

Last March Denys Wilkinson of the University of Oxford showed how the Conferenceman gets the upper hand over his projectionist. Here, in the second excerpt from his treatise on "Slidesmanship," Wilkinson explains how to subjugate the audience:

The Slidesman's objective is, of course, to convey, effortlessly, to the members of the audience his transcendence and superiority over them. A guiding principle of Conferencemanship is to conceal from the audience what you are talking about. The Conferenceman as Slidesman must equally conceal what the slides are about. It should, however, be all but clear that whatever the slides are about it is not what the talk is about, whatever that is. The general malaise that this engenders is helped by remarks such as: "This same point is made diagrammatically in the next slide."

Slides are very useful for conveying to the audience the Slidesman's togetherness with the Olympians. A good technique is to show a slide with something written on it with a sticky pencil on the *reverse side* so that the muddy, reversed letters are made out only with difficulty by the fascinated audience. What the Slidesman has written is: "Wigner asks for two copies of this slide." The next slide but one bears the inscription (this time it can be on the right side): "This one to Eugene too."

The Slidesman-audience relationship is fostered by the "Interpolated Slide." This is from a field utterly alien to that of the conference and illustrates, say, a sequence of tablets inscribed in Linear B or, perhaps, a manuscript page of an unpublished arrangement by Busoni for one piano, three hands, of a motet by Gesualdo. The Slidesman says: "I'm terribly sorry, it must have crept in somehow." And then after a tiny pause he adds:

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"Another of my little foibles, you know."

An arresting technique is the "Further Work" slide. This shows a number of points labelled "Experiment" all lying well below a horizontal line labelled "Theory." The Slidesman (who is, of course, responsible for both theory and experiment) refers to the points as "Very recent work in my laboratory." (Always, always, *my* laboratory) and says that although the present fit between theory and experiment is not of the best, further work is going on in his laboratory at that very moment and that he feels confident that when the new results come along the fit will be greatly improved. As he says this, the experimental points, which are really little weights fixed on with low-melting-point wax, respond to gravity as the wax softens in the heat of the projector and move across the screen to rest firmly on the theoretical line, which is really a strip sticking out of the surface to form a ledge. Note that, since from the slide's point of view up is down, the points move upwards across the screen.

A useful piece of Slidesmanship is to have a run of slides all of which project on their sides with abscissas running vertically. This causes cricked necks

in the audience, itself very useful, and enables the Slidesman to say: "I'm sorry about these slides; they were made up for the Peking conference." (I should explain for British readers: everybody but us and the Chinese use slides that are $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 4''$; Chinese slides are $4'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}''$.)

At one time Russianmanship was an important part of Conferencemanship but now that everybody of any consequence has been to two Russian conferences this must be largely dropped. Slides actually lettered in Cyrillic characters, however, are still most valuable. If the Slidesman presents a long run of slides, all so lettered, but without translating the captions, he implies both that he is so frequent a visitor to Soviet parts that it is worthwhile getting his slides made up specially, and also that he is so familiar with the language that it never enters his head that it needs translating. This is good, but the best is to come. Eventually someone in the audience must tire of this meaningless procession and say: "Look here, aren't you going to tell us what these slides are about? We can't *all* read Russian you know." After a well judged pause the Slidesman replies: "Not *Russian*, my dear fellow, *Bulgarian*."

To the refrigerator

Robert L. Kovsky wrote this sonnet to a He³-He⁴ dilution refrigerator when he was a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley. He took his MA in physics there and is now in the University of California School of Law, Berkeley.

Down—toward the mystery, the shadow world. You travel
Through this tangled mesh of confused actions
And find your rest of separated fractions
Where heliums are distinct and amplitudes unravel.
As God once swept the seas from land, all things made clear
So do your gasses now condense
Heat's mad passion, anarchy, is stilled. Symmetry and sense
Shape space as Lord—and men revere.
We serve you, pour LN and seal each leak
We are the drones who ease your slide to ground
And when the final millidegree is found
You shall reward us with the trace we seek.
The upper world may swirl in rapture, fear, and hate
But you—stay cool, stay low, refrigerate.