

Spring 1990

## Ballast Quarterly Review, v05n3, Spring 1990

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**Volume 5 Number 3**



# BALLAST

Quarterly Review. Volume 5  
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**BALLAST** is an acronym for Books  
Art Language Logic Ambiguity  
Science and Teaching, as well as  
a distant allusion to **BLAST**, the  
Vorticist magazine founded in  
1914 by Percy Wyndham Lewis,  
who was both an artist and writer.  
**BALLAST** was founded in 1985.  
Initially it was a protest against  
illiteracy and other anti-intellec-  
tual tendencies among artists. Its  
editor having reached middle age,  
it is now chiefly a harmless  
pastiche of odd and indelible  
extracts from books and articles.  
Put differently, it is intended to be  
insightful, amusing or thought-  
provoking.

The purposes of **BALLAST** are  
educational, apolitical and non-  
commercial. It does not carry  
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It is published every three  
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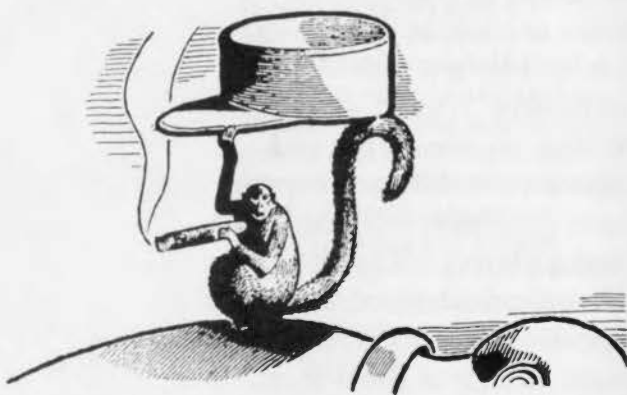
# During

the meal, I was sitting opposite a middle-aged gentleman with a long handsome beard, who had been introduced to me as a barrister. We were having an animated conversation about criminal psychology. In order to answer a particular question of his, I made up a story to illustrate it, embellishing it with all sorts of details. While I was telling my story, I noticed that a quite different expression came over the man's face, and a silence fell on the table. Very much abashed, I stopped speaking. Thank heavens we were already at the dessert, so I soon stood up and went into the lounge of the hotel. There I withdrew into a corner, lit a cigar, and tried to think over the situation. At this moment one of the guests who had been sitting at my table came over and asked reproachfully, "How did you ever come to commit such a frightful indiscretion?" "Indiscretion?" "Why yes, that story you told." "But I made it all up!" To my amazement and horror it turned out that I had told the story of the man opposite me, exactly and in all details.

C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 51.  
Suggested by Barb Whyre, a reader from Tuxedo Park, Delaware.

# Highly Recommended:

Norman Bel Geddes, *Miracle in the Evening* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960). An engaging autobiography by a legendary figure in theatrical and industrial design, the father of Barbara Bel Geddes.



Portrait of Castro as monkey on back, from David Suter, *Suterisms* (New York: Ballantine, 1986).

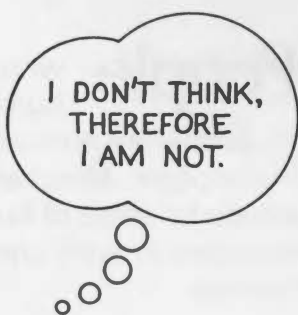
## **John Jay Chapman:**

Did you hear what [William Dean] Howells once said to a boring author who was trying to wring a compliment out of him? "I don't seem to write as well as I used to." "Oh, yes you do — indeed you do. You write as well as you ever did — but your taste is improving."

## **William Congreve:**

[in a letter to Mrs. Edward Porter on 27 September 1700] For my part I keep the Commandments, I love my neighbour as my selfe, and to avoid Coveting my neighbour's wife I desire to be coveted by her; which you know is quite another thing.

