



FORUM MAGAZINE

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FORUM

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Cover Illustration by Cindy Bystry

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FORUM MAGAZINE
c/o Writing Media Department
Loyola College
4501 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

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FROM THE EDITOR

For those of us involved with this magazine, *Forum* has actually become a season in our lives. Roommates, friends and family have adjusted to this phenomena rather well too, as they are able to identify without hesitation when "it's that *Forum* time of the year." As the seasons change, each of us begin a new season in our own lives, and for most of the staff of *Forum* 1990, this means graduation from Loyola, and graduation from *Forum*.

Thank you to the 1990 staff, especially Kiki, Jill, and John for all of those Saturdays in the computer lab, and to Dr. Dan, for being "just" the faculty advisor. I wish to thank Dean Roswell and Mark Broderick, Loretta Bartolomeo, and the entire writing department, for all of their support, and send a special thanks to my Mom and Dad, Walt, Beth and Carl for keeping me focused on what's really important.

And what about the essays? Elizabeth Hardwick, who in trying to describe the pieces contained in the anthology, *The Best Essays of 1986*, says something which I think can be applied to the contents of this year's edition of *Forum*. Ms. Hardwick writes: "Some are straightforward and some wind through the paths of memory, the unmapped individual experience. Such is the art of the essay."

Such is the way of the Muse.

Kathleen M. Klaus

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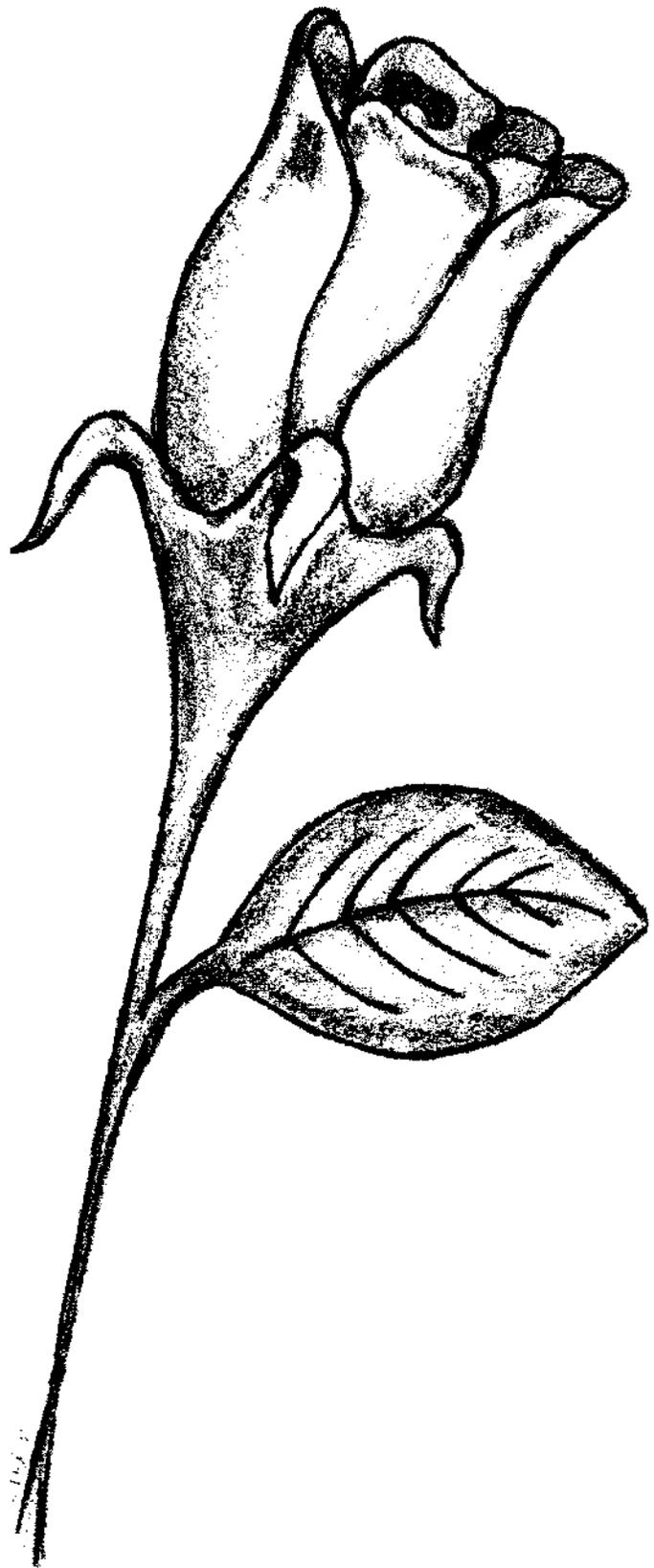
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Artwork solicited by Cindy Bystry

*"A perfect writer would make words sing,
dance, kiss, do the male and female act,
bear children, weep, bleed, rage, stab, steel,
fire cannons, steer ships, sack cities..."*

Walt Whitman



Sunflowers, Saints and Inspiration

by Kirsten Gay

Included in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Van Gogh in Arles*, engagement book, Vincent Van Gogh confessed in a letter to his brother Theo, "Sometimes I know so well what I want. I can very well do without God both in my life and in my painting, but I cannot, ill as I am, do without something which is greater than I, which is my life—the power to create." Indeed, Van Gogh dedicated his life to the canvas subjects that inspired and tantalized his innate talent. The light and spaciousness of the Arles countryside nourished his furious passion to capture what he called, "the mysterious vibrations of kindred tones." This blaze of color endures today, and people frequenting Sothebys or a museum like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, can gaze upon products born from a man possessed by a universal, penetrating force—inspiration. It is an energy that stimulates the minds of human beings to a fulfillment of personal dreams and goals. Van Gogh's success demanded inspiration's prodding. The renowned Impressionist would enter feverish creative periods during which entire masterpieces had to be finished in one sitting. His passionate immersion of the soul for the sake of achievement reflects a receptiveness to inspiration found within all human beings.

A very interesting parallel also exists in the natural world described by Primo Levi. In his essay, "Frogs on the Moon", Levi describes the internal, "fully understandable instinct" of pollywogs to struggle for life in a different environment. Their attempts are a result of "a brutal and brusque puberty: the little animal became restless, as if it were sensing within itself the travail of one who changes his nature and is upset by it." Such fluctuations also characterize the emotions of human beings whose dreams have been touched by inspiration, which activates an imaginative flow of ideas. Therefore, when an enlightened mind and soul unite, emotional intensity facilitates the creation of something very personal such as artwork, arias, books, or even a homemade holiday wreath.

People around the world who enjoy some of the more well-known results of inspiration, actively participate in its long term purpose. Those who see Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, for instance, return to their homes around the world enthusiastic to express themselves. People are attracted to a painting for various reasons. Some notice the intense flurry of the brushstrokes, while others are amazed at the brilliant shapes and colors involved. The various components of artwork which appeal to individual personality and preference are absorbed into the memory of onlookers. Later on, some may be inspired to incorporate certain artwork impressions in a poem or essay. In the case of Van

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Gogh's *Starry Night*, people might be inspired to combine artistically successful color schemes into their wardrobe or designer collection. Perhaps a landscaper will speckle cypress trees instead of weeping willows on a field. In this way, Van Gogh's initial perceptions of pasture and populace have been preserved in the talents of those who eagerly await new ideas. What remains after a moment of inspiration, therefore, reverberates without end.

Not everyone has to be enraptured by Van Gogh in particular to be inspired. For Primo Levi, a butterfly exhibit mounted in Turin's old hospital building triggered refreshing insights into a man's conception of beauty. Levi, for instance, discusses why humans find butterflies so becoming as opposed to bees. Butterflies have vivid colors, symmetry, a graceful manner of flying, and the enigma of metamorphosis. He writes that they "are beautiful by definition, indeed our yardstick for beauty." Primo Levi was obviously inspired, when "as happens anytime one partakes of spiritual food, one leaves the exhibit nourished and at the same time hungrier than before." This hunger for thoughts and ideas was just as meaningful for Levi as for those who lived centuries ago.

In thirteenth century Italy, one man's religious example would leave a mark on humanity. St. Francis of Assisi sought to spread his devotion to God and a feeling of oneness between man and nature. His teachings at the time so inspired a group of men that in the year 1210, the Franciscan order was formed and officially acknowledged by the pope. Francis' own conversion into spiritual understanding created an aura of appeal that has lasted into modern times. Being the son of a wealthy merchant, Francis enjoyed the lavish life. After overcoming a serious illness, Francis was divinely inspired to help the poor. At one point, the crucifix in the town church imparted a message to him. Following this experience Francis turned from the wealth of his family to the care of the sick and poor. It is his transition and sacrifice to God's will that still effects the world today. St. Francis, for instance, was the first to set up a manger scene to honor Christ's birth, and according to Victor Green's *Saints for all Seasons*, even though the ancient tradition of using live animals and humans was discontinued, miniature representations still adorn churches. The story of St. Francis can also inspire more involvement in the community. Indeed, the true spirit of St. Francis' work survives in the kind hearts of human beings around the globe who remain impressed by his religious steadfastness.

While the story of St. Francis is associated with the spirit of kindness, George Friederich Handel's *Messiah* exudes Christmas cheer. Many people who listen to the triumphal score or melodious chords cannot resist humming, whistling, or singing along. When something is so beautiful, people want to participate. In Sir Malcolm Sargent's "Handel's Messiah," Handel himself admitted that after composing the famed "Hallelujah Chorus," "I did think I did see Heaven before me, and the Great God Himself." When King George II heard the famous chorus for the first time in Covent Garden, he rose to his feet in sheer awe of the musical splendor. Very few people are aware of the great feat Handel accomplished. After twenty-two days of "hardly eating or sleeping", he "completed an oratorio of incomparable grandeur and ineffable beauty which two hundred years later, brings glimpses of heaven and Peace of God to thousands."

The same soothing, comforting tone found in Handel's musical composition can also be found in a work of art, such as "Joan of Arc," by Jules Bastien-Lepage. People who visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art can see this very powerful oil painting. Lepage painted "Joan of Arc" leaning next to a tree in a

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garden. What immediately catches the eye is the facial expression worn by a girl who has just heard God's voice. Joan's eyes are fixed and her cheeks are slightly flushed. The faded blue vest and plain brown skirt allow all attention to merely focus on the religious experience described on her face. Lepage surely achieved artistic success in suspending a very emotional moment on canvas and conveying his message.

Underneath the oil painting is a small explanatory note, that brings out the double meaning originally intended by Lepage. After France suffered heavy losses during the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, Lepage sought to bind the wounded spirits of his fellow countrymen by invoking the memory of Joan of Arc. The picture itself however, was not designed to reveal a particular historical period. In the background, for instance, is a building whose architecture is purposefully ambiguous. It could easily resemble a small French cottage of the late nineteenth century. Lepage wanted to focus on a remarkable countryman whose courage might inspire French soldiers to rebound from defeat. Indeed, the bravery of Joan of Arc still embodies an immutable meaning.

The power of artists like Lepage to uplift the feelings of his audience is also apparent in writing. After reading Homer's "Iliad," Heinrich Schliemann passionately sought to restore the lost world of Bronze Age Kings, who hunted lions for sport, poured libations, and sacrificed to terra cotta idols. Archaeology, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, was a mere fledging science, but Schliemann was determined to organize digs in Greece and Turkey. While unearthing many ruins, Schliemann battled illness and suffered harsh criticism from skeptical scholars. His faith in the actual existence of Agamemnon's world, however, remained steadfast till death. Today, the tombs and treasures Schliemann discovered serve as dazzling, tangible reminders of a dedicated life.

The inspirational energy Schliemann found in Homer's "Iliad" can be felt in other literary works of art. The British historian Michael Wood, made a special impression on me with his book *In Search of the Trojan War*. Michael Wood's presentation of the Mycenaean Bronze Age, brought the art and history alive for me. In the companion mini-series, the author travelled to Greece, Crete, and Turkey, showing the Cyclopean walls of places such as Homer's "Golden Mycenae." A pure man-made beauty radiates from the Lion Gate and the beehive tombs, which once housed the cremated royal relatives of Atreus. Mr. Wood also discussed the latest archaeological revelations surrounding the most famous war in history. After seeing and reading his work, I enthusiastically read more about the Mycenaean civilization that sparked an attraction deep within me. The sheer beauty surrounding Bronze Age cities captured my imagination. I felt a uniting of my interests in language and art with something new and exciting—archaeology. With mind opened and emotions invigorated, I am now following the well-travelled road of inspiration. Years from now I may work in Greece as an archaeologist and reflect on the moment inspiration guided my future.

"The aging mind has a bagful of nasty tricks, one of which is to tack names and words away in crannies where they are not immediately available. . . This is extremely annoying to a writer who wants his words where he can reach them."

E.B. White

An Art of Deception

Thomas McHale

"The fairest experience we can have is the mysterious."

-Albert Einstein

I sat unmoving in my seat, fascinated, as the mammoth cloth covering began falling slowly, deliberately, to the ground. As my anticipation rose, the covering descended more rapidly until finally, it could fall no further and could no longer block out my perceptions. Spotlights, hundreds of them it seemed, raced back and forth around the area like a confused swarm of bees. It wasn't there anymore. The Statue of Liberty wasn't there! It had vanished, David Copperfield had done the impossible.

Magic. The word alone conjures up thousands of mental images ranging from witch's spells, superstitions, and fairy-tale sorcerers to card tricks, rabbits being pulled from hats, and Harry Houdini's unbelievable escapes. It is no accident that images of this sort are almost universal in the western world. Magic has been a part of our culture for a very longtime, but just what is *magic*? What relevance does it have in a modern scientific society? How can we be so fascinated by something that has a fundamental component of deception, something that we know isn't real?

I have had an active interest in magic for a long time. I am, in fact, an amateur magician, but one doesn't have to be a magician to experience magic. Millions of people all around the world enjoy magic. Despite its widespread following, few people seem to think about magic as the art that it is. If I'm engaged in conversation about the arts and I introduce the idea that magic is an art, I usually get a negative reaction. Some people ignore me and keep on talking about whatever it was that they were talking about. Others respond with a blank stare. The honest ones often admit that they have no idea why I think magic should be considered an art form.

I have a keen understanding of what magic is and what it takes to be a magician. I know what it is like to spend hours trying to learn the simplest sleight of hand trick only to find that I am too clumsy to bring it off smoothly. I know what it is like to practice an illusion for hours, perfect it, perform it, and, in front of a critical audience, make a crucial mistake that ruins the trick and exposes me as, at best, a poor magician. On the other hand, I know what it is like to perform successfully, to amaze people, and this makes all the hours of

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practice, all of the mistakes, all of the jokes about amateur magicians and their lack of proficiency, worthwhile somehow. If even one person smiles, or applauds, or even says, "How'd you do that?" after I've performed, I feel successful. I am convinced that magic is an art, but what about it makes it an art?

What is an art? Art is almost an intangible concept. We all have some idea what it is in general. We all agree that some things like dancing and music are art, and that other things such as opening doors and getting out of bed in the morning are not an art. When it comes down to specifics, however, we are not always in agreement concerning what constitutes art and what does not. Magic is one example. Sports like boxing and football (which can be and, in fact, have been considered art by some people) are some others. I think the best way to approach the question of magic as an art is to compare it to other art forms in order to show that it shares most (if not all) of the characteristics that different arts hold in common.

Magic, like other forms of art, is as old as man is. There is something about magic that is fundamental to man. It is resident in our concept of that which is beyond the world, the supernatural. Magic has, as an almost universal concept of human culture, been used in conjunction with other forms of art, for example the rain dances and other rituals of the American Indian and the numerous supernatural images present in the paintings used with other forms of expression. Michael Jackson recently performed a concert in Great Britain in which he disappeared several times in great clouds of smoke, only to reappear seconds later some distance away. Recently, I saw the musical "Les Miserables" at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. One of the things that fascinated me about the show was the way the special effects were used to provide the audience with convincing illusions. When Javert, a tragic figure, killed himself by jumping into the Seine, it looked as if he were actually falling many feet. The settings changed almost magically before my eyes from courtyards to cafes to barricades to sewers. All of this was accomplished using props and lighting. It wasn't really happening, but I chose, for a time, to believe that it was. Therefore, at the very least, magic is artistically useful.

Many things that are artistically useful can, themselves, be classified as art. For example, when we see the great dancer Rudolf Nureyev, we are interested primarily in the motion of his body, but the effect of his performance is enhanced by the music that accompanies it. Music sets an emotional tone and rhythm for the entire performance. Music is an art without dance. Magic is an art in and of itself when separated from its use with other forms of art. Any person who disappears in great clouds of smoke and reappears a great distance away will be able to hold our attention. If the person doing so is singing while this takes place, an already existing interest is enhanced. Art is often used to add to the effects of other art.

