THE BLUE AND WHITE
Vol. XI No. II November 2004
Columbia University in the City of New York

A FERRISS TO REMEMBER
by Michael Mallow

DISEASE THE DAY!
by Avi Zenilman

THE FOUR HORSEMEN
by Michelle Legro
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Cover by Ajay Kurian

Typographical Note
The text of The Blue and White is set in Bodoni Old Face, which was revived by Günter Gerhard Lange based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765–1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.
sympathy is long overdue for the much-maligned Wile E. Coyote, every time tricked anew by the trompe-l’oeil tunnel on the canyon face. We here at The Blue and White know just how he feels—we’ve slammed into winter’s unyielding visage yet again. While hardier spirits may relish saccharine prospects of snowmen and cocoa, our heads shiver with visions of snowballing term papers and deadlines creeping up like glaciers. It’s enough to run cold the blood of the most devoted Butler-rat. But as all the really good hibernation caves and private islands have been booked for months, the B&W staff has taken solace in delusion and looked far, far beyond the imminent doom of reality. We bring you The Future issue—only the most fantastical articles allowed.

So because the nights are already frozen and interminable, cuddle up with Avi Zenilman and his “Disease the Day!”; he’s looked at the future of romance and seen a vision anything but frigid. Michelle Legro’s “The Four Horsemen” presents an equally toasty dystopia. If the vague future’s still a shade too plausible, escape with Michael Mallow into the New York that never was in “A Ferriss to Remember.” He’s not the only one taking comfort in plans best suited for Disneyland; Hector Chavez shows he’s a sensitive man well in touch with his inner eight-year-old in “Popp Culture.”

The present-weary members of The Blue and White staff sympathize deeply with Mr. Chavez’s escapist desires; we’re cold, sniffly, and we hope to see a future back on our mothers’ couches watching television. One way or another, it’s time for our naps—complete in some cases with a graduate school security blanket. Is nothing really certain but death and taxes? We’d like to add finals, winter, and growing up. But don’t despair: this month’s Blue and White aims to comfort like a really snug pair of bunny slippers—a pair of nano-rocket-powered bunny slippers. So snuggle up, turn the page, and dig in.
Hello Avi. It’s Eva. Well I was wondering if you could do me a favor. Okay, so in my language arts class, we study vocabulary words. And if you find a vocabulary word that we studied in a book, magazine, newspaper etc. or use the word correctly we can get quiz points, test points, and even free homework passes, depending on how many words you find/use. So I was wondering, if you are still writing articles, which Mom told me you just wrote articles for the Columbia magazine, if next time you could try to fit in some of my vocab words. And then I could “find” them and get a free homework pass! There are about thirty already, and we should be getting a lot more. Email or call me back and tell me if you will do this. I will put the list of words that I already have studied. you can use these in any form, if you are not sure which meaning I studied, call me. In your articles, you can keep on using the same word.

percussion defer persevere avert dilatory infer contend adversity perennial intent subvert tortuous subservient contort distort retort permeate introvert perverse prose excerpt exhilarate exonerate exorbitant compound exposition expound impose imposter proponent elation

Eva N. Zenilman

Dear Eva,

You are a gentleman and a scholar. The mischievousness with which you subvert the intent of your assignment does much to exonerate the family name which your brother has dragged so callously through the proverbial mud. Still, we would be remiss if we were to say that your request for an exposition of the proper manner in which to expound using compound latinizations caused nothing but elation. We do not contend that the fault is yours, but rather that of the educational system whose designs you have chosen very wisely to distort. Which is to say, really, why must your instructors persevere so perversely in imposing upon you so exorbitant a vocabulary? Communication, dearest Eva, must communicate. It seems your instructors seek to avert progress and create a nation of introverts who exhilarate only in writing whose dilatory indulgence leaves the hapless reader with much to infer. The Blue and White maintains a perennial adversity to such tortuous prose, and we suggest you avoid all writing which contorts and distorts common sense—indeed which makes meaning subservient to all manner of intellectual imposters and proponents of pedanticism. When your leering pedagogues nudge at you (as too soon they will) with excerpts of Henry James and Foucault we can only hope that you do not defer to them, but rather retort with the sublime and primitive percussion of hands upon desks which is the just reward of all those who seek to let verbal ostentation permeate in the young.

Your Servant,
Michael Zacchaeus Mallow, VIII
Managing Editor
The Blue and White
Grace Parra

Any conversation with Grace Parra, C’06, is likely to start out with her common form of greeting: “Meow?” Yes, this little lady has a habit of using cat-speak for salutation, at times resorting to various intonations, distortions, and meow-based compound adjectives to fully express her thoughts and emotions. It’s all part of the sonically intense verbal attack with which she greets the masses each day. It might be difficult to miss her as she runs to her various meetings, rehearsals, and methodically coordinated lunch and dinner appointments; Grace’s quick little trot, exuberantly curly hair, and carefully chosen fashion accessories (little boy’s blazer with complimentary shoe-purse) constitute a beacon of sartorial light in the sweat-hooded darkness of East Campus, Butler, or Lerner.

Wait, a shoe-purse? Grace explains: “On the spur of the moment, I was like, Grace, you need a purse right now—a small black one. What do I have with me? A shoe. Had I worn it? No.” Problem solved. Perhaps one can trace this Crusoe-like mindset of extemporaneous task handling to Grace’s ongoing participation in Columbia’s Fruit Paunch improv troupe. Grace has since taken home some lessons learned from her three years of improv, whether performing in McBain, Furnald, the Upright Citizen’s Brigade Theater, or Caroline’s on Broadway. Boldly unafraid of embarrassment and public failure, she remarks, “Doing improv, I say a lot of things, so a lot of it can fall flat or not be cool. I’m desensitized.”

