

Spring 1988

Ballast Quarterly Review, v03n3, Spring 1988

The Art Academy of Cincinnati

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BALLAST QUARTERLY REVIEW

B

BOOKS
ART
LANGUAGE

Q

LOGIC
AMBIGUITY
SCIENCE

R

AND
TEACHING

At around age six, perhaps, I was standing by myself in our front yard waiting for supper, just at that hour in a late summer day when the sun is already below the horizon and the risen full moon in the visible sky stops being chalky and begins to take on light. There comes the moment, and I saw it then, when the moon goes from flat to round. For the first time it met my eyes as a globe. The word "moon" came into my mouth as though fed to me out of a silver spoon. Held in my mouth the moon became a word. It had the roundness of a Concord grape Grandpa took off his vine and gave me to suck out of its skin and swallow whole, in Ohio.

Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1984), p. 10.

M

Above: Logo designed by Elaine Goetz (1987), a reader from Cincinnati.

Von Neumann lived in this elegant house in Princeton. As I parked my car and walked in, there was this very large Great Dane dog bouncing around on the front lawn. I knocked on the door and von Neumann, who was a small, quiet, modest kind of a man came to the door and bowed to me and said, "Bigelow, won't you come in," and so forth, and this dog brushed between our legs and went into the living room. He proceeded to lie down on the rug in front of everybody, and we had the entire interview--whether I would come, what I knew, what the job was going to be like--and this lasted maybe forty minutes, with the dog wandering all around the house. Towards the end of it, von Neumann asked me if I always traveled with the dog. But of course it wasn't my dog, and it wasn't his either, but von Neumann--being a diplomatic, middle-European type person--he kindly avoided mentioning it until the end.

Julian Bigelow [*Princeton mathematician, recalling his job interview with John von Neumann*], quoted by Ed Regis, *Who Got Einstein's Office?* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1987), p. 110. Suggested by Joseph Podlesnik, a reader from Chicago.



Above: Logo for Screamin' Fool Visual Design, designed by William Korbus, a reader from Austin, Texas. Mr. Korbus is Professor of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin.

Arnold Toynbee: America is a large friendly dog in a small room. Every time it wags its tail, it knocks over a chair.

Question: What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison?
Answer: You can't wash your hands in a buffalo.

Frank Lloyd Wright: The doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines.

Anon: Writing about art is like dancing about architecture.

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In a children's art class, we sat in a ring on kindergarten chairs and drew three daffodils that had just been picked out of the yard; and while I was drawing, my sharpened yellow pencil and the cup of the yellow daffodil gave off whiffs just alike. That the pencil doing the drawing should give off the same smell as the flower it drew seemed part of the art lesson--as shouldn't it be? Children, like animals, use all their senses to discover the world. Then artists come along and discover it the same way, all over again. Here and there, it's the same world. Or now and then we'll hear from an artist who's never lost it.

Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 9-10.



Above: Logo designed by Jeff Hudepohl, a reader from Cincinnati.

Ted Turner: If I had a little humility, I would be perfect.

