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Landing in Savannah

BALLAST

BOOKS ★ ART ★ LANGUAGE ★ LOGIC ★ AMBIGUITY ★ SCIENCE ★ TEACHING

George Bernard Shaw: If all the economists were laid end to end, they would still not reach a conclusion.

Dorothy Parker: If all the young ladies who attended the Yale promenade dance were laid end to end, no one would be the least surprised.

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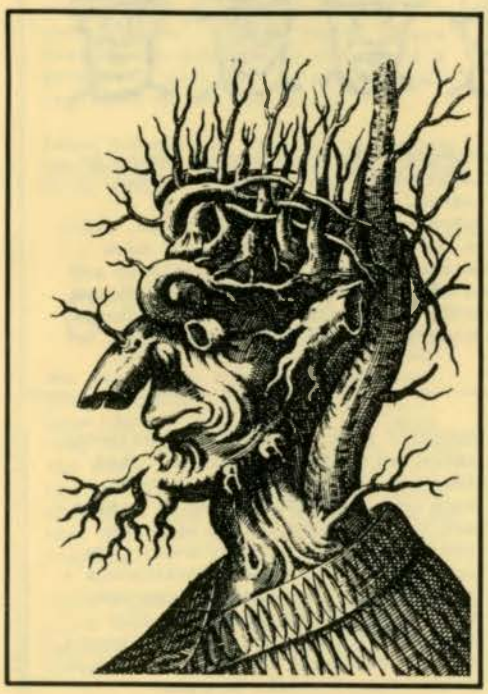
Below: Winter personified, a print by an unknown artist, in the spirit of Giuseppe Arcimboldo, circa 1600.



I've painted for a very long time, but I don't get tired or bored by it; I love to do it. If I don't paint one day, I don't feel well physically or mentally. My eyes bother me when I don't paint. But when I paint a full day, I feel satisfied and everything seems to be OK. I would never stop, never retire. I can't see how people can retire; I don't understand that. My brother Moses died while he was painting. He was actually working on a painting, and the last words he said were to the model: "Phoebe, don't frown." Then he died. He worked to the very last minute.

Raphael Soyer, quoted in Elaine King, Artists Observed (New York: Harry Abrams, 1986).

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She was a well preserved woman and reminded John of a crystallized pear; her frosted transformation glistened like encrusted sugar round the stalk, which was represented by a tubular head-ornament on the apex of the carefully tended pyramid; her greeting was sticky.

Sir Compton MacKenzie, Poor Relations (London: Martin Secker, 1919), p. 148.

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What differences are there among a gardener, a billiard player, a precise man, and a church janitor? The gardener minds his peas. The billiard player minds his cues. The precise man minds his p's and q's. And the church janitor minds his keys and pews.

The important thing was that we had a great deal to say to each other, and that each was really interested in what the other said; also, that each was eager to speak when it came his turn, and was confident that what he said would be worth hearing. We like those who inspire us to talk well, to talk indeed our best, which in their presence becomes something better than it ever was before, so that it surprises and delights us too. We like least those persons in whose presence we are dull. For we can be either, and company brings it out; that is what company is for.

Mark Van Doren (recalling his close friendship with Joseph Wood Krutch), The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

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We talked of the education of children and what was best to teach them first. "Sir," said he, "there is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your backside is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt 'em both."

James Boswell (recalling a conversation with Samuel Johnson on July 26, 1763), in Mark Harris, editor, The Heart of Boswell (New York: McGraw Hill, 1981), p. 90.

BALLAST

bal·last (bal′əst), *n.* **1. something heavy carried in a ship to steady it. 2. weight carried in a balloon or dirigible to control it. 3. anything which steadies a person or thing. 4. gravel or crushed rock used in making the bed for a road or railroad track.** —*v.* **1. furnish with ballast. 2. give steadiness to. 3. load or weigh down.** [apparently < Scand. (ODan.) *barlast* < *bar* bare + *last* load.] —**bal′last·er,** *n.*

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There is no shortage of material for future issues, but readers should not be discouraged from sending in offbeat examples of verbal and visual wit of the sort that the journal might publish. Original material must be explicitly labeled as that. Material which is not original must clearly make note of its author and source. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless it is accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

When subscribing to BALLAST, please send good-looking or unusual stamps. No more puppy love stamps please!

People have said for ages that a woman's hips are shaped like a vase. It's no longer poetic; it's become a cliche. I take a vase and with it I make a woman. I take the old metaphor, make it work in the opposite direction and give it a new lease on life...I make you see reality because I used the metaphor. The form of the metaphor may be worn-out or broken, but I take it...and use it in such an unexpected way that it arrouses a new emotion in the mind of the viewer, because it momentarily disturbs his customary way of identifying and defining what he sees.

Pablo Picasso, quoted by Francoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, Life With Picasso (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 322.

