Some news arrives in the news room in the form of the news release. Everyone and his dog is sending news releases to the media. Companies, governments, agencies, political parties, charities and so on are busy writing news releases. An individual can write a news release or it can emanate from your association.

The public is excellent at calling or writing to the media offering news.

The reporters employed by the media or 'free-lancing' (working on their own and selling individual stories to the media) are looking for news 24 hours a day and have regular sources they check constantly. Their ideas join the flow of information into the newsroom.

As well, the top brass, the publishers and senior editors, offer ideas and orders for news stories they wish covered. Most of these get covered.

THE EDITOR AND PRODUCER

Information arrives first at the desks of Assignment Editors. In large newspapers and other media outlets, there are many such editors (or producers as they are called in the broadcast media.) There will be a City Assignment Editor, a Business Editor, an Entertainment Editor and so on. Small media outlets may have a single editor or producer who does everything.

The assignment editor has two jobs: 1) choose the news stories that will be published on that day and 2) assign reporters to cover some of these stories. There are no rules which tell these editors what is news and what is not. Often, they choose news items because they believe the items are of interest to the audiences they serve and/or because the item is of interest to the editor personally.

Editors and producers don't have a great deal of time in which to make their decisions. Often, they will read a few leading paragraphs of a news release and, then, decide either to throw it into the garbage or assign it to a reporter to follow.

THE REPORTER

If the editor or producer decides he wants a story covered by a reporter, he has two kinds of reporter from which to choose, the "Beat Reporter" and the "General Assignment Reporter."

The Beat Reporter: this is a reporter who has chosen to specialize in a particular subject area. For instance, there are Police Beat Reporters covering crime, fires, inquests and related stories. There are Education, Business, Entertainment, Travel, Environmental, Health and Lifestyles Beat Reporters and many others.

What sets the Beat Reporter apart is his intimate knowledge of the subject area. A Health Beat Reporter, for example, will be familiar with current events in the hospital world, fitness trends, clinical treatment, etc.

Generally, when you deal with a Beat Reporter in his area of expertise, you can assume that he understands the background of the topic under discussion and that he can deal with technical terms, bureaucratese and jargon.

Often, Beat Reporters become so knowledgeable about their subject area, they form strong opinions, biases and beliefs: in effect, some become too expert and believe they know more than their sources. This is a danger of allowing a person to remain on a 'beat' too long.

The General Reporter does not specialize. He can be assigned to cover any story. Often he is assigned to cover stories about which he has no knowledge or understanding, no credible sources of information and, sometimes, absolutely no innate interest.

When you deal with General Reporters, you can assume they know little, if anything, about the subject and may be incapable of understanding technical terms, jargon or bureaucratese (which is unnecessarily formal language full of obscure expressions and words such as 'utilize' instead of plain old 'use'.) Bureaucratese is also known as bafflegab and is employed, incorrectly, by persons who believe they are doing themselves and their profession a service if they speak in completely indecipherable ways.

Often, being human, General Reporters do not like to display their ignorance or are so adept at asking questions they hide the fact they do not understand the story. This can work against the reporter if the interviewee assumes he does understand and talks over his head.

RESEARCH: Checking the Old News

Whenever any reporter is assigned to do a story, he attempts to do some research before setting out on interviews. The most common way to research a news story is to go to the files of one's own newspaper, magazine or broadcast outlet.

These files normally contain only previously published articles. They are, in other words, clipping files. By the way, these files are 'yesterday's news' and there is a saying in journalism that 'there is nothing deader than yesterday's news'. Therefore, the library for these old files in a newsroom is called 'the morgue'.

When a reporter reads these clippings, he is searching for two things: a) information on which to base questions he will ask interviewees and b) the 'angle' or most important aspect of the story.

The angle of the news story usually comes in the first sentence or paragraph.

The reporter assigned to a story often accepts the angle of the last story on the topic and continues it in the next story.

AND THEN...

After the reporter carries out research, he conducts interviews to update and expand this information. Occasionally, he will find a new angle to the continuing story but, in general, if the original story was negative, so will the next be. If the original story was positive, positive coverage will continue unless someone makes a concerted effort to change the angle or the project goes publicly sour.

After the reporter writes or prepares his story, it goes to editors and others who correct spelling and grammatical errors and who may change the story to make it more understandable or, even, more interesting.

Most of the time, these editors improve the story. Sometimes, their editing harms the accuracy of stories. In general, however, well-researched and well-written articles are not changed dramatically and survive with accuracy intact.

WHO IS A JOURNALIST?

Before we leave the media side of the equation, we should spend a moment talking about the real, live people who work within the media.

There are reporters, editors, producers, researchers, anchor people, photographers, camera operators, switchers, directors, script assistants, production assistants and a number of other workers in newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations.

Today, many reporters are hired out of community college or university journalism courses but such education is not a prerequisite for the job. Many reporters hired by weekly newspapers and smaller radio and television stations have no qualifications for the job at all other than a willingness to work all hours at low wages. many reporters are brilliant or dedicated or both. some reporters are not-just like people in any other field of endeavor.

In most media outlets there is no training provided other than trial and error with an editor looking over the reporters' shoulders. The CBC and Southam News, however, do provide in-depth training as do some other units.

In general, few journalists would agree on a single set of criteria for the job or, in fact, on a code of conduct for the performance of journalism.

Most reporters are left to their own devices when forced to apply ethics or scruples to their work. Fortunately, most reporters and other journalists are decent, honorable and ethical people. Some are not.

However, the average reporter's or editor's views on what is ethical but which you may not:

1. Taping interviews without telling the other party. This is the modern reporters' way of taking accurate notes. You may feel it is underhanded.
2. Not allowing you to see the completed story before publication. Many reporters feel this compromises other sources and their own integrity. You may feel the story would be more accurate if you could 'edit' it.
3. Trespassing. The reporter will enter private property to get an interview or a photograph and he will not ask permission. He can be charged, just like anyone else although this is not advisable in most circumstances.
4. Attempting to interview next of kin of people killed or injured in accidents.

5. Not telling you they have interviewed other persons before coming to you.
6. Not admitting they do not understand fully the stories they are covering.

There is one other thing to say about most journalists. There are exceptions of course but most are not particularly well paid.

II

ENCOUNTERING THE MEDIA

We have seen the media in its day-to-day role as information collector and editor. Now, it's time to talk of ways in which you should greet the representatives of the newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations and wire services that abound throughout this land.

Before we deal with details, we should deal with some of the major complaints and questions of designated spokespeople.

Q: Why should we deal with the media in the first place? Why not pass everything to the public affairs people who are trained to deal with media interviews?

A: Public affairs people are essential to good media relations. They can keep track of Beat Reporters, media deadlines, different kinds of media, media biases, press clippings and a number of other media-related things. Some organizations funnel all media calls through the public affairs people. However, public affairs people are not experts in your field. They do not have the credibility with the media you would have. In most instances, when the media chooses to bypass the public affairs people and go to another source of news, you are the best source of that news—best for the media and best for your organization.

Q: Where do I find the time for the media? I am too busy with my other duties.

A: Today, the duties of people like you involve communications and that includes media relations. Talking to the media, either to uphold your image or to promote it, is important to all enterprises and critical to many.

Q: What if I bomb? What if I say something wrong during an interview? What if I look bad?

A: It happens. In most cases, spokespeople magnify their errors in their minds: few statements are damaging over the long run. Few people look so 'bad' in photographs or on television that the public will hold their appearance against the organization or the interviewee. But mistakes do occur. In this training, we tell you of ways to reduce or eliminate serious error. Without training, you are completely exposed to error. Remember also, if you do your best, any mistake should be forgiven by the organization and your colleagues.

Q: But, all said and done, the media is out to get us, isn't it?

