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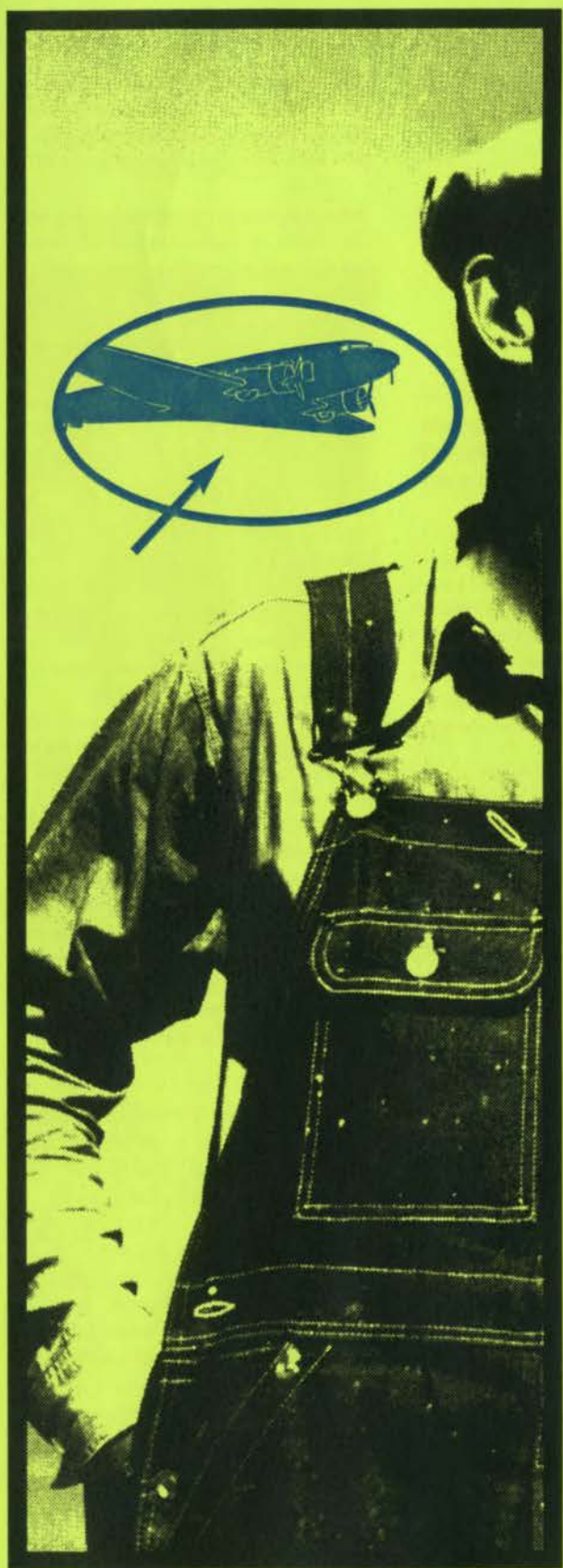
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Ballast is an acronym for Books Art Language Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well as a distant allusion to *Blast*, the short-lived publication founded during World War I by Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer. *Ballast* is mainly a pastiche of astonishing passages from books, magazines, diaries and other writings. Put differently, it is a journal devoted to wit, the contents of which are intended to be insightful, amusing or thought provoking.

R A N D A L L
J A R R E L L
Art is long, and
critics are the
insects of a day.

A N O N
'Tis better to
have loved a
short than
never to have
loved a tall.

H E N N Y
Y O U N G M A N
(after watching
ballerinas danc-
ing on tiptoe):
Why don't they
just get taller
girls?

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A few hours after I arrived at Taliesin we dined with others outside under a large tree. Flies, for some reason, were prolific on this warm spring day. [The architect Frank Lloyd] Wright remedied this annoyance by having a fly swatter next to his chair. As a fly landed, he would pick up the swatter and take precise aim. "That's Gropius," he jovially exclaimed, and then he would take aim again at another unsuspecting fly. "And that's Corbusier," he would add, until dead flies littered the table and he had struck down the so-called hierarchy of modern architecture.

M A R I A S T O N E in Edgar Tafel, ed., *About Wright: An Album of Recollections Those Who Knew Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: John Wiley, 1993), p. 57.