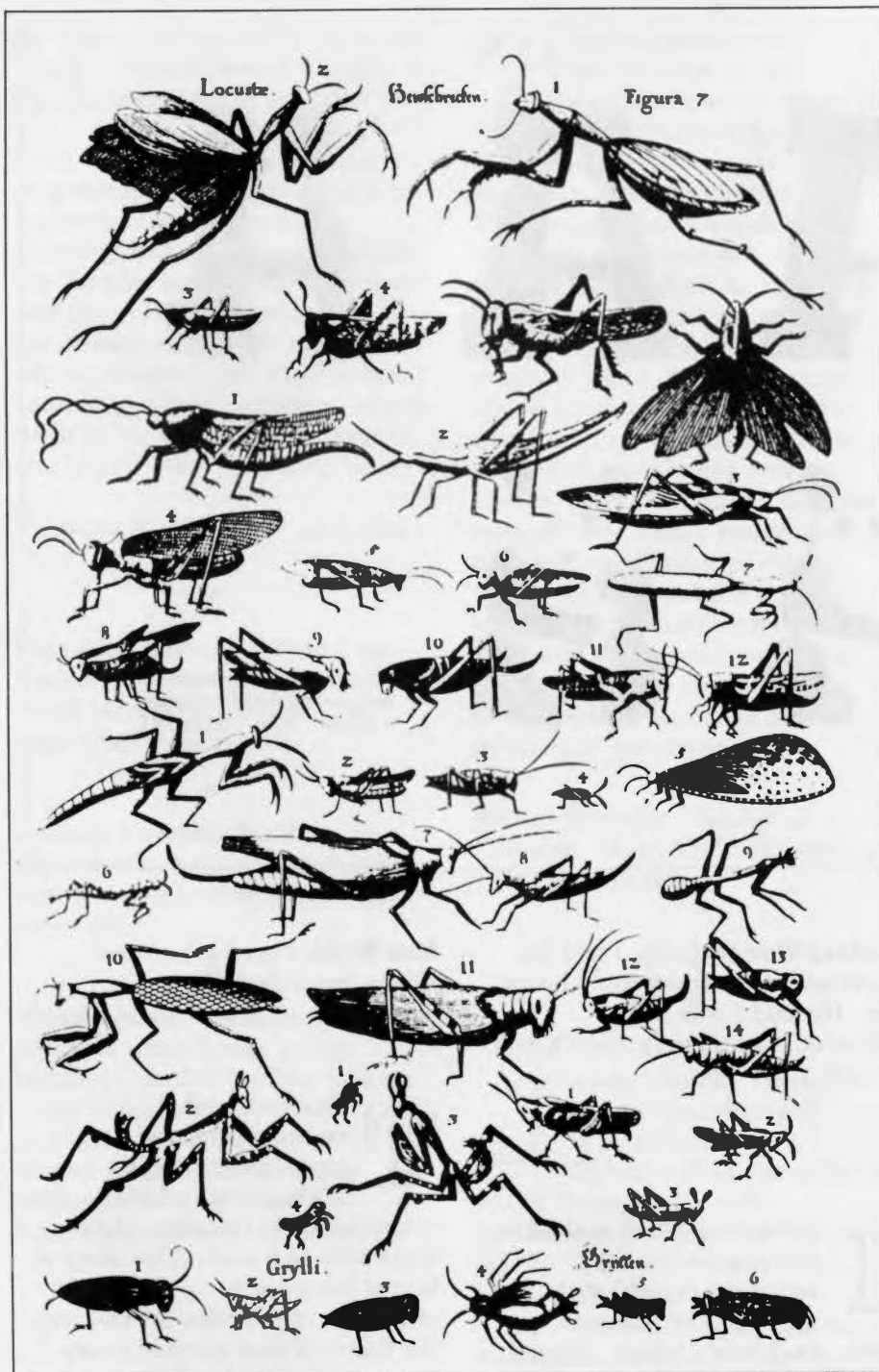
Fran Lebowitz (in *Metropolitan Life*, 1978): Breakfast cereals that come in the same colors as polyester leisure suits make oversleeping a virtue.

Y H I O

Ostwald had an aversion to being touched by strangers, such as barbers and tailors. He also tried to avoid dealing with persons who had not had a scientific training. Though he disliked being dependent on others...he eventually reached the point where he no longer could avoid hiring a secretary. Even then, he did not dictate to her directly but via a dictating machine (the old type with wax cylinders). When he had accumulated a number of these cylinders, he would place them in a basket that he then carried to a stand in the hall outside his study. There was no electricity in the house, so he would signal the secretary by means of a bicycle bell. After the young lady was sure that Ostwald had gone, she would go into the hall, retrieve the cylinders, and type what he had dictated. The typed sheets were placed, together with the cylinders, on the stand in the hall. She, in turn, would then ring the bell, and retreat. When Ostwald was sure that she was back in her quarters, he would emerge from his study and take the typed sheets and cylinders back into his study for reading, correction and revision.

Ralph Oesper [referring to *Wilhelm Ostwald, the German chemist and inventor of the Ostwald system of color notation*] in *The Human Side of Scientists* (Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati Press, 1975), p. 149. Suggested by Buster Delauney, a reader from Scottsdale, Arizona.

Joe E. Lewis: I distrust camels, and anyone else who can go a week without a drink.



Above: Plate from *De animalibus insectis...* by Ulisse Aldrovandi, first published in Bologna in 1602.

Canada is a country so square that even the female impersonators are women.

Richard Benner, *Outrageous!* (screenplay), 1977.

Dick Cavett: There should be three days a week when no one is allowed to say: "What's your sign?" Violators would have their copies of Kahlil Gibran confiscated.

