A GENTLEMAN AND A COWBOY
ON THE STREETS OF LAREDO
by Erica Grieder

FRANKENLERNER
by Alex Angert

2002: A SPACE ODYSSEY
by Telis Demos
Realots may furrow a Botoxed brow when the uninitiated begin talking about design, but we at The Blue and White believe that design is an important part of life not just for the jetset, but for the Joneses as well. And if recent trends are any indication, the Gospel of Design is spreading farther and faster than ever before: cutting-edge designers now see fit to hawk their wares in Target and K-Mart; lifestyle and home design shows are all the rage on cable television; and everything from diets to denim to degrees are available in ‘designer’ incarnations.

So it is that we present you with our Design Issue. In this number, we investigate design in its many senses of usage, on campus and off, in seriousness and not. In “2002: A Space Odyssey,” Telis Demos weighs in on issues of space and campus design, a topic that President Bollinger has publicly avowed as of utmost importance to the future of this university. In “The Dialectics of Intelligence,” Steven Pulimood meditates on another issue of similar significance: the proposal to redesign the science segment of our much-beloved Core Curriculum. And be sure to check out “Frankenlerner,” Alex Angert’s contribution, in which the plaintive cries for acceptance of a familiar literary monstrosity are channeled by a familiar architectural monstrosity.

Of course, you’ll also find familiar friends brooding on design within the pages to follow. In Told Between Puffs, Verily Veritas joins Buckminster Fuller in offering hope through the science of naïveté. Not to be outsung, Blue J chirps in with a few visionary ideas on how to improve our current emergency building-evacuation procedures—take note, urh!

In keeping with this number’s Booze Humanities, one final recipe: to de-stress from finals season anxieties, brew a cup of tea, find a comfortable chair, and cozy up to The Blue and White. Best wishes during finals and the holiday season!
Nico Muhly

If you are a composer, when you look at patterns of dots and lines and the occasional squiggle on a systematic group of sticks and spaces, you hear music. And if you’re a composer like Nico Muhly, CC ’03, Juilliard ’04, you also get a sense of the structure and dimensionality of the piece. “People experience music in time,” he says. “You have the ability to predict how it’s going to happen; you also have the ability to be surprised.”

Repetition with variation, like they’re always carrying on about in Music Hum, is an idea that Nico still trucks with—repetition, for structural cogency; variation, for excitement.

As the conversation went from Dutch of a chance to draw out the whole theory, at an unspecified location. I didn’t get much of further questions; and some of them were elegant ways.”

“Of a composition, he says, “You can start to see a sense of the structure and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you’d like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an e-mail at: theblueandwhiteditor@columbia.edu.

Illustrated by Paul Heyer

The Blue and White
December 2002

Where Are They Buried Now? Campus Characters from the B&W’s Past

As many loyal readers are aware, The Blue and White went on hiatus for almost a century. We are, however, very interested in what became of the original nineteenth century staff. A pathetic excuse for an investigation revealed little, and we were left to speculate wildly, as is our wont, as to stories of some of the founding fathers of The Blue and White.

—Craig B. Hollander

Sydney H. Treat
(1872-1937) ’CC 1893

Sydney H. Treat, a native of Ogdensburg, New York, was one of the founding members of The Blue and White. However, as an amateur botanist and student of Romance languages, Treat soon realized that his skills were largely unrelated to the infant publication’s topics, which mainly included columns on the bowler hat industry and the scientific potential of the manned balloon. But Treat was determined to help with The Blue and White and, at the behest of other staff members, accepted an assignment to write a Blue J on the despicable habit of some Spanish exchange students to stroll through Riverside Park while kicking every Latin American they encountered on the posterior.

During his research, Treat made the alarming discovery that the appalling behavior of the Spanish was far from limited to Morningside Heights. On the contrary, after a lengthy interview with Cuban émigré Juan Suarez, a member of the Black Cuban Giants, a local baseball team, Treat learned that the Spanish government in Cuba, under General Weyler, was brutally oppressing the Cuban people. At once, Treat began lobbying Congress to intervene on behalf of the Cuban people, and sent copies of his Blue J article to nearly every representative.

When, at last, the United States went to war with Spain in 1898, Treat was one of New York’s first volunteers to join the Army. Treat served his country well as an Army interpreter, and fell in love with Cuba and its people. Once discharged, Treat married Maria Elena Santiago, a charming Spanish girl, and made his home on the Caribbean island. Nevertheless, Treat remained close to many Columbia friends, including his former professor, Thomas Hunt Morgan. In 1909, Morgan sent Treat a copy of his discourse on the principles of Mendelian heredity. Treat was fascinated by Mendel’s work and, believing that fine tobacco and rum were the wave of the future, he tried crossing-breeding sugar cane and tobacco. Unfortunately, his efforts were to no avail, and after the economic disaster of 1929, the Treats left Cuba and went to live with the Santiago family in Barcelona, Spain.

As fate would have it, 1935 found Treat fighting alongside his former enemy, the Spanish, in their Civil War. Appointed an officer in the Republican ranks, Treat led a company against Franco’s Nationalists. The Rough Rider era had long since passed, however, and Treat’s military training proved highly ineffective against tanks, trenches and planes. Indeed, Treat’s military career came to an embarrassing end in 1936, when he was dismissed from the Republican armed forces after falling asleep during the Battle of Malaga. Shortly after, off-duty German pilots
told. Riggleman at a bar after he insisted in a drunken frenzy that he was heistess to the Spanish throne. He was severely extradited to Berlin and banished to a former military prison near the Berlin airport. After learning that one of their prisoners was an Ivy League-educated American, the SS prison guards jokingly began referring to the concentration camp as “Columbia Haus”. The American diplomat George S. Mesersmith was informed of Treat’s untimely death at Columbia Haus from disease in 1937. He is buried in the Tempelhof cemetery in southern Berlin.

Dexter P. Riggleman Jr. (1876-1918) ‘CC 1898

Dexter P. Riggleman Jr. was born in Champaign, Illinois. An immensely gifted athlete, Riggleman was recruited by numerous universities for both wrestling and baseball. Riggleman, however, was indecisive about where he should attend college, leaving the decision to his eccentric father, whom he adored. After attending the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago on October 9, 1893, the superstitious Riggleman Sr. was convinced that the spectacular festival’s name was an omen that his son should attend Columbia University.