This is an understatement, coming from a young woman who might burst into either mime or song at any given moment, regardless of location or appropriateness. Music in heavy rotation in the Grace Parra jukebox includes “all the classic standards: Ashlee Simpson, Lindsey Lohan, and Hilary Duff—oldies but goodies.” I wince at this, but her understanding of pop music has been influenced (read: skewed) in the past year while working at Interscope Records, a Top 40 radio station in her hometown of Houston, and Radio Disney.

At that last gig, she found herself dressed up as Cowgirl Gracie, playing “Mickey Says” with kids in predominantly Mexican grocery stores. Sure, it may not have been your summer internship at Goldman Sachs, but the entertainment industry—at all its levels—has always fascinated Grace. Her desired future occupations include explorer, nun, mariachi, or late night talk show host. “Why are there no women late night talk show hosts?” she asks. “All of them are forced into three o’clock housewife slots.”

Unlike many of us, she has managed to rack up quite a few theatrical performances here at Columbia, stealing shows and splitting sides on a regular basis. Despite the seemingly perpetual spotlight, Grace lacks the typical self-importance so pervasive in this little school of ours, attributing any achievements to equal parts faith and serendipity. Well Grace, if talent doesn’t play a role, then what’s the secret? “I play the guitar, I improv. I meow a lot. I meow a lot.” —HRC

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian
Verily Veritas lately finds himself amused by the phenomenon of self-defeating words. By this he refers to instances in which the mere sound, appearance, or accrued connotation of a word undercuts its literal meaning. Perhaps Verily should be more unequivocal—indeed he would be hard pressed to find a word that achieves unequivocality with less success than “unequivocal”. Verily simply means that anyone who, knowing its meaning, can type the word “suavity” with good conscience should be turned over to the semiotics gestapo. Oddly enough his infatuation with these disasters of diction has little to do with the romanticism of self-defeat. Rather, one term in particular has been falling flat each time it arises in Verily’s mind: the Future. Verily has been thinking about the Future much of late, and how the very word seems hopelessly vintage. This was not always the case; Verily remembers a time when the word couldn’t help but evoke visions of Buck Rogers design, affable robots with hidden agendas, and either universal health care or nuclear annihilation. Perhaps it still does, and maybe that is part of the problem. Blame it on the naively capital “F”, but the poor term now connotes a sense of grandeur that few people, Verily regretfully not among them, can consider relevant in talking about what one can expect from next Tuesday.

Verily Veritas once said that a word is like fashionable real estate: it can only last so long before overexposure and social climbing ruin it. As for finger-pointing, Verily can think of no one more culpable than the Futurists, for obvious reasons. The Futurists were the archetypal artists-as-pamphleteers. The modern world, they prophesied, would be an iron wonderland of speed, convenience, and the razzle-dazzle of mechanized war. They promised to replace the past with the works of art befitting this stunning new age. And then they painted dauchsunds. On leashes. Never mind that their rhetoric helped roll out the carpet for Mussolini, Fascism, and the industrial gore of the World Wars; for that you can hardly blame the poor dauchshund. No, Futurism’s worst offense was to take a noble concept and drown it in bathos, and we have Marinetti and his goons to thank for the term’s current vulgarity.

Fittingly, it was one of the great luminaries of “Old Europe” that made contempt for the Future fashionable. After a visit to an industrializing Brazil—the self-touted “Country of the Future”—Charles de Gaulle is rumored to have quipped that Brazil was indeed the country of the future, and always would be. If Verily recalls correctly, this was sometime in the late fifties, though most of that decade remains a haze of Campari and airline stewardesses. Verily only mentions the date to give de Gaulle credit for being cynical before it came into style. Since then, there have been terms aplenty accounting for this new stodginess. Francis Fukuyama calls it the End of History and, alas, a bummer. Lyotard calls it postmodernity, but no one asked him. Oddly enough, though, it was the late, grating Jacques Derrida who sensed that the term “the Future” wouldn’t cut it. For him, there was la futur, an inevitable and driving force—capital “M” Modernism for readers with high tolerances for tired terminologies. And then there was l’avenir (the coming)—a sense of unsureness and surprise he likened to the arrival of an unexpected guest.

Derrida clearly preferred the latter, and Verily wonders if many of us really have a choice between the two. A recent read of A Bend in the River left Verily musing upon Naipaul’s distinction between the distant “they” who create the future and the “we” who await its blessings. Perhaps the Future really died by becoming the present: we didn’t get the plebeian dream we expected, but we do have amazing computers, grand resource bottlenecks, and (still!) the threat of nuclear annihilation. And let’s face it, dear reader, you aren’t going to do a damn thing about any of this. They will handle it, and by “they” Verily gives a nod to Naipaul but refers specifically to SEAS. The rest of us should forget about the Future, or maybe just develop a fondness for anime; perhaps all we can handle is l’avenir. And who knows, maybe it will be a pleasant surprise. ☺
THE J

Attack of the iPod People

The J wishes to inform her dedicated readership she is currently indignant and, thus, preachy. (It’s only fair to warn.)

Just last Tuesday she espied a dear companion whom she hadn’t spotted in months—perhaps he had finally escaped the clutches of that fearsome mountain lion indigenous to the Butler stacks—but he sauntered by with nary a nod! Her oblivious long lost neighbor from John Jay 6 seemed to be in the grip of stringy white wires dangling from his ear. The J could only think one horrifying thought: iPod People.