Jews weren't allowed to carry over a certain amount of cash on the street in Prague...And my father was out on the street one day with what he knew was more than the amount of cash in his pocket that he was supposed to have. And he was stopped and picked up. The cops took him into the police station, and he was supposed to empty out his pockets. So he's desperate, but he got this brain wave. He took his hankchief which he had in his pocket and he wrapped it around the money and pulled it out and blew his nose, and the money was in the hankchief. Then he cleared his pockets out, and it was okay. They didn't look in his hand, but the money was in his hankchief. He just stuck it back in his pocket and walked out free.

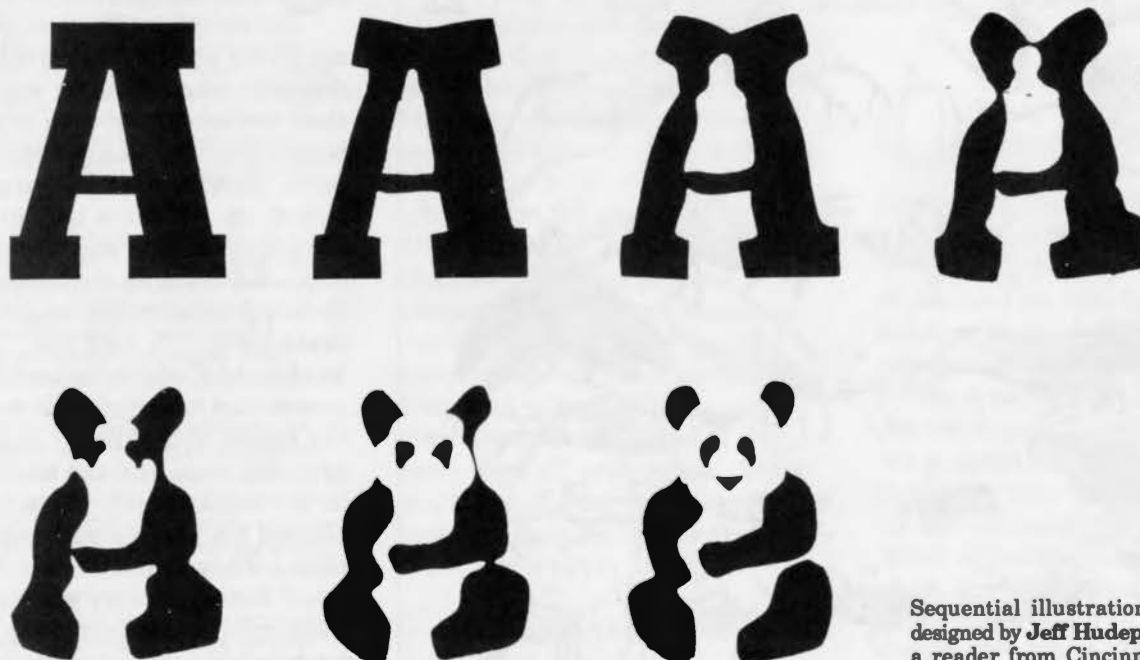
Marianne Ross, quoted in Steven J. Zeitlin, et al., *A Celebration of American Family Folklore* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 25.

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt.

James Joyce, opening paragraphs from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press, 1963 [1916]), p. 7.



Sequential illustration
designed by Jeff Hudepohl,
a reader from Cincinnati.

Because of these investigations he remained secluded in his house, almost like a hermit, for weeks and months, without knowing much of what went on in the world and without showing himself. Spending his time on those caprices, he knew, while he was still alive, more poverty than fame. He left a wife who used to relate that Paolo would spend the whole night at his drawing-board trying to find the rules of perspective, and when she called him to come to bed, he would answer: "Oh, how sweet is this perspective!"

Giorgio Vasari (remembering Paolo Ucello, Renaissance painter and perspectivist), quoted in Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn : The Character and Conduct of Artists* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 54.

Rodney Dangerfield: I told my psychiatrist that everybody hates me. He said I was being ridiculous--everybody hasn't met me yet.

I remember when a child in the pew on Sundays amusing myself with saying over common words as 'black', 'white', 'board', et cetera, twenty or thirty times, until the word lost all meaning and fixedness, and I began to doubt which was the right name for the things...

Ralph Waldo Emerson (in his journal on 22 August 1841) in William H. Gilman, editor, *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: New American Library, 1965), pp. 104-105.

Mae West: I used to be Snow White, but I drifted.

The nineteenth century produced great preachers in Wales, some of whom are remembered to this day. John Elias was one such...The story is told of his preaching in a small village in mid-Wales on the way the finger of God touched every man. At the height of his peroration he flung out his arm, having carefully arranged the candles beforehand so that the huge shadow of his finger fell upon the wall. Seeing this monstrous arm, the congregation fled.