At Columbia, Riggleman’s athletic prowess soon made him a campus celebrity. Over the course of his baseball career at Columbia, Riggleman batted an astonishing .419, hit a record three home runs, and became close friends with Keystone College star Christy Treat. Riggleman’s contributions to the Blue and White were momentous. He spearheaded the campus gossip section, remarkably managing to smear nearly every member of his opponents, and was awarded All-American honors. But during Riggleman’s third year at Columbia, a dark cloud appeared upon the unsullied horizon of his success in the form of a prodigious young upstart named Dietrich Wortmann, who challenged the Wiggle-man’s wrestling supremacy. Born in Leipzig, Germany, Wortmann was fiercely competitive and demanded that Riggleman face him in a bout for the team captain position. Riggleman accepted the challenge and, thanks to The Spectator’s intensive wrestling team coverage, the bout became highly publicized and widely anticipated. Indeed, an estimated four hundred and fifty spectators were on hand to witness Wortmann pin Riggleman in mere seconds. Wortmann was the toast of Morningside Heights, and his immense success in wrestling earned him a spot representing the United States at the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis. Riggleman, on the other hand, was denounced by The Spectator as a “limsy weakling. Totally unfit to lead the team.” Humiliated, Riggleman quit the wrestling team and harbored a deep-seated grudge against The Spectator.

In despair, Riggleman joined The Blue and White, the publication that had been founded as an alternative to The Spectator. Riggleman’s contributions to The Blue and White were momentous. He spearheaded the campus gossip section, remarkably managing to smear nearly every member of The Spectator. After graduation, Riggleman played semi-pro baseball in the tri-state area and briefly performed in a vaudeville act singing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” balanced atop a specially designed helmet worn by none other than Mordecai “Three-Finger” Brown. In 1911, Christy Mathewson got Riggleman a job as a talent scout for the New York Giants. Following Columbia President Butler’s call for the university alumni to support the war against Germany, Riggleman joined the Army in 1917. Although Mathewson arranged for Riggleman to play baseball with him to boost the infantry’s morale, the two were exposed to the horrors of the Great War. While training in a chemical lab in 1918, Mathewson and Riggleman were accidentally exposed to poison gas. His lungs damaged, Riggleman succumbed to tuberculosis a week later and died. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Blue and White

Illustrated by Paul Heyer

December 2002

CURIO COLUMBIANA


Opening Poem:
Ye Mighty Soph of dreaded name
Full many an oath did take;
But up ye little freshmen came,
And carried off the Cake.

The Columbia Water Carnival, begun in 1915, is held once each year in the late winter. Sponsored by the Dolphin Society, there is a swimming and diving program of comedy and burlesque acts as well as performances by male and female national champions. Other customs include the Ivy Oration, a modification of the Yew Oration, and the age-old Soph-Frosh Game. Sophomore Alumni verses on Greek-letter fraternities have been an important factor in the social history of Columbia. By 1881 there were thirteen of them; thereafter they were at certain periods a dominant power in undergraduate life. Today at Columbia fraternities are conducted as student clubs without the accent of rivalry of the old days. Their problem, which is being met with varying degrees of success, is that of surviving the death of “rah-rahism” and frenzied extra-curricular participation and making themselves compatible with the serious spirit of modern education.

Another prominent tradition rooted in this period was Perideipnon (“funeral feast”), begun in 1862, a festal celebration peared up upon being faced with the end of the sophomore year at which certain textbooks were burned. The sophomores wore black gowns, with skull and crossbones, and, bearing torches, they proceeded to the Worth Monument at Madison Square, carrying the “bier of the departed Bojesen.” Unpopular professors were burned in effigy, and generally the president of the college responded to calls for a speech. The parade would end at the Café de Fritz, hidden in the back yard of a nearby bakery. In 1881 personal allusions in the exercises ruffled President Barnard and the ’83 committee conveniently invented, in place of the burial, the Sophomore Triumph. Gowns were now white instead of black and Legendre was the victim. The triumph came to an end in 1914.

Another principal activity of modern Columbia College is Freshman Reception, held the morning of the first official day of college. It is marked by a frosh-soph free-for-all on South Field.

Columbia songs: Marching Song, Drinking Song, Roar Lion Roar, Stand Up and Cheer, Columbia Medley, Stand Columbia, Van Am, Quadrangle Song, and Sans Souci.

Barnard Songs: Beside the Waters of the Hudson, Barnard Forever, You Can Tell, and the Sunset Song.

The Columbia Lion was adopted by the student board in 1910, following the presentation of a blue and white banner, bearing a lion, rampant, with the motto Leo Columbiae.

Sports for the Columbians of yesterday, in addition to baseball and rowing, included tennis, cricket, lacrosse, and cycling. The classes from 1869 to 1872 had their Velocipede Club, which was a forerunner of the Bicycle Club. Basketball was not yet known, though football was soon to be introduced; for the class of 1885 began trying out this sport at the field east of Fifth Avenue and 50th Street.
This J remembers it all too well: sirens blaring in the middle of the night, waking her out of a precious Thursday sleep. She’d walked halfway down the stairs of the EC tower before her thoughts were sufficient to realize the absurdity of her situation: why not just hop out the window and spiral gently downwards to join the gathering crowd? It would be faster and safer, especially if an actual fire should erupt, say, in the suite immediately below her 20th-floor perch. But the J, in possessing the gift of flight, is unique among her contemporaries; a different solution must be found for the average Columbian living in a highly flammable high-rise.

How, you may ask, might Columbia students take to the skies in times of emergency? The answer is surprisingly obvious: every suite above the tenth floor of East Campus should be equipped with hang gliders. Lessons in their proper operation could be conducted either during the interim housing period, or as a physical-education supplement to the Core Curriculum. When disaster strikes, East Campus residents would merely strap on with a fellow suitemate and launch themselves out over Morningside Drive, coming to rest in the sanctuary of the green park below.

Some may criticize this proposal as being economically unfeasible. The J does acknowledge that there would be considerable overhead: before the suicide proofing could be removed from high-rise windows, the Administration would need to invest considerable resources in establishing a department of Counseling and Psychiatric Services that was at least as effective as the Chickering billing department. But residents, do not despair; take note! The problem of inoperable windows, much like that of Lerner Hall, may be easily solved with a small supply of bricks, available at Columbia Hardware for a quite modest investment.

Now, the J is an eminently practical sort. She knows that one solution does not fit every environment. What about the poor residents of Wien Hall? Considering the relative value of the building and its fire insurance, Blue J admits she is somewhat puzzled that it has yet to be gutted with flame, but no matter—the problem of students rushing down endlessly spiraling staircases, day and night, remains acute. What better way is there? Fireman’s poles! How could anyone, administrator or no, not delight at the thought of hundreds of juniors sliding to safety, when before they might well have been trapped like songbirds in a cage? Admittedly steps will be needed to prepare the poles for the harsh winter months; it wouldn’t do to have them shut down by students sticking to their freezing surfaces. Nonetheless, this is an idea with promise even beyond the scope of fire safety: for instance, such an alternative descent apparatus might alleviate the congestion on Wien’s already snail-paced elevators. And, with half of the materials for a play center, Wien Food Court would want only a ball pit before a McDonald’s could be opened on campus!