Non Cogito, Ergo  
Non Sum, from  
Tom Grothus, *Errata*  
(Seattle: Function  
Industries Press,  
1984)



He [a thirteen-year-old boy,  
born blind, who had regained his sight]  
was very much surprised,  
that those things which he had liked  
best, did not appear most  
agreeable to his eyes, expecting those  
persons would appear  
most beautiful that he loved most, and  
such things to be most  
agreeable to his sight, that were so to his  
taste... Being shewn his  
father's picture in a locket at his mother's  
watch, and told what it was,  
he acknowledged its likeness, but was  
vastly surprised; asking,  
how it could be, that a large face could be  
expressed in so little room,  
saying, it should have seemed as  
impossible to him, as to put  
a bushel of anything into a pint.

**Z. Cope**, *William Cheselden* (Edinburgh,  
England: 1953). Suggested by  
Lois D. Naumanator, a reader from  
Boise, Idaho.

**Charles  
Baudelaire:**  
Life is a hospital  
in which every  
patient is domi-  
nated by the wish  
to move to  
another bed.  
One would prefer  
to suffer nearer  
the fire, while  
another feels sure  
he would get  
well if he were  
by the window.

**Anon:**  
Would you like  
to sin  
With Elinor Glyn  
On a tiger skin?  
Or would you  
prefer  
To err  
With her  
On some other  
fur?

**People** who don't have a sense of humor are a drag. Interesting people are humorous, one way or another. Shakespeare, Mencken, Shaw...each had a wonderful sense of humor. And humor is important in every arena — especially in business.

**Paul Rand**, interviewed by Steven Heller in Mildred Friedman, et al., *Graphic Design in America: A Visual Language History* (Minneapolis and New York: Walker Art Center and Harry N. Abrams, 1989), p. 195.  
Suggested by Barry Pye, a reader from Nags Head, North Carolina.

**September 1644:**  
Sir Arthur Aston was governor of Oxon at what time it was garrison'd for the king, a testy, forward, imperious and tirannical person hated in Oxford and elsewhere by God and Man. Who kervetting on horseback in Bullington green before certain ladies, his horse flung him and broke his legge: so that it being cut off and he therupon rendred useless for employment, one coll. Legge succeeded him. Soon after the country people coming to market would ever be and anon asking the sentinell, "who was governor of Oxen?" They answered "one Legge." They replied then: "A pox upon him! Is he governor still?"

**Anthony a Wood**, *Life and Times*  
Suggested by Phil Tertip, a reader from Parachute, Colorado.



**Tallulah Bankhead:**  
I am as pure as the  
driven slush.



**H.H. Asquith:**  
“Why did you  
murder those  
workmen at  
Featherstone in  
1893”? “It was  
not 1893: it was  
'92.”



**Robert Frost:**  
[when asked to  
explain one of  
his poems]:  
What do you  
want me to do —  
say it again in  
worser English?



**Philip  
Guedalla:**  
Any stigma is  
good enough to  
beat a dogma  
with.



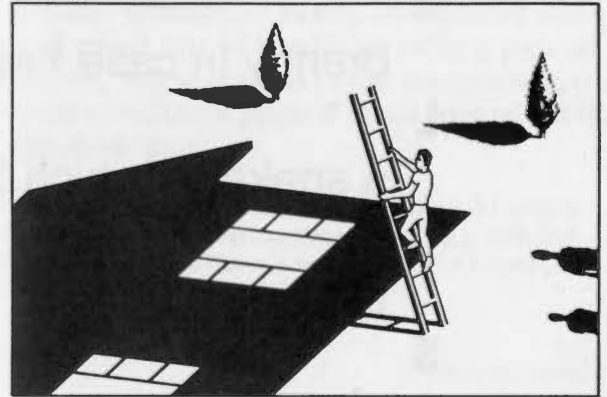
**Fred Allen:** I  
don't have to look  
up my family tree,  
because I know  
that I am the sap.