**FRA, DARD AND
MARY MERRYSEAT:
On Elbert Hubbard and
Dard Hunter**

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ANON
Ars longa,
vita brevis.

LEFT
Photograph
of **ELBERT
HUBBARD** as
published in *Pig-Pen
Pete or Some Chums of
Mine* (East Aurora
NY: Roycroft, 1914).
Author's collection.

IN 1903, A 20-YEAR-OLD chalk talk artist named William J. Hunter (later known as Dard Hunter) was touring the U.S. on the Chautauqua lecture circuit. The son of an Ohio newspaper publisher, he was the stage assistant for a troupe of traveling magicians, headed by his brother Phil, who performed as "The Buckeye Wizard."

On a hot summer day in California, the chalk talk and the magic show had been scheduled to follow a lecture by the politician William Jennings Bryan—the "Silver-Tongued Orator"—who had recently lost a bid for the U.S. Presidency. To prepare the stage for the magic show required considerable effort, so all the props had been installed when Bryan arrived for his lecture. Backstage, as he groped for the curtain, he became entangled in the magic paraphernalia, and ripped out wires, strings, and threads.

Upset by Bryan's clumsiness and his unwillingness to apologize, Hunter noticed that the orator's hat had been left backstage. During the lecture, he dumped red chalk inside the hat, so that later, when Bryan placed it on his

**FINLEY
PETER
DUNNE**
Ivry gr-great ora-
tor ought to be
accompanied by
an orchesthry or,
at worst, a
pianist who wud
play trills while
th' artist was
refreshin' himsilf
with a glass iv
ice wather.

MAX
BEERBOHM
[William Morris]
is unquestionably an all-round man, but the act of walking round him has always tired me.

DARD
HUNTER
(*My Life With Paper*)
[As a child] I was fat and rotund, and had a lackadaisical disposition; a slow and easy way of life was more to my liking. I recall my embarrassment when my father ordered two pairs of trousers for me from a Philadelphia tailor. When the enormous pants were completed they were displayed in the clothing-store window with a placard reading: "For a ten-year-old Ohio boy."

perspiring bald head and sauntered out into the blazing sun, he became literally red-faced.

It was on that California tour that Hunter stayed briefly at the Glenwood Mission Inn (now called Riverside Inn) in Riverside. There, for the second time, he witnessed a new trend in architectural and interior design known as Craftsman or Mission style. He had seen furnishings of this kind two years earlier at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, but never before had he been engulfed by it: "You can't imagine how it makes me feel to look at it," he wrote to his brother, "It is the grandest thing I've seen since I have been in existence." He couldn't wait to return to Ohio, to build his own Mission furniture and to redesign the entrance hall to his parents' home.

Mission-style furniture was first marketed in the U.S. in 1894. Inspired by William Morris and the British Arts and Crafts Movement, it was called "Mission" because, like the furnishings in monasteries and missions, it was non-decorative, sturdy, and simple. It was, as someone noted then, "a furniture with a mission, and that mission is to teach that the first laws of furniture making should be good material, true proportion and honest workmanship." In addition, it may have been influenced by the austerity of Shaker furniture, which was well-known and had been exhibited at the U.S. Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876.

Morris had also spearheaded the Private Press Movement by setting up the Kelmscott Press in 1890. Between 1895 and 1910, more than 50 derivative presses were launched in the U.S. alone. So it is no surprise that, at the same time that Dard Hunter became interested in Mission-style furniture, his father had acquired a book that had been designed and printed by William Morris. "I became so fascinated by the book," Hunter recalled, "and by father's description of the Kelmscott Press that I was eager to visit England, where such books had been made." But he could not afford to travel then.

In the meantime, Hunter's brother had shown him an issue of *The Philistine*, "a periodical of protest" that was edited by a former soap company executive named Elbert Hubbard. Published by an artists' colony called Roycroft in East Aurora, New York, it was, as one author describes it today, a flamboyant literary magazine full of "ranting, 'new' poetry, distilled aphorisms, and self-promotion." However pretentious, it must have struck a

common chord, because its circulation grew from 2,000 in 1895 to 52,000 in 1900, then soared to an astonishing total of 110,000 by 1902.