To be a real art, however, something must be valuable in itself, no matter how interesting it is when combined with something else. Magic is interesting. There is something about magic that attracts us to the television when David Copperfield wants to (and is, in fact, going to) out-do his last impossible trick. Note that it is a trick, a deception, just that, nothing more or less. We find these deceptions interesting by themselves, but do they make magic valuable? Why is Harry Houdini an almost universally admired figure? He was certainly an interesting person, but what was it that caused others to admire him? He made

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a living tricking people and escaping from all sorts of ridiculous devices designed to imprison him (or perhaps from ones designed to let him escape.) We do not normally admire those who deceive us, but many people enjoy magic and admire the skills of talented magicians. If we truly do not like to be deceived there must be some deeper reason that we find magic so compelling. It is difficult to put a finger on it, but for some reason we consider magic to be a valuable part of our culture. We aren't willing to give it up. In this way, it is like many other art forms that we have a difficult time explaining exactly what it is that draws us such as music, or dance, or painting.

True artists challenge us to see beyond what is apparent in their work. Dancers compel their viewers to find meaning, purpose, and emotion in their movements, the images they create with their bodies. Painters ask us to see the inner beauty and meaning of their images. In this way, magicians challenge us to focus on the meaning of their work, not on their motions, devices, and deceptions, although these are important and should not be under emphasized. It should be noted that Houdini, one of the greatest magicians of all time, was also one of the greatest critics of the supernatural. He exposed several of the period's most influential spiritualists as frauds. He made no secret of the fact that his "miraculous" escapes were cleverly orchestrated tricks. He was trying to see if there was a supernatural, not trying to make us believe his tricks were part of it. Houdini had an obsession with escaping death, an obsession that is reflected in his fantastic escapes from "dangerous" situations. He was obsessed with the afterlife. He spent an enormous amount of time searching for proof of the transcendent nature of the human soul. It was this search that was the artistic cornerstone of his career. It was his own deep, personal struggle with the concept of mortality that made his escapes so fascinating, and so relevant. The viewer was compelled to join in the search, questioning his or her own concept of mortality. The deception was a tool. It supplied a serious, yet comfortably unbelievable context which Houdini used as a backdrop to play out the drama of life and death. The tradition of "debunking" magicians predates Houdini and continues even today, particularly in the noteworthy actions of James "The Magnificent" Randi. Deception is a tool that the magician uses to achieve his purpose, much as the painter uses paint or a poet, words. Deception, for the true artist, is never an end in itself.

Deception is one of the magician's most valuable artistic devices however, for the quality of a magician's deceptions determines, perhaps more than any other factor, the effectiveness of the art. Houdini needed the appearance of true danger to get his audience to question mortality. Because these illusions are so important, magicians are constantly searching for more effective ways of deceiving people. Magic, like other forms of art, evolves. It has developed and changed as man has developed and changed. The progression of mankind from primitive to civilized has been accompanied by a similar progression in the arts. There has been a progression from the chaos and violence of primitive rain dances to the refined precision and beauty of ballet. Modern men like Picasso have tried to picture abstract concepts and ideas, a great advance over the cave drawings of our ancestors. Magic has undergone a similar evolution from a primitive concept to a refined art. The men who engineered the disappearance of small objects like coins and other trinkets centuries ago would probably be absolutely stunned at the disappearance of something as large as the Statue of Liberty.

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Magic, with its artistic reliance on deception, forces the magician to be devoted. Art is like a jealous mistress. It demands devotion and sacrifice from its lovers, who are married to the reality that art often mirrors so effectively for us. The magician must be a dancer, every motion contributing to the effect, precise and flowing and graceful. To conjure up quarters from thin air one's hands must be able to dance an invisible ballet, intricately, smoothly going through the motions that the audience must not see. Few people ever master it. The difference between an amateur and a professional is comparable to the difference between "The Nutcracker," and a show put on by children from an elementary dancing school.

The magician must also be a painter, giving us an image that he wants us to receive, an image that is not necessarily true. The actual event depicted doesn't have to be true to life. What matters is that the artist evokes the intended feeling from the viewer. For example, the famous image of Washington crossing the Delaware standing in the middle of a row boat was not true, or even plausible, but it evokes patriotic feelings and that is the important function of the painting. A magician must give us an image that directs our attention away from what is happening or the feeling he is trying to convey will be lost. If I were to tell one of my audiences that I'm actually holding the coin that I'm about to "pull out of thin air," the effect of the trick would be ruined.

The magician must be a speaker and an actor in order to hold and/or divert the attentions of his critical audience. Like all other artists, he does have a critical audience. If a magician performs a long and intricate trick but doesn't present it in a way that is interesting to his audience, he is wasting his time and that of the audience.

Magicians must practice their art continuously to achieve proficiency. Their rehearsals are those of the theatre, of the dancer, of the trickster, their failures the sketchings of the poet or the artist— good, but not good enough. Houdini trained himself physically to endure extreme conditions, to dislocate body parts, to hold his breath for several minutes at a time, all for his art. Doug Henning is said to spend hours every day refining the positions of his fingers in order to be more precise, more fluid, more artistic. A magician, like every other true artist, must sacrifice something of himself to the art in order to receive that special power that allows him to bring something of himself to others.

Magic is also like a story. It has major characters such as Copperfield, Houdini, and Blackstone. It has tragic figures. Houdini died because his illusion was too good. An enthusiast intending to test the "iron physique" of the great Houdini punched him in the abdomen. The blow caught Houdini completely off guard. His appendix ruptured as a result of the attack and he died several days later, leaving the message that he would return from death in some way if it was possible, a mysterious promise he has yet to keep. It is a fitting legacy, for in a way, he will never die. Magic presents us with minor characters, perceptive audiences, and like the best of stories, no real end save that which we impose on ourselves.

Magic unfolds like a good play or novel. There is a major character, the magician, who is in conflict with something, most often a natural force. There are minor characters, the magician's assistants or volunteers. There is a climax to every trick just as there is in every story. Magic holds our attention.

Like other forms of art, magic reaches us on a number of different levels. It engages our attention physically through our senses particularly those of sight

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and hearing. It reaches us emotionally by playing on our reactions to suspense, humor, and the unexpected. Finally, it challenges us intellectually by causing us to question what we're sensing. David Copperfield has a flair for the dramatic. He made the whole Statue of Liberty disappear. We saw it disappear, we were astounded at the magnitude of the accomplishment (we've all seen magicians make things disappear, but the Statue of Liberty is so big...) and throughout we couldn't help wondering, "How did he do that?" Doug Henning (the magical flower child) captures a similar disbelief when he makes a large motor-cycle disappear and reappear seconds later suspended high above the stage.

Susanne K. Langer, in her essay, *The Cultural Importance of Art*, defines art as "the practice of creating perceptible forms expressive of human feeling." Magic evokes (notice how words from the concept of magic permeate our vocabulary) feeling. Something the magician does, something that we sense in what he is doing, some perceptible form that his action takes, makes us feel something. With the president and first lady of the United States looking on, David Copperfield impaled himself on a sword while playing the strikingly appropriate musical theme, "I Don't Care Anymore." Again, the audience saw it, and experienced a sort of grudging admiration for the accomplishment. The trick was, however, different than the Statue of Liberty trick. On an emotional level, it played on fear and suspense for its effect. The camera crews incidentally got a very good shot of the president comforting his wife afterwards. That was the kind of emotional response the trick was meant to elicit. Mrs. Reagan wasn't the only one in that room who needed to be brought back to reality after the trick. To this day I wonder if Copperfield got so carried away by the sheer impossibility of the trick, was so impressed by it mechanically, that he forgot how an audience might react to it.

The tricks don't need to be nearly so spectacular to be intellectually challenging however. I have seen pictures of the great Blackstone (one of America's premier magicians, a contemporary and rival of Houdini) surrounded by light bulbs floating in the air with no support, brightly shining without an apparent power supply and following him around, sometimes for hours at a time, while he was performing. He'd make them go through hoops, pluck them from the air and put them in his mouth and so on. For years, audiences responded with amazement because nobody could figure out how he did it.

However there is more to magic, and to art. As is the case with many other forms of art, there are reasons underlying the apparent reasons we choose to engage our interest in it. I have been trying to define magic in terms of the specific ways it can be compared to other works of art. I have shown how specific works of art require an artist's devotion, evoke feeling in an audience, and reach individuals on a number of different levels. All art forms have at least one other thing in common. They are an integral part of society.

In the essay "Football Red and Baseball Green," Murray Ross describes a sort of need for the "pastoral art" of baseball and the "mechanization, violence and flux" of football. In "On Boxing," Joyce Carol Oates clearly states that we need boxing as a medium through which we relive our species' violent "infancy." It seems that art fills a human need for something, for some feeling or notion.

Drama, poetry, music, dance, and magic allow us to experience a wide range of human emotions vicariously. We need this sort of vicarious experience. We need to feel for others, and for ourselves. As human beings, with a full range

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of emotions, there are times that we need to be depressed, distraught, angry, lighthearted, laughing uncontrollably, loving, curious, and even apathetic. Art enriches the human experience by presenting us with the opportunity to look at human behavior, our own behavior, and experience it in a context. Art allows us to become more human. It is a short break from reality that helps us to understand what is going on in our own lives. To feel the pain, joy, confusion, love, or agitation of another is a way we can better understand our own.

Somewhere on the long, winding road of human development, we realized that magic, as an actual science of tapping into the supernatural, did not truly fulfill its function. It is impossible to change natural law by saying that a few specific "magic" words. If magic had no practical use after this discovery was made, why did we keep it? Magic fulfills a fundamental human need to "feel" power over nature. We realize that what a magician is doing is not real, and we suspend our disbelief when we view a performance. It allows us to live out the fantasy of supernatural power. We want to be gods, to be beyond nature, beyond death and suffering. How easy it would be for mere humans if they had an ultimate tool that would allow them to become supernatural superhumans. Like the violent infancy that Oates describes, we have outgrown this futility, but not entirely. Magic gives us hope in a sometimes disheartening reality. We still need to believe that the impossible is possible. We still need to be amazed, to be awestruck, to be deceived not only by the magician, but by ourselves as well.

*"The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact,
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Both glances from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."*

William Shakespeare



The Edge of God's Canvas

by Eric J. Lazur

In the days of the wooden sailing ships when the seas were still a mysterious frontier, sailors would spin yarns of ferocious sea creatures which would attack ships and feast on the vessels' crews. The most infamous of these watery nemeses was the dreaded Kraken. A gargantuan octopus-like monster, the Kraken heralded its appearance by causing the sea to bubble and foam around the sailing vessel it intended to devour. It then surfaced next to its prey and wrapped its many tentacles around the dwarfed ship in an unrelenting death grip.

For the ship's crew there was no place to hide. Those brave enough to remain on deck to battle the monster were snatched up in one of its ghastly arms and devoured. The sailors who decided to take refuge below deck were no better off. The insatiable Kraken, in an attempt to flood out any remaining man/meat hidden within the vessel, would exert its Herculean strength and drag the hapless ship down into its murky abode. There, hidden from the light of day, it would finish its delectable feast by consuming the washed-out bodies of the drowned seamen.

Today, after centuries of exploration and underwater technology, we know the seas do not contain any gigantic monsters which pounce on unsuspecting vessels. Of course, the timid octopus and the occasional giant squid may have been the horrible Kraken of sailors' tales. However, these "monsters" prefer to remain hidden in the security of the deep sea and shy away from those fearsome human creatures which seem to inhabit the land, sea and air. The Kraken, it appears, only infests the waters of the human imagination—or does it?

Now a new breed of mariner, the astronomer and physicist, has ventured far into the vast sea of outer-space using the vessel of physics whose sails are woven from equations. These star gazing seamen now spin their own yarns about a dreaded Kraken. This monster, though, far exceeds any nightmarish vision of the deep ever imagined by a drunken sailor. It consumes not ships but whole worlds and blazing suns. This stellar Kraken even devours light itself so that the universe may be as black as the deepest fathoms of the sea. The light-eating demon is called a black hole and all the latest data gathered by the astrophysicists seem to indicate that it is real.

A black hole begins after the death of a very massive sun. Stars, like living things, have a birth, life and a death. A star's life can be billions of years long (depending upon its mass) and throughout its life, a star fuses together hydrogen atoms. As the hydrogen atoms fuse, they become helium atoms and vast amounts of energy in the form of light and heat are released into space in

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the process. When fusion has used up all of a star's fuel or hydrogen, a star is then pronounced "dead" by the physicist.

After its nuclear demise, the star's outer layers collapse inward around its core. During this stage of contraction, its mass plays an important role in determining its final state which could consist of a black hole. Stephen Hawking in his book, *A Brief History of Time*, describes the Chandrasekhar limit which is the greatest mass a sun can have before it becomes a black hole after its death. Determined by Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar in 1928, this limit is a mass of one and a half times the mass of our sun. According to Hawking, if a star with a mass less than this amount dies in the vacuum of space, its outer layers will contract but this contraction will not go on indefinitely. The star's collapse will end and it will settle down into a final, stable state as an innocuous white dwarf. This will be the eventual fate suffered by our sun in about five billion years. So don't worry...you'll live past this weekend.

Stars whose mass is equal to this limit will become neutron stars when they die. These stars may only have a radius of about ten miles but their densities (obtained by dividing their mass by their volume) will be, according to Hawking, "hundreds of millions of tons per cubic inch."

A star whose mass exceeds the Chandrasekhar limit will experience total gravitational collapse, that is, it will become a black hole. This means that the star will never stop collapsing in upon itself after the orb expends its nuclear fuel. It will continue to contract and its density will become infinite. In short, the star will collapse to a single point. Furthermore, because the black hole has an infinite mass, its gravitational pull will be, to say the least, tremendous.

The effects or implications of the black hole are mindboggling and often upset some of the greatest scientific minds of our time. Einstein refused to believe that a star could collapse to an infinite point and, according to Hawking, was the most vocal opponent of the existence of black holes. He was not about to be taken in by any of the sailors' yarns. It is only natural, though, that we should find the concept of the black hole staggering. First of all, nothing can escape from it, including light, because of its immense gravitational pull. If nothing can escape it, this implies that everything dragged into a black hole is brought to a complete standstill, again including light. Can anyone imagine what non-moving light looks like or if it is even possible?

The internal part of the black hole which causes light and matter to stop and cease to exist is called the singularity. According to Hawking, the singularity is the part of the black hole in the very belly of the beast where density becomes infinite. Here the black hole achieves its most mind boggling feat. The singularity is the point at which time comes to an end! Just like light and matter, within the bowels of this Kraken, time also stops. Another way of viewing the singularity and its effect is to think of the singularity as a point of nonconformity, like an orange in a bushel of apples. However, what the singularity refuses to conform with is the entire space-time continuum.

Our perception of our environment is contained within the space-time continuum. That is, every person and everything which we can observe on Earth and in the universe exists in space (it occupies a volume) and in time (things get older or move with the forward flow of time). At the black hole's singularity, though, our space-time perception completely breaks down. Nothing exists in time because time has ended and nothing exists in space because the tremendous gravity has crushed everything to a single point.

THE EDGE OF GOD'S CANVAS

If all of God's creation is viewed as a tapestry woven out of the matter contained within the space-time continuum, then it would seem that black holes make up the very fringes of this tapestry. A black hole is the edge of the canvas where God stopped painting His masterpiece of creation.

Aside from the actual black pit of no return which is associated with this time-killer, a black hole is thought to be surrounded by a maelstrom of incoming matter. This matter could be made up of debris from a nearby star and it glows in the darkness of space as it is sucked into the timeless vortex. This luminescence is caused by heat kindled within the matter by its swirling motion as it spirals into the black hole. Thus, a black hole would take on the appearance of a giant, glowing whirlpool as it draws matter from its stellar neighbors and sends it spiraling into its black core. If a star could scream, it would do so in the presence of this celestial monster.

Surrounded by the black hole's whirlpool of glowing debris is the actual hole itself. The edge of this hole or the point at which matter and light actually enters the black hole's interior is called the event horizon. Hawking describes it as a boundary created by light rays within the black hole which just fail to get away from it. It is like the edge of a shadow; it is the point of no return. Outside of the event horizon boundary, the space-time continuum still exists. Inside this boundary (which would be the black hole's interior), the space-time continuum ceases to be.

If no one can see a black hole, how can it ever be detected? It is true that a black hole is a taker and not a giver since nothing gets away from it. It does not emit light or discernible signals of any kind according to its nature. It is a silent hunter. However, this does not hold for the matter and debris which are being drawn into the pit of the maelstrom. This matter has not yet entered the black hole's interior. Because the particles in this doomed matter have been greatly accelerated, they emit not only light and heat but strong X rays as well. Thus, it is these particles spiraling toward the center of the black hole which emit X rays and not the black hole itself.