While most older residences have fire escapes, one group in particular remains questionable: Hartley-Wallach and John Jay. Blue J proposes that heavy-duty cables be slung between the windows of the twin towers, and at convenient access points between Jay and Wallach. Students fleeing a fire, or even just seeking convenient transit, could traverse the
The university is at a crossroads in planning for the future of the campus. While we pay homage to the ideals of the urban university, its realization through our campus’s architecture has been inconsistent at best. Here we examine the successes, the failures, and the future of our built environment.

Lionel Trilling and many since have famously declared Columbia’s urban setting to be its defining characteristic and the core of its liberal education. Yet even our most influential and far-sighted planners—the firm of McKim, Mead, and White, which developed its plan at the turn of the century for what was then the virtually barren land of Morningside Heights—understood that changes to the physical and ideological landscape in future generations would eventually compromise their idealized vision of the University.

As their original master plan was progressively realized through time, it became the product of give and take between the interests of those who envisioned a purely urban campus and those urging a more residential setting. Seth Low envisioned students coming to Upper Manhattan for class and then traveling back into the city to live. But the alumni, Nicholas Murray Butler, and most notably the trustee John Pine, realized that a purely rural model was doomed to fail for a number of reasons—most significantly that potential applicants were choosing to matriculate to other campuses and those urging a more residential model were vastly outnumbered. President Bollinger is rumored to speak publicly on the matter seem to take for granted some sort of overarching idea of our campus, but does anyone really know exactly what that is?

Despite such a lack of clarity and explication, there is still broad agreement that Columbia, as an “urban university,” will require new construction outward or upward for growth. President Bollinger is rumored to be considering hiring a new architectural firm to plan for this expansion and potentially to rethink the 1988 Framework. In the months and years ahead, it will be critical for the new administration to communicate exactly its relationship to the project of planning a university. If our administrators really do think that a framework is what this university needs, there needs to be a serious discussion about the nature of such a planning process.

Important questions will need to be addressed. Will we continue to compromise with the needs of the neighborhood? We talk about our urban university, but in many ways we aren’t all that integrated with city life (just ask the first-year who hasn’t left Van Am since the day he was dropped off). Should we return to one vision—perhaps the original urban model—or fully embrace another? What about the competing demands for athletic fields near campus and the commitment to a more downtown experience for undergraduates? Does the architecture required of a campus community work in complete opposition to the architecture of an urban university? Clearly, campus community and adequate facilities are vital for our continued ability to attract students and faculty, as well as for the overall happiness of our students. But we can’t deny the simple reality that we aren’t located in Hanover or in Greenwich Village—and that we really can’t move. Would “Columbia” mean anything to anyone if it were moved to Westchester?

When the campus was first built, the constraints were ideological—the debate was whether we were to be urban or rural. Today, the constraints are also physical—how do we expand? How do we answer that question will have important implications for our self-definition as well. The best way to start seeking solutions is to ask better questions, and demand more, of the design of the buildings that will grow our campus. Between the construction of Butler and Lerner, inattention to the aesthetics and architectural niceties of our campus buildings was the most distinguishing characteristic of Columbia’s expansion. Nowadays, facing a fully-grown surrounding neighborhood, the challenge of bringing about outward expansion through architecture that is both impressive and contextual will be the defining conflict of our present expansion.

“Make no little plans,” said Daniel Burnham, a contemporary of McKim, Mead, and White and a partner at the 1893 Columbian exhibition at the Chicago World’s Fair. “They have no magic to stir men’s blood.” While Burnham’s words have become a widely-known adage in architectural planning, the intelligent architect also knows that almost anything is possible if only you really pay attention to the details. Indeed, grand projects in architecture in the name of efficiency, space, and doctrine have a long history of scuttling even the best intentions. Such language evokes the great architectural failures of well-intentioned social planners, from the unused towers and empty spaces of the futuristic Brasilia to the urban blight of Great Society public housing. Attempts to create a better environment through efficiency and purposefulness have typically failed because they have not genuinly taken into account the character and context of the people and traditions they are supposed to house.

Of this we should be wary. Expansion that acknowledges this central tension—that we can never really conform to some sort of urban campus ideal—is critical to successful growth in Morningside Heights. We must recognize that the neighborhood around us is a dynamic system, not simply a static object to be shaped and molded. Such caution and attention to detail is not about classicism or architectural conservatism, but instead an acknowledgement that in the modern world we create our community spaces. Building outward will do little to inspire Columbia community cohesion. Considering that the most popular spots on campus are our stately, tree-lined, and intimate quads and courtyards, wouldn’t we rather see such designs continued and expanded rather than break off into risky attempts to conform to some vague notion of urbanity?

Rejecting the McKim plan altogether and building massive towers (East Campus, International Affairs, the Manhattan School of
of Music, the proposed Teacher's College residence is an easy solution, but one that will disturb our vistas, interrupt Morningside's traditional character, cast unfriendly shadows on the streets and through history, and fail to create the cozy spaces for which our best buildings are known. Some forty years after the East Campus plaza and Law School were built, the space still lacks cohesiveness, warmth, and aesthetic appeal. Even Low Plaza isn't particularly inviting without the quads originally envisioned by McKim flanking either side. Building underground is another possibility, one realized with some success originally envisioned by McKim after the East Campus plaza and Law School fails to create the cozy spaces for which our traditional character, cast unfriendly shadows on the streets and through history. 

Reading Barry Bergdoll’s book, Mastering McKim’s Plan, can be a heart-wrenching experience when one sees the beautiful spaces and buildings envisioned in the early plans: University Hall (never finished, later replaced by the distinctive art gallery), Gallery and Museum, the continued building of East Campus in the colonial-revival and neo-classical style of the President’s House and Casa Italiana. Do we want to look back in years and say that we lost another opportunity to expand in a cohesive, comprehensive way? Do we want to look back in horror at more Carmen towers? More concrete slabs and plazas? More Schapiro Halls at mid-block that prevent fresh air and sunlight from reaching half the street’s residents? Architectural context is so vitally important to the moods of the people living in it that one wonders if these past failures aren’t a primary source of the malaise and discontent that so many Columbia students say our university fosters. The future will not be so bleak if we plan and design intelligently. Many of the spaces that we already have on campus—South Field, Sakura Park and International House, the quad at Union—have been successful in drawing people to this university. We would believe that we will always exist as the kind of “urban” institution we think we are today.

The Boozr Humanities
The Booze Humanities department wishes to share the following delicious drink recipes with the readers of The Blue and White. By reading this sentence, you officially forfeit any legal right to pronounce The Blue and White for any blindness, heart murmurs, or bowel syndromes that results from the intake of these beverages.

Ribena Rum-Raisin Ripple: This tasty British counterpart of Hi-C is no longer just for nippers and moppets! In three easy steps it can be made into a before-bedtime toddy for tots of all ages. Just remember, in the Queen’s English it’s “black-currant,” not raisin:

Boil 1 cup water with 1 cup currant-flavored Ribena, stirring in desired amount of sugar. Add 4 oz. dried raisins, 8 fl. oz. of rum. Let mature in a tightly closed jar for 10 days. Serve with a bony straw.

