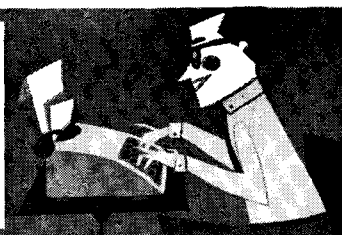


# Top of My Head



## PR Takes Over History

**T**HE 1,000 members of the Public Relations Society of America in recent convention in Denver did not squander their time dropping paper bags of water from hotel windows.

They got right down to business and came to the sad conclusion that our war in South Vietnam has been amateurishly presented to our people and is in dire need of a good public relations man—or, in translation, a press agent. The PR men concluded that the administration had created an “information gap” and news was seemingly being handled by a suppress agent. Mr. Fred W. McDonald, public relations man for Travelers Insurance Company, estimated that “eight out of ten Americans could not even locate South Vietnam on a map.”

I think the eight-out-of-ten figure is high. But if most Americans know South Vietnam is just south of North Vietnam, would that give this war a better image?

I don't know exactly where on the map the Carolinas are, but I do know South Carolina is just south of North Carolina, and no PR man can give that battle an attractive image.

The “apathy” of the Americans, Mr. McDonald says, “shuts out all attempts to inform them.” In other words, the Administration has not attractively sold the war to our people or explained in detail exactly where it's being fought. It is obvious, in the opinion of the public relations convention, that what is needed here is the hard sell. Possibly in the manner of TV commercials?

“In South Vietnam in Southeast Asia, where there are more South Vietnamese than there are in North Vietnam, they fight the good war. Why? We don't know. But we must be doing something right.”

Or: “Men, come on down! It's the exciting monsoon season in Southeast

Asia. Fly United States Air Force! Come on down!”

Or a young man in uniform says: “I like our form of government. I'd rather fight than switch!”

Does public relations make war more palatable if we know the longitude and latitude of the war theater? Does public relations make for a better image if everyone knows South Vietnam is in Southeast Asia and borders on Cambodia, Thailand, and hysteria? Will it help our young men who are giving their ultimate in the infested swamps and jungles if the cheering section at home doesn't know where to locate it on a map? Not by a bombsight!

How do you sell a war? It doesn't peddle easily. It doesn't lend itself to the hard sell or even to the subliminal. It's a product nobody likes or wants, with a hell of a built-in resistance. It's like selling a special toothpaste for dentures. You may be entranced by the paste but you don't go getting your teeth knocked out so you can enjoy it. Aspirin is sold to headache sufferers and while it removes the ache it doesn't eliminate the cause.

The cause—that's a valid point made at the PR convention by Mr. Robert Armstrong, public relations director of the American Textiles Manufacturers Institute, who said that too much attention is being leveled at the day-to-day military operations and not enough to the basic question: “Why are we there?” In other words, what is our Cause?

I agree with Mr. Armstrong that a Cause is the hard-sell ploy to move the product off the shelves. However, public relations notwithstanding, I believe our people are well informed; more so than the colonies were when they were told the first great battle of the Revolution was fought on Bunker Hill, when in truth it was fought on nearby Breed's Hill. This misinformation did not affect the cause or outcome.

When the climaxes of history are recorded they pinpoint the villages and fields where the battles were fought and where our men fell for a Cause. But the Cause remains constant. Our Cause is freedom for all people. There are, of course, patriotic dissidents who feel deeply that the Cause will not be furthered through this war. Just as there are those who feel deeply the war should be escalated to further this Cause. Our government has decided that this kind of war, as dreadful as it is, will achieve our cause, contain Communism, and maintain for our country our way of life.

I love this country. I cherish our way of life and wish it could be shared by all. I like it here. I like what I'm doing. I like being able to write these weekly pieces without fear of reprisal. Without it I'm dead. And I'd rather be read than dead.

—GOODMAN ACE.

## Some New Books from Wesleyan

### JAMES DICKEY Buckdancer's Choice

“Dickey's work is full of dramatic energy, superb observation, and honesty. . . . He remains one of the foremost poets of his generation.”  
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### THE COMPLETE POEMS OF W. H. DAVIES. Introduction by Osbert Sitwell.