Wolfgang Pauli was a short, rather rotund man. He had a well-developed sense of humor. His mainstay in that respect was the so-called Pauli effect. This was a phenomenon thoroughly known to every physicist of the 1920s: Whenever Pauli (a pure theoretician) entered a laboratory, all kinds of things would go wrong. Meter needles would dance wildly, delicate glassware would crack, electric wires would suddenly spark, and so on. Pauli himself was very good in entertaining an audience with tales of his past exploits in this field. Once, however, I saw him wax really furious. This was when a professor at a smaller German university forbade Pauli to enter his laboratory because the man was afraid of the "Pauli effect." This was too direct and too blunt even for Wolfgang Pauli's sense of humor, and it took him many months to get over it.

Walter M. Elsasser, Memoirs of a Physicist in the Atomic Age (New York: Science History Publications, 1978), p. 96.

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This remarkable sequence of portraits was produced by an anonymous inmate in a mental institution, a person who was diagnosed as schizophrenic. These portraits have been reproduced in J.H. Plokker, Art From The Mentally Disturbed: The Shattered Vision of Schizophrenics (Boston: Little Brown, 1965) p. 113. According to that book, "It often occurs that a patient will draw long rows of heads or other figures on one sheet, these showing little if any variations. Or he will reproduce the same small scene in an identical manner several times in juxtaposition, then suddenly introducing a small variation by adding or omitting an element, then returning again to the old stereotyped pattern" (p. 153).

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An Arab came to the river side
With a donkey bearing an obelisk:
But he would not try to ford the tide
For he had too good an *

Anon, quoted in Susan Stewart, Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 145.

VELOCITY is a tri-annual, contributor sponsored mail art magazine. Send them 100 copies of an 8 1/2 by 11 inch page, plus $1.00 cash or stamps, and they will supply you with the issue containing your artwork. (We are reminded of Richard Kostelanetz's Assembling.) For more information, write to: VELOCITY Magazine, 4350 McPherson Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63108. Suggested by Steve Frenkel, a reader from Roswell, Georgia.

Mrs. Cabot tells a characteristic anecdote of Thayer...She was attending a fashionable finishing school in New York City as a girl in her teens. Thayer was to come down to Scarborough by train to meet her and escort her back to pose for him the next day. He arrived at the station, she says, arrayed in a corduroy hunting suit, a worn felt hat with an old hankerchief wound round his head and under his chin to relieve a toothache, and a pair of rubber boots. He carried a brown paper bag of wild ducks which he had recently shot and which were leaking badly.

The modishly dressed young girl and the uncouth figure of the artist made a startling contrast, but Thayer, not at all embarrassed, suggested a stroll up Fifth Avenue, for they had several hours to wait for their train. As they walked along side by side Mrs. Cabot saw that everyone stared and Thayer remarked, "It's amusing, isn't it, you and I walking up Fifth Avenue like this?" After awhile he pulled out his watch and said, "The Kneisel Quartette is playing a Beethoven concert this afternoon. Let's go. We've just time before our train." And so, as Mrs. Cabot says, with entire disregard of the dressy crowd of the concert hall they took their seats--corduroys, rubber boots, leaky ducks and all--and enjoyed the music.

Nelson C. White, Abbott H. Thayer (Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut Printers, 1951), p. 70.

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How easily and cleverly do I write just now! I am really pleased with myself; words come skipping to me like lambs upon Moffat Hill; and I turn my periods smoothly and imperceptibly like a skillful wheelwright turning tops in a turning-loom. There's fancy! There's simile! In short, I am at present a genius: in that does my opulence consist, and not in base metal.

James Boswell, in Mark Harris, editor, The Heart of Boswell (New York: McGraw Hill, 1981), p. 48.

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So how do you go about teaching them something new? By mixing what they know with what they don't know. Then, when they see vaguely in their fog something they recognize, they think, "Ah, I know that." And it's just one more step to, "Ah, I know the whole thing." And their mind thrusts forward into the unknown and they begin to recognize what they didn't know before and they increase their powers of understanding.

Pablo Picasso, quoted by Francoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, Life With Picasso (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 66.

The common cormorant or shag
Lays eggs inside a paper bag
The reason you will see no doubt
It is to keep the lightning out
But what these unobservant birds
Have never noticed is that herds
Of wandering bears may come with buns
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

Anon.

●

Suddenly, one evening, a fearful noise in the yard. People came running. What had happened? They said the lady had drowned in the well. And indeed the next morning she wasn't there. I couldn't really understand what dying meant. All that registered in my mind was that she had disappeared, as I thought, in the way that one does when going from one house to the next, from one room to another. You can't see through the wall, of course, but the person still must be there.

Oscar Kokoschka (recalling his childhood), My Life (New York: MacMillan, 1974), pp. 10-11.

The frailty of his mechanisms was part of their charm. Over his bed were a series of strings that put on the light, turned on the bath, lit the gas under the kettle and so forth; often they failed to function and he would have to hop out of bed to fix them. When I saw him last he told me he was making a machine for tickling his wife Louisa in the next room.

Julian Trevelyan (remembering the American sculptor, Alexander Calder, inventor of the mobile), Indigo Days (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), p. 30.