Radio astronomers are able to detect these X rays from Earth, and pinpoint the location of a possible black hole. To be macabre, astronomers are able to find potential black holes by listening for the screams of its hapless victims.

This is the case in Cygnus X-1 which is a star that seems to be orbiting around some unseen companion. This companion could simply be a very dim star that cannot be detected on Earth but would account for Cygnus' orbit. However, the Cygnus system is also emitting strong X rays. Furthermore, astronomers have been able to calculate the mass of the unseen companion from the orbit of the visible Cygnus. This mass is six times greater than our sun. Therefore, this invisible companion exceeds Chandrasekhar's limit for a potential black hole. All evidence seems to indicate that the Cygnus system could be a fringe on the tapestry of the space-time continuum.

Another possible lair for one of these unseen, light-quenching beasts is at the very center of our Milky Way galaxy. Here, based upon data gathered from neighboring galaxies, astronomers speculate that a humongous black hole with a mass hundreds of millions of times greater than our sun is consuming suns and solar systems. Chet Raymo in his book, *Soul of the Night*, describes this sun-killer as an object no larger than an average star with a mass equal to one hundred million suns. This black hole is believed to be the very engine which powers our galaxy and causes the spiral arms of the Milky Way to rotate like a

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child's pinwheel.

The pit of the black hole, like any other dark place, is believed to harbor certain secrets and mysteries. Various theories exist pertaining to these mysteries. Using Einstein's general relativity equations, physicists have come up with the possibility that wormholes exist in the black vortex. By entering a wormhole, a traveler could move from one region of space and into another without the lengthy travel through the space-time continuum. A wormhole would allow a traveler to avoid hitting the singularity which would end his or her time. If such a "trap door" does exist, matter dragged into the maelstrom might have a chance of escape! In a black hole, matter can never leave through the way it entered by crossing the rim of the hole, the event horizon. However, if there are wormholes in the space-eater, then it might be possible for any unlucky matter in the abyss to leave through the backdoor!

The wormhole, though, is purely theoretical at this stage of black hole knowledge. Physicists and astronomers are still solidifying the actual existence of black holes using data such as X ray sources. Furthermore, the probability of successfully testing the wormhole theory would be low. Even if we were able to traverse the long distances to stars like Cygnus, a black hole spelunker would be an endangered species. Any living thing entering a black hole would be ripped to pieces by the hole's incredible gravitational pull. Before even reaching the hole's singularity or possible wormhole, the foolhardy traveler would be stretched like a noodle and his or her soul would fly away, screaming, from the event horizon.

Another possible secret which may be hidden within the celestial shadows of the black vortex is the white hole. Physicists speculate that a black hole may have a counterpart in a completely different universe existing outside our familiar space-time continuum. This theoretical counterpart is called a white hole and, unlike a wormhole which would allow for travel within the same universe, a white hole would lead to a whole new cosmos. Matter compressed to nothingness in our universe's black holes may perhaps reappear in another parallel universe's white hole and become part of its space-time continuum. This theory is explained by John Gribbin in his book, *Spacewarps*, which gives the theoretical white hole the image of an inter-universal drainage ditch. Matter drains out of one universe and surfaces in another.

Incredible speculations such as the white hole demonstrate another problem with black holes: where does sound scientific theory end and science fiction begin? With black holes, neither scientists nor anyone else may ever know the answer to this question, at least not until more definite data is obtained.

The clandestine nature of black holes rooted in the possible secrets of their shadowy depths is what makes them so fascinating for us. Scientists and non-scientists alike love a good mystery. Scientists, in particular, love to fill in the missing spaces like a child who gleefully completes the picture puzzle by fitting in the final piece. Such was the case in Cygnus X-1 where the final piece could not actually be seen except for its necessary shape which was outlined by the completed stellar puzzle surrounding it. Thus, the astronomers and physicists gleefully filled in the missing space with the puzzle piece called a black hole.

The black hole does more than just devour light and matter, it reveals the awesome power of the universe in the process. It lays out before us the very

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nature of our learning and comprehension. It provides a missing piece or fringe in the space-time tapestry for which, by the nature of our learning, we feel compelled to account. In this sense, our learning, no matter what the topic, can be seen as a compulsion, an intense need to fill in the missing spaces or holes with the puzzle pieces of knowledge. By not filling in these spaces or gaps in knowledge with our understanding, our comprehension and growth as an intelligent species could come to a complete halt just like time and space inside a black hole.

The human animal would be wise to pay due respect to the unparalleled power of the black hole. Amidst the shiny new toys provided by our technology and our ever greater accomplishments, we sometimes have the audacity to think of ourselves as gods. A black hole should serve as a dark reminder that no matter what our achievements, our "godliness" could be eradicated in the blink of an eye with one fateful trip across an event horizon.

The star-speckled sky which I look upon at night has never before frightened me. It has always looked back at me with a silvery gaze of a million stars and held me in celestial trance with its stare. The presence of black holes, though, has seeded in me the feeling that this silvery gaze may contain a glint of malice, a hatred for my world and my own small matter. Despite the unlikelihood of this malice, I fear that one fine day the sea of space may begin to bubble and foam around the tiny sailing vessel called Earth. This nightmare continues with a monstrous stellar Kraken, a black hole, surfacing next to the blue and green ship and tearing it asunder with tentacles of gravity, devouring its inhabitants along with the light. The Earth would never be seen or heard from again in this universe.

If this were to happen it would be a shame for five billion souls who would never have had the chance to finish filling in the missing pieces of their knowledge. Through no fault of their own, their comprehension and growth would be brought to a halt and they would never realize the full potential of their never ending need to learn. Such a catastrophe would deprive God's masterpiece of a beautiful brushstroke called life and leave a barren space as foreboding as the black hole itself.

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In Absence

*Absence abates a moderate passion
and intensifies a great one -
as the wind blows
out a candle but fans fire into flames.*

Francois Duc de la Rochefoucauld

Tuckerton Is a Muddle

by Michele Wojciechowski

Tuckerton is a small town. So small in fact that it is absent from large maps of New Jersey. Just thirty miles north of Atlantic City—where brightly colored neon signs flash over the boardwalk, bad lounge acts sing "Feelings," and gamblers roll dice until dawn—Tuckerton lies nestled in the dense woods just off of Route 9. It's small and off the beaten path of the Garden State Parkway, but the residents don't seem to mind.

In Tuckerton, most of the residents know each other. Elmo is the local barber, and you can get your hair cut in the little shop on the side of his home. A red, white and blue barber pole hangs from the side of his shop. You have to be willing to tell Elmo the update of your life if you want a good haircut. About three miles down the road is the "My Three Sons" produce stand. During the summer you can buy the sweetest silver queen corn and the tastiest canteloupe and watermelon in town from—who else—the father and his sons. They even let you taste the melon before you buy it. The father will hold out a piece of orange melon or red watermelon dripping with the juice from being freshly cut and say, "No, you try it first. You should know what you're buying." Just a few hundred feet from "My Three Sons" sits *Penny's Family Restaurant*. The same Tuckertonians have run the restaurant since it was built. Our waitress said that she'd been there for about twenty years. She's a short, dark haired woman who talks to the same lunch customers every day. From time to time she asks, "You awright hon?" The aroma of homemade gravy, hot apple pie, and the soup of the day fills the restaurant. In the vestibule of *Penny's*, there is a large bulletin board mounted on the wall where the residents of Tuckerton post announcements, notices of items for sale, or descriptions of lost pets. Across from all these places lies the natural beauty of Tuckerton—its meadows.

Although Tuckerton is in the heart of the woods, it has lush green, brown, and yellow meadows that extend from Route 9 for acres and acres to the horizon. These meadows have been there unchanged for hundreds of years. Sometimes you can see wild rabbits, brown with white cotton tails, eating grass and hopping about. A native of Tuckerton told me that if you chase one of the rabbits around the meadows, you could eventually catch it because rabbits have little endurance. They can just sprint away quickly. Some of the local children have tried this, but they tire out before the rabbits do. Once in a while a deer will be brave enough to come out of the nearby woods and eat grass or leaves like the rabbits. I love to walk through these meadows, smell the fresh grass, and listen to the silence which is occasionally interrupted by bobwhites calling, "Bobwhite. Bobwhite." But besides the meadows, you can experience nature and the past in other places as well. You can go to nearby Smithville.

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Smithville is a rejuvenated small town that was built in the 1800s. The tiny houses have been restored into a town of shops where you can experience the hominess of Smithville. You can buy homemade cheeses in the cheese shop. The owners let you taste sharp cheese on bits of crumbly wafers. You can smell rich jams as they are scooped into jars and the scent of fresh coffee beans being ground. In the nut shop, you can get brown bags filled with warm roasted nuts to cut the chill in the winter. In the summer, the ice cream shop makes fresh flavors daily to cool your throat. But there is more in Smithville than just the food. The cobblestone paths lead to shops where handmade jewelry, crafts, blankets, and even carved duck decoys are for sale. (Duck hunting season is an important event in Tuckerton. Schools are even closed for a few days so that the young adults can hunt with their fathers.)

Smithville has its own lake. Ducks and geese waddle freely up the gravel and sand beach onto the cobblestones and grass looking for spare bits of food that people may have dropped. You can buy corn to feed the ducks. Once I saw a little boy throwing corn *at* the ducks and geese rather than to them. He would run for a few feet, turn around to see the birds chasing him, and throw more food. This process continued until he ran out of corn. Then he hid for safety behind his father's leg. If you look across the lake you can see a slanted, wooden shack with a pier out front. Both are barely standing. I've never seen anyone in it, and I like to imagine that an old fisherman lives there and comes out early in the morning to fish and feed the ducks. Or perhaps an old hermit sits at his window and watches the people across the lake at Smithville who are buying their wares. He could be watching us now.

Smithville is like potpourri. Both reuse something that was old and no longer useful. Like dried up flowers, the town of Smithville was delapidated and falling apart. But by taking the framework of the old buildings, a new town was built, whose sights, smells, and sounds remind us of the old. Just like the scent of potpourri reminds us of the flowers that once lived. Both change the old, but do so for the better.

In August, I returned to Tuckerton after a long absence. As one would expect, some changes had occurred. "My Three Sons" had opened up a new booth, in addition to the old one, on the other side of town. *Penny's* parking lot seemed to be more crowded than usual. Elmo had put up a wooden sign on his home that said, *Elmo's*. These changes weren't major, and they were improvements. Basically it seemed as though everything was the same. Until I looked for the meadows.

They were gone. In their place stood rows of identical townhouses that looked like they had been stamped out of a machine. They were colored gray and white. Where I had once walked through tall grass that seemed to grasp at my ankles, I now tread on flat, hard, black asphalt lined with gravel that spewed at my bare legs. The parking lot had straight white lines that separated the cars. I remembered when rabbits ran here. The houses were lined in symmetrical rows that surrounded the parking lots. At every corner a thin tree extended from a small patch of dirt laid in the concrete sidewalk. Tennis courts sat off to the side of the houses next to a playground for each family's 2.2 children. A painted wooden sign was posted out in front of the complex "**Tuckerton Meadows.**"

I visited the Cincotta family who lives across the road from *Penny's* next to the remaining open field. But there was no solace to be found here. The field has been sold to a developer who is going to build a Pathmark and small shopping center. The Cincottas had to sell their home to the developer and are

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moving. Would you want to live next to a shopping center or busy parking lot? The home that John Cincotta designed and had built will be demolished by large bulldozers with their teeth-like scoops ripping out the wall of the newly designed laundry room. And flattening the enormous picture window of the living room. And tearing down the perfectly good shelf-lined garage. The bedrooms where the children put their first trophies, cried over their first heartbreaks, got ready for their first dates, and even put on their college graduation gowns will all be gone. What will replace them? A large, gray aluminum sided building with the red letters F&M (the company who recently bought Pathmark) on the top, where you can buy deodorant or Q-tips or lighter fluid. And in a few years when the company gets bought out or the store fails, the empty gray building will stand there boarded up sitting across the street from *Penny's*. And the meadows will all be gone.

I visited Smithville, even though it was against my better judgement and that of my heart's. A sign greeted me that said. **Welcome to the New Smithville.** The new Smithville was filled with the same shops on one edge of the lake. But now a wooden bridge extended across the lake to rows of connected, identical shops that lined the edge of the newly built pier. These shops didn't sell homemade goods, but rather store-bought clothing, souvenirs that said "Historic Smithville," and plastic cups bearing the new Smithville logo. I frequently got lost because all the shops looked the same. And they smelled the same—like fresh paint.

The house across the lake was gone. There were no signs indicating that it or the pier had ever existed. Now a rent-a-paddleboat place was located there. People were pedaling plastic dull colored paddleboats across the lake. Some people in the boats were chasing after the ducks and geese. Streams of water burst from an artificial fountain that had been erected in the center of the lake. The calmness of the lake was constantly interrupted by the splattering of drops onto the once glass-like surface. A fence covered with chicken wire prevented people from feeding the birds and the birds from coming onto the land.

The sounds were different too. I used to hear the quacking of ducks, the honking of geese, the laughing of children. Now I heard the gush of the fountain and the piercing whistle of the miniature train that would take tourists on a ride through Smithville. Train tracks were all over the ground. Much of the cobblestones had been replaced with bricks or wood. And the dirt parking lot was now covered with black asphalt. The grass was gone.

The town was like some gruesome mockery of the Smithville that I knew. The old, wooden shack was discarded rather than rebuilt like the original Smithville had been. It was torn down and replaced with one of the many plastic shops. The individuality of the shops was destroyed; the tranquility of the town was gone, and the historic quality that it once had was lost. The old Smithville buildings had withstood the test of time and the elements. I doubted that the new ones could.

As I returned from New Jersey, I realized that what bothered me most was not the change itself—but the *type* of change. Perhaps what saddened me was the fact that places so calm, so gentle, so friendly, were not as permanent as I had hoped.

In the meantime, the natives have been forced out, and their virgin land has been violated. The calm was traded in for commercialism. It's true, as the cliché says, that I'll always have my memories of the sights, sounds, and smells. But one thought remains: the meadows are gone forever.

*"The difference between
the right word
and the nearly right word
is the same as that between
lightning
and the lightning bug."*

Mark Twain

Streams

by Doug Davidson

Named after Lord Barrymore, *Lloyd's* stream flows south from Gilman Prep two miles through a tract of forest land in Northern Baltimore. John Wallace, a lifetime resident of the surrounding neighborhood, spoke of Lloyd Barrymore's queer affinity for the stream, the two of us tracing the rivulet's course, tottering from rock to rock in the streambed, John plunging an ash-wood cane into the shallows to keep his balance and speaking with the gruff reflections of a man who has lived next to the same brook for seventy years.

Watching the current sweep the sediment, feeling the smoothness of water-polished stone, dodging the walnuts as they plopped ripe green from the walnut trees, into the stream and the undergrowth on the banks, I considered what it was that inspired Lloyd's water dalliance and which in quieter, more acceptable ways keeps John Wallace near its bends and drives the thriving ecosystem around it. Curious, I decided to inhabit its banks for a few days.

A quarter mile north of Cold Spring Lane, at a jam of rotting trunks, the stream diverges, splitting into a tributary. Diverting all its current to the branch, the feeder trickles straight a hundred feet, drains through the sieve of fallen stones and fallen leaves from clumps of poplar growing there, and seeps into the earth. The branch gushes on, curving around the rocks, slowing where the bed is wide, speeding where there is little room to flow.

The bottom gurgles under pebbles, respire terrestrial breath. The whole bed trembles. Water quakes it, bursting from the laboring sacs of earth. Freudian water imagery in dream symbolizes birth. The forest gestates, it is born, connected to its sinuous appendage.

"The brook runs down in sending up our lives," wrote Robert Frost in "West Running Brook." The stream gives life in slaking thirst as when I saw a squirrel leap from willow branches and lap a quarter ounce of running water, then scramble up a river birch. The stream feeds the teeming forest, and because of it the sturdy trunks of locust, hornbeam, sycamore have grown, thrusting, thick and long trunked, to their canopies above. I watched a darnig needle swim, a speck that moved in choppy surges through the water, casting three round spots of shadow on the bottom of the pool. A field mouse came to drink, popping from a patch of sumac, quaffing its small dose, and, spotting my approach, scampering deep into the undergrowth. Mockingbirds and robins that like to feed on hackberries dropped down to bathe, to spray their pinioned bodies in the rill.

Tracking through a field of weeds, through cold, dry air, I reached a stagnant pool that had sundered from the gushing flux of stream. I stooped to examine the muck. Algae covered the rocks in the mire. My feet sank slowly in the slough.