Contains, it is believed, every poem ever written and published by W. H. Davies, including 113 previously uncollected poems; there are 749 in all. \$7.50

### W. H. DAVIES: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY. By Richard J. Stonesifer.

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### ANGNA ENTERS: ON MIME

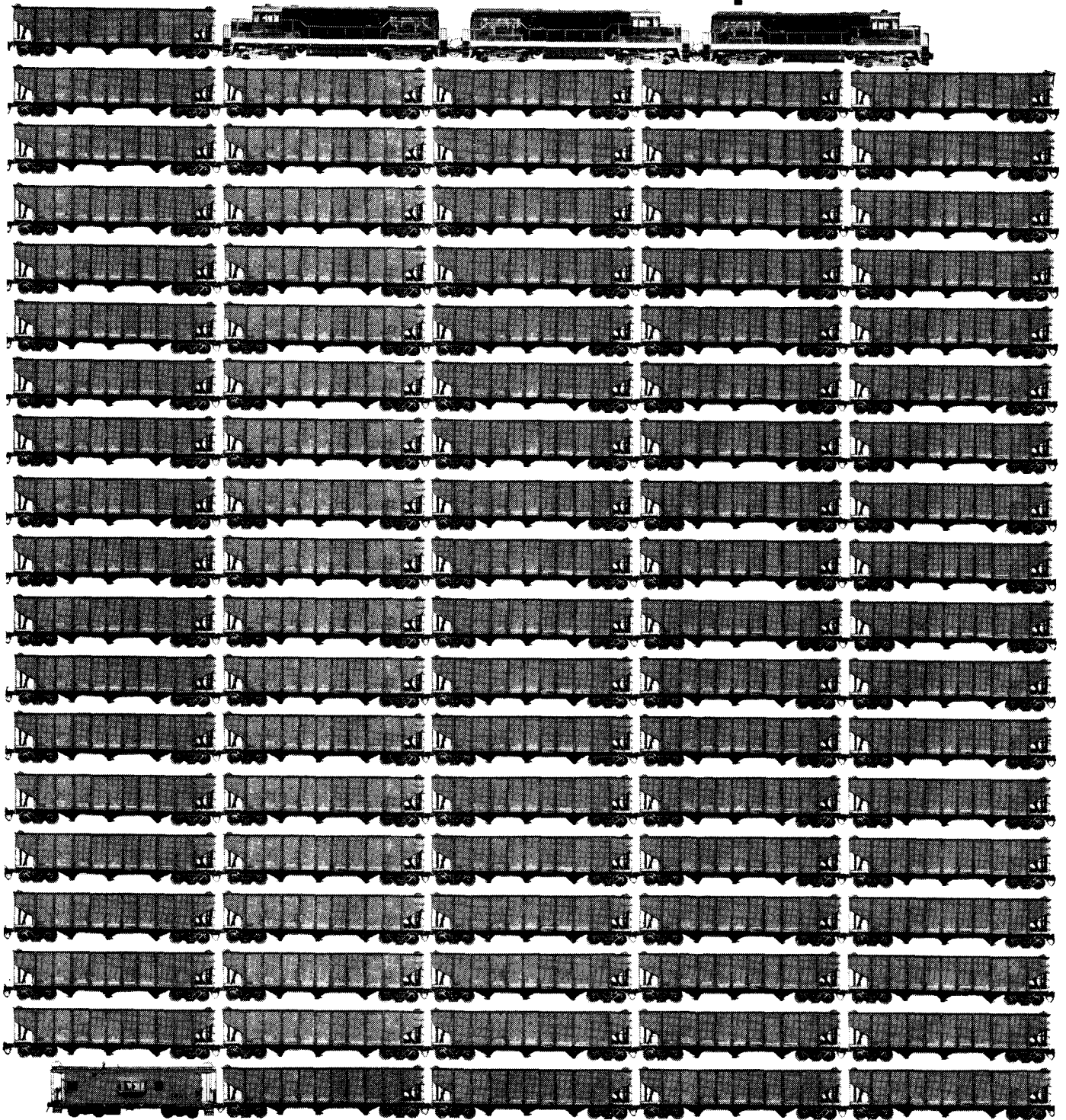
Wherein America's greatest mime explains for the first time the principles underlying her work — the How of her creations and more importantly the Why. With drawings by the author. (To be published Nov. 1) \$5.00

Forthcoming, Spring 1966 — Irma Duncan's autobiography, the vivid story of her years with Isadora.