A: Nonsense. The media hasn't got the time, the energy or the cruelty to 'get' everyone who says this. In most cases, the spokesperson has to 'get' himself, meaning he has to say something truly dumb or negative or alienate the media and audience in some way. In most cases, the media simply gathers information with no nefarious motives. On the other hand, it is your job to protect yourself. don't count on the media to help you out of crises or cover up errors.

Q: How can I prepare for the media when I don't know what they want?

A: You can predict, you can plan.

Here is how:

PREDICTABLE MEDIA APPROACHES

There are two situations in which you may encounter the media. The first is the predictable situation; the second, of course, is the unpredictable.

The predictable: there are many instances that fall into this category.

You may be scheduled to speak at an event which, in all likelihood, will be covered by the media. This is predictable.

Your organization may have sent out a news release: the media will want to follow up this release. It is predictable the media may call upon you.

Your organization may be involved in a crisis situation or some other highly newsworthy event. You can predict the news media may wish to cover the event and to talk to you.

In any predictable situation, the rule is simple: 'Think about your media encounter before you are in the midst of it.'

Before the media reporters telephone you or turn up on your doorstep, think about the interview you might conduct. Think about ways in which you can describe the topic. What is the most important fact you wish the public to appreciate? What questions might you be asked and do you have the answers? We will provide you with a planning format in a few pages but, as you can see, there are no mysteries to preparing in advance for the media encounter. It's common sense-and some work.

When you have planned in this predictable situation, you can greet the media with information as soon as they request it. Often, this fast, full response puts you in the driver's seat. You are one of the first 'sources' he calls and your information becomes much of the foundation for his story. All other information collected after yours will be judged against yours.

UNPREDICTABLE MEDIA APPROACHES

You pick up the telephone and there is a reporter on the other end asking you questions. You attend a meeting, leave it and run headlong into a phalanx of reporters shouting out questions. You are sitting placidly in your office when, all of a sudden, a camera crew and reporter open your door and stride in, a microphone thrust into your face.

These are unpredictable situations.

The questions asked of you are about a subject that either you had no knowledge of or one you are not prepared to talk about at the moment. What do you do?

First, do not say anything that can be quoted. When we say this, we are not telling you to be defensive or antagonistic. We want you to create a level playing field: the reporter knows something about the subject he wants to pursue with you, you know little or nothing. That's not fair. At least, you should have some time to explore the subject and to prepare your responses to questions about it.

Do not say, "Heavens, I can't comment on that." You may mean that since you have no up-to-date information on the topic, you can't make a comment immediately.

Call a reporter an hour after you have said "No comment." Tell him you now have a comment to offer. He probably will tell you, "I'm sorry, but the story has been locked in. I can't change it now."

Rather than making comments such as these and instead of answering the reporters' questions at this time, ask the reporter two questions of your own: "What do you want to know/" and "When do you have to write your story?"

What do you want to know? If the reporter is unspecific in any way about the topic he is inquiring about, ask him what he would like to concentrate on in his interview with you.

When do you have to write your story? Most reporters will try to push you into answering questions immediately. Reporters are under time pressures to get stories written: as well, every reporter knows quick answers are more candid, interesting and quotable.

At all costs, resist the pressure to answer immediately unless you have predicted the media encounter and have prepared for it. Tell the reporter you need time to get "the latest information" and, perhaps, "some statistics." Ask him to set a time within which you can call him back. In other words, ask him, "When do you have to write your story?"

Help reporters to meet legitimate deadlines. If he says he has to write the story within half an hour, get back to him in 10 or 15 minutes. If he says his deadline is three hours from this time, get back in an hour... If he absolutely demands information this second on a subject about which you have insufficient information, tell him he is being unfair or simply say, "In that case, I'm afraid you will have to write an incomplete story, without my information."

If you say you will do so, call the reporter back. Never promise to call and break your word.

As well, when you are inquiring what the reporter wants, never ask him to tell you his questions in advance or, indeed, to submit questions in writing. Not only do these requests make reporters suspicious of you, they make reporters think of questions to ask when, originally, they intended to create questions spontaneously during the interview. This latter scenario is far more advantageous for you than facing a reporter with preconceived questions and an interview 'script'.

THE PLAN

Now, you have time. In the predictable situation, you have time before the media calls on you. In the unpredictable situation, you bought yourself time.

You have time to plan. Here is a format that will help you to collect your basic information, predict media questions and prepare answers for those questions:

DESCRIPTION

FOCUS

POSITIVES

NEGATIVES

The first thing to prepare is a DESCRIPTION of the event or issue that will be the subject of the interview.

Most people do not describe things well: even though they are experts on particular subjects, more people provide incomplete, superficial descriptions.

To compile the information you will need for a basic description, use the '5 Ws', or the basic questions always asked by competent reporters. These 5 Ws are:

WHO,
WHAT,
WHEN,
WHERE and
WHY.

To make certain you have considered all your basic information, include as well the 2 Hs,

HOW and
HOW MUCH.

First, consider all major WHOs involved in the story you wish to tell to the reporter.

Now, apply the questions What, When and Where, How and How Much to each Who.

Finally, ask the question WHY? of each answer you have compiled above.

We now have our basic information collected.

We know, we know. You can't expect a reporter to sit still for the 10 minutes it will take to tell him all this information.

Once we have our basic information compiled we now must edit it down to the salient points we wish to provide to the reporter. Remember, a reporter must have at least one answer to each question under the 5 Ws or he will have a gap in his story.

Next, we wish to choose a FOCUS or 'angle' that we would like to see dominate the story as published by the media. Often, if we stress a focus or angle, as it is known by reporters, the reporter will accept our focus as the most important part of the story and will not attempt to find a focus of his own.

Your FOCUS should be compressed into one or two meaningful, interesting sentences. It should be stressed during the interview either through repetition or prefacing with phrases such as, "The most important thing is..."

You also should prepare a list of POSITIVES: remember most reporters do not ask you questions that elicit positive information. They ask negative or neutral questions instead. If you have positive information to include, you had better have that information in mind and volunteer it during the interview without waiting to be asked for it.

The NEGATIVES of the situation also must be considered during your preparation stage. Divide the negatives into three categories:

- 1) What negative questions may you be asked? List the most likely and prepare your answers in advance of the interview.
- 2) Can you identify a dominant negative which is certain to arise during the interview and which may become the 'angle' if you allow it to be?
- 3) Is there 'private information' which you do not wish to volunteer and will offer only if asked a direct question?

THE INTERVIEW

The above planning format (DESCRIPTION, FOCUS, POSITIVES, NEGATIVES) is not only a good format by which to compile your information before an interview, it is a good format to employ in the interview itself. In other words, it is best if you can begin any interview by telling your side of the story. This is your DESCRIPTION. As you give your description, include your FOCUS. In fact, you can begin most interviews by giving your focus flagged with an introductory phrase such as "The most important thing about this program is..."

Of course, you cannot do this if you are going to play Question and Answer with the reporter from the outset of the interview. If you answer his first question, you will not have an opportunity later to provide your carefully crafted Description and Focus.

Therefore, at the beginning of all interviews, ignore or set aside the reporter's first question and launch into your focus and description. Once you have given your side of the story, you must answer subsequent questions.

Whenever possible, however, volunteer a positive from your list.

Finally, in most interviews, you will arrive at the negative questions but, by this time, your side of the story will be known, you will have made key points and both you and the reporter will be on firmer footing.

BODY LANGUAGE

The ways you sit or stand, look and move are important to establishing your credibility and your control.

When standing, stand erect without leaning on anything. Do not move around so as to make focussing a camera difficult. Otherwise, follow the rules below.

When seated, sit erect and lean slightly forward. Don't lean back as this will make you look defensive or less interesting rather than relaxed and comfortable.

Keep your eyes in the vicinity of the eyes of the interviewer (unless, in a television interview, it is absolutely impossible to watch the interviewer--then look into the camera lens.) Avoid looking up at the ceiling or down at your shoes; this makes you look evasive, puzzled or as though you are doubtful about what you are saying.

