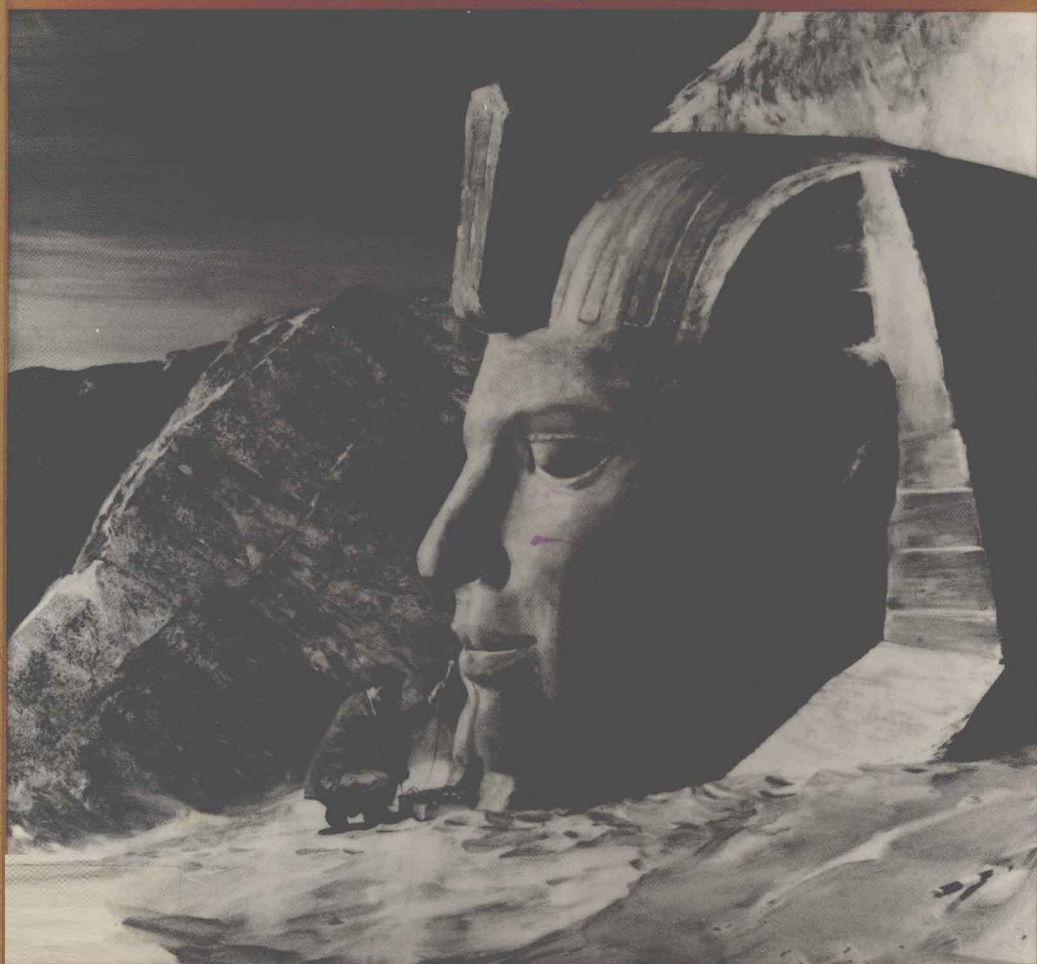


# Contesting the Boundaries of Liberal and Professional Education

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*The Syracuse Experiment*



*Edited by*

**PETER T. MARSH**

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*with a Foreword by* GERSHON VINÇOW

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Syracuse University Press


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## Foreword

Syracuse University, with a dozen professional schools and colleges in addition to its College of Arts and Sciences, is an ideal laboratory for the exploration of relationships between liberal and professional undergraduate education.

In my inaugural statement as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1979, I spoke of “the interface between Arts and Sciences colleges and undergraduate professional schools as one of the relatively unexplored frontiers in higher education, one which we at Syracuse, with our tradition of flexibility, may be particularly well qualified to explore.” I voiced the belief that such exploration “might be of great significance for the future vitality of Syracuse University—leading . . . to a greatly enriched and nationally distinctive undergraduate program, which is characterized in part by a strengthened liberal arts education for all, and in part by strengthened professional training for many.”