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Above rank, root-choked earth, crushed vines withered, an overgrowth of sunflowers smothering them. I would have stayed. A funky effluvium made me back away. There was something mysterious and dark about that scene as if had I stared into that cloudy water long enough, I would have glimpsed some ineffable secret of the earth.

Alone, sitting on a rock, I would hear splashes behind me and whirl around, and maybe think the brush was moving, but I would never see anything in the water. Once when a spray of blue and purple berries pelted me I spun to see two little girls scuttling and giggling off into the woods. I felt that they knew things about the stream I did not know. I would have chased to ask them what it is that hangs about this place, but they were gone.

This is what John Wallace told me about Lloyd: "A grown man named Lloyd, about thirty five, forty years old back then, he used to sneak down to the stream at night in the summer and roll around naked in the water and sing to the barn-owls. He said they sang back to him. That was for a few summers in the thirties. We were kids back then. We'd go hide in the bushes and watch him and giggle. One day I and this friend Joe walked right out in the open on the bank next to him on a dare. He saw us and got up and dressed and fixed his hair and tipped his hat at us and left. He was a dapper man, always wearing hats. I found out later he owned a string of pharmacies in Baltimore. He was already a widower with two sons when he used to come down to the stream. Then he remarried. He stopped coming down."

I spent hours at the stream, sitting on the rocks in the wide valley below Lloyd Barrymore's old estate, in the afternoon, when the sun suffused the water, making it bottomless. Thoreau wrote, "The shallowest water is unfathomed." I sat there on the bank where I thought Lloyd used to like to come and swim, wondering what it is about a stream like this that makes you want to stay. It is not just that its fluid shines its stones, crafting brooches for its bed, or that its moisture laves the unearthed roots of streamside trees. It is something less explicable. You know it when you see the stream at night as Lloyd had seen it, the moonlight sifting through the trees upon the rocks, making them cobalt, blue . and rust, the crickets sounding, reminding men of the presence of an infinite force.

I dammed a narrow strait with rocks. Water swelled and eddied in the pool. A hollow snare of gush poured in, muffled for a while in the swirls, accruing strength against the falling stoppage though. I braced the wall with buttresses: three sturdy branches from a nearby copse, bored into the ground and wedged against the dike. Trickles seeped through cracks in the lodged rocks. I plugged the chinks with smaller stones. I even grouted them with mud, but, building force, the stream destroyed the dam, disgorging over rubble, flowing south again. I have heard of beavers fearing freshets, wary of dam building, aware of an unending forward flux, that in time will tear their labor down.

"Does it ever dry up?" I asked John Wallace.

"No," he said, "the summer never gets it."

"No?"

"There was a drought a few years back. It ran pretty low."

"But it never dried up?"

"The march freshet is a trickle by August, but I never did see it stop running."

"The summers get hot here?"

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"Yeah."

"It ought to dry up."

"Seems that way. It doesn't though. They put in a sewage line near Cold Spring Lane a few years back. People thought it would drain too much water off the stream."

"It didn't?"

"You don't shut that faucet off," said Wallace. "No knob to turn."

"Do you hear it from the house?" I asked.

"If it's quiet. You hear it every night before you sleep, same sound I heard in 1930."

"Doesn't that get tedious?"

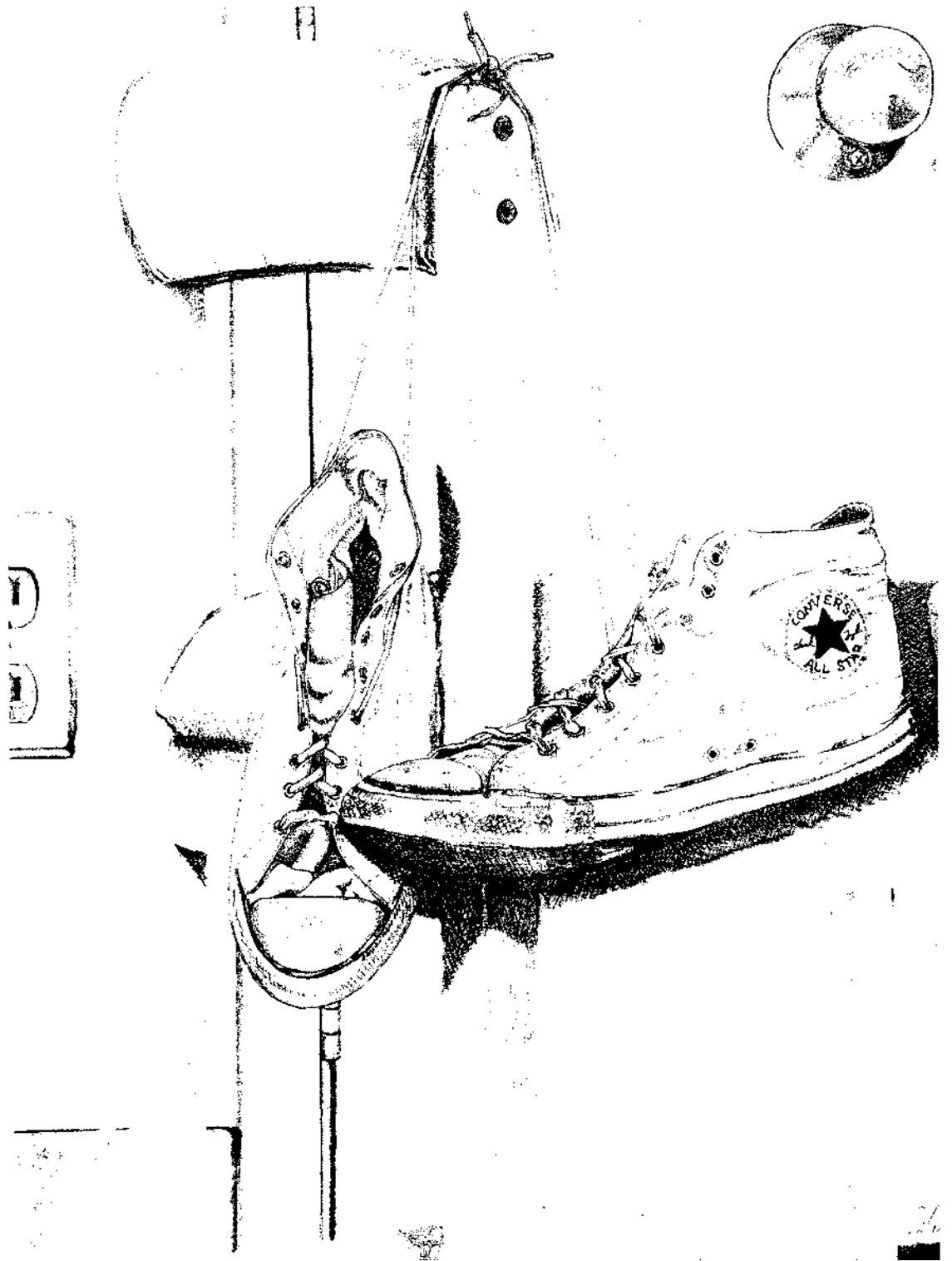
"I don't even hear it anymore. It's in the ears so long it becomes part of the quiet."

"You'd notice it if it stopped though?"

"I don't know," said Wallace. "When it stops, it won't be the water that quits running."

Whacking shadbush with an oak branch, I pressed upstream to find the runnel's source. I turned back south a mile later, weary of flogging the underbrush. The baying of a wild dog deterred me. I backtracked south past Cold Spring lane, along the bank, within a deep ravine, walled by twenty feet of earth, past the ties remaining from a long abandoned railway, seeking the stream's termination.

In an article for the Audobon Society, Peter Streinhart wrote "A creek is something that disappears around a bend, into the ground, into the next dimension." Lloyd's stream disappears into a Stygian tunnel, a rotting trunk protruding from its aperture, the flow of liquid sounding into darkness, converging at a centerpoint of black. I did not enter. I released the great continuum, stopped nagging it, watched it leave men to their ephemeral walks and surge incessantly into the a spectrum of periods and localities.



Avoiding Cotton

by Melissa Grossman

I have an incurable urge to pursue a certain mission, to be the champion of personal openness and expression. However, it's a mission characterized by several quirks on my part. These quirks aren't necessarily good or bad, but their presence is significant. In order to understand their presence in my character I need to examine how they affect my observations of other people and how I unconsciously apply them to the currents of the world.

Who is to say where the role of expression beyond that of communicating hunger, fatigue, indigestion, discomfort or annoyance begins or ends? Without expression past an elementary or primitive level though, I can't eliminate the idea that a human body regresses into inorganic matter, such as socks. Even the primitive levels aren't allowed by some to meet their limits. People become cotton balls. The surface is soft and squishable, but socks and cotton balls respond to external forces in an inevitably unweaving way. Their natural fiber beings are hollow in their predetermined reactions. If I mash a cotton ball between my palms, pressing all my weight down, and moving my hands in a smearing fashion it will flatten, the fibers will shred at the edges, and once condensed it loses the feature of poetic fluffiness. If I roll, twist, and beat a sock its crispness crumbles, it appears worn even if it's clean, its texture becomes dingy, and I've no desire to put it on.

The sock and the cotton ball haven't any choice in their response to my abuse. Their forms are ruffled in a very limited number of directions, and they have no objections. The sock and the cotton ball were marvelous means for releasing some of my aggression, but though I distressed their structures, not an ounce of romance was squeezed out of them. I say romance in the sense that expression creates fluid, vivid, persuasive beings. Expression adds a distinctive dimension to us, and gives us an identity that a name can never match on its own. What is behind a name is what makes it associative to a person. Expression fills out a name as air does a balloon, as poetry does Wallace Stevens, as martyrdom does Thomas Becket, as subtle self-destructiveness does Lily Bart. It is a natural instinct that people resist. Why are they afraid of it? Why must they cover it as if they're covering nakedness? I want to understand the reasons for their resistance in a more individualized sense, although I've begun by grouping them in a herd. I want to know the limits, indulgences, and requirements they insist upon when they encounter openness; why and when they open or shut themselves.

I once met a woman who became an artist after divorcing her pro-football player husband. She was an extraordinary person. I still have her parchment-

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textured business card, and I kept it not to use, but to remember her discussion. She spoke somewhat about her art, but mostly concentrated on the painful moments of her life that brought about a metamorphosis of mundaneness to vividness—from a sock to an artist. Before her divorce she had closeted her feelings and frustrations and personality inside her. After the divorce however, she discovered that letting go her fear of exposing herself was the path to satisfaction and personal revolution. She began to stray off the sidewalk, trod upon the grass and mud off the pavement, and in doing so finding grace. ..finding art. Expression saved her and christened a new life. Her voice swelled , filling her with passion and feeling like an overly full wine sac. Arms flew, eyes rolled, hands pulled hair or pressed against her breastbone, lips quivered, hips shifted weight back and forth, and there wasn't a touch of dignity in or about her. Did it bother me? I have to admit that it did to a small degree, for I found it hard to watch and listen to someone rush to the brink in a whirlwind of confessionals and intimate revelations, to just throw the sensitive contents of her mind on the table circled by strangers. It is her courage that illuminates her, makes her memorable, and exonerates her from any criticism. She deserves respect for this ability to share her soul and then slide down the bench to make room for other souls that need it.

I've observed another person whose marble stillness rattles my attention for completely different reasons. The flatness of her presence makes her as obvious to me as if she were dressed all in red. I've seen homeless people at night asleep on a street bench who are as still, but not as bloodless. What flows beneath the neatly dressed and hair-clipped exterior? Face, body, hands, eyes, and voice move so quietly. Nothing twists, cracks, or lifts. Effortlessly, she fills pages of notebook paper rapidly with seemingly ingested information in tiny handwriting, orderly paragraphs, as if reflection would smear the entire page. I imagine she would counter my frustration with cool, condescending indifference. I would be a nuisance, not an instigator to her. I might be pushed by her calm into slapping her, and then she would be likely only pity me. Aggression...cotton ball...mashing...Grundism...downfall. To make amends I re-examine her, and I find her to be a little more rounded than on my first inspection. She carries a book of poetry, her shoes need to be polished, a few strands of her coarse, wavy hair are askew, and although stiffer than a breeze, there's a fluidity to her movements that rounds off some of the coolness. I suspect that something in this world touches her, and forces her to be pliant with its inspirations. If only the corners of her mouth would stir, or the range of her voice bend, and then I would be sure.

I think fearing the loss of dignity is one of the deterrents to expression. It seems that people almost equate unveiling the facets of their character, affections, and motivations with groveling, and irreparable loss of control, weakness, or doom. Perhaps the loss of dignity is the best remedy. Yes, sometimes it is painful to watch a person lose it, especially someone who wore it like armour. We have to unflinchingly watch their hearts ooze and pump on their sleeves, and relate to the luckily and suddenly disheveled person in a new way. But how dare anyone deny them the change?

Deitrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who was executed by Hitler, wrote many, many letters to friends and family while in prison. Some of the letters from and to him were smuggled in and out by sympathetic guards. As a member of the upper class he was expected to be an example of strength and

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courage to the other prisoners, and survivors told afterwards of his compassion and willingness to fulfill the role demanded of him. The hardships and emotional distress he experienced during his imprisonment were never included in his letters to his torn family in war-ravaged Berlin, or his worried friends elsewhere. "A prisoner," he said, "no doubt inclined to make up, through an exaggerated sentimentality, for the soulessness and lack of warmth in his surroundings; and perhaps he may react too strongly to anything sentimental that affects him personally. The right thing for him to do then is call himself to order with a cold shower of common sense and humor, to avoid losing his sense of proportion." Emotion, in his case, might have ripped him apart.

Bonhoeffer was still human, however, and still possessed some very thin and delicate threads leading to his soul. For in prison, he indulged in the emotionally charged genre of poetry. He wrote a little of it in some letters to his best friend Eberhard Bethge. He confesses to Eberhard that he dared not even send a sample of his poems to his fiancée, Maria, because he feared it would pain and frighten her more than please her to witness something so out of his character. In one of his poems, "The Past," he writes,

O happiness beloved, and pain beloved in heaviness,
you went from me.
What shall I call you? Anguish, life blessedness,
part of myself, my heart—the past?
The door was slammed;
I hear your steps depart and slowly die away.
What now remains for me—torment, delight, desire?
This only do I know: that with you, all has gone.
But do you feel how I now grasp at you
and so clutch hold of you
that it must hurt you?
How I so rend you
that your blood gushes out,
simply to be sure that you are near me,
a life in earthly form, complete?
Do you divine my terrible desire
for my own suffering,
my eager wish to see my own blood flow,
only that all may not go under,
lost in the past.

His poems were the only clue his friend received that despite his attempt to freeze any despair by helping others, he was suffering. Even a man of his strength couldn't unwaveringly bear the weight of his heart, but his nobility which outlasted him after his execution by hanging, has nothing to do with the social hierarchy he was born into.

The fictional characters, Lily Bart in *The House of Mirth*, and Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, were two women trapped in anti-expressive socie-

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ties much like Bonhoeffer's. Unlike Bonhoeffer however, this was tortuous to them. Society killed Lily. Society drove Sarah mad. Each found a confidant, a man from whom they gleaned a source of compassion. Each in her own way clung to these men thinking that their link by intimacy would save them, and enable them to survive their environment. The very nature of their upbringing hindered any chance of them engaging in these confessional relationships without being haunted by the scandal that would erupt if they were exposed. So in essence, they couldn't completely purge themselves of repression. Yet, the nature of their characters demanded that they risk their reputations and follow the natural, healthy compulsion to be honest and open. They were damned if they did, and damned if they didn't. It is crucial, though, to note that the entrance into their intimate relationships rises out of desperation, and comes at a breaking point. When Lily's future is ultimately tainted by an innocent meeting with Lawrence Selden, we follow the successive events beyond her control that lead to her fall from society with even more distress. Her struggle to uphold her dignity, her salvation in resisting the evil means available to her to restore her in society's eyes, and the pride that prolongs her miserable end is all the more painful to watch because her troubles began in an attempt to save herself. When Sarah is shunned for her inability to hide her emotional agony, and for being called a whore for a rumored indulgence in passion, we are angered at the injustice, and at the same time the intensity of her personality and her feelings is sometimes disarming. Expression becomes a weapon she uses on herself and on others, such as Charles who is ruined because they became lovers. Yet, should she be denied?

On a street in D.C. last summer I saw a boy give the frowning girl he was facing a red and gold mottled tulip. She turned away from him, tossed the flower onto the street, and walked away. It was a public display without a spoken word. As a mere passerby catching this scene I cannot impose an opinion on her. It isn't my right, and to be fair I cannot presume that she is a bitch or that he is an ass. Some might object to such a scene or moreover a verbally violent one, to be enacted in public. Yet it would be Grundyism at its worst degree to censure what and when we express. We must consent to the hysterical tears, the giddy excitement, and the livid anger, as all being realizations of natural and acceptable expression.