Use your hands. Make gestures, express your thoughts. Unless you throw your hands about with great abandon, the use of your hands makes you and your information appear more interesting.

Don't cross your legs unless you can do so neatly. Crossing your legs makes you lean to one side, move back in the chair or look plain sloppy. Instead, plant your feet firmly on the floor, one foot slightly ahead of the other with your knees relatively close together.

CLOTHING

Your choice of dress also can add to your presence, control and credibility in front of any audience and, particularly, on television.

Generally, dark clothes add while light colors subtract.

However, avoid solid black and greens of any shade. Avoid glaring white clothes such as white shirts and blouses.

Avoid busy patterns and loud colors and avoid patterns and weaves that may 'strobe' on television: tweeds and herring bones are partial to this strobing or flashing effect.

Avoid wearing flashy, large jewelry and lapel pins.

If television makeup is offered, accept the offer.

VOICE

You can alter your voice to make it more interesting and authoritative. There are three ways to change your voice and delivery: Change Pitch, Change Power and Change Pace.

Professionals can change the pitch of their voices but an amateur should not try.

Changing Power means speaking louder or softer. Never speak so softly the interviewer has difficulty hearing you. However, you can modulate your voice so, for example, important points are made more loudly and background information is covered in a softer voice.

Changing Pace means speeding up and slowing down. This tactic will add interest to your delivery. Practice until you are able to speed up without speaking too quickly and slow down without becoming boring or labored.

Finally, it is a fact of life that reporters like to put words in your mouth. You do not want this to happen: it is interview!

KEY RULES TO CREATING AND MAINTAINING CONTROL

Here are some of the rules to follow to prevent reporters putting their words in your mouth:

1. Remember, you are speaking on behalf of your organization.

- Do Discuss Current Policy.
- Do Not Speculate On Policy.
- Do Not Discuss Confidential Information.
- Do Not Give Personal Opinions.

2. Do Not Allow Reporters To Interrupt a sentence or a thought. If they try to interrupt, keep talking until you have finished your thought or sentence. If they do not stop interrupting, say, "Excuse me, I haven't finished..." and keep on until you do finish.

3. Do Not Accept The Sensational Words Offered by the interviewer. If the question contains words such as 'tragic' or 'dangerous' or 'guarantee' or other such inflammatory words, avoid using them in any form in your answer--not even to deny them. If you do, the reporter can quote the word as if you initiated it, thereby giving it some credibility.

4. Do Not Answer 'Yes', 'No' or in any other monosyllabic way. To do so allows the reporter to quote the question as your answer. Instead, answer in complete sentences of your own construction.

Remember, create and maintain control so that you can tell your side of the story without undue prompting. You are the expert. This is your interview.

Good luck.

V. Samples of Policy Briefs

CAN AID PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNMENT?

Summary: The promotion of 'good government' has become an explicit objective of most aid donors. This has raised suspicions in developing countries, particularly when the threat of withholding aid has been used to force multi-party elections. But experience is showing that the good government agenda is less threatening than it first appeared, and provides opportunities for improving the quality of aid. Good government principles are here to stay, and - if applied consistently, openly and intelligently - can bring benefits for both recipients and donors.

What is meant by 'Good Government'?

The term 'good government' entered the aid vocabulary in the early 1990s. Definitions of what it means vary. For most donors, the main ingredients are:

- *democracy (particularly multi-party democracy);*
- *respect for human rights and the rule of law;*
- *efficiency, accountability and transparency in government and public administration.*

For some donors, good government also embraces:

- *popular participation;*
- *equity and poverty concerns;*
- *a commitment to market-oriented economic policies.*

Disagreement among donors on the content of the good government agenda means they have pursued distinct, sometimes contradictory policies, and have failed to give clear signals to recipients about what they are trying to achieve. This has confused the picture, and diluted the impact of good government initiatives.

What's new - and why now?

There is nothing new in many of the aims of good government policies, or in the approaches used to pursue them. What is new is that donors are putting *more emphasis on using aid to promote good government*, and are devoting more resources to it. There are several reasons for this.

- *the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism undermined the case for giving aid to repressive and undemocratic governments simply because they were anti-Communist. Democracy could be promoted as an objective in its own right.*

- *a growing belief that 'bad government' has been undermining development. Corruption, poor control of public funds, lack of accountability, human rights abuses, and excessive military expenditure, have all been blamed for holding back development - particularly in Africa.*
- *the conviction among donors that aid will be more acceptable to taxpayers if it is seen to promote democracy and human rights.*

The end of the Cold War was the trigger that allowed these concerns to be packaged together under the single 'good government' heading.



Donor pressure helped force elections in Kenya: 1992 opposition rally.

The punitive approach

Aid donors are implementing good government policies through a range of measures. These can be broadly divided into two sets: positive (the carrot) and punitive (the stick).

With the punitive approach, aid is made conditional on the recipient government adhering to political conditions set by donors. Failure to do so can result in aid being reduced, suspended, and in extreme circumstances, terminated. The key objective is to promote political reform, usually in the form of multi-party democracy, together with progress on human rights.

In practice, the punitive approach has been used sparingly, and often only as the last resort when conventional diplomatic pressures have failed. Where it has been applied, it has not always had the desired effect.

In 1992, donors publicly presented the Kenyan government with a virtual ultimatum - hold free multi-party elections or aid will be severely cut. This caused a stir, partly because Kenya had previously been seen as a close ally of Western donors.

Donors achieved their objective in the sense that multi-party elections were held (in December 1992). However, the outcome was that the existing government was able to take advantage of its influence over the electoral process to split the opposition, and gain re-election on the basis of a small share of votes polled. Ethnic tensions were heavily exploited in campaigning, leaving Kenyan society in a weakened state, and undermining its development prospects.

Punitive measures have also been taken against Haiti, Malawi, Somalia, Sudan and Zaire, but again with mixed results.

All this has convinced some donors to downplay the punitive approach. Canada, for example, has abandoned it as a mechanism for furthering good government. France has diluted its commitment to democracy promotion as a key policy objective. And in May 1994 the Clinton administration reversed its policy of linking preferential trade benefits to China to an improvement in human rights. However the United States has not discarded the punitive approach completely, and in some cases has been willing to back aid sanctions with military force to restore democracy - Haiti being the most recent example.

Most donors will no doubt continue to use aid as a bargaining counter to affect the composition and behaviour of governments. The difference is that now they are doing this quietly, rather than overtly.



Promoting a free press is one positive way of encouraging good government. Paper sellers, Côte d'Ivoire.

The positive approach

Aid donors also employ a wide array of positive aid measures - mostly involving institution-building - to encourage good government. They fall into two main categories:

Public sector reforms (advocated, in particular, by the World Bank):

- promoting better management of the public sector;
- encouraging civil service reforms;
- pushing for greater accountability and transparency in government;
- strengthening the legal system and training the police.

Political reforms:

- training journalists and promoting a free press;
- supporting human rights groups and other civic and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- providing election monitoring;
- encouraging constitutional reform;
- assisting new political parties.

The positive approach has been less controversial than the punitive, and has on the whole been more successful. But it is not without its problems.

Institution-building projects tend to be small-scale and long-term. They require patience and flexibility on the part of donors, and are difficult to manage and appraise. Donors have found it hard to spend money in this area. Providing too much money to organizations, too quickly, runs the risk of undermining their effectiveness and legitimacy.

Is national sovereignty threatened?

Good government policies **are** intended to be a threat to Third World governments who abuse human rights, or are corrupt and undemocratic. Using aid to counter these tendencies may threaten **governments**, but can help those who suffer under them - donors argue.

However, even those who favour democracy and respect for human rights are wary of donor intentions. Donors are promoting a particular type of government - multi-party democracy. What right have they to interfere in the internal politics of countries by prescribing this form of government?

If positive rather than punitive measures become the norm in future, then recipients may feel less threatened. But critics remain suspicious that donors are using good government arguments as a convenient excuse to cut aid budgets.