**Dr. John Arbuthnot:** Sir John Cutler had a pair of black worsted stockings which his maid darned so often with silk they became at last a pair of silk stockings.

**ONE** lives with a few familiar ideas. Two or three...one polishes them and transforms them. It takes ten years to have an idea fully one's own — about which one can talk. Naturally this is a little discouraging. But in this way man gains a certain familiarity with the beautiful face of the world. Up to that point he looked at it face to face. But then he has to step to the side to gaze at its profile. A young man looks at the world face to face. He hasn't had time to polish the idea of death and nothingness, the horror of which, however, he has tasted.

Albert Camus, quoted in Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience* (New York: Horizon Press, 1963), p. 59. Suggested by Freida P. Puhl, a reader from Lincoln, Nebraska.



Adjusting the Antenna, from Tom Grothus, *Errata* (Seattle: Function Industries Press, 1984) \$3.40 from the author at 2140 9th West #1, Seattle WA 98119.

**Artemus Ward [referring to Geoffrey Chaucer]: Mr. C. had talent, but he couldn't spel. No man has a right to be a lit'rary man onless he knows how to spel. It is a pity that Chawcer, who had geneyus, was so uneducated. He was the wus speller I know of.**

●●●● one day in 1912 I got a little book from the Japanese ambassador to America... It was a charming little book and all you ought to own it. It is called *The Book of Tea*. Well, there I read Lao-tze for the first time, and I read that the reality of a building does not consist in the roof and the walls but in the space within to be lived in. Well, there is my thesis.

Frank Lloyd Wright, "Autobiography" (record of a lecture on 13 May 1956) in Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Living Voice* (Fresno: California State University Press, 1987), pp. 25-26. Suggested by Deb Utante, a reader from Many Farms, Arizona.

"Have you ever been in France, Monsieur Martin?" said Candide.  
"Yes," said Martin, "I have been through several provinces. There are some where half the inhabitants are crazy, some where they are too tricky, others where they are usually rather gentle and rather stupid; others where they try to be witty; and in all of them the principle occupation is making love, the second talking slander, and the third talking nonsense."

Francois Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Candide* (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 66. Suggested by Margrethe C. Lauber, a reader from Cincinnati.

**W.C.**

**F**

I always keep a

**I**

supply of stimulant

**E**

brandy in case I see

**L**

a snake — which I

**D**

also keep handy.

**S**



**When**

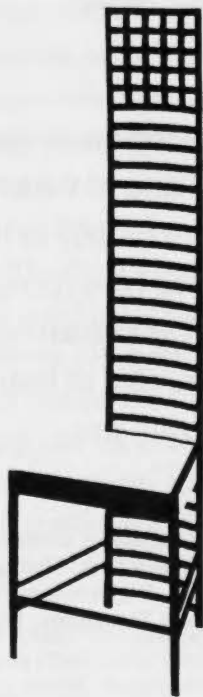
one sat to him [the British artist and writer Percy Wyndham Lewis], in his enormous studio, mice emerged from their holes, and lolled against the furniture, staring in the most insolent manner at the sitter. At last, when Tom [T.S.] Eliot was sitting to him, their behavior became intolerable. They climbed on to his knee, and would sit staring up at his face. So Lewis bought a large gong which he placed near the mouse-hole, and, when matters reached a certain limit, he would strike this loudly, and the mice would retreat.

Edith Sitwell, in a letter to Lady Snow on 8 January 1959. Suggested by Guy Nicollojuste, a reader from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

How **M**uch depends upon the way things are presented in this world can be seen from the very fact that coffee drunk out of wine-glasses is really miserable stuff, as is meat cut at the table with a pair of scissors. Worst of all, as I once actually saw, is butter spread on a piece of bread with an old but very clean razor.

G.C. Lichtenberg, quoted in W.H. Auden, *A Certain World* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), pp. 136-137. Suggested by Adam Baum, a reader from Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Emily Dickinson  
(describing herself  
in a letter): I had  
no portrait, now,  
but am small, like  
the Wren, and my  
Hair is bold, like  
the chestnut Bur,  
and my eyes, like  
the Sherry in the  
Glass, that the  
guest leaves.