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Little Willie from his mirror
Licked the mercury right off,
Thinking in his childish error,
It would cure the whooping cough.
At the funeral his mother
Smartly said to Mrs Brown:
"Twas a chilly day for Willie
When the mercury went down."

Anon., *Willie's Epitaph.*

Reproduced above is one of our favorite drawings by Tom Grothus, a post-Coast artist and writer from Seattle. We are intrigued by his curious books, to which we were alerted by M. Kasper, a reader from Florence, Massachusetts, who is an artist and writer himself. Among the Grothus books we've seen are On the Road to Detour, 1982 ($4.00), Land of the Cynical Dog-Men, 1983 ($3.40), and Errata, 1984 ($3.40). With much enthusiasm, we recommend these funny yet wonderfully ponderous tomes, as well as his tiny magazine, Manzine. Send orders or inquiries to: Tom Grothus, Function Industries Press, Post Office Box 9915, Seattle, Washington 98109.

If all the world were paper,
And all the sea were ink,
And all the trees were bread and
cheese,
What should we do for drink?

●

Why did the punk rocker cross the road? Because he had a chicken stapled to his foot.

During the first year of BALLAST, John L. McVey, a reader from Tokyo, not having a lot of American stamps, offered to send us some presents instead, including the catalog for an exhibition of Japanese toilets, bed pans, lavatories, and gods of the toilet...An unnamed Floridian abruptly cancelled her subscription and asked for a refund of 6 stamps...More Watson's subscribed to BALLAST than any other surname; Dyble is second.

I i interested me to hear Freud's views on precognition and on parapsychology in general. When I visited him in Vienna in 1909 I asked him what he thought of these matters. Because of his materialistic prejudice, he rejected this entire complex of questions as nonsensical...While Freud was going on this way, I had a curious sensation. It was as if my diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot--a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right next to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing the thing was going to topple over on us. I said to Freud: "There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorization phenomenon."

"Oh come," he exclaimed. "That is sheer bosh."

"It is not," I replied. "You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that in a moment there will be another such loud report!" Sure enough, no sooner had I said the words than the same detonation went off in the bookcase.

Carl Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962), pp. 155-156.

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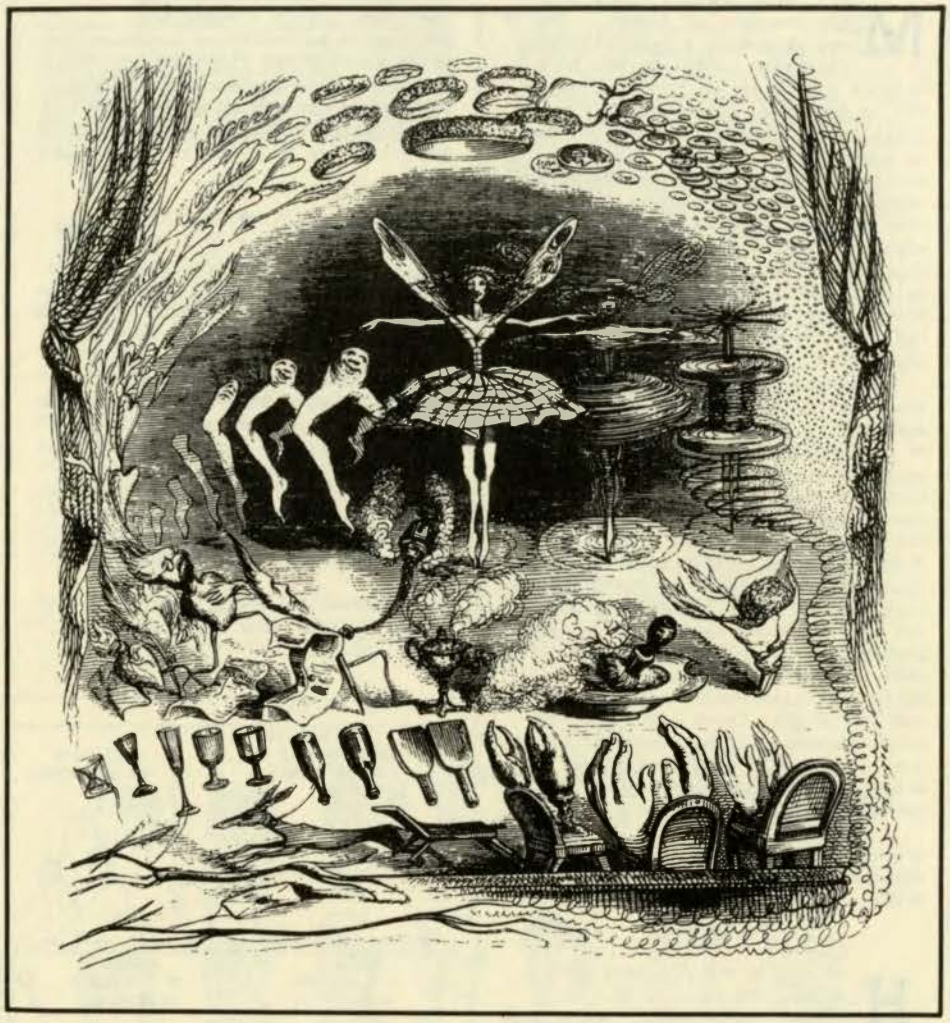
I happened to be practicing at the piano one day--I clearly recall, not that it matters, that it was a fugue by Mozart, K.394, for those of you who play it too--and suddenly a vacuum cleaner started up just beside the instrument. Well, the result was that in the louder passages, this luminously diatonic music in which Mozart deliberately imitates the technique of Sebastian Bach became surrounded with a halo of vibrato, rather the effect that you might get if you sang in the bathtub with both ears full of water and shook your head from side to side all at once. And in the softer passages I couldn't hear any sound that I was making at all. I could feel, of course--I could sense the tactile relation with the keyboard, which is replete with its own kind of accoustical associations, and I could imagine what I was doing, but I couldn't actually hear it. But the strange thing was that all of it sounded better than it had without the vacuum cleaner, and those parts which I couldn't actually hear sounded best of all. Well, for years thereafter, and still today, if I am in a great hurry to acquire an imprint of some new score on my mind, I simulate the effect of the vacuum cleaner by placing some totally contrary noises as close to the instrument as I can.