One of the clear benefits of good government pressures is that they are helping to shift the debate within Third World countries. People are hearing terms such as accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, and beginning to use them themselves to raise questions. Are government organizations doing their job? Do we get value from large parastatal foodgrain corporations that fail to provide cheap and reliable food supplies and run enormous deficits? Why is the press not able to investigate allegations of high level corruption?

People feel more confident about raising these kinds of questions when their governments are also under international pressure to take these issues seriously.

Contradictions

At present, the good government agenda is full of contradictions. Apart from donors defining it in different ways, there are glaring inconsistencies in the way it is applied. Some of the most obvious are:

- the fact that donors continue to provide substantial aid and trading privileges to some powerful and influential countries such as China and Indonesia, despite clear evidence of human rights abuses.
- the fact that some of the donor nations most active in promoting good government have themselves been among the largest suppliers of military equipment to the Third World. Recent reductions in sales to some parts of the Third World are not due to any change in policy. They are because Western suppliers are being priced out by tight budgets and competition from other lower cost suppliers, like China.
- inconsistent responses to events, such as when General Sani Abacha seized power from a caretaker government in Nigeria in late 1993, reversing the country's planned return to democracy. He was condemned by (among others) the British Government. But Britain continued to supply arms to Nigeria

These examples show the conflicts between good intentions, and political realities. These may be inevitable. But they do not strengthen Third World confidence that good government policies are being applied consistently or fairly.

Other problems stem from conflicts between different elements in the good government agenda. In July 1994, for example, the elected government of Gambia was forced out of office. Coup leaders alleged that the previous government, which held power for 29 years, was corrupt. The dilemma for donors was which was more important: supporting democracy, or rooting out corruption? In cases such as these, donors are forced to make difficult choices. The USA announced it would cut off aid. Britain opted for a middle course, saying that existing aid commitments would be honoured but that no new ones would be made.

And what if aid recipient governments change their policies and satisfy good government criteria? Will there be more aid? Not necessarily. The German government has recently increased aid to countries that have complied with good government criteria, and cut funding for others. But most donors have stopped short of making hard and fast commitments.

Views from the South

'Human rights begin with breakfast'

African delegate to a United Nations conference.

'The individual cannot really be a human being if his or her basic needs are not met, and those basic needs include security, subsistence, health, education'

Pierre Sané, Senegal (Secretary-General, Amnesty International).

Caution is needed before 'we twist arms to force democracy and all the other noble ideas and concepts down everyone's throats' ... 'the Commonwealth should not just go along with the World Bank' in putting new conditionalities on aid.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's prime minister (at 1991 Commonwealth finance ministers meeting)

'Economic linkages are the most important instrument we have'

(Nigerian civil rights lawyer, arguing in favour of tying aid to human rights).

Do donors practise what they preach?

Aid agencies have been justly criticized for failing to apply good government principles to their own operations. For example:

- *failing to consult properly with recipients;*
- *being less than 'transparent' in their own dealings with recipients;*
- *being hypocritical - advocating good government on one hand, while at the same time funding dubious aid projects, such as dam schemes that leave thousands displaced without proper compensation.*

The World Bank, which pioneered the notion of connecting aid with good government, very quickly found the tables being turned against it. The fact that it has recently opened its operations to greater public scrutiny is due in part to creative use of good government arguments by its critics.

The way forward

The good government agenda has moved on since it was first put forward. The positive approach has gained ground, and use of aid as an explicit and public means of forcing political change is being downplayed. It has proved to be a crude and unreliable tool.

Instead, donors are resorting to the more traditional approach of applying pressure behind the scenes. In early 1994, action of this kind led to the sacking from an African government of three Ministers against whom donors had collected direct evidence of large-scale corruption.

This more covert approach has the advantage of being more flexible, and more likely to be effective - although it can be criticized for not being transparent, and therefore breaking one of the basic rules of good government.

Looking ahead, the good government agenda is clearly here to stay. Aid donors have become attached to the principle, and have in many cases reorganized themselves so they have an office or division dealing explicitly with these issues.

The 'good government' label may be too broad and diffuse, and may eventually fall out of use. But the principles behind it - that giving and receiving aid are political processes, and that political issues should be taken into account - are likely to be embedded in aid programmes for the foreseeable future.

There are a number of lessons to be learned, however, if the potential benefits of good government policies are to be reaped.

For recipient countries:

- *the good government agenda has turned out to be less threatening than it originally appeared. It is better for countries to grasp the agenda and turn it to their advantage, than fight it.*
- *demonstrating progress in improving government performance and addressing human rights issues should provide useful leverage in negotiating better aid packages - although there are no guarantees.*
- *countries should put pressure on donor countries to consult more, stop 'moving the goalposts', and practise what they preach.*

For donor countries:

- *greater clarity and consistency are crucial if good government policies are to work. Donors should coordinate their actions and seek to develop a more coherent approach.*
- *the good government agenda needs to be broadened to embrace the economic dimension of human rights. It is not tenable to argue for political freedoms while at the same time promoting policies that make the poor worse off.*
- *an open attack on military spending has yet to become a recognized dimension of the good government agenda. Until it does, this glaring inconsistency will undermine the moral argument behind good government policies.*
- *if donors are serious about attacking Third World corruption they should start by following the United States lead and make the payment of overseas bribes by US citizens a criminal offence.*

Further Reading

IDS, 1993, *Good Government?*, IDS Bulletin Vol 24 No 1, Brighton: IDS

IDS, 1995 (forthcoming), *Towards Democratic Governance*, IDS Bulletin Vol 26 No 2, Brighton: IDS

The World Bank, 1992, *Governance and Development*, Washington DC: World Bank

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Head of Publications Services: Katherine Henry

Institute of Development Studies, at the University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK.
Tel: (01273) 606261 (Intl. + 44 1273) Fax: (01273) 691647/621202
E-mail: qdfj4@sussex.ac.uk



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DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

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The cost of air pollution abatement

Estimates of air pollution abatement costs based on comprehensive U.S. Census data provide a practical basis for decisions by developing countries on which industries to target and which emissions charges would be most efficient in which circumstances

Estimates of the costs of reducing emissions of major air pollutants in the United States show that these costs can vary dramatically across sectors for the same pollutant. The highest abatement costs for a pollutant are often 10 times greater—and sometimes 100 times greater—than the lowest costs. The estimates also show large differences across pollutants in the average costs and in the range of costs of their abatement.*

For environmental policymakers, these results suggest an important lesson. Command-and-control regulation in the United States seems to have reduced pollution at a very high cost. Optimal regulation would attain the desired reduction in pollution while equalizing the marginal cost of abatement across sectors. Where feasible, market-based instruments such as emissions charges and tradable permits are optimal in this sense.

In principle, regulators who were properly informed about abatement costs could approach this optimum using command-and-control-type methods. In practice, nothing like

this has occurred—as shown by the wide variance in the abatement costs for a pollutant across sectors.

Since regulatory resources are scarce, it makes sense to focus initial efforts on sectors characterized by relatively large contributions to total emissions and relatively low average costs of abatement.

The econometric research reported here was undertaken in collaboration with the Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Bureau of the Census. At the Center researchers had access to the U.S. Department of Commerce's annual 20,000-plant random survey of pollution abatement costs and expenditures. All told, the estimates reported in the study reflect the experience of about 100,000 U.S. manufacturing facilities. In depth and coverage, they are by a considerable margin the most complete estimates available.

Are these U.S. estimates a credible guide for benefit-cost analysis in developing countries? That depends on the answers to three basic questions:

- *If the primary interest lies in assistance to new regulatory institutions in developing countries, why use a U.S. database?*

Until recently most developing countries have had little formal

regulation of air pollution. Data on pollution abatement costs are generated only by abatement, so it would be quite difficult to assemble a large, comprehensive, and reliable database on abatement costs, by pollutant, in developing countries. The U.S. estimates are built from a complete accounting of costs, including capital, labor, energy, materials, and services. Thus, they are not idealized engineering estimates, but numbers for thousands of plants under actual operating conditions.