This phenomenal rise in the magazine's circulation was triggered in part by an essay, titled "A Message to Garcia," that first appeared in *The Philistine* in March 1899, and was then reissued in scores of editions as a slim but elegant leather-bound book. A defender of benevolent capitalism, Hubbard compared a worker's obligation to his corporate employer to a soldier's unwavering loyalty to his patriotic duty. According to Eileen Boris (*In Art and Labor*), it was Hubbard's belief that "the ordinary worker was incompetent and lazy, but those who loyally fulfill orders would be rewarded. Such men need never fear layoff, and need never strike."

It is odd to recall that this essay, which was widely distributed to workers by American corporations, was written by an "artiste" who, in nearly all his photographs, is groomed and costumed in the garb of a nonconformist. Wearing shoulder-length hair (which tended to be thought of then, as it still is, as effeminate), a wide-brimmed hat, and a flashy bow-like Windsor tie, he dressed like a resolute advocate of the Aesthetic Movement, decked out to resemble a "dandy" (or Aesthete) like James A.M. Whistler and the discredited Oscar Wilde. Perhaps, as scholars now contend, Hubbard was simply a capitalist wolf in sheep's clothing. "Part dandy, part artist, part adman," continues Boris, "Hubbard appropriated the craftsman ideal but distorted its spirit." He made dishonest, duplicitous use of antiestablishment symbols to support the corporate status quo.

Despite such intrigues, Dard Hunter wrote to Hubbard from Ohio in 1904, to ask if he might be employed as a furniture craftsman at the Roycroft Shop. When Hubbard declined, Hunter enrolled as a student instead at the Roycroft Summer School. Once there, he quickly gained the trust of Hubbard and his wife Alice, who asked him to remain, then offered to fund his apprenticeship to a stained-glass window company in New York. In return, he agreed to design and construct a set of leaded-glass windows for the dining room of the Roycroft Inn, which was then under construction.

Six months after his apprenticeship, Hunter completed the windows, which everyone admired, replete with a colorful tulip design. But the artist increasingly hated his work, so



ABOVE A kind of chalk talk drawing called an "evolution picture" in which a rabbit becomes a magician, from *How to Chalk Talk* by HARLAN TARBELL (1924).

WALTER
HAMADY
Hubbard was
a mother.



FREEMAN
CHAMPNEY
(*Art and Glory*)
[Elbert Hubbard
was] a sort of
licensed eccen-
tric: his everyday
outfit included a
large Buster
Brown cravat,
baggy corduroys,
flannel shirt,
farmer's bro-
gans, and a
western Stetson.
His hair was nat-
urally curly, and
he let it grow to
his shoulders,
giving a page-
boy effect. Dur-
ing the vaude-
ville tour, Harry
Lauder said,
"Elbert is the
only one of us
who wears his
makeup on the
street."

much so, as he recalls in his autobiography, that whenever anyone mentioned the win-
dows' "prettiness," he would immediately be
inclined "to slide under the table." Finally, on
a brisk November morning, he carried a ham-
mer unannounced into the Roycroft Inn dining
room and hastily smashed all the windows. "I
could endure the windows no longer," he
confessed to the Hubbards, who were, to say
the least, surprised, "something had to be
done." Smiling faintly, his employer Fra Elber-
tus (Hubbard) said, "Evidently the windows
did not please you. Better try again and
make a design you will like." Then,
as the autumn chill filled up the
room, he added, "Dard, if you
feel inclined to smash your next
set of windows, please wait
until summertime."

Elbert Hubbard and
Alice Moore had first met at a
Chautauqua Literary Circle in the
late 1880s. Born and raised on a near-
by farm, she had recently moved back to
East Aurora, to teach high school, from Cedar
Falls, Iowa, where she had taught primary
school since 1883.

At the time that she and Hubbard met, he
was a married, middle-aged executive, with
several children. He had grown up near
Bloomington, Illinois, where, at age 15, he
took a job as a "soap slinger," peddling soap
from door to door for Larkin and Weller, a
Chicago-based company owned jointly by John
D. Larkin, who would become Hubbard's
brother-in-law, and Justus Weller, Hubbard's
uncle.

Hubbard quickly proved to be an extraordi-
nary salesman, largely because of his personal
charm. His salesman's smile, he later claimed,
"was contagious, also infectious, as well as
fetching. When I arrived in a town everybody
smiled, and invited others to smile. The man
who dealt out White Rock splits smiled, the
'bus driver glowed, the babies cooed, the dogs
barked, and the dining-room girls giggled,
when I came to town. I scattered smiles, lilac-
tinted stories, patchouli persiflage, good cheer
and small silver change all over the route...
and I sold the goods."