Ivor Richard, *We the British* (New York: Doubleday, 1983). Suggested by Marylou Plutarch, a reader from Otterville, Iowa.

He had been building up one of those piles of thought, as ramshackle and fantastic as a Chinese pagoda, half from words let fall by gentlemen in gaiters, half from the litter in his own mind, about duck shooting and legal history, about the Roman occupation of Lincoln and the relations of country gentlemen with their wives, when, from all this disconnected rambling, there suddenly formed itself in his mind the idea that he would ask Mary to marry him.

Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day* (1919).

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Clarence Darrow: When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President. I'm beginning to believe it.

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Johnny Carson: For three days after death, hair and fingernails continue to grow but phone calls taper off.

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Woody Allen: I was in group analysis when I was young because I couldn't afford private. I was Captain of the Latent Paranoid Softball Team. We played all the neurotics on a Sunday morning. The Nail-Biters against the Bed-Wetters.

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Having ordered a pizza, Yogi Berra was asked whether he would like it cut into four or eight pieces. "Better make it four," he said. "I don't think I can eat eight pieces."

Richard L. Crouser (adapted), *It's Unlucky to Be Behind at the End of the Game and Other Sports Retorts* (New York: Morrow, 1983).

The limitations and peculiarities of his medium force the artist at each step to make choices, consciously or unconsciously; to select for representation those features or aspects which he considers to be relevant, and to discard those which he considers irrelevant...The measure of an artist's originality, put into the simplest terms, is the extent to which his selective emphasis deviates from the conventional norm and establishes new standards of relevance. All great innovations, which inaugurate a new era, movement, or school, consist in such sudden shifts of attention and displacements of emphasis onto some previously neglected aspect of experience, some blacked-out range of the existential spectrum.

Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 333-334.



James (Quick) Tillis, the young heavyweight... is a cowboy from Oklahoma who now fights out of Chicago. He still remembers his first day in the Windy City, after his arrival from Tulsa:

"I got off the bus with two cardboard suitcases under my arms in downtown Chicago and stopped in front of the Sears Tower," Tillis said. "I put the suitcases down, and I looked up at the Tower and said to myself, 'I'm going to conquer Chicago.' When I looked down, the suitcases were gone."

Los Angeles Times, July 25, 1981. Suggested by Issac B. (Robot) LeNesbitt III, a reader from Death Valley, California.

Brimful of some new idea, and in spite of my assuring him that time was precious, he drew me within the door of an unoccupied garden by the road-side, and there, sheltered from observation by a hedge of evergreens, he took me by the button of my coat, and closing his eyes commenced an eloquent discourse, waving his right hand gently, as the musical words flowed in an unbroken stream from his lips. I listened entranced; but the striking of a church clock recalled me to a sense of duty. I saw it was of no use to attempt to break away, so taking advantage of his absorption in his subject, I, with my penknife, quietly severed the button from my coat, and decamped. Five hours afterwards, in passing the same garden on my way home, I heard Coleridge's voice, and on looking in, there he was, with closed eyes--the button in his fingers--and his right hand gracefully waving, just as when I left him. He had never missed me!

Charles Lamb (*recalling a curious meeting with the British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge*), quoted in Leonard Russell, *English Wits* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1940). Suggested by Isabelle Garbo, a reader from Richmond, Virginia.

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Winston Churchill (*in reply to a female Member of Parliament who accused him of being drunk*): And you, madam, are ugly. But I shall be sober tomorrow.

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Question: If your house were on fire, which object would you take with you?

Tristan Bernard: The thing nearest the door.

Jean Cocteau: The fire.

Very composedly and very slowly, the art teacher, who visited each room on Fridays, paced the aisle and looked down over your shoulder at what you were drawing for her. This was Miss Ascher. Coming from behind you, her deep, resonant voice reached you without being a word at all, but a sort of purr. It was much the sound given out by our family doctor when he read the thermometer and found you were running a slight fever: "Um-hm. Um-hm." Both alike, they let you go right ahead with it.

Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1984), p. 27.

Significant Inversions: *War* spelled backwards is *raw*.
Pal spelled backwards is *lap*.
Gnat spelled backwards is *tang*.
Mood spelled backwards is *doom*.
Golf spelled backwards is *flog*.
But spelled backwards is *tub*.
Eros spelled backwards is *sore*.
Eye spelled backwards is *eye*.
Fun spelled backwards is *nuf*.
Gas spelled backwards is *sag*.

