

# Reflections on Fifty Years

*AMR* Readers:

Congratulations to *AMR* and to all those responsible including the current Editor-in-Chief, Professor Arthur Leissa, for their tireless efforts in bringing out this wonderful publication. *AMR* has gone through many changes in the past only to be seen as a better publication every time the change was made. In 1969, I was introduced to *AMR* by my professor KAV Pandalai, just when I started working on a literature search in the area of nonlinear vibrations of deformable bodies. As a young researcher, I was greatly impressed by the quality and content in the review papers that appeared in *AMR*. Back in those days when it was extremely difficult to have access to a variety of engineering journals, *AMR* was perhaps the only available publication in countries like India if one had to do a literature search on an engineering topic.

It was indeed a very rewarding intellectual experience to read applied mechanics review papers written by experts in the field. The first such review paper that I came across was, *Nonlinear deformation of elastic beams, rings, and strings*, by Professor JG Easley, (*AMR*, 1963). This was the starting point for my long journey to explore this area. This review paper, like every other paper appearing in *AMR*, had a wealth of literature citations and information. In addition to these excellent review papers, *AMR* had abstracts extracted from numerous journals which was extremely useful in doing a literature search. Inspired by many excellent contributions in *AMR*, I wrote my first set of review papers on large amplitude vibration of deformable bodies, which was published in the *Journal of the Aeronautical Society of India*, 1972 and 1973. This was followed by several contributions to the *Shock and Vibration Digest* on large deflections, and large amplitude vibrations of beams as well as plates during 1982 to 1988. In 1986, Art Leissa, who was an Associate Editor of *AMR* at the time, encouraged me to write a review article on nonlinear vibration of plates. I was happy to have the opportunity to do it because I felt that researchers all over the world could benefit from such a review article the way I did some 20 years before. I was, therefore, pleased to contribute my article, *Nonlinear vibration analysis of plates: A review and survey of current developments*, which was published in 1987. This was followed by another update nine years later, *Nonlinear vibrations of plates: An update of recent developments*. My desire to contribute to this type of activity continued further with the writing of a book, *Nonlinear Analysis of Structures* which is soon to be published.

In addition to contributing review articles, I have had the pleasure of reviewing several books for *AMR* over the years. I am sure *AMR* will continue to provide us with a wealth of information through book reviews, excellent review articles by leading experts, and an enormous collection of information on worldwide research in mechanics. It is indeed a great feeling to be a part of the *AMR* family. Again, congratulations to *AMR* on its golden anniversary and many good wishes for continued success in the future.

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*AMR* Readers:

Big 5-0 is an important birthday. May I join all *AMR* contributors, including readers, and praise the extremely dedicated work by its editors: LH Donnell, M Goland, S Juhasz, AWK Metzner, and AW Leissa. I recall becoming *AMR*'s reviewer some 25 years ago. I want to mention one infinitesimal contribution I made then. Unintentionally comparing *AMR* to its Russian cousin *Referativnyi Zhurnal Mekhanika (RZM)*, I paid attention that book reviews were easily located in the index of *RZM* (where they appeared in a boldface notation), but not in *AMR*. I wrote to Stephen Juhasz and suggested to put all book reviews together, for the benefit of possible interdisciplinary enlightenment; with all reviews placed together, one would without extra effort locate reviews of the books not only in one's own field, but hopefully in the other areas too. This suggestion was incorporated, and I too enjoy the fruits of that proposal.

The most important distinctive characteristic of *AMR*, as opposite of its counterparts in other fields, is its review articles. These reviews constitute the soul of *AMR* and continue to enlighten all of us on the latest developments in the field. The selection of the review articles and conducting their most proper and extensive review process is an important vehicle in retaining this essence undamaged. I hope that all *old* and *new* associate editors would have several

critically-minded reviewers evaluate the manuscripts so that we would get the *crème de la crème* articles. This is probably one of the cases when less is more. It is better to have less reviews, but very good and inspiring ones.

Having review articles published by the authors in the West and the East contributes to making the scientific world more of a global village.

I have decided to write this note only after I observed that every note was so extremely, and deservingly positive. Such positive remarks are most welcome. As Mark Twain said, "I can live for two months on a good compliment." Yet at an age of 50, it must also be a time for retrospection. Since *AMR* does such a great job, *we should demand more*.

Till 1984, the papers were reviewed in *AMR* (some positively, some critically, some even very critically). Now, only the abstracts are published. Of course, this simplifies considerably the logistics of the operation and no numerous reminders have to be sent to the reviewers. Yet, this simplification is, in my humble opinion, at the cost of the service to the profession at large. It would be nice to have critical reviews of the papers re-instituted in *AMR*. This is especially correct now, due to the current embarrassing easiness of the publication of manuscripts, due to availability of over 30,000 journals. Almost every *self-respecting* professor starts a new journal (or even two) to serve the community as an Editor-in-Chief. Some of the readers may recall their own resistance to energetic publishing houses when they were approached to start a new journal. Due to almost no difficulty in manuscript acceptance for publication, many authors now have hundreds and hundreds of publications, not unlike Leonhard Euler.

Re-introduction of the critical assessment of these papers, supported financially by indiscriminate (and perhaps even deliberate) program managers of the government funding agencies, may allow a starting reader to distinguish between excellent and not-so-excellent contributions (including those of so-called *prominent* or *eminent* scientists). These could be used during promotion and tenure: who would overlook the review with positive adjectives? Likewise, critical comments in *AMR* may introduce some damping in the promotion system.

More importantly, critical comments may introduce a strong incentive to publish less. Critical reviews could be used by the universities in differentiating good work from its opposite, and hopefully would contribute to the higher overall quality.

Likewise, even the long review articles often reference hundreds of papers without their critical and/or comparative analyses. If, however, this qualitative change were to be made, we would observe that many more faculty, young and not-so-young, would change the habit of no association with the library and would go there to read a careful judgment of their work, as well as study the reviews in the work of some extremely over-funded counterparts (funding is very important, but much of it appears to be counterproductive). Of course, quantity and quality are not mutually exclusive, yet many researchers have stopped to go to the library long ago, and not only because the review journals joined the nonjudgmental world. Even the comment made by Oscar Levant: "I never read bad reviews about myself, because my friends invariably tell me about them," reads so out-dated...

*AMR* deserves unequivocal praise. What should *AMR* do with my suggestion on criticality of reviews? Please do not follow John Steinbeck: "Unless the[y]... have the courage to give you unqualified praise, I say ignore them." Re-introduction of the paper reviewing process would make *AMR* competitive to some other review journals in the sciences. By the way, as a byproduct, this may turn financially rewarding to ASME: with a rigorous review process at all levels, every library would want to have an unsubstitutable *AMR*. We could visualize that people would wait for its every new issue.

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