- *Can U.S.-based estimates be reasonably applied to developing countries without modification?*

The estimates are based on high mandated levels of pollution control in the United States. They also reflect U.S. input costs. While some inputs to abatement are traded at roughly constant prices in international markets, the nontraded inputs generally will be more costly in higher-income economies. U.S. abatement costs therefore should be higher than costs in developing countries unless protection or scarcity of engineering skills have very strong countervailing effects. Taking the regulatory and cost factors into account, the U.S.-based numbers provide conservative upper-bound estimates of pollution control costs in developing countries. Regulatory options estimated to have high net benefits when evaluated using these numbers would probably look even better if local abatement cost estimates were available. Future research in the Policy and Research Department of the World Bank will generate such estimates for a broad sample of developing countries.

*For more details, see Raymond S. Hartman, David Wheeler, and Manjula Singh, "The Cost of Air Pollution Abatement," Policy Research Working Paper 1395. World Bank, Washington, DC, 1994.

• *Why use econometric analysis if direct survey evidence is available?*

Air pollution abatement is an activity of the firm, characterized by multiple inputs and multiple outputs. The outputs are abatement volumes for all pollutants controlled by the firm. Separate abatement activities, like other productive activities, have joint and common costs. Although firms have accounting conventions, the truth is that imputing these costs to separate activities is an exercise in inference from observed experience. In such a case there is no substitute for econometric cost function estimation from large samples.

The estimates of abatement costs can be used in two ways:

Efficient command-and-control regulation. Direct command-and-control regulation will be much more efficient if it is informed by estimates of relative abatement costs. The estimates should be read as the costs associated with attaining a relatively uniform (and strict) concentration standard for air emissions across sectors. Intersectoral variation in plant-level costs reflects significant differences in the average scale of abatement, number of emissions sources, pretreatment concentration levels in the waste stream, and myriad technical factors. To attain near-uniform emissions standards, plants in different sectors must incur very different average costs of abatement.

With scarce resources for monitoring and enforcement, many new regulatory institutions will want to focus on the sectors that are the largest emitters of locally dangerous pollutants. Once those sectors are identified, targeting should be informed by the relative cost of abatement. Consider, for example,

particulate emissions from pulping and steelmaking facilities. If both are heavy local polluters, the cost estimates would imply focusing on pulping facilities because their abatement costs are only 25% of those in steelmaking.

Cost-effective regulatory strategies. If complete sectoral data on emissions are available, a more sophisticated approach is warranted. In a simple example, suppose an area has five sectors that are significant emitters of suspended particulates. Order the sectoral emissions and cost data by ascending average abatement cost (see table).

These numbers provide a guide for economically sensible strategy, whether it is command-and-control or market-based. When sorted by ascending unit cost, the numbers trace a rough aggregate social marginal cost curve: cumulative abatement can be approximately related to the unit cost of abatement. Suppose, for example, that a country wants to set quantitative targets for emissions reduction. The cheapest abatement will be in nonmetal products (principally cement), where 400 tons of particulate can be abated for about \$20 a ton. Next cheapest is pulp and paper, where 100 more tons can be eliminated at

\$43 a ton. Abatement from these two sectors will eliminate 50% of total emissions.

It can therefore be stated, with rough accuracy, that the marginal social cost at 50% abatement of particulates is \$43 a ton. At 75% abatement, the marginal social cost rises sharply to \$127 a ton; at 95% abatement, to \$182 a ton. So, a move from 40% abatement to 95% entails a ninefold increase in the marginal cost of abatement. Such large step increases should be enough to make policymakers think hard about the optimal degree of abatement in particular circumstances.

It is also possible to reverse the logic of the example and use it as a guide for setting emissions charges. The numbers say that an emissions charge of \$30 a ton should give approximately 40% abatement since it will be generally cost-effective for polluters in nonmetal products to reduce emissions substantially (at \$20 a ton) rather than pay the charge. Doubling the charge (to \$60) should buy another 10% abatement. To effect 95% abatement, the charge would have to be tripled again, to something over \$182 a ton.

These simple examples illustrate the potential utility of the cost estimates in the table.

Notional average abatement costs by sector

Sector		Particulate emissions (tons)	Cumulative emissions (percent)	Sectoral average abatement cost (US\$/ton)
3690	Nonmetal products	400	40	20
3411	Pulp, paper	100	50	43
3230	Agricultural chemicals	250	75	127
3710	Iron, steel	200	95	182
3520	Other chemicals	50	100	212
Total		1,000		

ENRAP Beefs Up Institutionalization Program

The Environmental and Natural Resources Accounting Project (ENRAP) expends efforts at institutionalizing ENR accounting (ENRA) activity. ENRA integrates environmental and economic concerns into development planning and policy formulation. Efficient policy development requires explicit consideration of the costs and benefits of changes in the environment and natural resources.

One major constraint in estimating costs and benefits is the lack of information, compounded with the users' lack of analytical skills and inability to use such information. ENRAP's institutionalization efforts are geared towards addressing this problem.

Institutionalization plans, which began during Phase II of the Project, identified the activities that would sustain and strengthen ENRAP's support to policy planning and formulation.

Three major activities beef up the institutionalization program: training/orientation, dissemination, and networking.

Orientaion/Training

Complementary to human resources development programs of both the government and private sectors, ENRAP organizes training and orientation activities that are meant to create a critical mass of

Filipino professionals who can participate in ENRA development, maintenance and institutionalization.

For a start, ENRAP conducted a two-week course on Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Development in August 1994.

In January 1995, ENRAP is organizing a two-day briefing for high-level government officials on ENRA principles and applications in planning and policy formulation.

Dissemination

More than 15 briefings have been conducted since ENRAP III was implemented in May 1994. This outreach program, catering to various groups and individuals, is meant to disseminate information on the Project and its activities. It also helps ENRAP gather immediate feedback on such programs.

To keep the public informed of the vital importance of environment in their day-to-day living, ENRAP continues to strengthen its environmental communication and advocacy program by developing a battery of information and communication materials, such as the ENRAP Bulletin, an institutional brochure, a video documentary and other fact files.

(continued on page 2)

ENRAP

The Environmental and Natural Resources Accounting Project (ENRAP) was established in 1991 under the aegis of the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). ENRAP is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by the International Resources Group, Ltd. (IRG), in association with the Resources, Environment and Economics Consultants, Inc. (REECS) and Edgevale Associates.

Phase I of the Project modified the Philippine gross national product with depreciation estimates of the country's forest resources. Phase II, covering December 1992 to March 1994, developed a comprehensive accounting framework that examined the role of both the natural and environmental resources, and their impact on the nation's economy.

Now on its third phase, ENRAP institutionalizes the various ENR accounting processes within the government structures. It also aims to further refine environmental indicators so far developed to better assess a number of key environmental policies and management issues.

Priority activities for ENRAP III include:

- > refining and updating the 1988 accounts
- > training/orientation
- > policy/simulation exercises on environmental impacts of alternative trade regimes and growth targets, pollution and control technologies, energy mixes and land uses
- > developing the regional accounts
- > estimating natural capital depreciation, economic instruments for improved practices, and methods for valuing environmental abatement costs
- > disseminating ENRA/ENRAP information, and networking. ♦

This is our maiden issue, a first attempt at enhancing information exchange with you. This will also answer the need to share information with those requiring update on environmental and natural resources accounting (ENRA).

Since the establishment of the Environmental and Natural Resources Accounting Project in 1991, we have tried to reach out to a much wider public as possible, particularly those whose concerns are in mesh with the ENRAP goal of complementing the economic, natural resource and environmental development efforts. There is also the need to show decision-makers that the

ENRA/ENRAP activity is part of the general economic development policy formulation. This publication hopes to meet that need.