As a result, when the partnership broke up
in 1875, Larkin invited Hubbard to become a
junior partner in a new soap manufacturing
firm, called the Larkin Company, in Buffalo.
(This is the same Larkin Company for which
Frank Lloyd Wright, who was well-acquainted
with Hubbard, would later design an impor-

tant, innovative office building.) Over the next dozen or so years, Hubbard's instincts for marketing again proved extraordinary as he invented new, effective means of selling soap, including direct-mail sales, the use of attractive premiums, and various club and pyramid plans by which Larkin customers were persuaded, in exchange for gifts, to become salesmen themselves and to recruit their friends and relatives as new customers.

The Larkin Company flourished, with the result that, by the early 1890s, Hubbard had become wealthy, while also bored and unfulfilled. He was still an executive when he began to write books and to participate actively in literary circles. In 1892 (by which time he and Alice were a clandestine extramarital pair), he resigned from the Larkin Company, and sold his share of the partnership for \$75,000, the equivalent today of about one and a half million dollars. He then studied writing at Harvard, very briefly and unhappily, as a special student.

In 1894, Hubbard inadvertently became the father of two children by two different women, his wife Bertha and his covert lover Alice Moore. Perhaps in a vain effort to forget his responsibility for the coincident pregnancies, he sailed to the British Isles, where he hiked on "little journeys" to the homes of heroes from the past, among them Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, J.W.N. Turner, Sir Walter Scott, and so on.

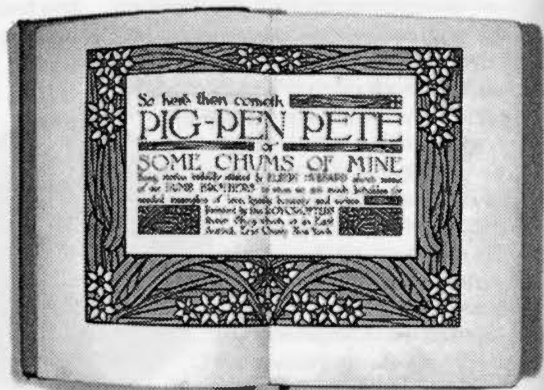
He also went to Hammersmith, to see firsthand the Kelmscott Press. Later, he claimed (untruthfully, apparently) to have spoken with William Morris personally, and to have been given the master's blessing to set up an American parallel to the Kelmscott Press. The truth of what actually happened (although no one knows for sure) may be in a diary entry by Wilfred Blunt, who frequented Kelmscott, and who wrote in 1894 that Morris felt "very scornful of an American imitation of his Kelmscott Press, though it was good enough to have taken Mrs. Morris in." When Hubbard returned to England in 1896, this time accompanied by his son, he was unable to visit Hammersmith, because Morris was on his death bed. A decade later, when Morris' daughter May lectured in Buffalo, she refused Hubbard's invitation to visit Roycroft: "I most certainly will not go to East Aurora," she said, "nor do I have any desire to see that obnoxious imitator of my dear father."



JAMES A. M. WHISTLER
[in a letter to Elbert Hubbard]
I have just read your *Little Journey* to the home of Whistler; I congratulate you; the booklet contains several things I never knew before.

ABOVE & OPPOSITE
Drawings of Elbert and Alice Hubbard from *White Hyacinths* (1907). Author's collection.

Whatever happened at Hammersmith, these trips to England were undoubtedly inspiring for the besieged Hubbard. In the rich, productive years ahead, he launched the Roycroft Printing Shop, along with comparable workshops for Mission-style furniture, metalwork, and leather; published a series of booklets about *Little Journeys* to the homes and



CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS Hubbard's printing was unbelievably bad...As a follower of the Arts and Crafts movement he was beneath contempt, both artistically and ethically...[he was] the moun-tebank of East Aurora!

ABOVE
Title spread of
Elbert Hubbard's
Pig-Pen Pete (1914),
designed by
DARD
HUNTER.
Author's collection.

lives of exemplary people; took over publication of *The Philistine*; and started a cluster of other magazines, among them *Fra* ("a journal of affirmation"), *The Bibelot*, and *The Roycrofter*. He also toured the country giving public lectures—in the process of which he was sometimes mistaken for William Jennings Bryan.