They are all about us—you yourself, like half of this fine publication, may have joined their numbers. But before you retreat, offended, to the back pages of the magazine where the dirty bits are, hear her out. Perhaps she would join you, if Apple manufactured headphones small enough for her diminutive ears, or the weight of the player itself didn’t reduce her to hopping like an overweight pigeon. But the J thinks not. She would miss the fabulous freestyling talents of her fine feathered friends in the bushes in front of Hamilton Hall, and how would she hear the enticing whistle of the old birdseed men in Riverside Park?

And that’s just the bird business. Blue J is not a native New York species, you see. The soundtrack of her hometown was the ominous humming of SUV exhaust pipes, so you can imagine her excitement that first day she set down on College Walk to discover so much fascinating bustle! Perched on Alma (embarrassingly, she’d been looking for the owl), J heard a very fat baby make exceedingly odd gurgling noises. Just a foot over, a pretty blonde loudly informed another pretty blonde, “And then he said I was a schizophrenic Muslim! The nerve!”

Blue J feels sorry for those earmuffled bipeds, hurrying along, insensible—on their way to something very important, speaking to no one. She’s since seen them on the subway, too, with their heads down, no doubt deep in contemplation of the finer points of the latest Radiohead rock opera. Then again, since they’re usually too oblivious to remark at a bright blue bird riding the 1/9, they’re easy to stare at. Oh, many are the mismatched socks and silly haircuts she has appreciated on these folk! But she wonders if they miss all the surprises. Don’t they like funny accents and besuited old men walking little dogs in sweaters? If they have a long subway ride, mightn’t they read a book or irritate—and edify—their neighbors with a giant newspaper? Why, after all, are they here?

Many of the J’s friends count themselves among the auditory Bubble Boys all about us. One pointed out that Morningside Heights in particular is full of taxicab horns and homeless veterans and overeager Save the Children volunteers. Surely she didn’t expect him to submit himself to that onslaught every time he stepped out of the house? The J is unflinching in her response. She insists that if you are bothered by the homeless, who after all live here too, you should either help them or be forced to address your self-interest. (Perhaps an exception may be made for the hungover.) Confirming her secret suspicions, yet another acquaintance of the J confessed that she wears headphones out so she doesn’t have to talk to people.

Do not think Blue J wholly inflexible; she has a solution for the avoidant among you. Apparently our northern neighbors in sunny Ithaca have a fine academic institution with a generous transfer policy. Those who find the City excessively stimulating might take advantage of its opportunities, thus freeing Morningside Heights of its congestion (and in an added boon, obviating the need for the controversial Manhattanville expansion). For the remainder, Blue J invokes a name she knows Columbia undergrads hold near and dear:

For shame! What would Walter Benjamin say?

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian
For Rem Koolhaas, New York City hit its creative peak during the skyscraper heyday of the twenties and thirties, when tall buildings were the thing, and everyone from John D. Rockefeller to King Kong knew it. Hugh Ferriss also knew it; he was a strange, quiet man who drew buildings, and his name doesn’t mean much to most people today. Oddly enough, though, most people come to New York expecting a Hugh Ferriss city. Ferriss almost single-handedly invented Gotham: smoky, nighttime New York, full of heroic skyscrapers and anonymous ant people. For Ferriss, New York was more than itself, for he saw in its form the germ of a new and monumental urbanism which he dreamt up and put on paper. His designs were naive and crazy and compelling enough to influence entire generations of architects, and his vision of the future was unique and mesmerizing enough to take New York’s identity hostage.

Hugh Ferriss started his career as a lowly architectural renderer, processing the ideas of others for public consumption. He could master detail, but he never got lost in fussiness, and even his early drawings denote a preference for mood and essence over minute representation. Still, his broad strokes were not about off-the-cuff expressionism; Ferriss simply felt that the meaning of a thing was in the grand idea, not the details. He once recounted having done a seemingly accurate rendering of the same building for both a terracotta and a window glass manufacturer. Both claimed the building was an essay in the use of a certain material—terracotta and glass, respectively. As his work matured, Ferriss tolerated such myopia less and less; when he rendered designs, he drew them as he wanted to seem them. In his world, the sky darkens and the lights get brighter; one generally sees the structure as if from an adjacent skyscraper. The heaviest shadows settle down to the street level while bright lights coat the skyscrapers with a drama generally reserved for bad experimental theater.

By the mid-twenties, renderings by Ferriss had become almost de rigueur for successful competition projects; countless timid, also-ran skyscrapers waited their turn to be bathed in the dark monumentality emanating from his drafting table. In these works a blasé department store appears as a giant lording over its block. Stodgy hotels cease to be stodgy hotels and become looming silhouettes emerging from the urban haze like shipwrecks. Ferriss went to grand new lengths in suppressing detail for mood, and clients loved it. It hardly mattered that the renderings sometimes tip into abstraction: they do so only to create a mood of bloated space that gratified the ambitions of the day. Eventually, though, even this proved insufficient for Ferriss’ own ego. He was not content simply to give existent buildings a new image; he wanted new buildings, indeed a wholly new city.

Since Ferriss the illustrator never suffered from literal mindedness in his work, the evolution of Ferriss the urban visionary made perfect sense. His first major prophecy used the setback zoning laws in New York to codify a style of tapering skyscraper that became the model for structures like the Empire State and Chrysler buildings. In 1916, fears of a skyline made too dense with tall buildings had led the city to pass a zoning ordinance requiring structures to narrow as they grew higher. For several years war, economic recession, and creative lassitude impeded anyone from finding a truly interesting model using the limitations. Then the recovery of the twenties came, and in 1922 Ferriss published his drawings, wherein he demonstrated how the ordinance could generate buildings that appeared even more dramatic and towering than their blocky predecessors. Ferriss’ invention was doubly effective: not only did he prompt other architects to follow his lead, he fit existing structures within an archetype that still defines the city.