*"The fool doth think he is wise,
but the wise man knows himself to be a fool."*

William Shakespeare



This Is Not Your Father's Idiot Box

by James A. Morrisard

"James... Anthony... Morrisard! Get upstairs this instant and start your homework!" After I had spent three hours in the basement watching television, my mother would soon pronounce my name in a tone that echoed throughout the house and made every dog in our neighborhood bury his head in the ground. You know how it was in elementary school, after a long day of playing in the sandbox, fingerpainting, and learning the alphabet, you needed to relax. After your afternoon snack, you run downstairs and watch Scooby-Doo run from ghosts and Superman save Lois from Lex Luthor. In junior high, your parents moved your bedtime from 8:00 to 10:00 and you soon discovered primetime television. Then came high school and if you weren't out partying or studying the five universal meanings to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, you were watching *Late Night with David Letterman* or *Saturday Night Live*.

Television has grown up with about four generations of children. It has not only entertained and educated the whole family, but it has also grown and changed with the family. From *Leave It to Beaver* to *The Cosby Show* the ground rules and blue laws of television have altered. Some have disappeared, and the television censor has left town. To a generation burdened with drug and alcohol abuse, AIDS, and nuclear warfare, Morton Downey, Jr., Roseanne Barr, and Pee-Wee Herman don't shock us. To our parents who remember "the good old days," television worries them as much as if their daughter were dating the lead guitarist of Guns 'n' Roses.

In the realm of black and white television, June and Ward Cleaver and Ralph and Alice Kramden never owned bedrooms, or at least we never saw them go to bed. Lucy and Ricky had little Ricky despite the fact that they slept in separate beds the entire time their show aired. In fact Lucy was never "pregnant," she was really "with child." Social codes deemed it improper to have a man and a woman crawl into bed together, even if they were married. Reality was watered down and the laws of physics were stretched like pizza dough. Sex didn't exist. Writers and producers created babies with pencil and ink, not egg and sperm.

In the colorful 25 inch realm of reality, on the other hand, it's not uncommon to sleep with the neighbor's wife, have an affair with a married man, or just go out and hire a "lady of the evening." On shows like *Santa Barbara*, you can watch a woman get raped in the comfort of your own home. Bobby Brady of the *Brady Bunch* worried about his first kiss, while Mike Seaver from *Growing Pains* questions if he and his girlfriend should have sex and who should bring the birth control. It just isn't television without explicit physical contact. Actors and actresses rip off each other's clothes, French kiss, and roll in and out

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of the bed or cheap motels more often than Ed McMahon has said, "Here's Johnny!" Abortion, homosexuality, AIDS, prostitution, and "pregnant women" add plot and conflict to prime time television.

Lucy and Ricky couldn't say "pregnant" on television, but now Dan Fielding on *Night Court* can call someone a "bitch." *Saturday Night Live* cast and crew appeared to have no reservations about saying words such as "penis" and "masturbation," immediately exercising their right as soon as the censors gave the okay. Thinking back along the life span of television, it wasn't that long ago when the Smothers Brothers had their show removed from primetime, because TV censors found their humor vulgar. The writers of *Laugh-In* were always on guard lest their show be discontinued for distasteful comments. The censors were just as strict as Ozzie and Harriet, but their creative children found new ways to describe and perform things that confused and out-smarted their overbearing parents.

Today families are faced with the problems of children who take drugs, get arrested for drunk driving, experiment with sex and birth control, or are trying to commit suicide. Unlike the TV moms and dads of the 50's, real moms and dads don't have all the answers, and in most cases, the kids have only one parent to depend on. Life just isn't as simple as it was in Mayberry with one sheriff protecting the town from Otis the drunk.

It seems as though the American viewer doesn't want to use television to help them escape reality; rather, they want television to suffer with them. Talking animals and *The Munsters* have been replaced with characters who are private investigators, doctors, lawyers, and policemen. Murderers, prostitutes, and psychotic killers are placed under arrest by the police; while some are pronounced insane by doctors and others sent to jail by lawyers, the P.I. gets girls and has an emotional crisis over whether it's right or wrong to kill someone. We want to see how actors and actresses deal with problems of divorce, raising children, alcoholism, and problems at work.

We are even beginning to use television to help us cope with our history. *China Beach* and *Tour of Duty* ponder the Vietnam War. *The War and Remembrance* mini-series showed us the Nazi's Jewish death camps. In this age of unstable foreign affairs, revolutions in Central America, and a deficit the size of Donald Trump's ego, the American people are looking for answers, and hoping that maybe television might give them a hint, something a talking horse can't say.

In all the 50 years that television has existed, there has always been a Walter Cronkite reporting the news of the day, good or bad. Year after year, wives have lost their husbands to the World Series and Super Bowl games. We have seen men on the moon, members of the Royal Family get married, presidents shot, wars, and the planets in our solar system. There have always been family shows, cop shows, sitcoms, and self-titled shows like *The Carol Burnett Show* and *The Tracey Ullman Show*. Kids used to watch Bugs Bunny, Superman, and Bullwinkle, but now it's Gummi Bears, Smurfs, and Ghostbusters. *Sesame Street* taught some of us our ABCs and 123s, but now preschoolers can learn about death and marriage on it. Our parents take a look at television and wonder what has happened to it, they are forced to realize that it has changed. The American people no longer want to use television as an escape device, they want it to mirror reality. If this is true, then why has television brought back the shows of yesterday and turned them into *The New Leave It to Beaver*, *The*

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Ministers Today, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*? Is it really that bad to leave reality for a while? Didn't you feel good inside when Robert Young was there to help Bud on *Father Knows Best*? For that brief half-hour everything was perfect, even though it was in black and white. At least we still have reruns.

*"The goal of all inanimate objects
is to resist man and
ultimately defeat him."*

Russell Baker

The Breath of Destruction

by Joseph Tobin

Your back begins to ache, feeling the strain of crouching on the floor. Outside the darkness grows denser, and you watch it through holes cut in the board that shields the window. You gaze at the mantle clock-2:00pm. There have been times when it was lighter in the dead of night. Now, in the dead of day, you pray that night will come. A steady whistling reaches your ears, and in the glow of the streetlamp you see the trees bend and straighten again, bending a little lower each time. An hour passes, and again you look at the clock-2:05 pm. They all said it was coming, but they couldn't prepare you for this. Nothing could prepare you for this. The whistling grows louder and deeper in pitch; you feel yourself shaking. Your hands find their way over your eyes, but you peel them away in time to see the whole room shaking with you. A sound like a machine gun firing all around you announces the arrival of the rains. A flash of lightning startles you, but you don't know if the thunder ever comes because the wind is screaming too loudly. Time no longer has any meaning. The rain moves sideways now, diverted by the sheer force of the gale. The house is trembling steadily now, keeping pace with your racing heart. Suddenly there is an explosion of light as the roof is blown away, sacrificed to the savage winds. Soaking wet you scramble for cover and savor each breath as if it were to be your last. Your body is beginning to yield to the storm, and you know that it is the end.

This may sound like something out of a bad dream, but all too often it is a frightening reality. It is the story of the arrival of a hurricane, a storm whose renown is its deadly force. To better understand the source of its power, you have to learn some basic facts about it.

Hurricanes form over tropical oceans, frequently near the equator at locations where the eastern and western trade winds meet. Unlike other, more commonplace storms, hurricanes do not have any contrasting air masses. In other words, there is no division of warm fronts or cold fronts. Once a mass of air is created, the earth's rotation instigates the storm's trademark whirling motion. A hurricane's movement is generally westward and towards the poles. As it moves along it spins faster and faster and grows larger in diameter.

Hurricanes follow a consistent geographic plan. They can originate in any one of the following oceanic regions: the Southwestern North Atlantic, including the Gulf of Mexico (storms that form here are the ones that strike the East Coast of the U.S.); the North Pacific near the Far East and Japan; the Bay

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of Bengal and the Arabian Sea; the Southern Indian Ocean off the northwestern corner of Australia; and in the South Pacific off the eastern coast of Australia. Notice that countries such as the United States and Australia, are vulnerable on both sides.

Everyone has either heard or used the phrase, "the eye of the hurricane," and in so doing they mean to convey a feeling of calm amidst chaos. In the meteorological sense, however, the term is a bit more precise. The eye of the hurricane is a small region at the center of the air mass ranging in size from five to twenty miles in diameter. It is almost completely cloudless, and therefore appears as a dot on satellite radar photographs (like the ones on the evening news). The winds within the eye are very light; mere breezes compared to what lies beyond.

Moving out from the eye, the first thing you would encounter is a region whose behavior is the complete opposite of the eye's. This region is between twenty and thirty miles wide, and it serves as a band encircling the eye. Within this band the winds are at their fiercest, easily reaching 150 mph and frequently more.

After this band comes the rest of the storm, which varies in both intensity and size. Hurricanes can be as small as sixty miles in diameter or as immense as one thousand miles in diameter. Using the time-honored measuring stick, the football field, that comes to an unbelievable width of 17,000 of them.

Storms also occur in diverse intensities, and are classified accordingly. A storm with winds not exceeding 39 mph is called a tropical depression.. Winds ranging from 40 to 74 mph, belong to systems known as tropical storms and anything over 75 mph earns the title of *hurricane*.

Prime time for the formation of these systems is the period between June and October because the sea surface is at its warmest and the humidity is highest. Once in a while one will show up in May or November, but not usually, and action at any other time is highly rare.

Once a storm has finally come together, it begins to move along its course. When the storm is still a newborn, and the winds are at their highest, it moves very slowly, if at all. So slowly in fact that a competent track and field star could outrun it - they rarely crack the 15 mph mark. As soon as it is clear of the tropics, though, it begins to accelerate, often topping 50 mph. The path hurricanes move along may be several thousand miles wide, at least until they move inland. In the meantime their winds' destructive forces can be felt anywhere from twenty-five to five hundred miles away from the path. They continue to draw their strength from the sea until they run aground. Then it's a different story.

Take the United States, for example. A given storm will strike somewhere along the eastern seaboard, usually between Texas and Florida. As soon as the storm reaches the shore, it has stripped itself of its power source and it begins to fizzle out as it makes its way up the coast. A storm that makes a successful run on the U.S. will touch most of the eastern states, even Pennsylvania and New York, before it either dies out completely or turns eastward and returns to sea. As a result of this, the weather ranges from the generally lousy to the downright destructive, depending how far north or south you are.

Approximately forty years ago, meteorologists began the process of christening hurricanes with names. While some people might find it a bit odd that their grandmother's namesake is actually a dynamo causing death and

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destruction wherever it roams, you do have to agree that this serves a very practical purpose. It is far simpler for history's sake to give each storm its own identity. Compare this to saying, "The Killer of '88." What happens if there are two hurricanes in 1988? Now the process has become a strangely affectionate one. When people hear of a new hurricane they're concerned less with its potential and direction and more with what its name is.

Hurricanes are regarded as the most dangerous of all storms, largely because of their combination of high intensity and monstrous size. On the average they bring between three and six inches of rain. They can raise the sea level by six feet and cause waves that are even higher. It works on the same principle as a cup of hot coffee. If you blow on the center to cool it off the coffee level rises around the edges of the cup. Likewise, the force of the winds on the water's surface creates huge waves along the coastline. It should not come as a great surprise that the majority of hurricane-related deaths are a result of drowning.

As a testimony to their destructive power, I present an index of some of the worst hurricanes in history:

Sep 8-9, 1900 - Hurricanes and tidal waves killed approximately 7,000 people in Galveston, Texas. This was the greatest loss of life due to storms in U.S. history.

Sep 12-14, 1919 - Florida, Louisiana, and Texas - over 800 killed and damages were estimated to be \$22,000,000.

Sep 3, 1930 - Dominican Republic - 2,000 killed and 6,000 injured.

Sep 1, 1935 - Florida Keys - Winds reaching 200 mph took 376 lives.

Sep 21, 1938 - Long Island and New England - 680 were killed, 1,754 injured, and damages around \$400,00,00.

Aug 17-19, 1955 - Hurricane *Diane* kills 191 and injures 7,000 along the eastern seaboard, dropping 16" of rain in Hartford, CT. (that, by the way, is equivalent to over 13 feet of snow).

Oct 27, 1959 - Central Mexico - over 1,000 dead.

Sep 6-12, 1960 - Hurricane *Donna* hits Puerto Rico. 102 dead, 200 missing. 600 homeless. Additional 30 killed in Florida Keys. Causes worst damage on Atlantic coast in U.S. Weather Bureau history.

Oct.31, 1961 - Hurricane *Hattie*, with 200 mph winds and tidal waves, kills 300 in Central America and leaves 20,000 homeless.

Oct 3, 1963 - Hurricane *Flora* kills 5,000 in Haiti and another 1,000 in Cuba.

Sep 19-20, 1974 - Hurricane *Fiji* leaves 8,000 dead and 500,000 homeless in Honduras.

Oct 1, 1976 - La Paz, Mexico - Hurricane *Liza* projects 130 mph winds, 5 inches of rain; a five foot wall of water levels the city killing 630 and leaving tens of thousands homeless.

Sep 2, 1979 - Hurricane *David* hits the Caribbean and the U.S. with 150 mph winds. Over 1,000 dead: 150,000 homeless; and damage in the billions.

That amounts to a total of more than 28,000 fatalities, over 15,000 injuries, at least 725,000 left homeless, and damages of almost half a trillion dollars. What's more, these storms represent only a small fraction of all the tropic-based storms that have struck world-wide. It is not difficult to accept that

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hurricanes are consistently nature's most potent and lethal outbursts.

Your knees crack as you stand erect for the first time. Your eyes, though shut, are burning, but the heat warms you inside. You know that the sun has returned. As you begin to move about, it occurs to you that you are in water up to your shins. The front window is gone; only shards of its wooden guardian remain. Through the gap you survey the surroundings. You are immediately overwhelmed by the flood. Brown water, if you could call it water, is everywhere, now flowing, now standing still. The rest is hopelessly bleak. Your heart sinks as familiar sights - a mailbox, a child's tricycle - go floating slowly past. Turning around you see that your home is identical to those around it, more a ruin than anything else. You sigh. Everything you knew is gone, but you are alive, and you notice that your back is starting to feel better.

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*"Never mistake motion
for action."*

Ernest Hemingway



The Destruction of the Rainforest and the Consumption of Cheap Beef

by Craig S. Lentz, Jr.

The destruction of the world's rainforests has been a widely discussed issue over the last 30 years. It is a topic that has a direct and powerful effect on all our lives, as well as the lives of the coming generations. In fact, the current statistics on the phenomena are so alarming, that Tennessee Senator Al Gore said the destruction of the rainforest, especially in Brazil, is "one of the great tragedies of all history" (Linden, 16).

As recently as 1960, tropical rainforests covered more than sixty percent of Central America. Today, less than one third of Central America's original rainforest remains. According to Vitor Celso de Carvalho, the head of Brazil's *Institute for Space Research, department of research and application of remote sensing*, the area of the 'Legal Amazonian' rainforest that has been destroyed since colonization began in 1500 is close to twelve percent (Neto, 86). Last year's burnings alone are estimated at 121,000 square kilometers in the part of the Amazonia south of the equator, Celso de Carvalho continued.

This deforestation of the world's oldest and most important living ecosystem has caused a great deal of shock and concern throughout the world. The problem in Brazil has become so bad that total extinction of the tropical rainforest is inevitable. "It's dangerous to say the forest will disappear by a particular year," says Philip Fearnside of Brazil's National Institute for Research in the Amazon, "but unless things change, the forest will disappear" (Linden, 17).

The first question you might ask is "Why are the forests being destroyed?" The fundamental answer is **money**. The Central and South American governments are responding to the incredible demand for some of the products that are found only in a rainforest. One of the major industries is the logging of teak, rosewood, and mahogany wood used in the manufacturing of homes and furniture. Once the valuable wood has been logged out of an area, and an access road has been constructed, the colonization of migrant farmers begins. These new settlers grow rice, corn, coffee, and manioc for a few years, but because the soil is so poor, they must move deeper into the forest to clear new land. A lot of these ambitious settlers give up and move to the new Amazonian cities to find work. Thus, the abandoned fields wind up in the hands of ranchers and speculators who see the potential for a lot of money to be made, as well as an easy access to capital through government subsidies and tax breaks. Almost two thirds of these areas are then turned into pasture land to raise cheap beef cattle.