In addition, Hubbard published books, as many as thirty, on the widest range of subjects, the majority of which were written by either him or Alice, who had in time become his wife. His endearing nickname for her was "White Hyacinths," which was also the title of one of his books, published in 1907. It was "a book of the heart," he explained, in which he declared his affection for Alice, his "comrade, companion, chum, and business partner" (who was herself a tireless, articulate advocate of women's rights), and for all great women.

The Art Nouveau title page for *White Hyacinths* was designed by Dard Hunter, who had meanwhile fallen in love with Edith Cornell, the official Roycroft pianist. They married in 1908 and sailed to Europe on their honeymoon, where he was then able to visit the Wiener Werkstätte in Vienna, the Purkersdorf Sanatorium, and other architectural sites in Munich and Darmstadt. Returning to the U.S. a few months later, he continued to work for the Hubbards for less than two years, resigning in 1910 to return to Vienna to study. In the remaining 56 years of his life, Dard Hunter went far beyond his association

with Roycroft and ended up being primarily known as one of the leading authorities on the craft of papermaking.

In 1915, although the Great War was ongoing, Elbert and Alice Hubbard decided that the two of them should get away from East Aurora momentarily, and instead spend several months in the British Isles. Unfortunately, they were told that the Fra's passport had been invalidated, because he was considered to be a convicted felon.

Two years earlier, he had been charged and found guilty of publishing and distributing through the mail a joke described in federal court as "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy and indecent." It seems that a double entendre about a fictitious legal secretary named "Mary Merryseat" had appeared in the November 1912 issue of *The Philistine*, in which it was said that a senior member of the law firm, whose memory was failing, instead could only remember her name as "Gladys" (or Glad Ass). At the time, to send such smutty stuff through the U.S. postal service was, technically, a violation of federal law.

The good news is that Hubbard's passport was restored promptly when, after an appeal to the Justice Department, he was granted a full and unconditional pardon by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

The bad news is that this then enabled Elbert and Alice Hubbard to depart for England—on the *Lusitania*. On May 7, 1915, the now-famous British passenger liner was struck by a German torpedo. Only 18 minutes later, when the huge ship took its fatal plunge, the Hubbards were among 1,195 passengers and crew who perished with it.

SAMUEL BUTLER

(The Way of All Flesh) He [Ernest] was, however, very late in being able to sound a hard "c" or "k," and, instead of saying "Come," he said "Tum, tum, tum."

"Ernest," said Theobald, from the arm-chair in front of the fire, where he was sitting with his hands folded before him, "don't you think it would be very nice if you were to say 'come' like other people, instead of 'tum'?"

"I do say tum," replied Ernest, meaning that he had said "come."

FOOTNOTES

Among sources for this essay were Cathleen Baker, *By His Own Labor: The Biography of Dard Hunter* (New Castle DE: 2000); Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor* (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 1986); Charles Hamilton, *As Bees in Honey Drown* (NY: A.S. Barnes, 1973); Dard Hunter, *My Life with Paper: An Autobiography* (NY: Knopf, 1958); Wendy Kaplan, *The Art that is Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1998); Marie Via and Marjorie Searl, *Head, Heart and Hand: Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters* (Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994); and others. The author is also appreciative of the contributions of David Delafield (who was born and raised in East Aurora NY), Marianna Delafield, and Gerald Peterson (UNI Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist). For other information, see the websites <roycrofter.com> and <dardhunter.com>. Elbert Hubbard's original books are surprisingly affordable and can be readily purchased on Ebay and at <abebooks.com>.

A N O N
 [an old man,
 recalling his
 childhood mem-
 ory of Vincent
 van Gogh]
 No one knew
 him. He lived
 alone like a dog.
 People were
 afraid of
 him...He ran
 across the fields
 with these huge
 canvases. Boys
 used to throw
 stones at him. I
 didn't. I was too
 small.

M A U R I C E
 B A R I N G
 [Art Nouveau]
 was born in
 Munich. Its par-
 ent on the male
 side was Japan-
 ese, on the
 female side a
 bastard descen-
 dant of William
 Morris via
 Maple. It was
 brought up in
 Germany, fos-
 tered by what
 are called deca-
 dent artists.
 These are artists
 whose works are
 a mixture of
 beer and
 sausage and
 Aubrey Beards-
 ley.