Truthfully, though, these prescriptions were hardly technical; they barely rendered actual
buildings at all, but rather boxes morphing into steely, streamlined spires. In other words, the details of the proposal weren’t what stuck in the minds of those poor impressionable architects; it was all mood and shapes. The city of the future would be sharp, yet sensual. It would be sleek and exacting, but also sculptural and expressive. Tapering structures had been done before, but Ferriss’ designs brought an entirely new image to skyscrapers precisely because they were so dreamlike. He already took such liberties with his visualizations of actual buildings that his own designs were a natural outgrowth of his constant re-imagining.

Ferriss’ concern with remaking both the image and typology of the city reached its most original, enduring expression in his 1929 masterpiece publication, *The Metropolis of Tomorrow*. In a stroke of grand hubris, Ferriss included renderings he had done for clients as the tiny germinations for his own grandiose urban designs. Most of these projects were located in New York and derived their forms from its setback requirements; other cities chipped in a few renderings, often as evidence of New York’s influence. As such, those interested in seeing the first realized images of the future would know where to go; New York was the city of tomorrow, and Ferriss was its prophet.

His prophecies, like his response to the setback requirements, were not unprecedented, but they outdid previous models in both their visual splendor and their size. Ferriss advocated vast blocks of planned space, generally involving lower buildings ascending up to one skyscraper whose dimensions would be considered impossible even today. He considered such spaces more cohesive, and less susceptible to the unruly chaos of street life. Superblock spaces like Rockefeller Center, which close off cross streets to create miniature fiefdoms, are the progeny of this model. Ferriss’ most fantastic work is found here: sprawling swoops and jutting spires abound everywhere, creating urban forms that are both otherworldly and eerily familiar. Somewhere in the intoxicating mess of Ferriss’ visions lurk the forms of traditional skyscrapers, the kind he inflated and mythologized for a living. Perhaps the renderings of built structures legitimate Ferriss’ crazy designs; by placing the work of his patrons within an urban narrative culminating in his imaginary city, Ferriss made those buildings his own. But he had given them their visual identity anyway; the relationship between the brick city of New York and the paper city in *Metropolis* was intensely symbiotic, and it continues to be. New York

*FERRISS continued on page 52*
These excerpts were culled from documents left on Columbia’s lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via e-mail, at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Kinesias also expresses the unity of men after he is really drunk and enters speaking in the lesser manner of the Spartans: “Hain’t never seed sech a spread! Hit were splendiferous!” (109). This may imply that drinking has the power to unify.

Never fall in love with a poet because poets know words, all the right ones know the intricacies of speech both written and spoken how to punctuate an awkward silence as easily as they can fill notebooks of formerly blank college-ruled looseleaf/ with roughly scrawled iambic pentameter lines of all the things you never dreamed a person could say to you and mean.

boom! I was totally on board the MJ Express until the last few pages, when we detoured into finger rape.

One’s experience of traveling through MacIntosh Hall can be understood as a purely spatial experience dictated by a drastic contrast between forward motion on this journey and retrospection on reverse motion along the journey.

I am busy hosing down Paundra, that hoary old carapace, when I hear the screaming. At first I tell myself it’s just the wind. I’ve spent the whole day scrubbing seagull excrement with a Sisyphean fury, and now it looks like the storm is going to hit after all. Goddammit, I mutter to the smirking gulls. Never fails. As soon as I suds up these bitches, it pours.

Need to do more research on growing legumes. How much soil, how much water, how much sun?? Need to find an appropriate bacteria for the chosen legume. Need to go to a garden store!!

Finally a bear comes along and asks,
Bear: “What are you doing?”
Rabbit: “I’m doing a thesis on how rabbits eat bears.”
Bear: “Well that’s absurd!”
Rabbit: “Come into my home and I’ll show you.”

Inside the rabbit’s burrow. In one corner, there is a pile of fox bones. In another corner is a pile of wolf bones. On the other side of the room a huge lion is belching and picking his teeth.

The moral is:
It doesn’t matter what you choose for a thesis topic.
It doesn’t matter what you use for your data.
It doesn’t even matter if your topic makes sense.
What matters is who you have for a thesis advisor.

What dress will I wear? What flowers will I order? How many kids will I have? What will I name them? For crying out loud, I was 5 years old!

Usually those who apprehend things with their intellects and concepts tend to exhibit the attitude that it is they and their intellects that are clever or special enough to have grasped that thing.

Please feel free to call me up (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or respond back to clarify or ask anything. I look forward to speaking with you soon.
Sincerely yours, I am

R------ D------
PS: See resume attached.
There is a strong current throughout Oedipus the King suggesting that fate somehow cuts Oedipus down and ruins his existence.

Note: This is not a wacky play.

Retard:
(He is slow but functional. He has dreams but is not overly sweet in his presentation of them.) In my opera there will be many little people. And they are running around and they are singing their songs. And they are very happy. They are very little people but they are singing their songs. This is my opera.

Composer:
(A little brisk.) That’s great.

Retard:
I know that there are little people in your opera but the little people in my opera are smaller than the little people in your opera.

You notice every woman, don’t you? I mean, every woman. Waitresses, wives, weavers, laundresses, ushers, actresses, women in wheelchairs.

I am so so so happy I got a seat next to you on the Kabuki Express, pal. I was complaining to Doug recently that because I’m pretty positive in general, I don’t think people take my compliments seriously anymore, the way you can’t distinguish dolphin syllables because they’re all squeaked out in that high register.

Two omens: mare gives birth to a hare and mule dropped a foal with two sets of sexual organs (What does that mean?)

Upon first setting eyes on Jean-Francois Millet’s Autumn “Landscape with a Flock of Turkeys,” I was overwhelmed with a sense of desolation. Before analyzing specific aspects of the work, I scribbled down my first impressions as a viewer: heavy, silence, sorrow, beauty, pain, somberness, loneliness, oppression.