The incredible demand in America for cheap beef has spurred this massive expansion and deforestation. In 1983, U.S. companies imported more

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than 330 million pounds of Central American beef annually. This amount represented twenty-five percent of the region's annual beef production and ninety percent of its beef exports (Nations, 16). While this amount has decreased to 120 million pounds in recent years, (due in part to the extensive boycotting of fast food chains that import the beef, especially Burger King), it is still a large amount.

This conversion of the rainforests into pasture land has been largely financed by international credit, from such sources as the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Fund. Their multi-million dollar loans are used to expand the amount of land used to produce the beef, to construct new beef packing plants, and to protect the cattle against diseases (Nations, 16).

So why is the destruction of the tropical rainforests so dangerous, and why should we be aware of the potential hazards and risks that their disappearance will produce? The future of mankind depends on our awareness and our action today. The first thing we need to understand is the incredible amount of land that is wasted by grazing cattle for consumer beef. The Rainforest Action Network (RAN) contends that in Latin America cattle grazing produces fewer benefits per unit of land deforested than any other form of land use. For example, the traditional agricultural system of the Lacandon Maya, indigenous inhabitants in eastern Chiapas, Mexico, produce up to 13,000 pounds of shelled corn and 10,000 pounds of root and vegetable crops per hectare per year. On the same amount of land, in the same area (where the soil is better than in most rainforests), and for the same amount of time—one year—the average beef yield is 22 pounds of meat (Nations, 15). If world hunger was the issue of this extensive beef production, as some critics have actually defended, then which form of land cultivation would you think would be most substantial and rewarding? Every quarter-pound hamburger we consume from Central America equals about 55 square feet of forest. We "lose" about half a ton of forest for every hamburger produced in Central American forests (Uhl, 642).

This takes us into the next major topic: what is being sacrificed by this vast misallocation of resources? In just this small area of 55 square feet, you can lose one huge, vigorous tree, and below it 50 saplings and seedlings in some 20 to 30 different species (several of these plants might be very rare and only found in that particular place), thousands of insects in a hundred different species (many of them not yet known to scientists) and a countless amount of animals that inhabit that area (Uhl, 642). The statistics get even better as the area increases: "A 1982 U.S. National Academy of Sciences report estimated that a typical four square mile patch of rainforest may contain 1500 species of flowering plants, 750 species of trees, 125 kinds of mammals, 400 types of birds, 100 of reptiles and 60 of amphibians" (Linden, 77).

Every human being needs to realize that most of these plants and animals will be destroyed forever. We can actually wipe out entire species for each hamburger we indulge in. More importantly, many of the tropical rainforest's plants and animals may ultimately hold the key to solving a wide range of the world's problems. New sources of food could be discovered to feed the underdeveloped nations who live in or around the forests. However, the most important fact to keep in mind is that medicines for all human ailments and diseases may be found in these plants. You might have just eaten the only cure for cancer or AIDS in your last Burger King hamburger. RAN, in their current

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"facts" sheet, report that one fourth of the medicines available today owe their existence to plants, and seventy percent of the plants identified by the National Cancer Institute as useful in cancer treatment are found only in the rainforest.

We, as a developed and technologically dominant country, should assume at least some of the responsibility for the rest of the world to help find solutions, cures, and new food supplies. If the Amazonian rainforest disappears, so will more than one million species of these plants and animals — a huge chunk of the earth's biological diversity and genetic heritage. If all accessible rainforests disappear by 2000, as the 1978 UN State of Knowledge reported, half of the five to ten million plant and animal species on the globe will disappear along with it.

The method they use to clean away these lands, generally termed "slash and burn," can actually affect global weather patterns. When the rainforest trees are burned, or are cut and left to decay, a vast amount of carbon is released into the atmosphere as CO₂—carbon dioxide—which increases the warming of the earth. This CO₂ is the second largest contributor to the greenhouse effect (Linden, 77). By eating that fast food hamburger, in a sense you become indirectly responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer.

The third major topic that needs to be dealt with is the destruction of pre-existing cultures, such as the Indians and rubber tappers. After the logging companies have entered the area and removed all marketable wood, migrant farmers take over as I have already explained. These peasants normally have little regard for the indigenous and aboriginal inhabitants and very little ecological awareness of their new home, and therefore have the potential to totally annihilate those already living harmoniously with the forest. These people are "wiped out," as Chico Mandes was, by trying to protect their land and way of life, or by being exposed to the diseases and disruptions that result from deforestation.

But the migrating peasants should not receive all the blame. The reason that they move out into these regions in the first place is because there is no other land for them, and because Central American government officials either promote these forest colonization projects or "tolerate" spontaneous colonization partly because it relieves a lot of the pressure for land reform in other areas of the country. The production of the beef and its marketability for foreign consumers also helps to alleviate some of the Central and South American government's 1.3 trillion dollar foreign debt (Linden, 82). If the United States and some of the other world powers were really serious about this expanding issue, they would stop putting so much verbal pressure on the governments and forgive some or all of this insurmountable debt. Unfortunately, there are not many more accessible options to stopping this extinction in process.

Before discussing the other possible solutions to this catastrophic problem, it is important that I briefly discuss the dangers that are inherent in the beef itself. The imported meat from Central America carries with it "some undesirable ingredients, such as toxic residues of chlorinated hydrocarbons, found in DDT and other agricultural pesticides" (Nations, 18). Not only is DDT dangerous for human consumption, it is disastrous for the environment:

DDT use will have a profound impact on the Amazonian environment. Non-target species, including birds, fish, insects, and soil

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organisms will likely fall victim to DDT's acute and chronic effects. In an ecosystem dependent upon an incredible diversity of species, widespread DDT use in the Amazon will generate a new wave of development problems, with unforeseeable consequences (Treakle, 13).

As I have already stated, the U.S. imports 120 million pounds of beef from Central America. It would seem that all this beef would go directly to the fast food companies, since they are the major consumers of cheap beef. However, according to RAN, every major fast food chain denies any involvement with imported beef, and declare they get all their beef domestically. In the summer of 1987, RAN targeted Burger King as the only corporation they could positively identify as importing rainforest beef. After RAN staged a boycott against Burger King, the company announced in August 1987 that they would instruct their suppliers not to "source" Central American beef. However, substantial proof was not given, and after another boycott and yet another announcement that they had discontinued using the beef, no independent verification was given. Many of the other fast food chains who denied using this beef, including McDonald's and Wendy's, have worded their denials inconclusively — no independent proof has been given.

The tragedy of this whole affair is that once imported beef comes into the country and passes inspection, it is labeled "U.S.D.A. inspected." Basically, foreign beef cannot be traced. The only way to solve this major discrepancy is to protest the labeling laws and force the U.S. government to label what beef is imported, and where it is imported from, so consumers can make responsible decisions as to their dietary intake.

A bill to improve the labeling laws has already been designed by Rep. Tom Lewis of Florida. It is waiting for further hearings in the next year and more participation and vocalization before it will be reintroduced. Until substantial labeling laws are administered, we should stage a boycott of all fast food restaurants and of all processed beef (of unproven origin). We should also request those who can prove the origin of their beef advertise it nationally. That way the remaining companies who do not follow suit and advertise will naturally be singled out by the consumer masses as purchasers of this beef. Since the destination of the meat cannot be determined once it crosses the border, and there are 120 million pounds imported, any one of the fast food chains could be buying it, and actually not even know it! "Sometimes," says Miami-based U.S.D.A. inspector Dick Ablett, "a beef shipment changes owners two or three times before it even leaves the warehouse" (Nations, 18).

Another possible solution is for the U.S. government to restrict the importation of rainforest beef. This is probably next to impossible, but it would solve many problems. Again, we have to speak out and voice our opinions to our local, state, and federal governments. The beginning of any journey starts with the first step. One person can make a difference if you voice your concerns for all to hear.

Obviously, there are other possible solutions to this problem, and the ones I have mentioned are just the introduction to a variety of things that need to be done. However, the key to this whole situation is awareness. We need to be aware that our incredible demand for cheap beef in the United States has been one of the leading contributors to the clearing of two thirds of these

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RAINFOREST...

countries' rainforests for raising cattle. The fast food hamburgers we eat, the processed meats, hotdogs, pet foods, and many other beef items, can be indirectly destroying the tropical rainforests; destroying whole species of animals and plants that could contain miracle drugs; destroying whole cultures of people who either die or are subjected to extreme poverty while the few wealthy land owners get even richer. They can be contributing to the depletion of the ozone layer as a result of the greenhouse effect; and finally, they can be putting us in danger because of the toxic chemicals that are in the beef. The decision is yours to make. But the next time you enter a fast food restaurant, just remember what you are eating.

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"Imitation is the sincerest form of television."

Fred Allen

Elmer Fudd and Profit Maximization

by Bill Spedden

It is a Saturday morning in the late 1970s, and little Tommy jumps out of bed and without an ounce of hesitation, plants himself in front of the television set. It's time for the Saturday morning cartoon marathon! Tommy is already tuning into the Hanna-Barbera shows (perhaps Yogi Bear or Quick Draw McGraw), which are followed by *Scooby Doo*. If he changes the channel, he may even get to see *Bullwinkle*. Tommy's eyes are glued to the set. For now come the classics, the children of Mel Blanc: the characters of Warner's Brothers cartoons. Old friends, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Foghorn-Leghorn, and Elmer Fudd, will forever live in the minds of children— young and old. "Dat wasc'wy wabbit!" and "You're dessspicable!" are indelible memories and definite tributes to an era that began in the 1940s, and is still going strong today. But something is happening to this bastion of American youth and to cartoons, and it's not just Bugs Bunny who's asking "What's up, Doc?"

So what is the problem? In order to answer that, it might be helpful to look at what is not wrong. American children are still starving for cartoon entertainment. And, as supply usually meets demand, there is an abundance of cartoons being aired. So the children really are not different, the cartoons are. And this change is not the mere natural progression that goes along with the development of new, creative minds in the industry, but, rather, it involves the deep roots of our capitalistic society. In other words, the naive, lovable millionaire, Elmer J. Fudd, has given way to profit maximization.

This change is not really difficult to see. Let us first look at program originality. There seems to be none left. *Ghostbusters*, the cartoon, came from a movie. *Care Bears* characters began as Hallmark toys. The *Gummi Bears* are candies, and *Pac Man* is a video game. There is even a cartoon about the Muppets as babies, an idea which came from a TV show. These copies leave a sour, stale taste in one's mouth, as if having seen a movie ruined by its sequel. Why can't producers be original? It's not that they can't be, but rather, that they will not be.

Consider the following example. He-Man and the Masters of the Universe was not first a cartoon, but a line of toys created by Mattel, Inc.. Mattel then joined with Filmation Studios to create the TV show as part of a coordinated package to sell the toys. This brings up another issue. Have cartoons merely become full-length commercials? A 1985 issue of *Business Week* addresses this issue:

Product licensing has been around since Mickey Mouse. But selling a program and a toy as a package is new. The trend has grown

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with the recent deregulation of television, and the practice angers many parents and children's advocates. "This is the worst kind of exploitation," says Frank W. Orme, the 79-year-old president of the Los Angeles-based National Association for Better Broadcasting (NABB). "It's deceptive and cynical because kids can't tell when they are being pitched" (Wilke, 53-54).

Admittedly, Joseph Medelson III, president of General Mills Inc.'s Kenner Products Division, confirms that "the payoff is much bigger" for toy-based television programs than 30 second commercials. And, in fact, from 1983-1985, the number of such cartoons increased from 14 to 40 over a two year period (Wilke, 53).

But are such methods of packaging as cynical as Orme suggests? For this answer, let us go back to Tommy. Most of us can relate to him. Cartoons are more a part of him than he or we may realize. Often, shows and characters which seem long forgotten are happily recalled in reminiscence. For instance, remember the one where Elmer Fudd thought he was a rabbit? How about the coyote who used to buy everything from Acme? My point is this. These memories are crystal clear and as pure as the day we first encountered the cartoons. For us, they symbolize a short, sweet time in our lives, but we have to wonder if the new breed of cartoons is somehow robbing American youth.

Let us examine the following opinion.

"I have a general discomfort with toy-company ownership positions [in these] series," says Squire D. Rushnell, American Broadcasting Company's vice-president for children's programming. "How do you separate the intention of doing a TV show from the intention of selling a product?" (Wilke, 53)

There is an uneasiness as well as a pertinent issue that comes from the idea that children are no longer the recipients of creativity, but rather, they are the targets of marketing strategy.

But, there are those who disagree. George F. Scheizter, a CBS Broadcast Group vice-president, feels that it is not wrong that the toy inspires the product and not the other way around. Programming, he feels, is based on entertainment value and not its merchandizing ability (Wilke, 54). As profits from toy based programs increase, and as the market becomes more and more competitive, it will be imperative for toy manufacturers to promote their products this way.

"In a competitive environment, no toy manufacturer can afford not to have its own programs based on toys," says Peggy Charren, founder of Action for Children's Television (ACT), a Newtonville (Mass.) children's advocacy group. Adds FCC Commissioner Henry M. Rivera: "If the Commission blesses this practice by inaction, the vast majority of children's programming eventually will be funded this way" (Wilke, 53).

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If this argument holds true, it will become virtually impossible to base programming purely on entertainment value.

So, where does this commercial infiltration leave the kids who are at an age where Bobby's baseball cards and Suzie's tea parties are the most important things in the world? Television should enhance this world, not corrupt it. What if Mr. Rogers began selling clothing on his show, or what if Big Bird began promoting "Cookie Monster Chocolate Chip Cookies?" Each day children are forced to grow up faster and faster. Why do we refuse to let Tommy be young and to let Elmer be Elmer?

Yes, cartoons have changed because they have given way to commercialism, and it's important to keep in mind that the cartoons are merely representative of our society's changing attitudes and values. But where does this leave the children? As the saying goes, "you are what you eat," and today's cartoons are clear, unsettling examples of the food.

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"To proceed from musing to writing is to feel a robbery has taken place. And certainly there has been a loss; the loss of the smiles and ramblings and discussions so much friendlier to ambition than the cold hardship of writing."

Elizabeth Hardwick

Improving Improvements

by Kathleen M. Klaus

Americans seem to be obsessed with improvements. We strive to improve our health by eating right and exercising, we try to improve our nation's state of affairs by electing new government officials. We paint our houses to improve their aesthetic beauty, or, to be more realistic, to cover up cracks, and women paint their faces to improve their imperfections. There is nothing wrong with this. It's the way our country works. Companies must be constantly seeking new ways to improve their products and then find new ways to market these improvements in order to remain competitive. That is why we as customers purchase *New Improved Surf over Tide*.

One could easily say that seeking ways to make things better is a timeless tendency. In the late 1400s, for example, Christopher Columbus set out on an expedition to the West Indies when he discovered America. Improvement, by expansion, signified progress for the world as adventurers like Columbus sailed across the seas in search of new lands.

Consider now, the wonderful advances we have made in our society and in our world since the time of Thoreau. In his essay "A Slight Sound at Evening," from *The Essays of E.B. White*, White observes that if Thoreau were brought back to life.

He would see that today ten thousand engineers are busy making sure that the world shall be convenient even if it is destroyed in the process, and others are determined to increase its usefulness even though its beauty is lost somewhere along the way.

He does not think that Thoreau would be too shaken by the twentieth century. Everywhere he would see the "old predicaments and follies of men" but would also recognize "the visible capacity of mind and soul" because as he sees it, the world "is more beautiful than useful."

In his concern for preservation, E.M. Forster suffers more anxiety than Thoreau when it comes to change, especially that of the English countryside. In "The Prologue," which is one part of a series of essays in the final chapter of his book *Abinger Harvest*, the reader is introduced to a woodman whom Forster has chosen to be the narrator of the piece. Proud of the path he has cleared so that history may occur in his section of the wood in Abinger, the woodman tells us that:

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The sound of my ax is the beginning of Abinger.
Before I came and cleared the fields he (pointing
to the shepherd) could not pasture his sheep.

The woodman is someone toward whom the shepherd should feel much gratitude then, for without his improvement on nature, where would the sheep graze?

In "My Wood," Forster further explores this idea by discussing how improvements can easily become destructive. Like the woodman, Forster, who is the narrator here, does not feel satisfied with the wood as just simply a wood, and has an impulse to, as he puts it, "do something about it." He connects this impulse with his possessive attitude concerning his wood, concluding that "I shall wall in and fence out until I taste the sweets of property." This is a temptation from which none of us is spared since we have a difficult time acknowledging that some things are just better left to themselves. This theme also pertains to discussions of art and literature. When we think of art, particularly theatrical performances and stage shows, we all succumb to the urge to criticize—but does the person who never studied music really believe that he could do it better? Would a college course make him eligible to critically evaluate the piece? Perhaps it is not in evaluation, but in appreciation that the answer lies. As an editor, I hack and chisel other people's prose in order to initiate a desired effect that I feel will be an improvement, walling in and fencing out until I have excavated the prose and found the diamonds.