Glenn Gould, in Tim Page, editor, The Glenn Gould Reader (New York: Knopf, 1984), pp. 6-7. Suggested by Joseph J. Podlesnik, a reader from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Once, in Hamburg, Pauli was invited to visit the observatory, an invitation which he at first declined with the words "No, no; telescopes are expensive." The astronomers smiled and assured him that the Pauli effect had no power in the observatory. When Pauli entered the dome there was an ear-splitting clatter; when the party recovered they found that the large cast-iron lid had fallen off one of the telescopes and shattered on the concrete floor.

Otto R. Frisch, What Little I Remember (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 48-49.

Above: An exemplary comment on visual metamorphosis by the 19th century caricaturist and illustrator, Jean Ignace Isidore Gerard, more commonly known by his pen name, Grandeville.

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Samuel Goldwyn (attr.): Anyone who would go to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined.

Laurence Durrell: A poem is something that happens when an anxiety meets a technique.

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Left: While we were preparing this issue, we ran into Schomer Lichtner, one of the most venerable artists we know, and (of course) a subscriber to BALLAST. He had just finished this drawing, intending to donate it to a certain humanitarian organization in celebration of its 40th anniversary. Drawing Copyright © 1986 by Schomer Lichtner, c/o Spotted Cow Publications, 2626a North Maryland Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211. Write and ask about his books!

We need some Johnsonian or Ruskinian pundit to frighten everybody with near impossible conditions for true creativity. We have to stop thinking that what kindergarten children produce with pencil or watercolour, is anything more than charming or quaint. If you want to be considered a poet, you'll have to show mastery of the Petrarchan sonnet form or the sestina. Your musical efforts must begin with well-formed fugues. There is no substitute for craft.

There, I think, you may have the nub of the matter. Art begins with craft, and there is no art until craft has been mastered. You can't create unless you're willing to subordinate the creative impulse to the constriction of a form. But the learning of a craft takes time, and we all think we're entitled to short cuts...

Art is rare and sacred and hard work, and there ought to be a wall of fire around it.

Anthony Burgess, But Do Blondes Prefer Gentlemen?: Homage to Qwertyuiop and Other Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986).

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In his book on the development of the atomic bomb, Brighter Than a Thousand Suns, Robert Jungk (1958) describes meetings between von Neumann, Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, and Richard Feynman, all men of unquestionable genius. Whenever a computation was needed, von Neumann, Fermi, and Feynman would begin to calculate, each after his own fashion. Fermi juggled his slide rule, Feynman pounded a desk calculator, and von Neumann calculated in his head. According to one observer, von Neumann was usually the first to finish, and the results of the three independent calculations were remarkably close.

Steven B. Smith (discussing John von Neumann, physicist and calculating prodigy), The Great Mental Calculators (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 341-342.