There are certainly other means to relate our program and activity, but a monthly monitoring of this kind between and among us is by far the most efficient way to relate our Project's mission to your own. This concerted effort cannot be as effective as we envision it to be unless there is a fitting information link between us. ♦

ENRAP beefs up.... from page 1

Networking

ENRAP's networking program is meant to expand existing groups of ENRA practitioners and users by:-

- establishing formal and informal linkages with ongoing related environmental projects
- participating in interagency committees that address ENRA-relevant issues
- conducting monthly seminars on ENRA-related topics
- expanding ENRA network among government and potential users
- participating in and/or presenting ENRAP activities and major findings in national/regional/international conferences and related fora on ENRA.

Future thrusts

ENRA institutionalization activity in the short and medium term comprises, among others, the following:

- > inclusion of a module on environmental economics and ENRA in the curriculum of the U.P. School of Economics
- > follow-up training of the first batch of ENRAP trainees
- > more expansive training/orientation programs for wider participation of government staff and those from other public and private agencies /institutions
- > production and wider dissemination of ENRAP information materials
- > more active counterparting system that will provide government counterparts hands-on training at ENRAP

> expansive networking with the private sector, local government units and NGOs

- > inclusion of an environmental module in the regular national surveys/censuses on establishments and households as well as in existing surveys and administrative systems of regulatory agencies relating to natural resources and environment
- > creation of ENRA units in the different participating government agencies
- > setting up a Database of Pollution Loads on Ecosystem/Geographic Area by Establishment
- > preparation of a Practitioners' Manual on Environmental Accounting. ♦

*We, at ENRAP, wish you all
A Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year!*

Air and water pollution sources

A 1988 data developed by ENRAP show that while industrial sources account for most of the Philippines' air pollutants, it may not be so when it comes to water pollution.

Except for the total dissolved solid discharges, households contribute more to the pollution of the nation's waters. They are also the leading source of BOD5 (biochemical oxygen demand), a key indicator of pollutants, which depletes the level of dissolved oxygen that supports fish and other aquatic plants and animals.

Stormwater runoff from urban streets is the primary source of

suspended solids that increase turbidity and limit life-support provided by sunlight.

Agriculture, while not the leading source of either BOD5 or suspended solids, plays a much bigger role with regard to these pollutants than does industry and electric power.❖

Water pollution and the economy

ENRAP's 1988 estimates indicate that most of the environmental damage from water pollution is on ecosystems and materials. Damage on ecosystem has been mostly due to the degradation of coral reefs from sedimentation. Such damage has been estimated in terms of decreased fish production and

loss of tourism revenues.

Water pollution in irrigation canals also reduces crop production.❖

Unrecorded fuelwood and crop production

In 1988, it was estimated that households produced a substantial amount of unmarketed fuelwood and upland food crops. If these products were accounted for in formal markets, forestry and agriculture production would have been higher. In particular, the forestry sector's output in 1988 would have increased by 33 percent had all household fuelwood production been recorded.❖

Enrapport

Cable TV series features ENRAP

ENRAP has been the focus of a television series on environment and nature, which was aired recently on TV 11 in San Pablo City. The half-hour program featured a panel interview with Dr Marian delos Angeles, Ms Eugene Bennagen and Dr Henry Peskin, Project Leader, Project Coordinator, and Project Advisor, respectively, of ENRAP. Also in the panel was Dr A Myrick Freeman III, Professor of Bowdoin College in the U.S. and resource person for the ENRAP training on environmental and natural resources policy development, held 1-13 August 1994 in Subic, Zambales.

The discussion focused not only on the past, present and

future thrusts and accomplishments of ENRAP, but also on the principal role of environmental and natural resources accounting in complementing sustainable environmental programs.

Copies of the TV program in VHS format is available at ENRAP.❖

ENRAP's Friday Group Discussion

The fourth in the monthly series of ENRAP's Friday group discussions covered such topics as *ENRAP Modified Input-Output Model* and *Environmental Legislation*. Ms Editha L Bernardo, Research Associate of ENRAP, tackled the topic on ENRAP input-output modified model, while Ms Abigail A Modino of the

Philippine Senate talked on legislation. The fourth discussion was held 9 December at the Chupungco residence, Philam Life Homes, Quezon City.

The first that launched this discussion series was held 26 August, also this year, at the National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR) in Diliman, Quezon City, and featured Ms Humbelina M Castro of NAPOCOR and Dr Harvey Ludwig, NAPOCOR Consultant, who both talked on *Environmental Management Costs for Power Plants*. The second discussion had the ENRAP staff presenting the *ENRAP Accounting Framework* with Ms Corazon Buenaventura, Director, Economics and Social Statistics Office of the National Statistical
(Continued on page 4)

Coordination Board, on the topic *National Income Accounting*. It was held 30 September at the DENR Building, Diliman, Quezon City.

Dr Marian S delos Angeles, Project Leader of ENRAP, and Dr Henry M Peskin, Project Advisor of ENRAP, respectively tackled *Tade and Environment* and *Green Accounting for the Chesapeake Bay* during the third Friday group discussion at the NEDA Building last 4 November.

ENRAP invites those interested to come to its future Friday group discussions. For more information, please contact Ms. Shirley Llagas and Cristy Cenzon through these numbers: 6338343 (tel-fax) and 6338344.❖

ENRAP conducts 1st training course

Thirty participants and observers attended the first *ENRAP Training on Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Development*, which was held 1-13 August 1994 in Subic, Zambales. Most of them were from government agencies and the rest came from the academe, related environmental projects and non-governmental organizations. ENRAP's research staff also attended the two-week course.

The course covered such topics as *environmental economics ; pollution sources, effects and management; environmental damages and the benefits of*

improving environmental quality; environmental control costs; natural resource depreciation; and environmental accounting.

Resource persons comprised Dr A Myrick Freeman III, Professor of Bowdoin College, U.S.; Dr Donald T Lauria, Professor of North Carolina, U.S.; and Dr Henry M Peskin, ENRAP Project Advisor. Local experts included Dr Marian S delos Angeles, ENRAP's Project Leader; Engr Francisco A Arellano, Division Manager of the Philippine Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System; and Engr Jose D Logarta, Jr., ENRAP Consultant.❖

ENRAP MONTHLY MONITOR

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ENRAP, Unit 402, Manila Luxury Condominium
Pearl Drive cor. Gold Loop, Ortigas Complex
City of Pasig 1600, Metro Manila
Philippines

Tel. nos. (+632) 6338343/6338344
Fax no. (+632) 6338343

E-mail address:
compuserve: 75107,236
Internet: 75107,236@compuserve.com





POLITICAL LIBERALISATION AND ECONOMIC REFORM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The last decade has seen unprecedented moves towards more liberal and democratic forms of political rule across the developing world. There have been expectations, in Africa and elsewhere, that such political changes would have a positive influence on economic reform measures. This Briefing Paper first describes the nature of the reforms and the links between political systems and economic management. It then examines some recent evidence of economic reform under new, and more democratic, political regimes in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa.

The Nature of Reforms

The current process of *political liberalisation* has been characterised by a series of reforms which involve greater respect for individual and collective rights, greater freedom of association and expression, amnesties for political prisoners and the institution of new constitutional changes such as the replacement of single-party by multi-party systems and the introduction of regular, free and fair elections for political succession. Democracy has been held to be consolidated when the new 'political rules' are generally recognised and become habitual, when elected assemblies have more than token power *vis-à-vis* the political executive and there is civil control over the military.

A number of Latin American countries have progressed beyond the process of political liberalisation which began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and appear to be in the period of 'democratic consolidation'. Several East Asian countries are in the political liberalisation phase. In sub-Saharan Africa, since 1989, there has been some political liberalisation following initial popular protests. Typically, these began with largely urban interest groups – unions, business people, students – seeking to improve their specific conditions but also protesting against government corruption, repression and mismanagement. The degree of political liberalisation has varied widely and, in Africa especially, it is premature to talk of the consolidation of democratic rules or norms.