Vincent Van Gogh: Chemicals, Crisis, and Creativity by Wilfred N. Arnold. Birkhauser, Boston MA, U.S.A., 1992. ISBN 0-8176-3616-1.

According to an old saying, the journey is more important than the destination, the process more gratifying than the product. In some ways, this book is a model of that. Its explicit purpose is to find the chemical, biological, and medical factors that caused or in some way contributed to the tragic self-destructive plight of Vincent van Gogh. Why did he cut off a portion of his ear? Why did he shoot himself? Was his "madness" in some way contributive to the gestural style and pictorial content of his paintings? The answers offered by this book are both fascinating and persuasive (far more convincing than those of other authors, whose range of explanations include epilepsy, alcoholism, manic-depression, schizophrenia, syphilis, and so on). The artist was not insane, concludes this author, who is a biochemist at the University of Kansas Medical Center, but rather he probably "suffered from an inherited, debilitating disease [called *acute intermittent porphyria* (or AIP)], which was unrecognized in his day. His life style [excessive drinking, malnutrition] provoked symptoms, exacerbated his condition, precipitated acute attacks, and shortened his life." That said, the most riveting part of the book is not its conclusions, but the spellbinding process by which they are reached. More than anything else, it is its elegant line of questioning, an exemplar of scientific reasoning, that is the real subject of this book. If all this sounds daunting to a non-scientist, it really should not. The author is a skilled writer with a delightfully dry sense of humor. Despite the technical nature of its subject matter, it is a highly accessible book that reads more like a well-written mystery than a medical diagnosis.

A B R A M G A M E S

[As a graphic designer] you wind the spring, and it is released in the mind of the viewer.

M I C H E L D E M O N T A I G N E

Words belong half to the speaker, half to the hearer. The latter must prepare himself to receive according to such motion as they acquire, just as among those who play royal tennis the one who receives the ball steps backwards or prepares himself, depending on the movements of the server or the form of the stroke.

Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid by Mardges Bacon. MIT Press, Cambridge MA, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 0-262-02479-9.

It goes without saying that American art and architecture were profoundly influenced by European Modernism, most famously by the Armory Show of 1913. It is less evident that certain aspects of European Modernism, architecture in particular, were inspired by American paradigms. Frank Lloyd Wright's City National Bank in Mason City, Iowa, for example, is said to have influenced the work of Bauhaus-founder Walter Gropius, while American grain elevators were of enormous interest to both Gropius and Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier. Gropius eventually emigrated to the U.S., but Corbu (as he was called) remained in Europe. He spoke little English, but he did develop friendships with various Americans in Paris, among them Gertrude Stein's brother Michael, the American Black performer Josephine Baker, and a wealthy American writer named Marguerite Tjader Harris, with whom he was later romantically linked. According to this book, such "enlightened" Americans convinced him to visit the U.S. for the first time in 1935 (later, he returned briefly to contribute to the United Nations Headquarters), with the expectation that, in so doing, he would be given avant-garde architectural commissions. As it turned out, the trip happened but not the commissions. Sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art, Corbu toured the country giving lectures, holding press conferences, and meeting with architects and industrialists. His lectures, delivered in French, were illustrated by freehand pastel drawings, some of which are published here for the first time. The experience changed (for good and bad) his understanding and appreciation of the U.S. In the end, he left empty-handed, with the result that he wrote an unfavorable book, titled *When the Cathedrals Were White: Journey to the Country of Timid People*, about the inability of most Americans to understand and support his ideas. All this is covered in great detail in this illustrated study, which is a dense academic treatise, but one that is often enlivened by surprising information from anecdotes, eyewitness reports, and contemporary news articles.

TOM LEHRER
I wish people who have trouble communicating would just shut up.

EDWARD MARSH
[Ned Lutyens] thought as a little boy that the Lord's Prayer began with "Our Father Charles in heaven, Harold be thy name."

ELIEL SAARINEN
Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context—a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.



ABOVE
Photograph of Le Corbusier during his first visit to the U.S. (1935).

WOODY ALLEN
I had a rough marriage. Well, my wife was an immature woman, that's all I can say. See if this is not immature to you: I would be home in the bathroom taking a bath, and my wife would walk right in whenever she felt like and sink my boats.