●

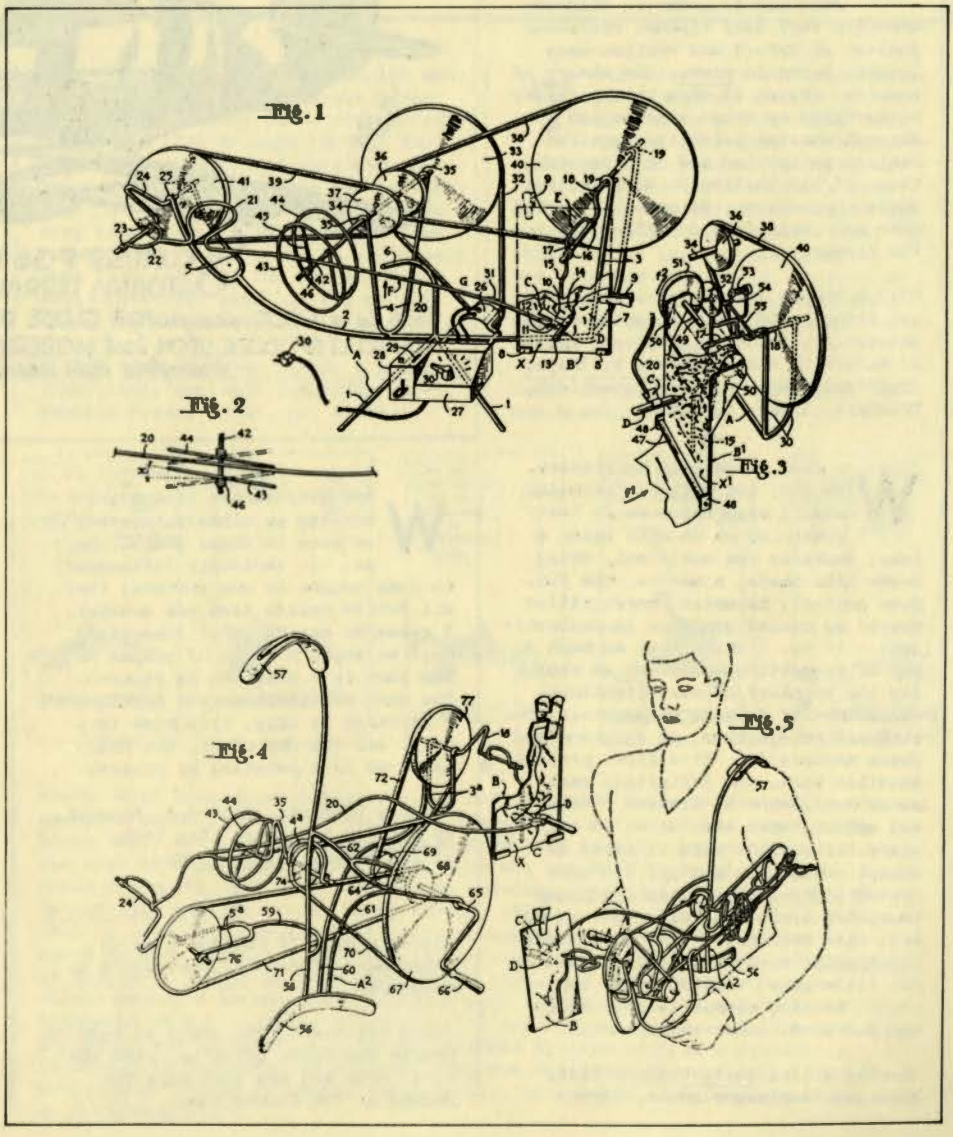
Jean Tinguely was (perhaps still is) an avant-garde artist, a Swiss sculptor, a colleague of Yves Klein and Bruno Munari. In 1960 he made *Homage to New York*, a capricious assembly of mechanical detritus which was supposed to self-destruct at its first and only performance at the Museum of Modern Art. Reproduced here (*right*) are the patent diagrams for a Jean Tinguely drawing machine, which he registered with the French government on 26 June 1959. It is described in great detail (in French) in Otto Piene and Heinz Mack, Zero (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1973), pp. 127-129. Suggested (years ago) by Ken Gogel, a reader from Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Nor can I forget what I saw one summer through a door inadvertently left open off the downstairs hall of a farmhouse where the reunion was being held. I was on my way to the kitchen; I glanced in, and there on the edge of a bed, pulling up her stockings, was a strange woman whom I knew at once, by the wild way she stared at me, to be--I remember saying to myself--crazy. In those days and in that place the insane, if it was possible at all, were kept at home instead of being sent to institutions. The thing that most impressed me then was not the condition of the woman (a cousin? an aunt? I never knew) but the assumption that I should not learn of her existence, or if I did, that I should not let on to others. My mother, when I told her what I had seen, was horrified; I must never mention it, she said.

Mark Van Doren, The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 49.

Then there was the legend of the so-called "Pauli effect": whenever Pauli entered a laboratory some disaster would strike--a glass apparatus would break, there would be a short-circuit, and so on. But, the legend said, no harm would ever come to Pauli as a result of these accidents. Once, at a big conference, some young physicists planned a practical joke of this legend. At a big reception they suspended the chandelier in the big hall by a rope running over a pulley so that, when Pauli entered the room, they would release the rope and the chandelier would crash down. As Pauli arrived the signal was given and the rope was released, but it jammed in the pulley and nothing happened. So a real Pauli effect had spoiled the joke!

Rudolf Peierls (remembering Wolfgang Pauli, the German physicist), Bird of Passage: Recollections of a Physicist (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 47.