In the years that followed, a number of such bridges were indeed constructed in the Syracuse curriculum. The “Liberal Arts Core” curriculum that had been adopted by the College of Arts and Sciences was extended to a number of our professional schools, among them the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Professional studies minors for Arts and Sciences students were created in the School of Management and in the School of Architecture. A new dual degree program, combining Arts and Sciences with Computer and Information Sciences, was initiated to supplement our existing array of dual and combined programs, in which nearly 10 percent of our student body now matriculate. An interdisciplinary six-course minor developing analytical and communications skills (writing, speech communications, critical thinking, computing, statistics, and data bases) was implemented cooperatively by Arts and Sciences and three professional schools.

The success of this series of curricular innovations, which brought together existing courses and programs of study, suggested that we might go further to explore the potential for integration of liberal and professional education through the creation of a new type of course in our All-University Honors Program. We sought

courses that would provide approaches to such questions as: What are the liberal and conceptual foundations of specific professional disciplines? Can the teaching of the liberal disciplines be enriched by exploring their application to problems associated with the professions? In view of the fact that the preponderance of our Honors students are narrowly focused either in professional schools or with a pre-professional orientation within the College of Arts and Sciences, how can we awaken them to the interrelationships among the various liberal arts and professional subjects in their prescribed programs of study?

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation recognized the creative nature of this project and offered generous support. Miss Claire List of the foundation was most helpful in clarifying the nature of the project, and I acknowledge her contributions and guidance with gratitude. As frequently happens with pioneering efforts, the completed project has gone well beyond the boundaries of the initial foundation proposal in curricular results, in intellectual impact on faculty and students, and in the refinement of concepts concerning the essential nature of liberal and professional disciplines. This book, through which we share the experience at Syracuse, is another unexpected result. For the University, I extend deep thanks to the project director, Professor Peter Marsh, for his vision, intellectual leadership, and tenacity, and to the faculty group who have become the true “owners” of the project.

The efforts begun when I became dean of Arts and Sciences are entering a new and most interesting phase. The faculty of the Mellon Foundation project have charged the University with extending their conceptions beyond the Honors Program to all the undergraduate curricula. They propose that we develop new courses throughout the University which acknowledge the essential “embeddedness” of all the disciplines and professions. Through these courses, students will perceive the larger fields of knowledge, action, and responsibility in which their special subjects are “embedded.” The dual questions of “relation” and “self-reflection” will be transformed from a marginal position at the boundaries into the very center of each academic department. It is my hope that the Syracuse faculty will accept this challenge enthusiastically.

January 1987

Gershon Vincow  
Vice Chancellor for Academic  
Affairs, Syracuse University

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## Contributors

GERARDINE CLARK has her Ph.D. from Indiana University in theater with a specialization in dramatic criticism. She is an associate professor of drama in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and literary manager for Syracuse Stage, a professional regional theater associated with Syracuse University. Her curricular assignments include courses in acting, theater history, and dramatic theory and criticism. She has recently begun research into the relationship of "Method" acting to certain recent discoveries in cognitive science. In addition to her academic work, she is a professional actress, director, and playwright. Her play, *Garcia Lorca's Bicycle Ride*, was featured at the opening of the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida. She is currently finishing a musical adaptation of Molière's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*.

SAMUEL P. CLEMENCE has his Ph.D. in civil engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and chairs the Department of Civil Engineering at Syracuse. He served six years in the Civil Engineering Corps as a naval officer in the Seabees (construction battalion), supervising construction of airfields, roads, and dams in the South Pacific, Thailand, Vietnam, and Spain. He was a consulting engineer for several years before entering academia, and is a registered professional engineer in New York and Missouri. An active researcher in the field of geotechnical engineering, he has done work on the morphology of the Mississippi River, strip mining reclamation, collapsible soils, and—now that he's moved north—frost heave in stabilized soils. He received the Outstanding Teacher Award for two years at the University of Missouri at Rolla where he taught before coming to Syracuse. He is the author of more than twenty technical papers, editor of two recent books on geotechnical engineering, and is currently director of several research projects in the disposal of hazardous wastes.

DENNIS GILLEN, assistant professor of organization and management in Syracuse's School of Management, teaches corporate strategy and policy on both the graduate and undergraduate level. He has several publications in the areas of management development and organizational effectiveness. He has consulted or conducted research for Allied Chemical Corporation, Georgia-Pacific Corporation, American Can Corporation, International Paper Co., Fairchild Space and Electronics Co., Pitney Bowes Inc., Oneida Limited, IBM, and Eastman Kodak Co. He has also developed a large com-

puter-based diagnostic program for individual development of managers, and is currently conducting a study for IBM on university communication networks.