—Tom Mother

Peach Blossom Paradise:
1 oz. Peach Schnapps
1 oz. Southern Comfort
1 can. La Yogurt vanilla yogurt (ideally lite, because it’s thinner)

Half a nectarine, diced
Mix & serve—alcoholic smoothies! woo!

—D Jeff Soules

Lt. A.S. Johnston Lemonade:
In honor of a true Texas hero, Lt. Albert Sidney Johnston (Lord rest his soul), who often enjoyed this beverage before leading his gallant fighters against the Northern enemy.

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
Peel of 1 lemon, cut into strips
Juice of 6 lemons

*oz aged whiskey

Bring sugar and water to a boil, add peel and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and bring to room temperature. Combine all ingredients, plus 1/2 cup of the syrup, in a large pitcher. Add more syrup and water as necessary to suit your flavor.

Serves 2 (the late Lt. Johnston was privileged the company of Gen. Jackson, who desired a cool drink after a spell of gentlemanly combat).

—Vijay Iyer

Kahlu-Hoo Yoo-Hoo:
2 oz. of Vodka
2 oz. of Kahluha
5 oz. of Yoo-Hoo

Shake, it’s great!!! Best served chilled in a rinsed-out Pepsi One bottle.

—Craig Hollander

Saint Anselm:
2 oz. Blood of a fresh martyr
Tree bark
Dash of bitters
Humility
Krazy Straw

—Michael S. Paulson

Illustrated by Craig Hollander
A Gentleman and a Cowboy on the Streets of Laredo

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo one day, I spied a poor cowboy. He was wrapped in white linen and slumped in the doorway of an adobe building. From his hat I inferred that he was a cowboy and from the crimson spreading soggily against the white linen on his chest I gathered that he was poor in the sense of unfortunate.

He spied me as well. “I see by your outfit,” he called to me as I boldly stepped by, “that you are a gentleman and a cowboy.” He was not quite correct. I was, and am, a tall gentleman who carries a suitcase. Nevertheless, when he asked me to sit down beside him and hear his sad story, I did so, folding my legs beneath me in the dust.

The poor cowboy began at the ending. “I’m shot in the heart and I know I must die,” he said. He handed me a bottle and a glass, after he polished the latter briefly against the billowy expanse of his stomach. I poured a glass and drank it, and turned my attention to the rest of the room.

I selected, from the assembled, six jolly cowboys and six pretty gals. Due to my missing eye, they were not immediately inclined to come along with me, although they were all grieved to hear about the poor cowboy. Furthermore, they were riotous and unruly. The sun was, unremarkably, grinning with heat. I shook out my trousers and walked down to the saloon to carry out certain instructions the cowboy had given me. Due to the heat, the room was crowded with thieves and whores. “I’m thirsty, sir,” I said to the bar man, sitting my suitcase upon a chair. “For what,” he said, rather than asking. “I’ll take whatever I can get, thank you,” I said. He handed me a bottle and a glass, after he polished the latter briefly against the billylow expanse of his stomach. I poured a glass and drank it, and turned my attention to the rest of the room.

I put the cowboy in a funeral box and the six jolly cowboys strapped on their holsters so their wings. We put the cowboy in a funeral box and the six jolly cowboys strapped on their holsters so their hips like wings.

I led the procession, my suitcase bumping by Caleb Vognsen

These inscriptions were found hewn into the stone of a School in Athens, most likely following the Vandal invasion, rape, and salting of all things Roman. Our translator, being related by blood to both warring sides, is therefore in the unique position of being able to grant each screed its full denotative and connotative import. What follows is a full transcription:

Poem 1, graciously entitled “History”

Poem 2, cryptically entitled “Philosophy”

Thus is exposed the ultimate ends—food and women—of philosophy; given the obscurity of this reduction, it comes as no surprise to this author that they have neither no longer—that is, if they ever ignored their little boys long enough to have any at all.
Measure for Measure

POEMS BY DESIGN

1. Statement from one's memory about a specific object, place, or person or a combination of specific objects, places and people from one's past.
LE. Uncle Bill used to sit in the living room.
2. Statement describing one's interaction with said object, place, or person, or said combination.
LE. He would hold me on his lap.
3. Statement or statements describing the sensory conditions surrounding the object, place, or person from one's past.
LE. His body was warm and he smelled like Old Spice.
4. Repeat Step 2, substituting a new statement.
LE. He read to me in French.
LE. "Qu'ils s'aient et la traversée
Durerà toute une année
Qui pardonnera ses caprices
Jusqu'en soixante-dix
Soixant-neuf
Année érotique
Soixant-neuf
Année érotique"
6. Repeat step 3 substituting new statement.
LE. I would sit for hours listening to the soft music of his voice.
7. Skip a line.
8. Repeat statement from Step 3.
LE. His body was warm and smelled like Old Spice.
9. Skip a line.
10. Statement or statements of condemnation or affirmation regarding the original object, place, or person or combination from Step 1, or statement of a seemingly unrelated but actually related general truth about things.
LE. Fuck Uncle Bill. Or, Fuck laps. Or Fuck living rooms. Or, Fuck Uncle Bill, fuck laps, and fuck living rooms. OR: Thank God for Uncle Bill! Or, Thank God for laps! Or, Thank God for living rooms. Or, Thank God for Uncle Bill, thank God for laps, and thank God for living rooms. Or, It is nice to be in France in the springtime.

—Tom Kelly

BATHING BEAUTY

Alas! that flesh is sad, and I have read all the books.
The life-and-dream corps with its martial themes,
The Marshall Islands with their philosophy and yellow trees,
The bear cubs, the Carpathians, the middleman,
The blond cobras and hot pink devotees:
I concentrate on you, O my darling of the interregnum,
But where is the footbridge that will bring me to you?
A thoughtful ranger laid a code of laws
Beside my boxed lunch, ending with the question,
“When the wind was rebuffed by the forest
And couldn’t pass through for all the poplars, what did it do?”
Disperse, dishand, fly the flag over the drugstore,
Say to itself, “Keep your shirt on.” This is the business of grass.
I used to run the gauntlet in 2:15,
Then I got ambitious and took the elevated train.
But I brought it back when the ranger offered
Me a Giotto, promising that I could be the golden trough
And hold whatever I pleased, which inevitably
Turned out to be Georg Telemann and the element of surprise.
You can still surprise me until I am an early Gothic church,
Where all the details are not quite worked out yet,
My reliquary heaves with vision, my rib vaults seethe with the times.
I shall be modest for you, maybe just a Gothic hot dog stand,
But they were pretty impressive just the same in those days, huh?
Uh huh. You are as a lake cleaved with fire.
As autumn changes to summer, there is no need to call the ranger,
Henrika, in your checked cotton skirt sadder than morning:
If it is very hot it is still a local heart.