During World War I, Pablo Picasso supposedly said that the French army could most effectively camouflage its soldiers if it dressed them in harlequin costumes. The idea was not as absurd as it sounds, as is witnessed by the fact that a wide variety of military and natural forms are characterized by disruptive surface markings. The French referred to this kind of camouflage as *bariolage* or *zebrage*. In England and America, it was more commonly known as *dazzle camouflage*. It was invented separately, and almost simultaneously, by three artists: Abbott H. Thayer, a prominent American painter; Victor Lucien Guirand de Scevola, an obscure French painter; and Norman Wilkinson, a British marine painter. Reproduced here (*right*) is a page which discusses disruption from Eric Sloane, Camouflage Simplified (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1942).

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Our fourth trip was to the West Indies...My father's special mission was tasting butterflies! This was in order to disprove what his very dear friend, Professor Poulton of Oxford has written many lengthy books to prove, the theory of mimicry, trying to show that harmless butterflies or other insects had through natural selection acquired similar patterning and coloring to those of bad tasting butterflies for their protection. He actually tasted them and could find no difference in the flavor.

Gladys Thayer (recalling a trip with her father, the American painter and naturalist, Abbott H. Thayer), quoted in Nelson C. White, Abbott H. Thayer (Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut Printers, 1951), p. 109.

●

We read, I've told my classes, to die, not entirely certain what I mean but sure it has something to do with being alone, shutting the world out, doing books like beads, a mantra, the flu. Some perfect, hermetic concentration sealed as canned goods or pharmaceuticals. It is, I think, not so much a way of forgetting ourselves as engaging the totality of our attentions, as racing-car drivers or mountain climbers engage them, as surgeons and chess masters do. It's fine, precise, detailed work, the infinitely small motor management of diamond cutters and safecrackers that we do in our heads...I haven't said it here, am almost ashamed to own up, but once I opened books slowly, stately, plump imaginary orchestras going off in my head like overtures, like music behind the opening credits in films, humming the title page, whistling the copyright, turning myself into producer and pit band, usher and audience.

Stanley Elkin, Early Elkin (Flint, Michigan: Bamberger Books, 1985).