In these similes the raw material of life being born is, in fact, life being killed.

You see, you can never ask a poet to tell you the truth because to poets truth is subjective and reality is fluid and what is today might not be tomorrow and probably wasn’t yesterday either

When I see somebody studying particle physics, I see a system of particles, called a “human,” looking at another system of particles, called a “book”…

Surprisingly we are able to deal with this complexity without going mad.

This hearkens back to the earlier point about prohibiting red meat and mandating annual colonoscopies. Life is full of wonderful things: ice cream and pizza, movies and books, economics classes, sex sunsets, trees, kids, video games, cats and dogs, sports, friends, not having a tube stuck up your butt.

See how the little boy has his hands facing down? That’s called an “under-hit”. But we’re over-hitting too!!! We’re also slamming, cherry bombing, and having tea parties.
Limericks about Philosophers

The thing Mr. Benjamin missed
in essence reduces to this:
The modern aesthetic
doesn’t find life pathetic—
It’s just baroque and cannot be fixed.

That magnificent Roland Barthes
Was surrounded by lovers of art
Who carefully wrote
Every word that he spoke
And recorded the sound of his farthes.

Søren (of course) Kierkegaard
Never quite found himself marred
By the reports of his pupils
That despite all his scruples
He swam daily in buckets of lard.

—Matthew Harrison
March of the Übermarionettes

The Magic Flute
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
The Metropolitan Opera
dir. Julie Taymor

With opera, I am less a gourmet than a gourmand. A gluttonous love for the stuff has driven me to watch The Magic Flute dozens of times. Of course part of my fancy for it stems from its incomparably beautiful score, but that tends to happen with Mozart. However, the main reason I keep going back to see the Flute specifically is because any staging of the opera is bound to be a fantastic, fun show. Naturally, I jumped at the opportunity to see Julie Taymor’s production of it at the Metropolitan Opera this season. With Taymor’s reputation for out-of-this-world costumes, sets, and staging, and the Met’s ability to attract world-class musicians, I knew I was in for an operatic delicacy the likes of which I would not be able to indulge in for years to come.

Honestly, going to the opera “solely for the music” is pointless, especially when anybody can listen to recordings of the best contemporary artists on CD. I’m not saying I sit in an auditorium seat for three hours of costumes and sets. Really, I just mean that an operatic performance is ultimately a show, and deserves to be attended as one: visual elements of a show contribute or detract from the overall experience as much as anything else, and they can even save the bunch from a few bad bananas, or even a flat soprano.

Such was the case with Taymor’s production. Unfortunately, L’ubica Vargicová, who played the Queen of the Night, struggled with the challenging coloratura that defines the part. Which means that when Vargicová got to the arias “Oh Zittre Nicht” and “Der Hölle Rache”—perennial favorites of those too lazy for the entire score—she botched them. Still, it’s hard to get caught up in disappointment when the soprano turns into a huge moth with the help of six stage hands with sails and clever lighting effects.

Fortunately, the rest of Taymor’s cast was spectacular—most notably Dorothea Röschmann as Pamina. Röschmann’s performance was so good you could practically feel her co-star Matthew Polenzani, who played Tamino, trying to catch up with her. While Pamina contemplated suicide onsetage in “Ach, Ich Fühl’s” I was nearly driven to tears. I did a quick visual check on the rest of the audience, and they were just as captivated.

Along with human characters, imaginary beasts and animals play a vital role in The Magic Flute. In practice, this generally means animal suits and underpaid actors who might think they can get a better gig with more dramatic gesticulations. Here, Taymor’s penchant for puppets and spectacular costumes was allowed free reign and made the performance that much more enjoyable. Taymor’s production employed dozens of puppets operated by stage hands. The sounds of Tamino’s flute lured gigantic dancing bear puppets onto the stage. The three wise men were constantly accompanied by a flying albatross marionette.

The performers, puppets and costumes never distracted from the music but complemented it in a way that the fantastical narrative demands. It was pure entertainment on all fronts. Those who came for the music were treated to Röschmann’s Pamina, and I have no doubt that those who came for Taymor’s visual fireworks left gloriously satiated.

Unfortunately, The Magic Flute will not be showing again at the Met until next April. When it does return, it will be back with a slightly different cast; notably, Vargicová will have been replaced by Erika Miklosa. These planned cast changes will eliminate most of the negative aspects of the production, while the opera’s assets will remain: Röschmann will stay on, as will the most pleasing aspects of Taymor’s production (the scenery, costumes, and staging). As the Flute returns, so will I. With a production like Taymor’s, an opera glutton like myself simply cannot resist a second helping. —Daniel Paluch
Larry was the quiet one. If he were taller, or thinner, or the bearer of the eternal hellfire through which all that is light and goodness is turned to darkness and death, he might have been happy. Unfortunately, Leon was the looker of the bunch, and was prominently on fire. In so many ways, Larry thought, shaking his head. Who was he kidding? The white horse did nothing for his complexion, and really, showing up first to these events made him look way too desperate. Maybe he was desperate. He signaled the bartender for another shot.

War, 11:27pm

Englebert was feeling sharp tonight. He strode like a man on a mission, immediately bucking up to the hottest girl in the place and using the same tired line he always used. ‘Hey sweetheart, it that a sword that vanquishes all peace on earth in my pants or am I just happy to see you?’ Bert was the youngest, and a world-class shitface. He had only been promoted above Larry because of his superior skills at riding sidesaddle while hell-bent on merciless destruction. What no one knew was that he had honed these skills while moonlighting as the red and yellow knight at Medieval Times over the summer, and had only been fired because of his awkward tendency to cause a catastrophic rift between worlds of the living and the dead whenever he used the mace. Getting slapped in the face barely fazed him anymore, so instead of licking his wounds he bounded up to the bar and slammed his fist on the counter, upsetting Larry’s meticulously poured shot. Disconsolate, Larry retreated to the jukebox to be comforted by smooth jazz and the faint smell of burning flesh.