RIGHT
Identifying mark on
Craftsman furniture
designed by
GUSTAV
STICKLEY
(c1910).



The Furniture of Gustav Stickley: History, Techniques, Projects by Joseph J. Bavaro and Thomas L. Mossman. Fresno CA: Linden Publishing, 1996. ISBN 0-941936-35-X.

Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms: The Quest for an Arts and Crafts Utopia by Mark Alan Hewitt. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 0-8156-0689-3.

In 1898, Wisconsin-born furniture maker Gustav Stickley visited leaders of the British Arts and Crafts movement in Europe, then returned to make what he described as "Craftsman" furniture, to publish a monthly magazine (*The Craftsman*), and to develop plans for a utopian artists' colony called Craftsman Farms in Morris Plains, New Jersey. He became immensely influential, emerging as a central force in American Arts and Crafts, by propagating his simple, solid wood furniture, along with his carefully crafted beliefs. In *The Furniture of Gustav Stickley*, two furniture experts who are also university professors present a concise overview of Stickley's philosophy and accomplishments, discuss his materials and production methods, and provide detailed construction plans for nine pieces of his Mission-style furniture, among them a recliner (or Morris chair), a rocker, and a combination bookcase and table. In *Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms*, written by an architectural historian, new information is revealed about the conditions that led to Stickley's tragic, failed attempt, starting in 1911, to found a 650-acre farm and school community, which was initially comprised of a central log cabin for his family, surrounded by guest cottages. Unfortunately, Stickley went bankrupt and was felled by a nervous breakdown, with the result that Craftsman Farms was sold in 1917. In 1989, the site became public property, and has since opened as a museum.

JOHN LLOYD WRIGHT

(*My Father Who Is On Earth*) Elbert Hubbard was almost as picturesque as was Father—they talked arts, crafts and philosophy by the hour. Said Elbert the Hubbard to the Papa one night, "Modesty being egotism turned wrong side out, let me say here that I am an orator, a great orator! I have health, gesture, imagination, voice, vocabulary, taste, ideas—I acknowledge it myself. What I lack in shape I make up in nerve..." Said Dad the Papa to the Hubbard, "Not only do I intend to be the greatest architect who has yet lived, but the greatest who will ever live. Yes, I intend to be the greatest architect of all time, and I do hereunto affix 'the red square' and sign my name to this warning."



LEFT
U.S. President
WOODROW
WILSON inspect-
ing WWI camouflag-
e, with concealed sniper
in foxhole beneath a
papier-maché rock.

Blast: Vorticism 1914-1918 edited by Paul Edwards. Ashgate Publishing Company, Burlington VT, U.S.A., 2000. ISBN 1-84014-647-8.

Vorticism was a British-born art and literary movement that was founded in 1913 by P. Wyndham Lewis, a painter, novelist and critic, whose parents were British and American, and the American expatriate poet Ezra Pound. The name was coined by the latter, from the word "vortex," meaning an influence so compelling that everything within range is sucked into it. In part, it was inspired by Italian Futurism (which was preoccupied with machine age movement), so that most people commonly think of it now, too simplistically, as a composite of that and Cubism. As every cause has its manifesto, Vorticism's was a short-lived magazine called *BLAST: Review of the Great English Vortex*, which was first issued on July 15, 1914. In that issue, which is as much remembered for its typography as for its text, various things are "blasted" (hence the magazine's name), while others are "blessed." Humor, for example, is blasted as "Quack ENGLISH drug for stupidity and sleepiness. Arch enemy of REAL, conventionalizing like gunshot, freezing supple REAL in ferocious chemistry of laughter"; yet, in the same issue, it is also later blessed as "the great barbarous weapon of the genius among races. The wild MOUNTAIN RAILWAY from IDEA to IDEA, in the ancient Fair of LIFE." Originally published in German in 1996 as an exhibition catalog by two German museums, this book is a collection of essays by six of the subject's leading experts (including Richard Cork, whose books are well-known), illustrated by 100 reproductions (forty of which are in color) of paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture by its various practitioners, among them Lewis himself, Edward Wadsworth (who contributed to WWI ship camouflage), David Bomberg, Alvin Langdon Coburn, and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Supplemented by biographical notes and a substantial bibliography, it offers a lucid yet solid account of a maverick branch of Modernism.