**ERICH HARTH** received his training in experimental physics at Syracuse University, completing his Ph.D. with a dissertation on cosmic rays. The experiments were carried out at the High Altitude Laboratory on top of Mt. Evans in Colorado. After a few years' work in nuclear physics at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., he returned to his original interest in elementary particle research. While in the physics department of Duke University, he was instrumental in building the first liquid helium bubble chamber, and carried out research at the cosmotron at Brookhaven National Laboratory and the bevatron of the University of California at Berkeley. He joined the Syracuse faculty in 1957, where he founded an experimental high energy team and continued collaboration with groups at Duke, Northwestern, Johns Hopkins, and Cornell. In the 1960s Harth abandoned high energy physics to concentrate entirely on a study of brain function, using both theory and experiment, and approaching the subject from a physicist's perspective. This work has resulted in a large number of publications in scientific journals and *Windows on the Mind*, a popular book on the subject.

**MARGARET HIMLEY**, with a Ph.D. in composition and rhetoric, is an assistant professor in the English department, and teaches undergraduate writing courses as well as graduate courses in composition theory and research. She works in the new Syracuse University Writing Program on curriculum development and program evaluation. She is interested in working out a post-phenomenological approach for studying written language development, and is currently writing a book-length study of how and why one child became a writer.

**SHARON HOLLENBACK** earned her degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, first in history and then in American Studies, culminating in a Ph.D. in communications. Further study at the University of Michigan and the Slade School of Art in London fueled an interest in cross-cultural and international television and film. The holdings of the Humanities Research Center in Austin led to her study of screenwriting and its role in the collaborative creation of feature films. An associate professor in the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, she oversees the undergraduate writing program in television, radio, and film, and teaches courses in media criticism and dramatic writing. Long active in the University Honors Program at Syracuse, she was one of the original designers of the Mellon Foundation project and team teaches the course developed through it on social and cultural issues in mass communications. Having written, produced, and hosted

television productions for fifteen years, she is currently researching the effects of new technologies on public broadcasting.

**JOHN PHILIP JONES**, a Welshman, read economics at Cambridge. He spent twenty-five years with J. Walter Thompson, the advertising agency, managing the advertising for major brands of consumer goods. Many of his responsibilities were multi-national, and he was based at various times in London, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen. He joined the faculty of the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in 1981, published *What's in a Name: Advertising and the Concept of Brands* in 1986, and is currently at work on a book of marketing and advertising cases.

**SALLY GREGORY KOHLSTEDT**, who received a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, teaches in American history and American studies. Her account of *The Formation of the American Scientific Community* is a study of emerging scientific professionalism in the nineteenth century. Her current attention is focussed on science in public culture, as represented in *Historical Writing on American Science* which she co-edited. She has chaired the Women's Studies Program at Syracuse and regularly teaches courses on women in American history, as well as topical courses on other aspects of American life. During the final months of this book's preparation, she intermittently rejoined the group, taking leave from research on natural history museums being conducted at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.

**H. RICHARD LEVY** was born in Leipzig, Germany, received his secondary education in England, and then moved to the United States where he received his Ph.D. in biochemistry at the University of Chicago. A professor of biochemistry, he is an active research scientist in the field of enzymology, specializing in the mechanisms of action and regulation of dehydrogenases. This research includes collaborative projects with scientists in Canada and England. He has been an active participant in numerous university-wide endeavors including the Honors Program, the editorial boards of the *Syracuse Scholar* and the Syracuse University Press, and the University Senate Committee on Academic Affairs. He has a deep love of music which he satisfies by singing with the Syracuse University Oratorio Society and as general manager of a professional chamber orchestra, Syracuse Camerata.

**PETER T. MARSH**, born in Canada and educated in Toronto and Cambridge, is a professor of history and has directed the University Honors Program at Syracuse. It was on the basis of that experience that he drew up the proposal for the Mellon Foundation project which he has since led. The recipient of fellowships from the Canada Council, the Guggenheim Foundation, All Souls College, Oxford, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, his books and articles deal with various aspects of nineteenth-century English



political culture. His interest in the connections among differing occupational fields has been quickened by the biography that he is writing of Joseph Chamberlain, the English radical, municipal reformer, and imperialist whose first career was as a manufacturer of screws.