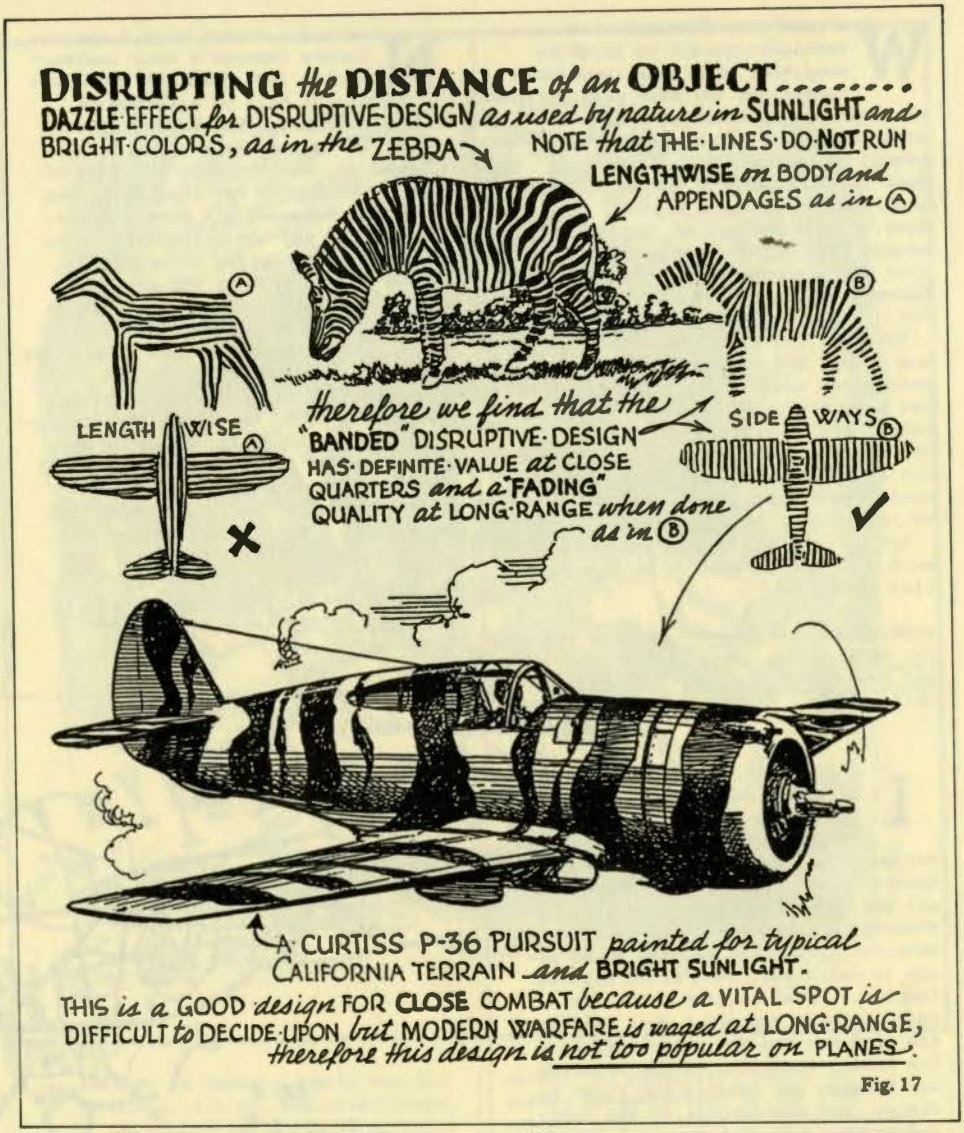

Fig. 17

When artists are living and working as closely together as we were in those years, they are all obviously influenced in some degree by one another; they all derive motifs from one another. I remember one day when Juan Gris told me about a bunch of grapes he had seen in a painting by Picasso. The next day these grapes appeared in a painting by Gris, this time in a bowl; and the day after, the bowl appeared in a painting by Picasso.

Jacques Lipchitz, with H.H. Arnason, My Life in Sculpture (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p. 40.

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Clarence Day: If you don't go to other men's funerals, they won't go to yours.

Jacob Bronowski: The world is made of people who never quite get into the first team and who just miss the prizes at the flower show.

G.M. Trevelyan: Education has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.

Henry David Thoreau: Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk.

●

A man becomes creative, whether he is an artist or a scientist, when he finds a new unity in the variety of nature. He does so by finding a likeness between things which were not thought alike before, and this gives him a sense at the same time of richness and of unde understanding. The creative mind is a mind that looks for unexpected likenesses. This is not a mechanical procedure, and I believe that it engages the whole personality in science as in the arts.

Jacob Bronowski, A Sense of the Future (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977).

Buxton told Holliday that he was "drunk with reckoning" from 10 a.m., May 17, 1725, until the 16th of June, at the end of which he slept soundly for seven hours --raising the question of how much he usually slept. He determined never again to undertake such demanding calculations. The problem which led to his "drunkenness" was determining the number of grains of barley, vetches, peas, wheat, oats, rye, beans, lentils and hairs one inch long, respectively, required to fill a container 202,680,000,360 miles on a side...Buxton was often drunk with more than reckoning. His apparent lack of wit did not prevent him from being a premier beer hustler. He kept a mental record of all the free beer and ale he had been given since the age of 12, and where it was consumed. The total, 5,116 pints, averages out to 5 or 6 ounces a day. Bear in mind that this was beer which he was given, and does not include any beer that he may have paid for, or made for himself. The most interesting item on the list is the 72 pints he consumed at a "gathering for his dead cow."...Buxton referred to pints of beer as "winds," because he never took more than one breath to a pint or two to a quart.

Steven B. Smith (describing the characteristics of Jedediah Buxton, 1702-1772, a British calculating prodigy), The Great Mental Calculators (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) pp. 171-172.

●

There was one entertainment I was not allowed to attend until I was much older. It was given, whenever he visited my parents at Berkhamsted, by an old clergyman called Canon Baldwin...He recited the more grisly scenes from Shakespeare, in the dark of the drawing room, taking all the parts himself: male and female. Sometimes, listening from a discreet distance in the hall outside, I heard muffled gurgles, chokes and screams, as Duncan lay laced with his golden blood or Desdemona strangled. They were tense occasions for my parents, as a single cough from one of the privileged guests would stop the Canon in mid-speech and he would call angrily, like Hamlet's uncle, for lights.

Graham Greene, A Sort of Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), pp. 42-43.

●

It was absolutely marvelous working for Pauli. You could ask him anything. There was no worry that he would think a particular question was stupid, since he thought all questions were stupid.

Victor Weisskopf in the American Journal of Physics, vol 45 (1977), p. 422.

This one dollar bill was issued by Canada in 1954. As shown by the detail at left, a devilish portrait is easily found in the hair of Queen Elizabeth. Public reaction to the "devil's face" necessitated the withdrawal of the series.

Pauli was a plump, youngish man, only a couple of years older than I...One odd characteristic was that he kept rocking forward and backward, not only when he was sitting but even when he was walking. Since this rocking motion didn't keep time with his legs his walk was erratic; for a few steps he would walk very fast and then the oscillation would interfere with his leg motion and a few short steps would follow.

Otto R. Frisch, What Little I Remember (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 47-48.

They believe in rod, the scourger almighty, creator of hell upon earth and in Jacky Tar, the son of a gun, who was conceived of unholy boast, born of the fighting navy, suffered under rump and dozen, was sacrificed flayed and curried, yelled like bloody hell, the third day he arose again from the bed, steered into haven, sitteth on his beamend till further orders whence he shall come to drudge for a living and be paid.

James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 323.