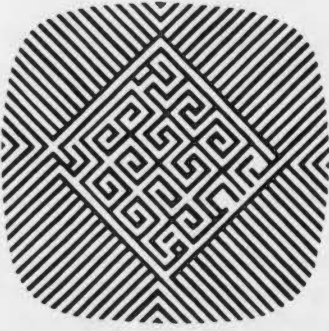
Hill house bedroom  
chair by Charles  
Rennie Mackintosh,  
1902.

**M** was married twice  
**Y** before she married  
my father, but she  
**M** never told me this  
**O** until after he died.  
**T** She couldn't  
**H** remember her first  
**E** husband's name.  
**R**

John Cage in Jeff Goldberg, "John Cage Interviewed" in *Transatlantic Review*, 55/56 (May 1976), quoted in Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1989). Suggested by Ella Funt, a reader from Battle Ground, Indiana.

**When** Freud visited me in Zurich in 1918, I demonstrated the case of Babette [ a patient ] to him. Afterward he said to me, "You know, Jung, what you have found out about this patient is certainly interesting. But how in the world were you able to bear spending hours and days with this phenomenally ugly female?"

C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 128. Suggested by Fran Chize a reader from Tomahawk, Wisconsin.



Basketry pattern from British Guiana, from L.H. Appelton, *American Indian Design and Decoration* (New York: Dover, 1971).

But the scenes [of growing up on a farm] that I have described, and many others of the same nature, such as the searing of horses' tails, the killing of poultry, the birth of cattle, Even the lewdness of a half-witted laborer, were witnessed by us children with complete passivity — just as I have seen children of the same age watching a bullfight in Spain quite unmoved by its horrors. Pity, and even terror are emotions which develop when we are no longer innocent, and the sentimental adult who induces such emotions in the child is probably breaking through defenses which nature has wisely put round the tender mind. The child even has a natural craving for horrors. He survives just because he is without sentiment, for only in this way can his green heart harden sufficiently to withstand the wounds that wait for it.

Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience* (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), pp. 22-23. Suggested by Beth Lee Hehm, a reader from Flossmoor, Illinois.

# ONE

day Lady Onslow, being desirous of knowing the most remarkable planets and constellations, requested Mr. Harvest, on a fine starlight night, to point them out to her, which he undertook to do; but in the midst of his lecture, having occasion to make water, thought that need not interrupt it, and accordingly directing that operation with one hand, went on in his explanation, pointing out the constellations with the other.

Anon, *The Olio* [1796] quoted in Louis Kronenberger, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 238. Suggested by William Board, a reader from Peru, Nebraska.

**Jack Benny:** I was born in Waukegan a long, long long time ago. As a matter of fact, our rabbi was an Indian. He used a tomahawk...

**Dr. Spooner:** I want you to come to tea next Thursday to meet Mr. Casson.

**Mr. Casson:** But I am Mr. Casson.

**Dr. Spooner:** Come all the same.

Maurice Bowra (*Memories*) quoted by W.H. Auden in *A Certain World* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 118  
Suggested by Warren Peaze, a reader from Meeteetse, Wyoming.

# I

studied journalism in college intending, to expose the world's ills. It was the late 1960s, and radicalism was pervasive. I learned valuable lessons: that bell bottoms are truly unattractive; that you can successfully challenge the status quo; and that you are free to use your imagination to change the real world. And within the inevitable self-seriousness of this process, I discovered that humor can be a critical medium. Everywhere, especially where it least belongs.

Tibor Kalman, interviewed by Steven Heller in Mildred Friedman, et al., *Graphic Design in America: A Visual Language History* (Minneapolis and New York: Walker Art Center and Harry N. Abrams, 1989), p. 145. Suggested by Jack Naif, a reader from Bowlegs, Oklahoma.

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