Wesleyan University Press MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT



# The train that never stops...



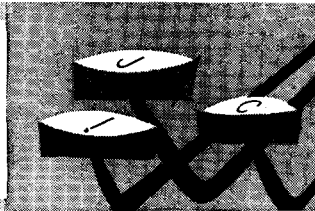
**except to save you money**

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# Manner of Speaking



**The Lion and the Mouse: a Revised Fable:** Once upon a time there was a lion who was not only king of beasts but prosperous in his kingdom. His court was comfortable and well watered, no enemies threatened his peace of mind, and all his tax-collection programs were working well. He had, in fact, just collected a tax payment from one of his deer herds and, having gorged regally, he was resting *couchant* in an unconsciously heraldic pose (for blood will tell), and feeling not only kingly but well disposed, though a bit crapulent (only a pleasant bit, however).

Just then a nearsighted mouse of an obviously clerical disposition came scurrying through the stubble, perhaps looking for a church to be poor in, or perhaps just scurrying in a habituated way. For it was a truly zealous mouse and, as we know, true zeal cares little about the direction of its going. As the mouse itself might have said, had the question been put to it, "All roads are open to spiritual

pursuits, and the more zealously we pursue the All, the sooner we shall have covered some."

It was probably in some such metaphysical frame of mind that the mouse happened to stumble over the lion's left paw; whereupon the lion, more by reflex than with considered intent, immediately twitched his right paw over his left and held the mouse securely captive.

"What small nuisance is this?" thought the lion. "Even were I in the mood for a tidbit, who could imagine this as a sequel to venison?" And he frowned, as much in boredom as in annoyance.

The mouse saw the frown but saw in it only the annoyance. It was itself too zealous to recognize how much tolerance may have entered the animal kingdom as a secondary effect of simple well-fed boredom.

"O, lion!" said the mouse, "let me go, I beg you, and perhaps someday I may return good to you for the good you do me now."

"Oh dear," thought the lion, "what tons of sentiment in an ounce of hide. A grasshopper would be as much diet, and yet it talks as if it were a bull elephant." For the lion could be both a king and a philosopher at times. Besides, he was well stuffed with all those reasons that make for a speculative but easy frame of mind. Still, of course, he had the majesty and dread of his presence to maintain.

Aloud he said, with a chuckle that might have sounded like a piece of sandpaper caught in a slow electric fan (could the mouse have known about such things): "You! What could the near-nothing likes of you ever do to help *me*?"

But being bored, and having done all that was really necessary to reprove the mouse for being small in the presence of greatness, he let it go to pursue its own views of nature.

The mouse scurried about a yard away from the lion and, turning, made as deep a bow as its own shallowness would permit. "O, Lion, Your Majesty," it quavered, "I beg you to accept my thanks and to be assured that I shall ever be your zealous and faithful friend."

But the lion, no longer *couchant*, had lowered his great head onto his paws and, still instinctively heraldic, though now *dormant*, was snoring in a rather common way.

• • •



"Can you imagine how frustrated parents would be if there wasn't any such word as 'no'?"

Some time later, it happened that the lion was traveling to inspect a wandering herd of zebras and to collect the tourist tax, when he stumbled into a trap set by a rival tax collector named Man. Somehow the lion had allowed his thoughts to stray. How does one explain a busy (and regal) creature's preoccupations? The lion was hungry, and just a bit tired, and just a bit at odds with his lioness, and more than a bit cross with the zebras for not having paid their taxes immediately on arrival in his territories. And, so distracted, he had not noticed the trigger of the trap, and was now hopelessly entangled in an enormous rope net that had fallen upon him out of a long-familiar tree—the very one in fact on which he most liked to sharpen his claws.

How the lion roared in astonishment and dismay!

He roared all night and all day and all the next night, and still he remained entangled in the rope net, and no one came. There were two reasons why no one came. In the first place, the lion had never roared in a way that tended to draw creatures to him. And in the second place, a fly had bitten the rival tax collector named Man, who, as the result of the bite, was lying in a tent some miles away suffering from a fever. Or so he thought of it. Actually, though