And change is necessary. As we grow older, we change into adults and many times that adult is a different person than the child we once were. It is a natural process. We are witnesses to change each time the leaves turn color in the autumn, and the flowers bloom in the spring. Every day the tide changes as ocean water rushes onto coastal beaches churning the sand and swirling it in the waves and currents according to sunrise and sunset. These changes in nature are inevitable, but as people we also have a responsibility to expand on what we have and know by stretching ourselves to the fullest potential. We long to feel that we have accomplished something because it makes us feel good. In his "Presidential Address to the Cambridge Humanists," Forster says:

What I would like to do is to improve myself and
to improve others in the delicate sense that has
to be attached to the word improvement, and
to be aware of the delicacy of others while they
are improving me.

Here Forster acknowledges that we learn from each other, and thus improve ourselves in the process. Although he feels that there is danger in trying to improve one's wood, change, especially changes in nature, will bump us along whether we want to go along for the ride or not.

Sometimes our efforts to improve backfire, especially when we are dealing with nature. Carl Pohlner writes in his essay, "Keeping Track, January 1984" about the problem of bird feeders and squirrels, remarking that so far this winter there has been little activity at his otherwise active birdfeeder. The author regretfully concludes that the device that he recently attached to the feeder isn't just keeping the squirrels away. To the author's amazement "the thing actually

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works, but I think it is scaring the birds."

What purpose does this Improvement serve when the poor man is left with a deserted bird feeder and a cellar full of seed?

So, why do we do it, why do we paint our houses and make elaborate squirrel-proof contraptions? And why do we take those courses in rhetoric that are aimed at improving our writing? It all goes back to the old adage that every mother tells her children—you never know until you try. The amateur bird watcher doesn't know if his creative genius will keep squirrels away any more than the novice writer knows that classes will improve her performance. Something has to be there first. If *Surf* wasn't good to begin with, we would never buy the new and improved version.

By those things that may be better off left alone, however, we are comforted. "Such steadiness," says E. B. White in "A Slight Sound at Evening," "... is at the heart of Walden — confidence, faith, the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen, undeviating gratitude for the life-everlasting that he found growing in his front yard." And so if all that we need is in our front yard, maybe the best way to realize that is by removing our "improvements" once in a while.

Let's take a moment to think about time. Except for daylight savings, time doesn't change. Because the effect of time seems to regulate us, we feel off balance when we leave our watches at home. Carl Pohlner remarks that "It seems we have the urge in the face of turmoil to look at a clock." And he's right. Somehow, knowing what time it is puts order to our lives. By managing our time we can better manage our lives, or at least that is what we believe, but what we fail to realize is that like the tide and the sunset, our lives are already regimented, and maybe we need to remove the clock once in a while. In my parent's home, for example, there are four clocks in the kitchen. Perhaps there is some security in this as one can see what time it is from every angle in the room. The living room in the Pohlner household has only one clock, and none during the Christmas season. Pohlner writes

It is good to have the clock back on the wall.
During the holidays we took it down because
it was the perfect spot for a large wreath made of
pinecones and nuts. Out of habit we kept looking
to the wreath for the time of day. We adapted
poorly to Eastern Pinecone Time.

Not all of us will adapt to change as easily as E. B. White predicts that Thoreau might if he were ever to experience the twentieth century, even though it may hold true that he would choose an improved laundry detergent over another favorite brand. It could even be that rather than attach a squirrel deterrent to a bird feeder, Thoreau would be the one who would invite the animals to feast upon the seed, getting rid of the feeder instead. And if the purpose of time then, is to move our lives from one point to the next, Thoreau would say that we should be steadied by the pinecones and the nuts.



Beauty Is More Than Skin Deep

by Kathy Twardowski

It was early September in 1986 when Tom Twardowski, a bankruptcy judge from Reading, Pennsylvania, disfigured his jaw on a tree one mile from his country house in Birchrunville, Pennsylvania. Tom and his good friend rode around the curves and up the hills to Phoenixville Hospital, the home of one of the many plastic surgery hospitals after the WWII. Immediately after the accident, his jaw looked like a victim of malocclusion, an inverted jaw shifting the position of the entire mouth. Tom Twardowski lay on the hospital bed, Dr. Feiner feeding him morphine intravenously. Tom's friend lay in the next room with a white sheet pulled tightly over his head.

"More morphine?"

"No. That's plenty. Any more and his jaw will relax too much for me to examine the possibilities for surgery."

Dr. Feiner is a plastic surgeon at Phoenixville Hospital and has been one for over twenty years. He worked closely with Dr. Haber, an oral surgeon at Phoenixville, in remodelling Tom's upper and lower jaw.

Ann Twardowski, Tom's wife, stayed at the hospital as much as the doctors.

"Ann, I'm going to have to ask you to go home for a minute. We need a picture of your husband." Ann knew from looking at Tom that she needed to go home.

"I'll be back soon."

Tom slurred something incomprehensible. The morphine had taken effect. The last words Tom heard before his pain dulled along with his general awareness were, "need a picture." Tom flapped his hand back and forth, both the doctors' and Ann's eyes circled for a flying insect. Dr. Feiner nodded his head and cackled with a strong force, his stethoscope reverberating on his white jacket.

Tom opened the drawer beside him and found a piece of paper and a pencil.

"Don't bring in a bad picture. I want to look sexy when this is over." The three laughed in chorus; Ann, because she admired his strength and sense of humor. Dr. Feiner and Dr. Haber vowed repeatedly that they would calculate his reconstructive surgery more accurately than they had with Tom's wave of the hand.

Ann drove home about eight miles to search for that perfect photograph. Before the hospital door hissed and closed, Ann volleyed back to her husband.

"Here's my chance to have a really good looking husband."

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One must not fall into the medical fallacy that plastic surgery is a new medical invention. Plastic surgery is a specialty, dating back to ancient times. It is defined as a specialty because plastic surgery is a limited field of medicine engaged in exclusively by its practitioners.

In the Egyptian papyri, there are descriptions of individual physicians who concentrated on the treatment of fractures of the facial bones and with war injuries and a variety of accidents involving soft tissue. India in the 13th and 14th centuries dove underneath the surface in the surgical replacement of the human nose. It was a common practice then to punish convicted criminals by amputations or mutilations of body parts. A frequent punishment for adultery was amputation of the nose. When I heard this fact I was relieved that it was only the nose. Usually the people of ancient times amputated the part of the body which was responsible for the evil act. Discussing this with Jerry McGlaulin, a male friend from high school, he exhaled so strongly the candlelight extinguished at the table at the Coventry Forge Inn, a country inn famous for its French cuisine. My companion sipped his wine nervously and relit the candle with the matches in the unblemished ashtray. Simultaneously we sang, "Thank God it was only the nose."

Two British physicians traveling in India were invited in 1794 to witness one of these nasal reconstructions performed in the foothills of Mahvatta. The patient was held to the ground by four strong men as the surgeon quickly cut free most of the skin from his forehead, leaving it attached only by a small bridge at the medial eyebrow. Jerry's French bread stuck in his mouth like someone intentionally stuffed it there.

"Can't we wait until dessert to finish this conversation?"

"There's not much more to it." Jerry unlogged his mouth and spread more butter on the bitten piece of bread.

They then turned, folded, and roughly shaped the skin into the form of the nose before they fastened it to the newly incised skin around the edges of the healed nasal defect. Loose stitches, resembling a fast seam repair on a pair of ripped blue jeans, as well as thorns were used to fasten the new nose into position and the patient's forehead was then allowed to heal over a period of weeks. The slip of skin in between the eyes was divided twenty-five days later. This method of surgery was later to be called the "Indian method of rhinoplasty."

Jerry and I ordered a piece of the French silk pie. He sliced a piece with his fork as soon as the waiter put it down and shoved it in my mouth.

"Let's talk about something else." I smiled for a minute. The missing tip of the triangle looked like the nose which I was telling Jerry about. I laughed to myself. I let Jerry think I was responding to his request for an abrupt change in the conversation.

Plastic surgery is sometimes defined as "that branch of medicine which seeks to correct congenital or acquired deformities in order to improve function, appearance, or both." It deals with defects both of the integument and of the underlying musculoskeletal framework. Although it is chiefly concerned with deformities involving the face, and the head and neck region, it also includes the treatment of deformities of the hands and feet, of body contours, and of the external genitalia.

Dr. John LaManna, a plastic surgeon at Reading Hospital in Pennsylvania, replaced an eight month old baby girl's foot after a German Shepherd chewed on it for five minutes in her front yard.

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"Where the hell was the mother?" Dr. LaManna stole my exact question. The mother came in the emergency room crying.

"I just left to answer the phone for a minute." Dr. LaManna rubbed the baby's head with one hand and groped for his instruments and gauze with the other.

"I'm going to need your help with her. She's got to know her mother's around." The little girl's tongue vibrated as she screamed. Dr. LaManna pressed tightly against the partially attached foot to dam the flow of blood. He immediately stitched the flesh from the ankle to the upper part of the leg. The mother covered her mouth and ran out the door like a waiter trying to rid himself of a hot entree. The bellowing subsided with a mild sedative Dr. LaManna injected into the wound. Dr. LaManna instructed the nurses to move the table to another room.

"Not enough light. This baby's foot is not going to look right if it's shadowed like that."

The nurses moved STAT. The mother followed.

Dr. LaManna finished his undergraduate studies at Boston College and went to Jefferson for four years of medical school. He continued for seven years at Jefferson for his degree in plastic surgery.

"What made you decide on plastic surgery?"

"I have to stop you right there. Plastic surgery is a wastebasket term for reconstructive and cosmetic surgery. I perform both types of surgery, more reconstructive though."

"Do you prefer reconstructive surgery or is there more of a demand for this type over cosmetic surgery?"

"Both, but my hands are dedicated firmly to reconstructive surgery." He was gripping his scalpel so hard his knuckles were white.

Dr. LaManna is from Frying Hills in Shillington, Pennsylvania. His mother is 70, a shade over double Dr. LaManna's age.

"I can't believe he's a surgeon. He never liked elementary school and it never liked him." Mrs. LaManna just walked in with a brown paper bag. The lunch was peanut butter and jelly. Knowing I had an edge on his favorite cuisine he admitted, "It's still my favorite delicacy."

"Do you ever experience unpleasant feelings before or after surgery?"

"Well, you're going to have some butterflies because you're responsible for returning a person's look and self image to them. Like with the surgery I performed on the baby. You have to realize that you have limitations even after eleven years of training. All you have to work with is what is lying in front of you." Dr. LaManna took a bite right in the bruise of the sandwich. His wife, Debbie, and one and a half year old girl frequent the hospital. Once Debbie had an emergency at her mother's and she had no choice but to leave her with Dr. LaManna at Reading Hospital. He was removing stitches from a young boy's index finger with Meredith tugging for his attention.

Every human face is different, so it is necessary to associate our individuality with our faces. We recognize each other by our faces, and each of us has difficulty in separating our identity from our facial self image. For this reason, physicians have come to recognize the enormous importance of dealing with deformities, great and small. Deformities inhibit function by making an individual feel that his image is inadequate. The word plastic basically means "form," and it is the form of the human face and body that primarily concerns

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the plastic surgeon. The plastic surgeon tries to give a part of the body better "form" as well as improved function.

Ann Twardowski returned to the Phoenixville Hospital with a picture of her husband at a party for some relatives. He was sitting at the player piano talking with his father. Tom was less groggy and he was breathing into a lung pressurizer to increase the strength of his lungs since he suffered three broken ribs in the accident. Dr. Feiner carefully looked at the picture and commented, "You call this good looking?" Ann and Tom both laughed, Tom holding his ribs to cushion the pain. Dr. Feiner left and took the photograph with him to his office.

"Get a good night sleep. Surgery at 7 a.m." Tom rolled his eyes, visualizing a wake-up call before noon. Ann was feeding her husband water through a straw, his jaw barely extending one half of a centimeter.

Aristotle stated, "Art indeed consists in the conception of the result to be produced before its realization in the material." That ability is a quality much needed by a plastic surgeon. It is a quality that should distinguish the artist from the technician. In 1798 Desavit first used the term "plastique" in a medical paper, and in 1838 Zeis published the first "Handbuch der plastischen Chirurgie." Plastic surgery was entirely reconstructive in nature until the 20th century. Now, the reliability and safety of this branch of surgery are advanced to such a degree that elective cosmetic surgery or aesthetic surgery is now highly reliable and extremely popular.

The principles of aesthetic surgery and reconstructive surgery are interwoven. The only clear distinction between the two is that aesthetic surgery is performed for deformities of a lesser degree.

Dr. LaManna operated on a woman whose nipple was almost insignificant on her right breast. She felt very self conscious and Dr. LaManna agreed to enlarge it by grafting some skin from her other nipple to balance out the size difference.

"This is aesthetic surgery. It is surgery performed on a lesser degree and for emotional reassurance more than physical demand." The operation lasted only two hours with no complications.

Dr. LaManna reconstructed a woman's upper lip which was previously lost to its removal for cancer. This is an exaggerated form of aesthetic surgery. Dr. LaManna pointed out that he did operate for emotional reasons, but the physical necessity overwhelmed the emotional. Mrs. Boswell, mother of two, felt inadequate as a mother. She saw herself as incomplete. Over a period of six weeks, Dr. LaManna reviewed the necessary procedures and by the end of that time, Mrs. Boswell left with a plump upper lip and a new complete sense of self.

In the case of aesthetic surgery, the surgeon is attempting to make improvements within the narrow range of normal anatomy. Such surgery always carries some risk and should not be undertaken unless the person's sense of deformity is producing significant emotional problems which might lead to inhibitions that could significantly affect the patient's behavior and personal relationships.

Dr. Feiner left the chart for Nurse Maxwell who prepped Tom for his surgery. Ann spent the night in a cot in his room. The nurse demanded that Tom inhale and exhale through the lung pressurizer to strengthen his lungs and breathing. She injected morphine into his jaw, numbing his entire face. Ann held his hand while the nurse and Dr. Feiner wheeled him into surgery. Dr.

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Feiner prepped himself and Ann pecked his cheek softly and whispered something to Tom.

"I won't make him look too sexy so you don't recognize him." Ann smiled and closed the door behind her.

Tom was in surgery for about three hours. Most of that time Ann spent at the cafeteria or with family and friends either at the hospital or on the telephone. When Dr. Feiner removed him from surgery and placed him in recovery, his face was swollen. His head and jaw looked as if someone had opened the top of his head and filled it with water. Tom had wires in through his eyebrows extending down both sides of his face to support and set his jaw. His mouth was wired shut. He slept through the rest of the day just in time to receive a pain killer and a glass of juice at 6 p.m. The pulp from his orange juice clung to his brace-like apparatus inside his mouth.

"Only one more week and you can go home where you belong." One of the nurses was coming through the door with a large bouquet of red and white carnations which Judge Goldhaber sent from his office in Philadelphia. The card read, "Hurry up you lazy bum. My paper work is calling you." Ann put the green vase in front of the bay window with the other array of colors and scents.

The first specialization in plastic surgery developed as a result of the stimulation of William Stewart Halsted, the first professor of surgery at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He encouraged one of his younger associates, John Staige Davis, to limit his practice to plastic surgery.

At the beginning of WWI, Davis and Morestin of France were the only two recognized specialists in plastic surgery among the allied forces. Morestin, a native of Martinique, conducted an active plastic surgery program at the military hospital of Val-de-Grace in Paris. He died prematurely in the great influenza epidemic in 1917, but not before he interested a British surgeon, Harold Gillies, in the field of plastic surgery.

Barrett Brown developed the technique of cutting and using large split-thickness skin grafts to resurface the wounds of patients with many burns. A Franciscan sister who worked at St. Christopher's Bum Center in Philadelphia treated people with minor skin burns, like a seven year old boy whose arm was scalded by a burning hot iron. His arm bubbled like a burnt piece of cheese in a toaster oven. She also treated victims of disastrous fires. Sometimes, 85 percent of their bodies were burned, and it hurt Sister Jane as much as those victims at times to watch their pain.

Sister Jane sympathized. "You want to touch them to let them know that you are there for them, but it hurts them too much." She no longer works at the burn center because she said her heart couldn't take it any longer.

Tom Twardowski gained back some of the weight that he lost when he came home from the hospital. Ann fed him protein shakes and milk shakes. His ribs were healing and his jaw was getting stronger.

Although facelifting is considered to be the major type of cosmetic surgery by the lay public, skeletal alterations such as the one Tom had are now becoming acceptable and common procedures. Some of these fast-developing techniques include reshaping the bony skull, correcting the abnormally small or the abnormally large lower jaw and chin, straightening the curved spine, and elongating the excessively short neck.