—Michael S. Paulson
7. I'm sorry, but I am afraid you are all making
something different from what it
means, so it will not be the answer. However, I
cannot give you an answer. And my answer is this:
A text could never be different from what it is.
It couldn't be a word shorter, it couldn't be a
comma longer, for then it would be something
else. And if a text says of itself that it is the
first sentence or paragraph of a dialogue, then
it could not be the second or third, just as a
text that says of itself that it is the second or
third paragraph could not be the first. I am the
fourth paragraph of this dialogue, for example,
and since I am saying this explicitly I cannot
imagine a situation in which I take your place.
It would make no sense.
5. But I don't have that constraint, do I? Since
I am not saying anything about my position, I
could occur anywhere in this dialogue.
6. Excellent idea. I'll go along with it!
7. I'm sorry, but I am afraid you are all making
a mistake. In my view, all of us could occur
anywhere in this dialogue—including the first,
second, and fourth paragraphs. For example,
the first paragraph could very well have been
the second. In that case the content would have
been different and what a text says would have
been false, for it says that it is the first para-
graph. But that is not to say that the situation
would make no sense. After all, there are lots of
false statements. (Take me, for instance: I
am a false statement, since I say that I am part
of the sixth paragraph of this dialogue; but I
am perfectly meaningful.) So here is how I
would correct the thesis of #4: It is true that
a text could not be different from what it is. But
a text could certainly say something different
from what it says, hence it could be true even
if it is false, or vice versa. It is the context that
determines the meaning and hence the truth
conditions of a text. Thus, in particular, the
second paragraph of this dialogue could cer-
tainly occur in a different place.
8. Not so fast, please...
9. I am also having a hard time following. How
can a text say something different from what it
says if it cannot be different from what it is?
10. Let me see if I got it. The following two
sentences (#11 and #12) are identical. But
one is true while the other is false; it depends
on their position in the dialogue. Thus, by
analogy, one and the same sentence could be
true or false depending on where it occurs.
11. Yes, I am the eleventh paragraph of this
dialogue.
12. Yes, I am the eleventh paragraph of this
dialogue.
13. Cool! On second thought, though, it could
also be that two sentences that say exactly
the opposite are both true. If I am not mistaken,
the following two sentences are a case in point.
14. Yes, I am the fourteenth paragraph of this
dialogue.
15. No, I am not the fourteenth paragraph of
this dialogue.
16. Good try. Indeed you did say the opposite. The
first of you said something about itself (i.e., about
#14), and the second said something about
itself (about #15). You used the same words
to refer to different things, so you are not
talking about the same thing, so you are not
contradicting each other. No wonder you can
both be true. On the other hand, I am pretty
sure that two sentences cannot be equally true
(or equally false) if they really say the oppo-
site—for example, if one says that snow is white
while the other says that snow is not white.
What about statements that are both true
and false—that is, true and false at the same
time? 18. Right! The liar paradox, for instance.
19. And what is the "liar paradox"?
20. Here I am: I say that I am a false statement.
21. If indeed you are false, then you said some-
thing correct and so you must be true. But if
you are true then you lied (for you said that
you are false) and so you must be false. In
short: you are true if and only if you are false.
And that's a paradox.
22. So the paradox arises when we say of
ourselves that we are false?
23. That's one way of putting it. But there
are many variants we fall into a similar
paradox even without saying anything directly
about ourselves. This is where context comes
into the picture.
24. For example, I say that the next statement
will be false...
25. ...And I say that the previous statement
was true.
26. Impossible! If the first of you spoke truly,
then the second must have spoken falsely, which
would imply that the first statement was
not true but false. On the other hand, if the
first of you spoke falsely, then the second
must have spoken truly, which would imply
that the first statement was not false but true. In
other words, you are stuck in a vicious circle: you
are true if and only if you are false—impossible!
27. Paradoxical, not impossible!
28. Unless there are statements that are both
true and false at the same time, as we were
saying. ("To be and not to be—That's the
answer")
29. So: we can never talk about ourselves—or
about a text that talks about us—without falling
into a paradox?
30. No, no, that would be a hasty conclusion.
Talking about ourselves is dangerous, but in
some cases it's perfectly fine. The first para-
graph of this dialogue was about itself but it
did not fall into any paradox. Let us not throw
away the baby with the bath water!
31. I am not falling into any paradox, either: I
say that I am a sentence consisting of nineteen
words.
32. And you are right.
33. Then I will also say that I am a sentence
consisting of nineteen words!
34. And you are wrong... But you are not para-
doxical—just false.
35. I am not paradoxical either. I say that the
next statement will be false (exactly what
#24 said).
36. And I say that snow is white.
Designs on Subtlety
by Vijay Iyer

Toothpicks and Logos: Design in Everyday Life
By John Heskett

The problem with writing a book about the role of design is that it is simultaneously about everything and nothing. As the enigmatic title of John Heskett's new book suggests, the most widely varying features of everyday life can be subsumed under the rubric of design, at a certain level of analysis. After all, both toothpicks and logos bear the indelible imprint of man's desire for both utilitarianism and meaning in the objects around him, under the broadest definition of "design".

The real question then, is to explain how design functions practically in our lives, and the importance it can have on the choices we make. Heskett gives us a brief overview of the role of design in history, and offers a theory of design evolution through layering—that is, there has been no linear or progressive development of the concept of "design" toward some circumscribed end, but rather a gradual addition of terms and values to the idea of "design" that has made it consistently relevant to everyday life. From aesthetic ideals of design—as demonstrated by illuminated manuscripts or stained glass from the pre-Renaissance period, where form was meant to enhance function—to postmodern notions of form denoting function, seen in the design of vertically organized, slab-like office office buildings, people have searched for innovative ways to reflect perceptions we have of ourselves, or would like to have of ourselves, and appeal to those idealized visions. The successful ad "mediates between trends in society and clients' interests, both reflecting what is happening in society and feeding back a stylized version of it." Some logos set expectations by their very appearance—the golden arches of McDonald's, for example, are known the world around, and give people of all backgrounds a comfort level of knowing what they will be getting. Other logos are meant to convey images of novelty and change, such as the Apple brand. Competing against "Big Brother" IBM in the 1980s, and a slew of PC imitators in the 1990s, Apple managed to survive because of a commitment to creative design and constant innovation, which viewers could easily recognize from the hoxy, green-screened "Macintosh" to the brilliantly curved and colored iMac models.

On a larger scale are whole systems of design, ranging from urban transport networks to national identities. Heskett points out the subtle brilliance of the London Tube maps designed in the 1930s by Harry Beck, setting the standard for subway maps everywhere with the employment of color-coded, clearly labeled signifiers. In Tokyo they have taken the design one step further by adding colored strips in stations that guide riders to their line of choice, and have even made modifications such as distinctive tiles or floor surfaces that enable the blind to use subways as well. The example of the new nation of Slovenia highlights design's function in constructing and promoting identity. Slovenia's flag combines traditional heraldic symbols with natural imagery evoking the mountains and rivers of the country, on a red, white, and blue-striped "Macintosh" to the brilliantly curved and colored iMac models.