Famine, 11:32pm

Look, but don’t touch was Leon’s motto. Cause if you do, you’ll get burned, baby. He shot the cute blonde across the room a smoldering glance, which was returned with a bloodcurdling scream and a feeble attempt to claw her own eyes out. Sometimes he was just too much for the ladies, but was that such a crime? If honey can’t stand the heat, then she best step out of the fire, he told his mates. Still, the girls hovered around him like moths to a flame, and really, who was he to divert their attentions? Secretly though, all he wanted was someone to have and to hold, someone to laugh at his jokes and pick him up when he was feeling down, preferably without spontaneously combusting. Sighing, he ordered another round.

Death, 11:58pm

Walt was carrying that damned briefcase again. Since it was black, it went with the grey flannel suit he insisted on wearing to all these occasions. But it was also Tuesday, so he was wearing the blue tie with the mallard ducks.

Siding up to the bar he ordered his usual (dry martini) in the usual way (wink and a nod) and proceeded to get down to business as usual. There was just all that paperwork: the passing of judgment forms with attached receipts, the alerting of the sub-committees of the greater Inferno district of the differ-
Pontius Palate has oft found himself wishing he were an Oscar Meyer wiener, or at least that he were eating one. But, frankly, the vendors of Morningside Heights don’t peddle the Wieners of his dreams, and so Pontius, dreading the prospect of another quasi-kosher Frankenfurter, determined to head further afield in search of hand-held gastrological gratification. After all, even the most endomorphic epicure occasionally wants to walk and chew at the same time.

Pontius’ friends recommended a stand on the southeast corner of 53rd and 6th known for its Halal chicken. Their awestruck, adulatory tones implied some culinary Xanadu. But was it real? Or had Pontius’ friends, like Coleridge before them, dreamt up this gastronomic pleasure-dome in a drug-induced haze? (Knowing said friends, Pontius thought this a distinct possibility.)

To Carthage then Pontius came. Burning burning burning with hunger, he ordered the chicken with rice platter, with sauces red and white, and a Coke. The stand, in a nod towards diversity, offered Pepsi as well; though Pontius is a proud blue-stater, he casts his ballot for the red can every time. Panting from exhaustion after this exercise of democracy, he sat down to test his right to chew.

Pontius lacks the perspicacious prose—to say nothing of the formidable girth—of a Falstaff to properly convey the transcendent nature of the meal he merrily devoured in Rockefeller (apologies, Democracy) Plaza. But he will do his best to transmit to the reader the perfection of this six-dollar repast. The chicken itself, cubed and chopped, was of an almost astonishingly high quality; this, apparently, is what they mean by Halal. The admixture of the two sauces created a taste simultaneously creamy and tangy. Most dominant was the curry, which lent its color to the dish and mingled with the chicken like Harold Bloom at a sorority mixer. Less bold was the rice, slightly mushy and blander than could be expected.

But the entrée! Pontius has taken a bite of nearly everything that can be baked, boiled, blanched, or battered, but this was a bird of a different feather. Pontius hadn’t gotten this much bang for his buck since his last visit to Atlantic City. Jaded by the regular practice of paying four dollars for his daily espresso, the idea that a complete meal could cost less than $6 shocked him out of his precisely calibrated senses.

For at least a moment, in fact, he felt the pressure of impending obsolescence. After all, if the sublimities of the palate were accessible to the hoi polloi, what good was the fact that his culinary knowledge ranged from anko-nabe to zabaglione? Wherefore his training in terroir?

But finally, his mouth still full of that not-quite-kosher chicken, he came upon a happy thought. If this small stand encroached upon his gustatory stomping grounds, in so doing it only taught its customers to relish good cuisine. And to that he could only say, “Hot Dog!”
Dear Editors of The Blue and White:

(Oh! I do hope you’re not shocked at my calling you dear editors. Please don’t be. I know it sounds perfectly awful, but Kitty Mills, who’s helping me write this, says it’s all right and you won’t mind.) Dear me! what am I saying. I’m sure that sounds just awfully confused, and I don’t know whether there ought to be an e in awful or not; should there? Speaking of being confused, reminds me what a terrible scrape Kitty and I got into at Huyler’s last Saturday. Ed. Bennett came in and—Now won’t you think me simply dreadful, telling you all about myself, when you don’t even know who I am! I’m not going to tell you my really truly name, for you might know some fellows that I know, and if you should tell them, wouldn’t it be just awful? (I know I use awful awfully often, but it’s such a comfort to use it!) So I’m going to call myself Pearl Rogers. I think Pearl is just a lovely name. I just dote on Columbia. My brother Dick goes there; he’s a Miner, and works in the “Quallab.” Isn’t that a peculiar name? Whenever he comes home late to dinner he’s always been in the “Quallab.” I’m sure must be just too lovely there.

Oh! but I started to tell you of my visit to College. I had such a delicious time. Mr. R— took me through. Of course, I won’t tell you his real name either. He’s just too awfully sweet. He’s got such lovely eyes, and such a soft moustache; that’s to say, it looks so soft. Of course, I never felt it—that’s to say—-! ! Well as we entered the gate I just couldn’t help squeezing Mr. R.’s arm a wee bit. There were so many fellows standing around, and they all seemed to have pipes in their mouths, and some were standing about a tree throwing pennies up against it. Mr. R. said they were Seniors, and were only pitching for fun, but I’m just sure they were doing it for keeps. Please do tell me, dear Mr. Editors. Mr. R. wouldn’t let me stop on the campus a bit, though I wanted ever so much to admire the beautiful bronze fountain and the paintings on it. He told me it was the work of one of the old Greek sculptors, but I’ve seen one just like it on a bargain counter at Macy’s for $2.99.