In 1937 Vilray Blair and twelve other senior American plastic surgeons established the American Board of Plastic Surgery. For the first time a serious

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effort to broaden and standardize the training of all plastic surgeons was launched.

At the end of WWII, only 200 American surgeons could meet the qualifications for certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Even in 1951, only two full time academic plastic surgeons had been appointed to the head plastic surgery divisions in American medical schools. Robert McCormack at the University of Rochester in New York and Milton Edgerton at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, were the two courageous men. During the next 30 years, 4000 additional plastic surgeons received board qualified training, and 87 American medical schools now have recognized divisions in plastic surgery. In several of them plastic surgery has been given full departmental status.

"Dr. LaManna please report to Emergency. Dr. LaManna please report to Emergency, STAT."

Dr. LaManna threw down his bagel with cream cheese from the cafeteria and ran to Emergency as if there was a fire in the building. His expression showed concern, but intrigue overlapped. A boy with dark hair and watery eyes lay on the stretcher rocking back and forth. The boy looked like a football player and I found out later that he was the quarterback for Swarthmore College in Swarthmore Pennsylvania. The way his eyes looked and the manner in which he was clutching his wrist, you would have thought that he just suffered a football injury, his eyes insistent in trapping the tears.

"Get me the gauze and the stapler." The boy's index finger was missing its tip and his middle finger and ring finger were missing up to the knuckles.

His tears escaped and he began sobbing. His mother was there, caressing his black hair. She was big boned and her eyes resembled the boy's before the tears fell. She was mumbling something about a factory and that she never wanted him to work there in the first place.

His name was Bob Klein. The tag on his brown jacket became visible only after Dr. LaManna cut the jacket from Bob's body. He worked at a lumber factory five miles from his home in Dresher, Pennsylvania. Bob was in the bottom of the factory, in the warehouse, stacking sticks of wood on a shelf. The tractor upstairs in the garage vibrated the floor, the ceiling of the warehouse. A chainsaw fell from the ledge above Bob and onto his left hand. The saw powered itself on the fall down. In less than ten seconds, it was over.

Dr. LaManna stapled Bob's skin on his index finger together and sterilized it, the flesh bubbling. The tears stopped, and an expression of shock took over his entire face and then the crying started again. Later Bob said that he was not crying only because of the pain.

"Football is so important to me and now it's over." Bob placed his right hand on his left contemplating a faultless defeat.

"Bob, give it a year or so to get your strength and coordination back."

"Listen to the doctor." Mrs. Klein was wiping her mascara from underneath her eyes. She wasn't so worried about the football part of it as much as the emotional strain.

Bob left the hospital after he agreed to join the counseling program at Reading Hospital.

"I'm no alcoholic," he said when the suggestion was proposed to him.

"I just want to be a football player again," he insisted and signed his name next to the 12:00 slot for the following Tuesday. Dr. LaManna scheduled to be

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with Bob on Tuesday and cancelled his racquetball game with his brother-in-law. I wouldn't have known this if I hadn't heard Dr. LaManna's mother praising him for his humble dedication. The day was Thursday, so she brought him turkey on wheat. She always prepared the sandwich with mustard ever since he was little and he never had the heart to tell her that he only liked mayonnaise.

The specialty in plastic surgery came about as a result of WWII. Lessons were learned about the treatment of the war-injured. The plastic surgery hospitals were created to repair the thousands of injured hands and faces of soldiers, sailors, and pilots. One of the largest American centers was the Valley Forge General Hospital at Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Here, the chief of plastic surgery, Barrett Brown, and his associate, Bradford Cannon, trained a corps of young general surgeons in the newest methods of general reconstructive surgery.

The important advances in hand surgery owe their increasing progress to WWII. For the first time, hand surgery became a major part of the work of plastic surgeons throughout the world. Complex hand surgery is best performed by a surgeon trained to detailed anatomy and physiology of the upper extremity, who has the surgical skills to reconstruct all injured tissues including skin, tendons, nerves, bones, joints, and blood vessels.

Dr. LaManna went back to the cafeteria after his emergency, ordered a tomato juice and went back to his office to read up on some technical advances being made in the reconstructive surgery of the hand. His research and anxiety never stops when he discharges his patients. That wouldn't be fair. He is sometimes at the office hours past his designated time, although there's no such thing as designated time for a plastic surgeon or any type of doctor. He built an addition onto his house on his four and a half acre lot to keep his studies and late hours from disturbing Debbie and Meredith. The den overlooks the pool and gazebo in the backyard.

"It's harder than you think to separate business from pleasure. The work that I do is pleasure to me so you can see my problem." Debbie doesn't mind the late hours too much or the interruptions at social events. She laughs. "The only way I can guarantee that he stays with me is to put him on a leash and I haven't found one yet that looks good on him."

On the day of their wedding, Dr. LaManna attached his beeper to his tuxedo pants out of habit. Just as he was about to say, "I do," the beeper went off. Dr. Presurpi, head of plastic surgery at Reading, had graciously given him the day off, but too, used the beeper out of habit that day to call Dr. LaManna.

"Weird things happen when you work closely like that on a team."

The congregation laughed and Dr. LaManna put his arms up in the air. He shut off the beeper and agreed to dedicate himself to Debbie if she would put up with him. They exchanged vows and John added one of his own. "And I promise to leave the beeper at home the next time I get married."

Today plastic surgery includes not only those traditional fields relating to reconstructions of the nose and maxillofacial surgery to correct fractures and deformities of the facial bones and jaws, but also includes the treatment of patients needing complex reconstructions of the hand, or repair of the paraplegic pressure sores, or grafting of wounds resulting from frostbite and major thermal wounds. In the 1950s and 1960s, plastic surgeons began to make substantial contributions to the treatment of head and neck malignancy by developing methods of reconstruction of the face and jaws.

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Dr. Feiner removed Tom Twardowski's wires from his face and mouth. Tom said that his jaw was stiff and he felt he had no control over his mouth's actions. He was directed to use an object one half centimeter in height to begin his jaw exercises.

His wife bought him a doorstop, one that had not previously been scarred by the floors, and Tom began by placing it between his teeth, strengthening the muscles. Tom kept the doorstop stationary for about two minutes, five times a day until he felt that he could increase the height of his jaw a bit by extending the object further into his mouth. By the end of the second week of faithful exercising, Tom could open his jaw one full centimeter.

The broadening scope of plastic surgery required diversified training of its practitioners. The plastic surgeon could not afford to work in isolation but needed contact with surgeons in many other fields from whom he might draw principles needed for the planning and execution of reconstructive operations in almost any body part. This was recognized by the American Board of Plastic Surgery in its insistence on a period of training in general surgery prior to entering additional years of training in plastic surgery.

Today, a division or department of plastic surgery has an important academic role in almost every large medical center throughout the U.S.A. Plastic surgeons are involved not only in generalized and major reconstructive surgery throughout the body, but also in basic research including the fields of wound healing, tissue transplantation, biology of implantation of synthetic materials, genetics, human embryology and development, speech pathology and most recently, research involving the new fields of microsurgery and craniofacial surgery.

Although it has been a subspecialty pioneered by plastic surgeons, microsurgery is now becoming a part of the technical arena of many other fields of surgery. Without this new capability, surgeons would not be able to return amputated fingers to the hands of workers, replace the avulsed hair-bearing scalp, or move important structures from one part of the body to the other by means of re-establishing the microcirculation in the new site. Microsurgery is on the threshold of even greater wonders.

Bob Klein came back to Dr. LaManna and he removed the bandages from Bob's hand. It was imperative that he receive some sort of counseling before the wrappings came off so he could emotionally deal with this new change in his life. Bob slowly opened his eyes as Dr. LaManna untaped the last piece of gauze. His middle finger and ring finger were extremely swollen and his index finger was normal size except for the tip which was skinny, like the finger of E.T.

Bob panicked when he didn't have all the motor control he possessed before the accident.

"I have exercises for you to begin, Bob. You'll notice a difference in a few weeks." Dr. LaManna reiterated the importance for improvement for his patients, not only for him but for them. He said that improvement increases confidence and their peace of mind.

Dr. LaManna gave Bob a steel cylinder and a rubber cushion to zip onto the tube to increase the grip of his left hand. Bob was anxious to get started and grabbed the steel cylinder in his hand, the blue cushion coat in his other hand. He grabbed it with his thumb and index finger and stretched his other three fingers to meet the bar. The steel collided with the carpet, making a muffled echo.

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"Your fingers will be swollen for some time. I still want you to practice, though, just take your time."

Bob left, his mother was waiting in the car. He cradled his hand, dead weight, and exited the door with his elbow.

Unfortunately, the public perception of the plastic surgeon is that of an individual concerned primarily with aesthetic or cosmetic surgery and the correction of relatively minor deformities, such as are associated with the aging face.

The plastic surgeons of today are required to complete a seven year period of post-graduate residency training and expected to master a variety of surgical procedures — repair of skin, tendons, nerves, bone, and blood vessels throughout the body.

A specialist in plastic surgery provides safety in operational procedures as well as reducing the cost of a somewhat costly operation. Plastic surgery is the most ambitious, far-reaching post-graduate educational program in medicine. The plastic surgeon must keep abreast around the clock because of split-second technical advances.

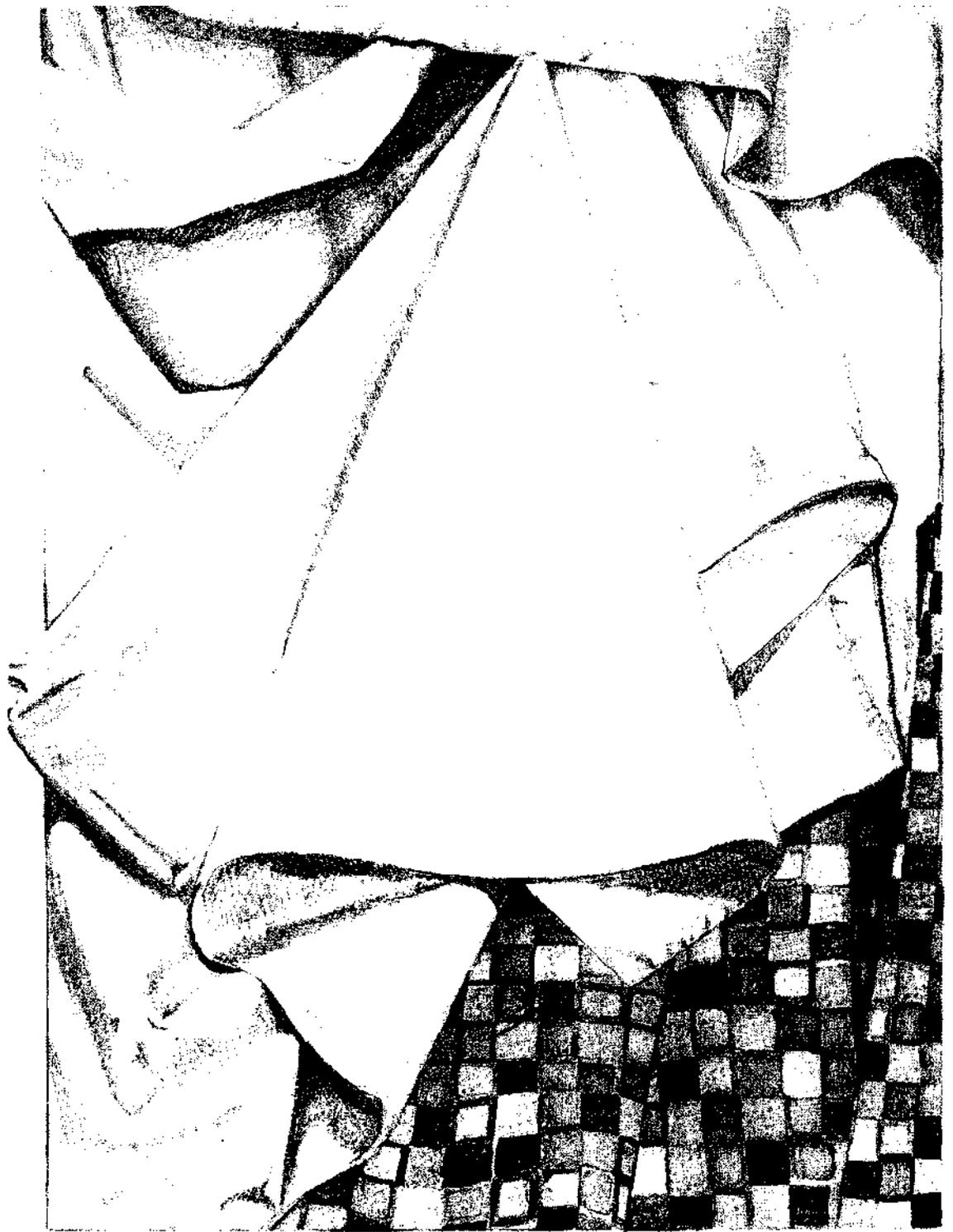
Tom and Ann Twardowski were packing a few bags to visit their oldest daughter for Thanksgiving in South Bend, Indiana. Ann studied her list. Toothpaste, hairspray, deodorant. Everything was there. Tom was packing the car, doorstop in his mouth. The twelve hour ride provided just enough time for Tom to work his jaw.

"There's no way I'm not going to eat turkey and stuffing," he said with only slight difficulty. Tom held the plug in his mouth about ten times on the trip, for about ten minutes each time. When they arrived, Tom could extend his jaw two and a half centimeters, the perfect height to insert a fork piled with turkey, stuffing, and maybe even some cranberry sauce. The Thanksgiving prayer at dinner was traditional with an extra spark of hope and energy from every member at the table. The family held hands tightly, Dr. Feiner included in their petitions of thanks. Thanksgiving day was the two month anniversary of the alteration of Tom's jaw and the inspiration from Dr. Feiner and Ann especially in the restoration of his form physically and most importantly his form spiritually and emotionally.

Pope Pius XIII stated in 1958, "If we consider physical beauty in its Christian light, and if we respect the condition set by our moral teachings, then reconstructive surgery is not a contradiction to the will of God, in that it restores the perfection of that greatest work of creation, Man."

Dr. LaManna took a recess in between his meeting with Bob Klein and a later scheduled surgery to tuck a 60 year old's eyelids, and ate a picnic lunch in his office with Debbie and Meredith. While John and Debbie spread out the blanket and arranged the food, Meredith turned her attention to a boy with red hair. Dr. LaManna put his face in his hands.

"I swear on this picnic basket to buy Meredith a Lambrighini on her sixteenth birthday if she doesn't start dating until she is at least twenty-three."



Forum acknowledges the following students
for writing achievement in the 1989 writing contests:

EFFECTIVE WRITING

Carl A. De Groot, Untitled
Kevin M. Hanrahan, "One Neighborhood, Two Worlds"
Thomas McHale, "An Art of Deception"
Leslie Ann Pessagno, "The Art of Language"

MEDIA

William A. Wysock, "Lasix"

POETRY

Jennifer Ann Kaminski, "Isolation on the Great Plains"
"My Prayer So Far Away From Me"
"The Guitar"
"For My Father"
"For My Mother"
"For Kurt"

FICTION

Edward A. Ashton, "Waiting for the Train"

CREATIVE WRITING

Rosmarie M. Serio, Untitled

UPPER LEVEL NONFICTION PROSE

Eric J. Lazur, Untitled

CONTRIBUTORS

DOUG DAVIDSON is a freshman from White Plains, New York who is pursuing a major in writing.

KIRSTEN GAY is a freshman classics major from Harford County, Maryland who is interested in a career in archaeology.

MELISSA GROSSMAN, a communications major with a concentration in public relations, is also pursuing a minor in writing.

KATHLEEN M. KLAUS, class of 1990, is an English/Writing split major from Bellmawr, New Jersey.

ERIC J. LAZUR is a junior from Baltimore. His essay, "The Edge of God's Canvas" was recognized in the 1989 writing contest.

CRAIG S. LENTZ, Jr., a senior English major with a minor in writing, is originally from Baltimore.

THOMAS McHALE is from Baltimore and will graduate from Loyola in 1992.

JAMES A. MORRISARD is a sophomore from Charlottesville, Virginia.

BILL SPEDDEN is a sophomore management major from Baltimore. His commentary on marketing to children through cartoons appears for the first time in FORUM.

JOSEPH TOBIN is a writing major from Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.

KATHY TWARDOWSKI looks forward to attending graduate school after graduating from Loyola this May. She is a writing major originally from Pennsylvania.

MICHELE A. WOJCIECHOWSKI is an English /Writing major who is also graduating this May. She plans on attending graduate school to continue her studies.