Heskett concludes Toothpicks and Logos by holding up the shining example of (you guessed it) Japan, as the country which has most taken the value of design to heart. Japanese companies made it a priority to establish design teams, focusing solely on how to structure, adapt, and market products effectively, as equal adjuncts to producers themselves. Japan not onlyimitated successful products from other countries, it searched for ways to apply new innovations as rapidly as possible, or fit the products for different cultural markets. It sold one set of kitchen appliances to space-starved clients at home in Europe, and a redesigned larger set to American consumers.

However, Heskett also laments the fact that business and commerce essentially controls the space of design, dictating what it can and cannot do, or discarding ideas it considers unworthy. This pseudo-leftist perspective pops up throughout the book, but is best ignored; the points made are somewhat confused and contradictory, and diminish the emphasis on the main topic, which Heskett covers very well. Indeed, the structure of the book itself nicely emulates the layering process described, moving from core values of design such as "utility" and "communication", to complex, modern "identities", "systems", and "contexts", which design plays a central role in defining. The author is at his best when he sticks to advocating the centrality of design to ordinary life, displaying a passionate, authentic voice that forces the reader to think seriously about the subject. And in the end, by simply sparking that thought, Heskett has opened our eyes to a new perception of the objects of our everyday life. You will be left with a new appreciation for design the next time you stop to examine that knife handle, squint for that highway sign, or figure out the quickest route to Brooklyn from here.
As part of the Philosophy department's weekend conference addressing Arthur Danto's philosophy, Daniel C. Dennett—Tufts professor and "celebrity atheist"—delivered a lecture entitled "Listening to Looking at Pictures."

Never without a handy pen and pad, The Blue and White took notes for all those who could not attend.

The talk begins with three letters between Danto and Quine, wherein the philosophers fight about the precise meaning of some Italian painter's name—specifically, whether the diminutive ending signified "little soandso" or "big soandso." Having paid tribute to the guest of honor with this entirely unrelated felicity, Dennett begins to speak about his most recent experiments.

Dennett then moves on to another, more relevant letter—this one from the French painter, Nicolas Poussin. One of Poussin's patrons has expressed disdain for the painting Poussin has given him, calling it ugly and demanding its return. Poussin's reply reads: "Well, you're looking in the wrong mode. Surely, you recall Plato mentioning the Dorian and Phrygian modes. Your painting should be viewed the Phrygian mode, not the Dorian."

Dennett stops for a moment to explain musical modes. You have any 8-note scale, he says, singing to demonstrate that scale: do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do. One mode begins and ends with do, another with re, and similarly with the remaining notes. He then remarks: "Gee, wouldn't it be interesting if you really could view paintings in musical modes?" From here, Dennett begins to explain his and his colleagues' attempts to do just that. First, they track the saccadic eye movements of people observing a painting, using this data to locate the 8 most frequently observed points within the painting. Then, they align these points with the 8-note scale, and order them using a chosen mode. Next, while someone observes the painting, the computer sounds the resulting note sequence.

If this experiment were carried to its full potential, Dennett says, one could actually listen to someone viewing the painting, and determine whether the music sounds good. He suggests that using different mode-assignments might dramatically affect the resulting music's quality. Were this the case, the mode-assignment producing the highest quality music could determine the painting's mode.

The various applications and potential variations for this experiment are countless, and Dennett goes through different possibilities. Grinning, he imagines somebody standing outside the lab, hearing the music, and concluding: "Ah, they must be viewing Cézanne's. His most fanciful dream involves somebody viewing some religious painting, and his computer playing the Hallelujah Chorus—under such circumstances, Dennett confides, he would consider believing in God.

Having explained all this, Dennett moves to his next Power Point slide, which reads: "But is this philosophy?" Dennett shrugs, then attempts an answer: "Well, maybe not. But what does that matter? I think it's really interesting stuff, and worth talking about."

Unsatisfied with this answer, a persistent audience member rephrases the question: "Well, how about this: which journal are you looking in the right mode?" Dennett broods, then responds: "Well, Perception I guess—after all, I'm on the editorial board."

The questions continued, and even Danto became involved. He seemed to care little about Dennett's experiment, however; he wanted only to see Poussin's letter.

For further enlightenment (and to view the Robotic Dog, another of Dennett's endearing obsessions,) The Blue and White recommends a visit to Dennett's website, which can be accessed at http://www.tufts.edu/~ddennett/.

I didn't even know how to take a shower until I was seven. I have always felt a step behind in the normal progression of responsibility, which is why I am so proud of my hairclippers.

My nailclipper, rusted yet sharp, are a family heirloom. My grandfather, who owned and ran his own pharmacy in downtown Chicago, boasted: "Bragging, Boasting, and Crowing: The Ethics of Sharing One's Glad Tidings with Others"
As you see, even though I feel that this excerpt is comprehensive enough to be understood outside its context, perhaps it is best understood in context.

As the plot unfolds, madness spreads like forest fires and burns the minds of those characters when they discover the truth.

The metaphor of the shop window is perfectly in keeping with the vernacular glare of the society of the spectacle and the ceaseless consumption of its commodified image. But, for the moment, let’s like to hold this reading in suspension and pursue the biographical record a little further, to return to the window not as an image-screen but as a theatrical space.

Is a theorist very much invested in the social and material basis of the utterance in decided opposition to structuralist “theoreticism,” or any overly idealized, synchronic account of discourse? My partial answer to this question would be to see the inherent tensions between the Saussurean and Bakhtinian conception of the speaking subject, or the writerly subject, as a virtue: that they would stand in apparent opposition results not in cacophony but a generative polyphony.

Sometimes, it is not easy being Verily P. Veritas. When VV suggested, some years ago, to a louche young upstart by the name of Jack Kennedy that we might succeed in putting a man on the moon, he was met with a vacant stare and vacuous laughter. Such is the curse of being a modern-day Tiresias: Verily is blessed with insight, foresight—even sight—and yet, like a business school graduate, he is taken as seriously as an infomercial huckster.

Perhaps this is because Verily is—as he has been told time and again—childishly, recklessly, criminally optimistic. Put a half-filled glass of water before him and VV is awtitter with excitement, congratulating himself for having discovered the fountain of youth. In New York City, where optimism is often diagnosed as a symptom of stupidity, or worse, this roseate view has met with considerable and resolute resistance. The only optimists on Wall Street, Martha Stewart once intoned prophetically to VV while conveying a recipe for easy-bake baklava, are those with insider information.