There was one awfully nice looking fellow, who winked at me, but I didn’t wink back—only a little bit. But then I gave Mr. R.’s arm a teeny, weeny hug, to make it all right.

Then we went in the library. Oh! my, it’s just too sweet. Mr. R. stopped at the desk to speak to a young lady there; he said everyone had to, but I don’t believe him. If you do, I don’t believe you mind it a bit; do you?

There were ever and ever so many fellows there too, all seated at little tables and most of them talking away, just like so many girls. Then there were some young ladies up stairs, who sat all by themselves, and wore eye glasses, and looked dreadfully prim, and I asked Mr. R. why it was there weren’t any fellows near them, and he said they were Barnard girls and didn’t count. What does he mean?

I tried real hard to look only at the perfectly lovely stained glass windows that Mr. R. pointed out, and at all the sweet portraits of the dear old gentlemen that adorn the walls, but I couldn’t help looking around just once at the fellows, and who do you think I saw? Why, Charlie Bates! He smiled and bowed and then a lot of nasty, horrid men got around him and began teasing him and they all stared dreadfully at me, and I noticed Mr. R. got very red in the face, and

CURIO COLUMBIANA

The following letter, recently discovered in our vaults, was originally published in The Blue and White, Vol. II, No. VIII, November 25, 1891. Our esteemed editorial forebearers defended its provenance to their graves; we defer to their unassailable integrity.

OUR LETTER BOX.

November 2004
Dear Alice,

My girlfriend has Herpes, but she says we should still have sex. She's also really hot, and has a wicked Southern accent. What should I do? Isn't Herpes bad for you?

Sincerely,
Clay Midea

Dear Clay,

Sometimes you need a little danger to spice up a flaccid relationship. Don't be afraid of risk—embrace it. Think about this: if your girlfriend had Herpes a hundred years ago, she could give it only to you. It's a signpost of great social advances that she can now give it to anyone.

Moreover, your worries about the dangers of Herpes are based on long-standing and basically fallacious taboos propagated by moralists in the North Dakota Library System. The truth is simple.

Herpes is a natural phenomenon, like the great Northern Lights, or babies: everyone in the world was born with a God-given right to obtain what we like to call a Sexually Transmitted Goodybasket (STG). 33% of Americans have chosen to exercise this right, and that percentage is rising. There are, after all, thousands upon thousands of potential sexual partners out there, and denying yourself the right to experience every last one of them is not only unnatural but un-American.

Don't fear something new. Once you do it, the euphoria—like the scabs—never goes away. These are times for exploring, for learning about and growing more comfortable with your body, for itching your undersides vigorously and uncontrollably. Avoid the thoughtless dogma of your youth, and do what you know is comfortable.

Just be yourself, and plunge vigorously forward. Or backward, depending on your preference.

Clay, some people say Islam and Herpes can't co-exist, and others say that Herpes is solely an American value. To them, we say: no. Seriously, no. Herpes is something everyone, from a child scampering through the streets of Brasilia to an astronaut floating in the confines of the International Space Station, from a beret-wearing bon vivant in the Starbucks of Mumbai to a beret-wearing bon vivant in the Starbucks of Baku, should be able to appreciate with joy, and vigor, and endless boils. Herpes, Clay, is on the march, and only Comstockian tyranny and closed-mindedness can stop it. Especially if she's hot and can drawl.

But please, please wear a condom. You don't want to get her pregnant. It's not like sex should have consequences.

Sincerely,
Alice!

Across the world, young adults just like you are now going through the same trials, tribulations, and multi-person hormone-infused interactive experiences. In Afghanistan, lithe young girls whip off their burkas just for a taste of an STG. In North Korea, the oppressed masses of Kim Jong-II (yes, still) high-step in hope of something joyous, something natural, something with an incubation period of 10-14 days.

In Indonesia, participation has reached an all-time high, and all the islands are stirring and scratching in the glow of this shining light of freedom.

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian
When Richard Avedon died in October, he was in the middle of a project for The New Yorker documenting the heated presidential election campaigns. Avedon’s work is lauded for its clarity, and the directness with which it revealed the personalities of his subjects. Nonetheless, his psychologically penetrating series of photographs of politicians, activists, journalists and everyday voters presents anything but an objective record of the 2004 election. This had less to do with politics and more with photography: Avedon never thought his medium was good for neutral documentary. Despite its seemingly neutrality, his work was about opinion and human interaction, rather than captured truth.

The composition of his pictures is partly responsible for their psychological depth. Portraits are taken straight on. The subject fills the center of the frame and looks directly out of the photograph, confronting the viewer intently. To further this impression Avedon shot all his portraits against a white shadowless background, leaving no extraneous information to change the meaning of the photograph or to distract the viewer.

All the viewer receives is a gesture or a facial expression, quite carefully chosen by Avedon, from which the meaning of the photograph must be derived. This is Avedon’s magic: he reduced his photographs to an essential, the one he liked best.

Avedon was particularly fascinated by photographing celebrities and politicians. He attempted to get beyond one-liner personas to capture an expression or gesture that would reveal something surprising or unknown. Time occasionally rendered these works prophetic. A recent Met retrospective of his work showed nineteen-seventies portraits of current Washington brass as relatively young whippersnappers. A fresh Donald Rumsfeld smirks at the camera like a strangely distorted and childlike version of the Rummy we all know and love. Back then, though, Avedon was simply unmasking the facelessness of government suits to show real, quirky human beings.