BRAD
HOLLAND
("Express Your-
self—It's Later
Than You
Think")

In high school, girls draw unicorns and boys, superheroes. Then in four years of art school, they're supposed to develop an original style. Even Rembrandt couldn't have done that. So many students wisely spend their four years cultivating gimmicks they call style, and mastering artspeak.

VLADIMIR
NABOKOV
My father
was...a salad
of racial genes.

JEAN KERR

It was hard to communicate with her...The line was busy.

VIRGINIA WOOLF
("The New Dress")

She was a fly, but the others were dragonflies, butterflies, beautiful insects, dancing, fluttering, skimming, while she alone dragged herself up out of the saucer.

George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design by Stanley Abercrombie. MIT Press, Cambridge MA, U.S.A., 2000. ISBN 0-262-51116-9.

George Nelson (1908-1986) is nearly always listed as an important American industrial designer, but it may be more factual to think of him as a writer and design director. While at Herman Miller, Inc., from 1946 to 1965, he was instrumental in the production and distribution of furniture by Charles and Ray Eames. At the same time, as principal of his own New York firm, he oversaw the development of furniture, office storage systems, and exhibitions for General Electric, Chrysler Corporation, Steelcase, and Olivetti. The two most famous products with which his name is commonly linked, the 1950 Ball clock (described here as a cross between the starburst and an asterisk) and the 1957 Marshmallow sofa (which failed, as someone at Miller explained, because "not too many people wanted to choose which cheek to place on which marshmallow"), may in truth have been developed by Irving Harper, a gifted staff designer. Based on substantial, thorough research, this illustrated biography of Nelson is nevertheless entertaining and highly readable, in part because the author's text is clearly and fluently written, but also because of the numerous quotes from Nelson's writings, along with comments by his friends, employees, and clients. Included in the appendices are a chronology of Nelson's work, a biographical chronology, and a major bibliography.

Design Connoisseur: An Eclectic Collection of Imagery and Type by Steven Heller and Louise Fili. Allworth Press, New York NY, U.S.A., 2000. ISBN 1-58115-069-5.

Texts on Type: Critical Writings on Typography edited by Steven Heller and Philip B. Meggs. Allworth Press, New York NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 1-58115-082-2.

When students first begin to work with typography, they feel as if they have to use dozens of blatantly differing fonts. It is only later, often much later, that they see the more subtle distinctions between one letterform and another. Having attained that awareness, there is no turning back, with the result that smart-set type appears—to a type taster—as full or smooth or dry as does a bouquet of wine to a wine taster. Thereafter, one has little choice but to fall in love with styles of type, to dote on ones bevy of favorite fonts, and to resort to owning books like this. *Design Connoisseur* offers page after page of obscure typographic remnants (long forgotten typefaces, ornaments, letterheads, and logos), culled from antique specimen sheets, type books, and trade magazines from 1896 through 1936. While it contains almost no text, it is a dazzling "museum without walls" of otherwise unattainable shards from the archaeology of typography. *Texts on Type* is the opposite, in the sense that it provides only a handful of visual examples, consisting instead of fifty essays by historic and contemporary designers, critics, and teachers (among them Frederic Goudy, Ruari McLean, Emil Ruder, Jessica Helfand, Herbert Bayer, and Beatrice Warde), who address type-related topics that (regrettably) may only be of interest to other designers, design historians, and typophiles. As noted in a passage from W.A. Dwiggins in the latter book's foreword, letterforms "are so completely blended with the stream of written thought" that "only by an effort of attention does the layman discover that they exist at all."

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OSCAR WILDE

I like hearing myself talk. It is one of my greatest pleasures. I often have long conversations all by myself, and I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying.

DARD HUNTER

(My Life With Paper)

When halfway through the printing of this edition, I had a distressing experience. Years before, when I was building the small paper mill in Marlborough, I had been struck in the left eye by a flying spike, but little was thought of the incident at the time. The shock had apparently been more severe than I realized, although it was not until ten years after the accident that a hemorrhage in the eye reduced it to total blindness. Since 1925, therefore, I have done my work with less than half normal vision. I have found, however, that being able to see with but one eye may be an advantage, as I am convinced that my sight is more acute than that of many of my friends blessed with two normal eyes.

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