My great-grandfather had come from Poland, or right near Poland, and he came to this country during the Spanish-American War. There was one of those Uncle Sam posters saying "We Want You!" and he thought it meant him! "Why me?" he wondered. "What's so special about me? I just came to America." And he went and he joined the army!

David Nachamonoff, quoted in *A Celebration of American Family Folklore* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), p. 82.

I have never painted a rubber-plant in my life. Nor would I if it was the last plant alive. It proves there is no God, for he'd never create a rubber-plant.

Lucian Freud [*British painter and grandson of Sigmund Freud*] from an interview in *The Manchester Guardian*, 1988.
 Suggested by Anthony Batchelor, a reader from Cincinnati.

The first thing that happened to me, when the exhibition opened in Fort Worth, was that I had to go on television. One of the things that the museums demand is that I promote, do a promotional tour, otherwise you can't have a show. The first thing they said was, "We have to go right away to Houston, we are going to be on a Good Morning show." The host was this woman with bright red lipstick, a big beehive hair-do, red nails, white skin, and she said (drawling), "Mr. Avedon, I'm so glad to meet you, I can't tell you this is my dream come true." And she said, "God rests on your head!" While I was trying to figure this out, the cameras went green, and she said, haughtily, "Avedon, West...Why?" I just couldn't open my mouth, I just looked at her. I didn't know what to say. So I made up these answers the best I could, as honestly as I could. The better I did the sicker I felt. When I got to Chicago, I think the second stop, I had gotten pretty good at it. I do a day like today, go back to my hotel and vomit because, in some way, I betray everything that I am.

Richard Avedon, interviewed by Mildred Thompson in "Interview: Richard Avedon" in *Art Papers*, vol 11, no 6, November/December 1987, p. 37.

One day I found that my sketch for an oil painting did not carry out my intention. There were too many shapes pressed into a chaotic arrangement. I took scissors. Cutting away some parts of the drawing, and turning it at an angle of ninety degrees, I was satisfied. When remnants were pasted on a new sheet, the whole had little similarity to the still life which I had chosen as the point of departure. People, accustomed to naturalistic schemes, insisted that this 'still life', mutilated and turned upside down, looked like a rider on a motorcycle. I protested, but basically I had a feeling of the complete autonomy of action. It occurred to me that, if I could make such changes in a drawing, I could also decide with the same freedom the shapes and colors in my oil paintings. Suddenly I understood the blue faces and blue horses of the expressionists.

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *The New Vision and Abstract of an Artist* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1947), p. 71.

ERIC (*Shakespearean actor*): Did you see my Bottom at Stratford-upon-Avon?
ERNIE: I'm afraid not.
ERIC: A pity--many people consider it my best part.

Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise, *The Morecambe and Wise Joke Book* (1979).

Mark Twain: When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.

Paul Harwitz: The marvels of modern technology include the development of a soda can which, when discarded, will last forever--and a \$7,000 car, which, when properly cared for, will rust out in two or three years.

Tom Taussik: The difference between Los Angeles and yogurt is that yogurt has real culture.

WENDLE: I'm not a suspicious woman but I don't think my husband 'as been entirely faithful to me.

PELLET: Whatever makes you think that?

WENDLE: My last child doesn't resemble him in the least.

Noel Coward, *This Year of Grace* (1928).

I grew up pretty much as everybody else grows up, and one day...found myself saying to myself--
I can't live where I want to--I can't go where I want to--I can't even say what I want to--School and things that painters have taught me even keep me from painting as I want to. I decided I was a very stupid fool not to at least paint as I wanted to and say what I wanted to when I painted as that seemed to be the only thing I could do that didn't concern anybody but myself--that was nobody's business but my own...

Georgia O'Keeffe, quoted by Lloyd Goodrich and Doris Bry in *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

Grandma Moses (Anna Mary Robertson): If I didn't start painting, I would have raised chickens.