CLEVE MATHEWS is a professor of journalism in the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. After earning a master's degree at the University of Michigan, he served on the staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for nine years and on the *New York Times* for twelve years. His positions there included that of assistant foreign news editor in New York and associate editor of the *Times* bureau in Washington, D.C. He joined National Public Radio as its first director of news and public affairs in 1971, and was the first executive producer of "All Things Considered." He was chairman of the journalism department at Wichita State University before coming to Syracuse. In 1960/61 he was the first occupant of the Robert and Evangeline Atwood Chair of Journalism at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. He is co-author with William L. Rivers of a book on ethics and the media scheduled for publication in 1988.

STEPHEN MELVILLE earned his B.A. and Ph.D. through a variety of interdisciplinary programs at the University of Chicago. He is currently an assistant professor in the English department, specializing in critical theory with a strong interest in contemporary visual art. Areas of special interest to his teaching and publication include modern European philosophy and psychoanalytic theory. The Mellon Foundation project continues a long-standing commitment to interdisciplinary work and theory that is reflected in his involvement with the Humanities Doctoral Program and the structure of the English department at Syracuse University.

GARY M. RADKE did his undergraduate work at Syracuse University and received his Ph.D. in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. He has spent extensive periods of time in Florence and Rome. Attracted by the opportunity of teaching at Syracuse's center in Italy, he returned to his alma mater in 1980, where he is now associate professor and chair of the Department of Fine Arts. The holder of grants from the Fulbright Commission, the National Gallery of Art, and the American Academy in Rome, he is engaged in research and publication on the history of late medieval and early Renaissance art.

MARSHALL H. SEGALL, trained mostly at Northwestern University, with input from Yale and l'Université de Genève, is an internationalist social scientist. Best known for his work in cross-cultural psychology, including a study of visual perception done with Donald Campbell and Melville Herskovits and a widely used text, he has spent more than twenty years at Syracuse

in the Maxwell School, where an interdisciplinary version of social psychology is embedded. His innovations in the undergraduate curriculum prior to his involvement in the Mellon Foundation project included a course that applies psychological findings to the analysis of public policy, and another that challenges the universality of psychological findings generated mainly by research performed on American undergraduates. He is now Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**JAMES STEWART** is a civil engineer and assistant professor of engineering who received his bachelor's degree from Syracuse University, and M.S. and Ph.D. from Cornell. Before beginning an academic career, he worked several years as a consulting soils engineer on such projects as high-rise office buildings, dams, offshore platforms, subway tunnels, waste containment facilities, and petroleum refineries. Since joining the faculty at Syracuse, he has taught courses in geotechnical and geological engineering. His research interests are in the fields of waste containment and foundation engineering.

**DELIA C. TEMES** has her Ph.D. in modern American literature from Syracuse University. An instructor in the Writing Program, she teaches lower and upper division writing courses. She serves as a consultant to local industry on writing, and has written and edited technical manuals and designed informational brochures for physicians. Before settling into a teaching career, she was the documentation specialist and senior technical editor for an engineering consulting firm in Washington, D.C.

**STEPHEN ZAIMA**, an artist born and educated in California, is now associate professor in the School of Art of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. In addition to a one-person exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art, he has shown in numerous exhibitions across the country. His works are in many public and private collections, and he has received awards from the Ford Foundation, the Edward Albee Foundation, the California Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The co-author of Chapter 11, Professor Zaima also carried out image research for this book.

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# Contents

Foreword	
GERSHON VINCOW	vii
Contributors	ix
I <i>Introduction</i>	
Preface	
PETER T. MARSH	3
1 The Syracuse Experiment	
PETER T. MARSH	9
2 The Faculty Seminar:	
<i>Discourse Communities and Quotation Marks</i>	
MARGARET HIMLEY	35
3 The Phenomenon of Professions	
SALLY GREGORY KOHLSTEDT	44
4 The Problem Exemplified	
<i>The Engineering Dilemma</i>	
JAMES STEWART	55
II <i>Objectivity</i>	
Preface	
PETER T. MARSH	69
5 The Concept of Objectivity	
CLEVE MATHEWS	74
6 Individual, Social, and Professional Identity	
MARSHALL H. SEGALL	87
7 The Impact of Seeing	
GARY M. RADKE and STEPHEN MELVILLE	99
III <i>Embeddedness and Enculturation</i>	
Preface	
PETER T. MARSH	111
8 The Concepts of Embeddedness and Enculturation	
STEPHEN MELVILLE and MARSHALL H. SEGALL	116