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Above: With considerable pleasure, we dedicate this issue of BALLAST to the American cartoonist George Herriman (1880-1944), author of the comic strip Krazy Kat. We strongly urge readers of BALLAST to take a careful look at the work of this extraordinary genius in the new book by Patrick McDonnell, Karen O'Connell, and Georgia Riley de Havedon, Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman (New York: Harry Abrams, 1986). Reproduced here is a strip that he drew on 6 January 1918. Previous issues of BALLAST have been dedicated to *Liam Hudson*, a contemporary British psychologist, author of The Cult of the Fact, Bodies of Knowledge, Night Life, and other books; to *Jules Kirschenbaum*, a contemporary American painter and the Ellis and Nelle Levitt Professor of Art at Drake University; to *Etienne-Jules Marey*, a 19th century physician and inventor; and to the *Reverend William Archibald Spooner*, a Victorian ecclesiastic who was the frequent victim of the accidental transposition of sounds in speech (metaphasis), or what is more commonly known as a "spoonerism."

R.W. Wood is said to have spent some time in a flat in Paris where he discovered that the lady in the flat below kept a tortoise in a window pen. Wood fashioned a collecting device from a broom-handle, and bought a supply of tortoises of dispersed sizes. While the lady was out shopping, Wood replaced her tortoise by one slightly larger. He repeated this operation each day until the growth of the tortoise became so obvious to its owner that she consulted Wood who, having first played a subsidiary joke by sending her to consult a Professor at the Sorbonne whom he considered to be devoid of humour, advised her to write the press. When the tortoise had grown to such a size that several pressmen were taking a daily interest, Wood then reversed the process, and in a week or so the tortoise mysteriously contracted to its original dimensions.

R.V. Jones, "The Theory of Practical Joking--Its Relevance to Physics" in the Bulletin of the Institute of Physics, June 1957, p. 193.

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One day the inventor Thomas Edison gave his guests a tour of various labor-saving features which he had built into his luxurious summer residence. In order to enter the garden, it was necessary to pass through a turnstyle which functioned as the garden gate. To operate the turnstyle required a surprising amount of strength. "Mr. Edison," asked a guest, "How is it that someone as clever as you would have such a cumbersome thing for a gate?" Edison smiled as he explained that the turnstyle was connected to a pump. "Whenever you pass through the gate, you water the plants in my garden," he said.

Cf., Edmund Fuller, editor, Thesaurus of Anecdotes (New York: Crown, 1942), p. 194.

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He used various Victorian pronunciations and sayings such as "hunderd" for hundred, "weskit" for waistcoat; he would refer to the "Dook of Wellin'ton", and some of his milder expletives were: "The Deuce take it!" "Flesh and blood can't stand it!", and "God bless my soul!" When he was tired he would say, "I don't feel an inclination to do any manner of work", or if anyone said there was no time to do so-and-so, he would reply, "Well, you have all the time there is." Another favourite saying was "If you want a thing done get someone to do it for you; if you want it well done, do it yourself!"

Ruth D'Arcy Thompson (describing her father, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson), D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, The Scholar Naturalist (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 182-183.

Claude Fortier (landscape in the shape of face), circa 1800.

On the subject of reincarnation he was usually reticent, but he did once come up with the hypothesis that his daughter Anne was a reincarnation of William Pitt. He had a portrait of the younger Pitt in the dining-room and he measured the skull, compared the measurements with Anne's head, and decided that they were identical. Soon afterwards, during a lunch party, he called Anne into the dining-room, propounded his theory, and quoted a saying of Pitt's. "Do you remember saying that in the House?", he asked her hopefully. She was unable to pretend that she did, so the experiment was not repeated.

Celia Goodman (identical twin of the late Mamaine Paget, second wife of Arthur Koestler, describing a relative, Uncle Jack), Living With Koestler: Mamaine Koestler's Letters 1945-51 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 15.

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Sir Alexander Fleming, inventor of penicillin, was to fly to Belfast and give a lecture on it, but when he got to the aerodome he was told it was quite impossible for him to go, as all the berths were taken for Ministerial personages of the Highest Priority--so the aeroplane started without him. It turned out that the passengers were all officials from the Ministry of Health who had been sent to hear the lecture.

Edward Marsh, Ambrosia and Small Beer (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), p. 342.

Nothing that happened in Berkhamsted escaped her eye: she was a walking newsletter...In later life I loved my aunt for this very quality, and would make journeys from London to have tea with her and hear the latest gossip of Berkhamsted...Her ear was very close to the ground. Once I arrived with my brother Hugh unannounced, walking directly from the railway station five minutes away. She opened the door to us, saying, "When I heard you were in Berkhamsted I put on the kettle for tea."

Graham Greene, A Sort of Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 36.

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There was an odd legend attached to Pauli. The so-called Pauli effect was a kind of evil eye: it was alleged that when Pauli appeared anywhere near a laboratory a dreadful thing was likely to happen. Bits of apparatus fell to pieces or exploded, and so on. One story asserted that James Franck, working in Gottingen, came to the laboratory one morning and found that the cooling water had failed, that the pump had blown up, that there was glass all over the floor; an absolutely horrible mess. Franck's instant reaction was to send a telegram "PAULI, WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT?" The answer came back "TRAVELING FROM ZURICH TO BERLIN." (The train passed through Gottingen.)

Otto R. Frisch, What Little I Remember (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 48.