Economic reform (or economic adjustment) can be broken down into those policies which effectively achieve macro-economic stabilisation through the use of rigorous fiscal and monetary policy, and those moves towards market liberalisation which involve more freely functioning markets for foreign exchange, credit and labour; reduced government intervention and regulation of marketing and pricing of traded products; the dismantling of state foreign-exchange management and import restrictions; and the introduction of more commercial principles into the management of public enterprises. There is near consensus that control of fiscal deficits and inflation is essential for the proper functioning of markets, though there are

differences of view on the appropriate sequencing of some of the above reforms.

While domestic forces have been major influences on the rate of both political and economic reform in developing countries in the 1980s, the global movement towards greater freedom from the arbitrary power of the state, and external financial pressures, have also played a powerful role. In Latin America a major influence was the drying up of access to international finance after 1982; in sub-Saharan Africa donor pressure for economic and political reform was a key factor. In the 1990s the aid agencies are setting conditions for both political and economic reform before releasing programme aid to many poor recipient countries, mainly but not entirely, in sub-Saharan Africa. (See Box 1.)

Political Systems and Economic Performance

Until the mid-1980s there was a widespread belief that tough authoritarian government was good for economic performance and adjustment programmes. This view was based on particular experiences of reform following military coups (eg Brazil 1964, Chile 1973, Argentina 1976, South Korea 1961, 1980, Ghana 1983).

This view is now less widespread, despite successful authoritarian economic management in, for example, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. However, authoritarian governance has depended on the specific nature and quality of the political leadership as well as reliance on patronage systems for survival. There have been explanations of why authoritarian regimes take a short-term perspective and seek personal gains from state-protected and subsidised activities. In contrast, some authoritarian leaders have taken a longer view and have promoted policies of economic stabilisation and effective industrialisation and development, with bureaucracies competent to implement the strategy.

More systematic research has now been done on the economic performance of different types of political regime in the developing countries. This fails to show that more authoritarian regimes are better at controlling their public expenditure, budget deficits, credit ceilings or inflation. Nor does it show that economic growth has been greater under such regimes.

The economic reform credentials of democratic rule have similarly not been established. Nearly a hundred World Bank structural adjustment programmes were recently examined to discover the degree of initiative and commitment evidenced by the domestic political leaders and officials. No systematic connection was found with the type of political system or regime: a high level of commitment was demonstrated in some politically liberal countries (eg Costa Rica, Mauritius), but it was paralleled in some less liberal ones (eg Korea, Ghana).

Box 1: Donors and their Critics

In the 1990s, donors are setting the double requirement of political and economic reform as the condition for the release of aid to recipient countries. Political conditions have related primarily to improved behaviour on civic and political rights and on free and fair national elections. This has attracted three main criticisms:

- That donor understanding of appropriate and sustainable political changes has been weak. There has been excessive concern with multi-party electoral systems and insufficient concern with more fundamental issues of civic interest groups and political party mobilisation and articulation which will offer the public policy choices.
- That donors have not been explicit on how or why political liberalisation and wider participation in decision-making will ensure more effective implementation of economic reforms.
- That donors who set political conditions and consider their implementation of fundamental priority need to relax the pace and extent of their parallel economic reform conditions, since there may be considerable incompatibility between them, especially during periods of political transition.

Why Link Democratisation to Economic Reform?

Given this unsurprising evidence of the lack of a clear link between economic performance and type of government, why have donors and some developing country governments argued for the need to link political democratisation to economic reform programmes? One reason is the current attachment to the idea of an affinity between 'democratic' and 'market' systems. It is argued, for example, that 'markets require democracy' to limit arbitrary political intervention in individual decision-making and to protect property rights and freedom of contracts.

The prospect of simultaneously combining political liberalisation with economic reform is problematical but the following arguments are put forward to support it.

- New governments with commitments to a fresh economic agenda can be fairly elected and can gain some trust and legitimacy from the public. The new political coalitions can include representatives of those interests – business, intellectual, religious, labour unions – which genuinely want a change in the way the economy is managed.
- A new democratic government can more easily enlist support for wide-ranging reforms if the political change occurred because of failures in economic policy associated with the previous regime.
- Such governments can blame their predecessors for their difficult inheritance and hence win some patience from the public in their adjustment effort.
- The freer association and expression accorded to a range of newer civic groups (or old ones freed from state dependence) can be influential in lobbying for economic reforms. Rural constituencies and small farmers are often seen as particularly important because, as domestic food and export crop producers, they should support, and benefit from, reforms in the marketing and pricing systems.
- A more open and consultative style of government

should ensure economic and institutional changes worked out by compromise and consensus politics.

It is recognised, however, that in times of simultaneous political and economic change some tensions are inevitable, for the following reasons.

- Both processes involve 'new rules' that raise great uncertainties about how they will work – for politicians, interest groups, producers, workers, consumers, etc.
- With new and perhaps excessive expectations and demands from previously frustrated groups, it may be difficult to control budget spending and deficits and to ensure a more productive use of public funds.
- Politicians and bureaucrats are often inexperienced in their new political roles. They have to reconcile the 'insulation' of policy in order to achieve stabilisation and inflation control with the novel openness and responsiveness of more politically liberalised politics. This also requires them to resolve the conflicts of interest between newly articulate civic interest groups.
- Urban groups, which are often a major force in political liberalisation may well lose jobs and protected markets and face an increase in their cost of living from economic policy changes.

These are the main considerations which appear to influence the outcome of simultaneous efforts at democratisation and economic reform. How, in practice, are the tensions being resolved? We look first at middle-income 'new democracy' countries, particularly in Latin America, and then consider sub-Saharan Africa where the problems of economic reform seem most intractable.

Latin America and other Middle-Income New Democracies

Economic Stabilisation

In the middle-income countries, to date at least, the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes has been associated with considerable macroeconomic instability. The transitions have tended to increase budget deficits and inflation though this has often been a legacy of the outgoing regime's desperate attempts to survive unpopularity through expansionist policies (Argentina 1983, Brazil 1985 and Poland more recently). But with very high inherited levels of inflation, incoming new democratic governments, in particular, have found it difficult to bring monetary policy under control, compared with established democracies.

In the first place, democratisation has heightened popular expectations and released hitherto suppressed social demands and grievances. These have sometimes coincided with misjudgments on the part of inexperienced and insecure newly elected politicians. Populist governments have emerged and typically this has generated a sudden expansion of public spending on the creation of jobs (eg Brazil, 1984–9). Nevertheless, in general, neither in election years nor in the years before or after elections, have there been larger fiscal deficits or higher inflation, perhaps because voters in these countries are not so obviously duped as is sometimes thought.

Secondly, when a country passes a certain 'threshold of crisis', public expectations about what the state can do seem to fall. Politicians become more experienced but also more aware that they will be held 'accountable' for the results of their stewardship. Hence they become more

cautious and more realistic; they gain in authority and credibility by promising less than before (eg Menem in Argentina and Salinas in Mexico).

Where there have been 'democratic pacts' providing guarantees to the property-owning classes, it has been relatively easier to maintain control of inflation in the initial democratic period, although the situation tended to relax in the subsequent period when there is more political competition. On the other hand, when the transition to democracy has led to a temporary relaxation and the collapse of inflation control, it has then been followed by drastic 'shock treatment' to stabilise the economy. Both processes have placed a strain on economic adjustment and the consolidation of democracy (eg Argentina and Bolivia in 1982).

Thirdly, the margin for manoeuvre of the newly democratic governments been constrained by the legacy of their predecessor authoritarian regimes; the military (eg Turkey); influential business groups with ties to the old regime (eg Chile), and continuity of personnel (eg South Korea). Yet, from a longer-term viewpoint, wider public participation in policy-making, which goes beyond narrow democratic pacts, in Latin America especially, may fail to generate a wider 'social consensus' on either neo-liberal economic doctrines or on the priority for price stability as against the reduction of gross inequalities and the perceived obstacles to development.