9	The Impact of Science on Medicine H. RICHARD LEVY	130
10	Gender and the Professions SALLY GREGORY KOHLSTEDT and DELIA TEMES	140
11	On Seeing and Reading STEPHEN MELVILLE and STEPHEN ZAIMA	149
IV <i>Learning and Teaching</i>		
Preface PETER T. MARSH		159
12	The Varieties of Collaborative Experience DELIA C. TEMES, SAMUEL P. CLEMENCE, SALLY GREGORY KOHLSTEDT, GERARDINE CLARK, and MARSHALL H. SEGALL	163
13	Everyone Writes MARGARET HIMLEY	174
14	The Liberation of the Humanities GARY M. RADKE	192
15	The Creating Mind GERARDINE CLARK	200
V <i>Challenges</i>		
Preface PETER T. MARSH		215
16	Education in a Transformed Field STEPHEN MELVILLE	219
17	From Specialization toward Integration <i>A Scientist's Perspective</i> ERICH HARTH	229
18	Evaluating the Experiment <i>Micrometers and Elephants</i> JOHN PHILIP JONES, DENNIS GILLEN, and MARSHALL H. SEGALL	238
19	Of Bridges, Ships, and Sea Dogs PETER T. MARSH	250
Background Reading		261
Index		265

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## *Introduction*



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## Preface

PETER T. MARSH

The boundaries between liberal and professional education are the most perplexing lines of demarcation in American higher education today. A large majority of American undergraduates now qualify for their bachelor's degrees by taking mixtures of courses categorized as either liberal or professional, a distinction emphasized by the administrative separation within universities between liberal arts and professional colleges. Various curricular arrangements—some of long standing, some more recent—have been made to package courses of the two sorts together. Yet all these arrangements have accentuated the dichotomy. The challenge to understand and to help students appreciate the depth of the interrelationship remains to be met.

An experiment to meet this challenge is being conducted at Syracuse, a university long distinguished by its provision of both forms of undergraduate education. The Syracuse experiment has a good way to go before it can claim full success. But the approach that it has developed already has proved singularly fruitful. We present this study of the experiment as a call and encouragement for further exploration across the boundaries between liberal and professional education.

Among the practical components of the experiment, two are crucial and inseparable. One is the creation of courses that take the relationship between liberal and professional coursework from the margins of the curriculum to its center. The other is collaborative learning among the faculty who teach these courses. This twofold approach is not simply useful pedagogical practice. It implies and fosters the belief that no discipline or profession can be rightly grasped without appreciating its embeddedness in the larger world. The approach has potentially radical curricular and administrative implications for American universities. It will require a reconfiguration of liberal and professional education.

The experiment at Syracuse has drawn moral reinforcement



from a succession of national reports on American higher education that have come out with striking frequency from the inception of the project to the present: in 1984 from the National Institute of Education and from the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, William Bennett (now Secretary of Education); in 1985 from the Association of American Colleges; and in 1986 from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Though written from varying standpoints, all make essentially the same point: American undergraduate education has lost its coherence and integrity, and hence much of its value. The blame tends to be placed on the rapid expansion of career-minded professional studies and the parallel abandonment of "one of the principle aims of liberal education, . . . to integrate what one has learned in different disciplines."<sup>1</sup>

Instead of further documenting the situation described by these national educators and agencies, the project at Syracuse has attempted to meet the challenge that they present. To do so we assembled faculty, not across the country, but across colleges within this one university. From the arts and sciences, we drew an English political historian who was to lead the project, an American social historian, a historian of art, an enzymologist, a physicist in neuroscience, a philosopher of science, a social psychologist, two literary theorists, and a professor of composition. From the professional schools, we recruited two civil engineers, management specialists in organization and in transportation/distribution, a nurse specializing in family practice, an analyst of advertising, a television and film writer-producer, a news journalist, an actor-director, and an artist.<sup>2</sup>

The cardinal weakness in undergraduate education as analyzed by the national commissions and experienced among our own faculty and students has much to do with failure to grasp and to convey understanding of the bearing of the many fields of liberal and professional learning upon each other. The cardinal need, so it seemed, was to find new, effective ways to integrate liberal and professional education. That was our initial objective. In order to meet it we had to dig beneath the surface of and also between each other's fields of study. Learning, reading, writing, and discussion in this collaborative context placed us collectively outside our individual specialities and thus moved us toward our goal. At the same time the goal changed. Integration, it became clear, is a bland term. It lacks the incisiveness needed to reflect the concepts and concerns that cut