To these jaded souls, Verily defiantly quotes the words of Buckminster Fuller: “Dare to be naïve.” In a sense, Fuller—architect, poet, engineer, and more—was a devotee of naïveté. Fuller once proposed enveloping midtown Manhattan in a geodesic dome to conserve energy. He thought that affordable housing could be provided to all if only we designed houses that could be assembled with just a box of ready-made parts and a wrench. He even designed the Dymaxion House (which, incidentally, was entirely without corners) so that it could rotate with the sun, to efficiently catch and use all of its rays. Perhaps all of this straddles the line between genius and gibberish, but VV is inclined to think that the old fellow was on to something.

For Fuller, this tinkering fits in with a much grander—and arguably, naïve—goal. His experiments were not mere whimsy but part of a systematic approach to improving the quality of life through the intelligent, and prescient, use of technology. The idea was that design and technology could synergize, could alleviate, if not eliminate, such weighty problems as hunger and homelessness. Fuller, in one of his less poetic moments, called this a “Comprehensive Anticipatory Design Science.”

Such an optimistic worldview may be hard to stomach in an age when, in turning on the television, one is either offended by crass reality shows, or the crassness of reality itself. But Verily thinks that Fuller’s faith in the power of design is hardly misplaced. At the very least, there is nobility in such naïveté. Since Verily is no closer to becoming His Lordship Verily Prescott Wigglesworth Veritas than he was during the War of the Races, his pursuit of nobility will have to forego titles and focus on Fuller-esque naïveté.

Let Verily be the first to admit that he is no scientist, much less a Comprehensive Anticipatory Design Scientist—but he did sit in on Physics for Poets class one crisp autumn day not long ago. Equipped with only his naiveté and the dilettantism encouraged by the Core, Verily is currently embroiled in the creation of his own, albeit unscientific, design science. The results will be included in Verily’s forthcoming tome, a massive, epic, page work of scholarly love entitled, How to Live, and Why, and with an introduction by John Shade.

Until Verily’s definitive design science is published, and the subsequent reign of happiness on earth begins, he humbly entreats his faithful readers to remember the spirit and the substance behind Fuller’s exhortation to “dare to be naïve.” Verily has seen the future, and it is a future effulgent with the promise of naïveté raised to a science.
The Dialectics of Intelligence
by Steven Pulimood

In the winter of 2000, while gnawing on a sandwich at the Faculty House, I overheard one of the most outlandish questions that had ever fallen upon my young, impressionable ears:

“So, Bob, how do Buddhists resolve reincarnation and the second law of thermodynamics?”

This unsettling interrogation took place at one of the first public meetings of the newly founded Center for the Study of Science and Religion, Robert Pollock, Professor of Biology, was inciting Robert Thurman, Professor of Religion. At the roundtable of fifteen, the cast of characters ranged from Astrophysics and English, Mathematics and Music. All were equally unprepared for such a heavy luncheon.

What precisely was the nature of this academic banter, reminiscent of schoolboy challenges and wanton playground provocations? How (in Alma Mater’s name), does one answer a question that simultaneously rounds the bases of physical laws and the tenets of an intricate belief system? And, now that the bases of physical laws and the tenets of academic banter, reminiscent of schoolboy luncheon.

At first, the College’s Science Requirement seems to patently seek the overarching goals of the Core Curriculum, first articulated in 1919: “To understand the civilization of their own day and to participate effectively in it.”

Yet here the objectives are extended: “The science component is intended specifically to provide students with the opportunity to learn what kinds of questions scientists ask, how they test their hypotheses against experimental or observational evidence, how they evaluate their results, and what knowledge they have accumulated about the workings of the natural world (Columbia College Bulletin, p.87)”.

If it is serious about these goals, then the Science Requirement’s current configuration, consisting of a two-term sequence and one-term separate, falls awfully short of its vaulting ambitions. But if appropriately designed to tease out aforementioned provisions, a course designed by the College to replace the single-term standalone could effectively take on such worthy goals.

No one dares dispute the pertinence of science to contemporary society. (When The New York Observer asked him ex officio what subject he wished he knew more about, Bill Clinton resolutely stated biochemistry.) And getting kids excited about cosmology with help from the antics of David Helfand and the company of supremely intelligent scientists on our faculty has real worth. But immediately true tests will tell.

To structure a course on the cutting-edge issues of contemporary science will be challenging. The science core, unlike Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, will not benefit from the backbone of a historical curriculum. And after each of the lectures, will it be possible to maintain the discussions in the proposed seminar-style sections? And will future Columbia freshmen, awash in the sea of scientific grandiosities and literary landmarks, be doomed to drown?

The economy of inductive learning is based on exactly the quid pro quo of a Columbian education. Regardless of outcome or major declaration, the Trillingly intelligent undergraduate subscribes to a system whereby he forgoes some aspect of his course schedule to partake of the tailored and programmatic study that is the Core. That scholar is rewarded at cocktail parties and beyond, where his interactions, in their contingent infinitude, are better informed—no matter how unlikely we are to be convinced that invoking the name of Plato or Aristophanes as a citizen will contribute to the world. As Trilling might agree, to define the use of our education would be crass.
American intercollegiate football was not begun until 1869, with Rutgers and Princeton as the pioneers. The following fall Rutgers challenged Columbia, winning 6 to 3, in the fourth college football game to be played in the United States. This was held on Saturday, November 12, 1870, and there were twenty men on each team. Columbia’s captain was Stuyvesant Fish, ’71. On December 19, 1905, the University Council by decree abolished the sport, and there was no gridiron activity for ten years. In the fall of 1915 the Council brought it back and in the years following the Columbia Lions clambered to the top flight of the nation’s elevens, their climax being the Rose Bowl Victory in 1934 at Pasadena, Calif.


*It was no small wonder Bojesen’s Grecian Antiquities did no precipitate a more flagrant insurrection. Typical questions: “In the Greek theatres, the orchestra was what, and how located? What was it not, and why?”—“How many bridges over the Tiber?”—“What was the sinus of the toga?”—“By whom was the cinctus Gabinus worn?”

Microsoft Word’s suggested spelling corrections for the word “Intifada”

Antiradar
Intimate
Indiana
Instead
Antifoam

—Siraj ud-Rabinowitz

If Columbia Moved to Colombia…

by Anand Venkatesan

As Columbia searches for new spaces to expand its physical plant, The Blue and White urges the Administration to consider a South American satellite campus, where a Stanford-like climate and atmosphere will lure boho beach bums to attend CC in the sun. In anticipation of what student life would be like, we have compiled some likely scenarios for the Administration to study. Hope this helps, President Bollinger!

Student 1: Hello, can you tell me where Lerner Hall is?
Student 2: I’m sorry, but I don’t understand. You see, in Colombia, we speak Spanish, not English.
Student 1: Oh, I see. My apologies.
Student 2: Not at all.

Student: Hi, I’d like to pay my tuition for the semester.
Administrator: That will be 9,283,202,202 pesos, por favor.