Market Liberalisation

There is growing evidence, in Latin America and the Caribbean, of far-reaching external trade policy reforms (reduced and harmonised tariffs and QRs, export incentives, etc) which have accompanied or have been preceded by significant real exchange-rate depreciation often leading to macro-economic stabilisation. So far these have suffered no major reversals and the incoming democratic regimes in many countries have adopted the trade policy reforms despite serious political opposition. This evidence is inconsistent with concerns that democratic leaders are particularly vulnerable to powerful interest groups.

By contrast there has been much less progress in the domestic liberalisation of industrial activities; in other words reducing regulations that distort domestic product and labour markets. This situation may arise from sensitivity towards those interests which stand to lose from such changes during a political transition.

There has been slow and fairly limited reform of public enterprises driven by the pressures to cut the fiscal deficit. The threat of job lay-offs resulting from public sector reform has often met with strong opposition from organised labour. Yet in some cases public enterprise reform, managed by technocrats insulated from the political arena and receiving support from heads of state, has been partially effective. It may be reconcilable with the transition to greater democracy where the public has been apathetic and interest groups poorly organised, so the specific changes have not become the sparking-plug for opposition on the part of entrenched coalitional interests (eg India, Turkey and Mexico). There has been considerable privatisation in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is not obviously incompatible with political liberalisation provided that it is carried out in an open and

transparent way – which has not always been the case – and does not arouse too much popular sensitivity about the underpricing of assets as a 'give-away' to favoured buyers.

Much economic reform has been initiated by governments under pressure from the conditions imposed by external financiers, rather than from civic interests and pressures within their own societies. Yet changes in economic policy changes can themselves have both a positive and a negative influence on the degree of participation by the public. This is illustrated by the situation in Jamaica where the introduction of a floating exchange rate made private business groups immediately aware of any relaxation in the government's control of public expenditure and inflation and caused them to press for more effective state budgetary control. At the same time, the undoubtedly unpopular ceilings set for budget deficits, encouraged less than transparent handling of public finances which made it very difficult for the public to know what was happening.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, the movement towards political liberalisation largely dates from 1989. Constitutional changes have led to multi-party elections in Ghana, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Mauritania, Kenya and Nigeria, although most of these have been marred by controversy. Countries with more genuine political liberalisation and freer elections include Cape Verde, Mali, Sao Tomé and Principe, Congo, Madagascar and Zambia, apart from more durable democracies like Botswana, Gambia and Mauritius. In Zimbabwe there has been greater openness and consultation with a wide range of independent interest groups. Regimes in some countries have continued to withstand the new pressures (Burundi, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Zaire) or are still at the stage of promises or in the planning phase (Tanzania, Malawi, etc). Some countries show signs of reversing their new political freedoms (Kenya, Benin, Nigeria).

National elections and the freedom to form different parties have provided only a first, partial step towards political liberalisation. Often the single governing party has been replaced by fragmented party systems. Effective opposition parties have rarely emerged or been allowed to emerge and have usually failed to offer alternative economic agendas (eg Tanzania), while pre-electoral debates have shown little concern with economic policy and programme issues (eg Kenya). Where more public debate has been encouraged it has indicated a low level of popular understanding of basic issues and hard economic choices. Indeed, public debate and elections can be viewed as more about the power of the state, personalities and human rights issues than economic policy choices.

The new 'electoralism' in Africa potentially offered scope for the election of governments representing fresh coalitions committed to more vigorous economic reform. Yet, so far, elections have resulted in only a few changes of government (Benin, Cape Verde, Mali, Congo, Madagascar and Zambia). In Benin quite substantial economic reform had already taken place before the political liberalisation. However, the open debate before the elections (1989) generated demands to which the new government did not have the means to respond, and the reform seems to have stagnated. In Zambia, political

Box 2: Political and Economic Reform in Zambia

Zambia since 1990 is a rare case in Africa of a country that has embarked on the difficult strategy of simultaneous political and economic reform. The new government typically in such a situation, has inherited a legacy of economic mismanagement and decline. How does the balance sheet look after two years of experience of the Third Republic?

Novel political developments were free and fair elections which produced a government led by the newly established Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), the emergence of newspapers outspoken in their criticisms of government action, and a more active and wider range of civic interest groups.

Economic reforms have included a major devaluation of the exchange rate, liberalised foreign currency management and cuts in some subsidies. The large budget deficit has over two years been turned into a surplus despite delays because of drought. An ambitious five year privatisation plan has been initiated, labour markets have been liberalised and interest rates deregulated.

Other economic reforms, including the reform of public enterprises and relaxation of state control over food and export marketing and prices, have been slow in implementation and there has been public suspicion about the way privatisation has been handled. There has also been resistance to change from the unions and disaffection in the townships.

Some commentators have suggested that further economic reforms (which adversely affect the dominant interest groups in Zambia), if too long delayed, may not yield their benefits soon enough to enable the fragile democratic structure to survive, with the MMD itself already suffering from internal disputes and breakaway movements.

reform and the change of government have accelerated economic reform efforts (See Box 2)

A new government has not always been necessary to propel economic reform. In Gambia, after considerable economic deterioration, the incumbent government party was re-elected in 1985 on a strong reform platform. It has carried out significant liberalisation, devaluing the exchange rate, liberalising the price of groundnuts, the main cashcrop, and cutting the public sector workforce, while keeping the public fully informed. Authoritarian government in Ghana pursued major and effective economic reforms and stabilisation measures in the 1980s, well before the holding of national elections (though with limited political liberalisation) in 1992. Although successful economic reform efforts in the past were undoubtedly a factor in the re-establishment of the incumbent regime, the election itself weakened the previously successful fiscal stabilisation programme.

Elections have not removed incumbent governments elsewhere, in Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Nigeria, and the momentum of economic reform appears threatened. These elections were contested and when the results were rejected by wide sections of society, this weakened the legitimacy of the government and its confidence in embarking on stronger economic measures, and may result in some inertia.

So far there is limited evidence of opposition parties and individual MPs within newly elected assemblies articulating more effective criticism of government economic policy or scrutinising and following up misuse of public funds more vigorously. The traditional dominance of the executive over the legislature has remained little changed and this especially limits the scope for improvement in public expenditure management – an important economic reform.

Despite some moves towards fiscal stabilisation during the years of political protest and liberalisation, much remains to be done to bring inflation under control. There has been widespread liberalisation of marketing and pricing of major food crops in the last few years and (to a less extent) of major agricultural exports, but the rate of progress seems to have had little to do with the extent of political freedom, elections or changes of government, nor with the influence of small farmers and rural constituencies which have been seen as a new force under more democratic systems.

A key to sustained development is a more competent, independent civil service, motivated less by loyalties of patronage and more by performance-related incentives. However, civil service reform has proved to be a long-term problem everywhere and difficult to achieve in the current political transition.

Overall, political reform in sub-Saharan Africa has thus far been only partial and, together with the survival of patronage networks, has generated somewhat unfavourable conditions for maintaining the momentum of economic reform. Partial liberalisation brings about a politically mobilised but discontented population and the continuance of governments which lack widespread public support or credibility, and seems likely to paralyse economic change rather than to galvanise it.

What Are We to Conclude?

Neither authoritarian rule nor continued political liberalisation offers an assured framework for economic reform. Several Latin American countries are in the process of consolidating democracy and there have been important economic reforms. In sub-Saharan Africa, partial political reform has so far not generated very promising conditions for democracy or economic reform.

Those seeking from outside to achieve simultaneous political and economic liberalisation will need to think through very carefully the pace and the means by which this is to be encouraged.

*A recent ODI study has examined the accountability of public expenditure management in developing countries with multi party electoral systems – John Healey and William Tordoff (eds) *Votes and Budgets* forthcoming.

For further information contact John Healey, Research Fellow ODI

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