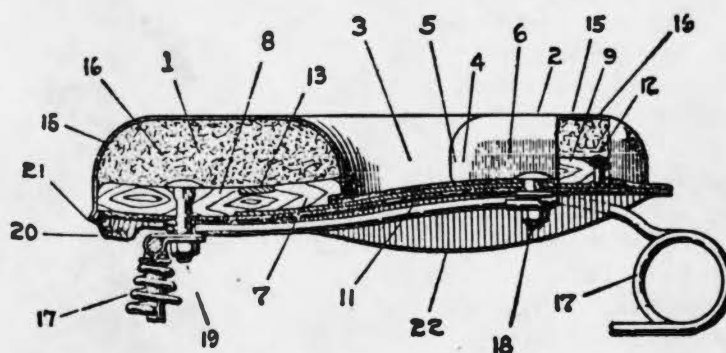
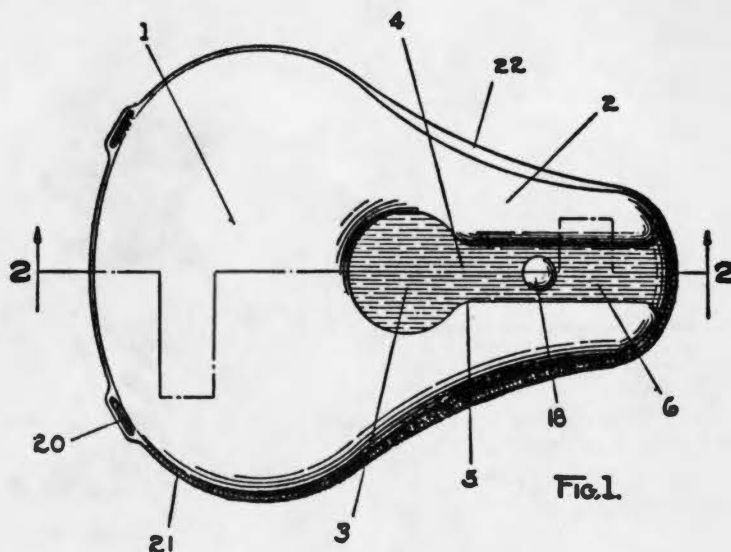


FIG. 2.

U.S. Patent No. 1,538,542, patented 19 May 1925 (Bicycle Seat for Men)

After we had been talking for about twenty minutes the maid came in with a huge bowl of soup. I wondered what was happening and I thought that this was probably a signal for me to leave. But when the girl left the room Einstein said to me in a conspiratorial whisper, "That's a trick. If I am bored talking to somebody, when the maid comes in I don't push the bowl of soup away and the girl takes

whomever I am with away and I am free." Einstein pushed the bowl away, and so I was quite happy and much flattered and more at my ease for the rest of the talk.

Lancelot Law Whyte (*recalling a visit to Einstein's home*), quoted in G.J. Whitrow, *Einstein: The Man and His Achievement* (New York: Dover, 1973). Suggested by Samuel Finley Breese, a reader from Braintree, Massachusetts.

John Ruskin (adapted):
 Hundreds can talk for one who
 can think, and thousands can
 think for one who can see.

•

One day my dad got hurt on the job and as a result, he said he couldn't bear to put any weight on his heel. The doctors, however, said it was all in his mind, and they sent him to a psychiatrist. This irked him, so my dad said, "If they want to think I'm crazy, I'll make them think I'm crazy." So he goes to the doctor's office, and the doctor brings out the Rorschach inkblot tests. The doctor laid these cards down in front of my father, and dad reached over, picked them up, shuffled them and dealt them out for a hand of Five Card Draw and said, "I'll open for a dollar."

Daniel W. Humphrey, quoted in Steven J. Zeitlin, et al., *A Celebration of American Family Folklore* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), pp. 39-40.

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"Who inu hell," I said to myself, "wants to try to make pies like Mother makes when it's so much simpler to let Mother make um inu first place?"

Harriette Arnow, *The Dollmaker* (New York: Simpson, 1954).

石敢耑耑耑耑

Left: Calligraphic interpretation of BALLAST Quarterly Review. Calligraphy and Chinese translation by Cheng Hsi-ling, Professor of History at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.

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One day, because of an engagement elsewhere, he posted the following notice on the door of his lecture room: "Professor Thomson will not meet his classes today." The young men decided to play a joke on their beloved teacher, and one of them carefully erased the "c" so that the note read: "Professor Thompson will not meet his lasses today." They then left. The class gathered the next day and anticipated that the professor would make some suitable remark about the altered notice. He came slightly late, but obviously he had already seen what they had left. The notice of the day before had been changed once again, and this time by the professor himself. It now read: "Professor Thomson will not meet his asses today."

Ralph Oesper [referring to the 19th century Scottish physicist Sir William Thomson] in *The Human Side of Scientists* (Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati Press, 1975), p. 181. Suggested by Lorelee Haldane, a reader from Norfolk, Virginia.