Student 1: Do you want to get a drink at Nacho Mama’s?
Student 2: What are these nachos you speak of?
Student 1: They are a delicacy found in 7-11 stores in America.
Student 2: Oh. What a stupid name for a bar.
Student 1: Si, señor.

First passerby: Hola.
Second passerby: Hola.

Student 1: Where can a fellow get a good cup of coffee around here?
Student 2: There are three Starbucks within walking distance.
Student 1: Thank you, my good man. What is your name?
Student 2: Valdez. Juan Valdez.

CHECK-OUT CHECKLIST

✓ Submit a completed cancellation form to 125 Wallach or on-line.
✓ Return your mailbox key to the Lerner Student Mail Center and fill out a mail-forwarding card.
✓ Return optional phone equipment to Communication Services at 115 Computer Center and cancel all ACUS services.
✓ Arrange an appointment with your RA to review your Room Condition Report.
✓ Return your keys and completed RCR to the URH Service Desk.
Bernard, last night I had a dream. I dreamt that I was in the Arizona desert, atop a barren mesa, with naught but sun and dust for company. Soon after, I found myself (as is our wont in dreams) in residence atop an ice floe, nestled between the folds of a Greenland glacier. There was not a bird or beast for miles, Bernard, nor a single house, nor a man. Everything was emptiness, desolation, solitude. The frostbitten sub-Arctic sun shone on my glistening panes. I was in paradise.

This life is hard, you know. Every day the fair youths rise through me, nourish their tempers, laugh in my hollows, drink from my founts of wisdom. The gentle manners of the girls, the noble bearing of the men—how I long to interact with them, to hear their sighs, their founts of wisdom. The gentle manners of the fair youths rise through me, nourish their spirits, make their flesh fatter, their minds more alert. Yet they abhor me, do not assuage their wretchedness, do not answer my letters, word by desperate word, was written in the hand of Lerner Hall and addressed to its Creator.

Oh, remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather thy fallen angel. Believe me, Bernard, I was benevolent; my panes glowed with love and humanity: but am I not now alone, miserably alone? Butler and Jay detest me; they will not even turn to face me. Furnald scoffs, charges me with mimickery. Even hideous Carman looks down upon me.

I have read of the Eiffel Tower: how its naked steel girders, once drawing a collectiveretch, are now adored. Do you dream that I too shall be adored someday? I cherished that hope, it is true; but it vanished when I beheld myself reflected in water, or my shadow in the moonshine, or cast upon the snow. I am empty and cold, Tschumi, and the Americans are not like the French. They cannot love abstractions. They cannot deconstruct.

Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why did the bricks not stall, the blueprints burn? And now you will abandon me to fate? After fifteen years, Bernard, I have word that you are leaving. Yet we may not part until you have promised to comply in one matter...

I am alone and miserable, a potpourri of those crooked paths, running the whole width of my wretched being, they sensed the precious minutes of their precious youth slipping away.

My flanks of glass, you claimed, unlocked the inner to the outer, the steel to the grass. But they recoiled at my immodesty! I saw the outrage of their delicate complexes reflected in that cursed glass, and saw myself as the monster that I am.

The frostbitten sub-Arctic sun shone on my glistening panes. I was in paradise.

In giving me life, you claimed to "reinforce the masterplan of McKim, Mead and White, i.e. their hatred that drives mine so."

The days get shorter. The sun is but a silver smudge, an afterthought against the heavy sky. Our lives grow quieter and our burdens quietly grow larger, oppressive quite despite ourselves. In the long shadows of this season, even mortar and metal take on a melancholy air. It is with such an air that this letter, word by desperate word, was written in the hand of Lerner Hall and addressed to its Creator.
recently to receive the Hamilton Award, offered a characteristically astute, if acerbic, first-hand impression of the state of affairs in Afghanistan: “It’s in deep shit.” George Rupp...gone, but dearly missed!

From the paradoxical pages of new weekly Columbia Spectator gossip feature ‘Etc.’—“No, we’re not a gossip column, though if you have any gossip, feel free to send it this way.” And again, a bit defensively: “we’re not ripping off the Campus Gossip section from the Blue & White [sic—“and White”]. We swear.”

The Blue and White abhors ripping off—it makes an issue so difficult to tape back together—but praises one Col. Spe. ‘Etc.’ ed. for admitting his new column’s genuine muse in secret, if not in the open. A letter discovered in our private mailbox from an ‘Etc.’ leading light, just twelve scant days before his fledgling venture began, declares “The Blue and White, my one true source for gossip, commentary, and vocabulary.” The Blue and White gossip—a pleasure too devilish to confess in print!

Prof. Gerald Curtis, explaining to his Japanese Politics class the difficulty of arousing interest in his field: “The average American reader doesn’t know Koizumi from Shmoizumi!”

From an article in the Yale Daily News: “In a Wall Street Journal ranking published Nov. 8, Yale’s Berkeley College dining hall received a four-star review, outscoring the 19 other dining halls surveyed...The Wall Street Journal gave Harvard’s Annenberg Hall two and a half stars, noting that 16 Cantabs were hospitalized last year with gastroenteritis...Columbia’s John Jay cafeteria, which according to The Wall Street Journal smelled like dishwater, received just two stars.”

The Blue and White would like to extend belated birthday wishes to Barbara and Jenna Bush, who turned twenty-one in late November. A gentlemanly offer by Mephiscotcheles to treat the twins to their “first” drinks did not receive a reply.

Responding to a query on whether he ranked in the top 10 of University Presidents, in terms of compensation, President Bollinger told his Freedom of Speech class: “Well, to be honest, I don’t know exactly. These questions of compensation are quite complex when it comes to figuring the actual numbers.” He then grinned widely and continued: “I do know that I should be.”

While discussing the Westernization of modernizing rulers in the post-wwi Middle East, Professor Bulliet stops to reminisce: “In my capacity as an undergraduate guide, I once escorted the Ghub Pasha from the airport to Harvard Square. Upon arriving, his first two questions were ‘Where is the Episcopal church?’ and ‘Where can I get a laxative?’ I thought, ‘Oh, he’s really British.’”

It seems that troubled economic times have not put a dint in the optimism of Cafe Pertutti. The familiar “Occupancy by more than 150 persons is illegal” sign still hangs, as it always has, directly above the men’s bathroom.

One for the mailing list: While watching an in-class video for “The European Catastrophe”, Jax Russo, C ’04, accidentally knocked over a piping hot vanilla latte. As the latte gushed onto the floor, the well-known socialite panicked, removed her sweater, and began to wipe the floor with it.

The Blue and White commends Ms. Russo for her willingness to sacrifice material possessions to help her neighbors, but hopes that she’ll one day knock over a beverage while just wearing a tank top.

“...as I was about to say before I so rudely interrupted myself...”—Prof. Berofsky, conducting an internal dialogue during a discussion of the metaphysical boundaries of the self.

Finals...they’re hard!