This fascination with life beneath the surface began with his first model, his sister Louise. Avedon thought she was very beautiful, and as a child he would dress her up and photograph her. Several years later, Louise died in a mental institution. Avedon became obsessed with the idea of her beauty hiding her insanity, and began his attempts to reveal people’s inner thoughts and emotions that still define his photography.

Avedon was conscious, however, that his photographs could not represent the truth about a subject’s personality. Asked about his portraits shortly before his death, Avedon said, “A portrait is not a likeness. The moment an emotion or fact is transformed into a photograph it is no longer a fact but an opinion. There is no such thing as inaccuracy in a photograph. All photographs are accurate. None of them is the truth.”

What Avedon portrays is not a definitive documentation of a person’s character. He does not attempt to document the truth; he uses photography to convey his opinions and sensations about his subjects. He shows the viewer the aspect of the subject that he is most interested in and drawn to, so the portraits reflect just as much about Avedon himself.

This interaction between subject and pho-

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian

Illustrated by AJay Kurian

Avedon continued on page 52

November 2004

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The Blue and White

Crossword Puzzle
by Nicholas Frisch

The answer key will be posted on our website: www.columbia.edu/cu/bw

ACROSS
1. Montaigne’s writing innovation
6. South Asian rice variety
12. Our sun, i.e.
13. Negation
14. Pleads
15. The amount of booze in your veins (acronym)
16. “Cheerio!”
17. They’re our future
19. Hawaiian sweet potato
20. S. Korean president
22. The Golden State, for short
23. Pennsylvanian town
25. Female sheep
26. Moroccan headwear
28. A nobleman ranking below an earl or count
and above a baron
29. The theme of this puzzle
30. (Inventor of) innovative lens found in traffic
lights and lighthouses alike
32. Something forbidden (colloquial)
35. Whiny alternative music style
38. Shorthand for the American Society of Nephrology
39. Racial selection program “popular” in Ger-
many and the Southern US alike
41. Shorthand for the Hebrew Bible
42. Whiny or pleasurable noise
45. Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs, for short
46. —Kwan from “The Story of Keesh” by Jack London
47. What Slick Willie wanted to build to the 21st century
49. Pain noise
50. Yevgeny Zamyatin’s famous dystopian novel
51. Abbreviation for “each”
52. Addams Family member
53. Popular variation of 80-down
54. Cognac designation
55. Opposite of 1-down, French and dyslexic
57. Iconic automotive image of the future
61. Type of game or weapon of war, for short
62. That is to say
63. American agency responsible for overseeing
workplace conditions
64. Champion of economic liberalism John
65. The person who grades your macroeconomics exam
67. Legendary baseball player Cobb
68. What you keep something sensitive on, colloquially
69. Alternately
70. Audio/Video
71. Sometimes accompanies “warm”
74. Popular for breathing
76. Anger
77. Swedish home-decorating warehouse with
avant-garde furniture
78. Type of radio
80. Parisian art museum in a former railway station
82. Impregnated with lipids
85. Politically correct term for certain Arctic peoples
87. Joining two edges or surfaces together as if by
sewing, and the resulting seam
89. Scientists for Global Responsibility (acronym)
90. Famous writers of a particular manifesto
91. Type of ball that tells the future and is also
shorthand for the same type of malt liquor as
21-down

DOWN
1. French for “east”
2. Advanced but ineffective anti-missile system
3. Sine anno, for short
4. Often contains a keystone, comes in Gothic and
Romanesque varieties
5. Cambodian utopian communist Pot
6. Buzzing animal
7. Woman’s name meaning Lamb of God
8. Hitler’s best, for short
9. Grass and sprigs beaten or trampled down by a
stag passing through them. (Crabb)
10. What certain birds use for their clawing
11. Quoth HAL: “I’m sorry, ...”
13. Orwell novel
14. Huxley novel
18. Nation’s capital, for short
19. Organization that shuttled Bob Hope around
the world to entertain troops
21. Popular malt liquor, for short
24. Kubrick film
26. Amusement
27. African tribe utterly demolished by British use
of modern weapons
29. Industry lingo for “flight simulator”
30. Fourth scale degree
31. Deep, mutual hatred
33. Ostensible Beatles wrecker
34. Shorthand for Belfast’s corner of the UK
36. Prophet
40. Woody Allen film
43. Shorthand for excessive, dangerous drug
indulgence
44. Verbal disputes between two characters in
ancient Greek comedies
48. Anger, incite
49. Latin for “eggs”
56. Slightly inaccurate, for lack of the Greek letter,
shorthand for a microgram
57. Decade marked by terrific enthusiasm about
technology and things to come
58. Jovian moon
59. Small cove
60. Renewable power source
65. Supposedly prophetic type of cards
66. Loan company Sallie
72. Vulgar shortening of “okay”
73. Casual greeting for Francophones
75. Egyptian goddess, wife of Osiris
79. “– is more than just a booming oil and timber
town; it is the gateway to the northeast
region, rapidly becoming Sarawak’s most popular
tourist area.” -Indonesian tourist brochure
80. Popular variation of 53-across
81. First name of the first man in space
83. Short for Lester, if you will
86. Tennis term
87. Aeroflot airline code
88. French for “you”
Walt Disney’s 1964 *Mary Poppins* is a cinematic masterpiece which should forever be praised for its superlative, earth-shattering wonderfulness. As a musical film, it is a work of Art, a rare instance of genuine talent and quality in a children’s movie. As a commercial endeavor, it was one of Walt Disney’s greatest gambles—one that paid off handsomely and secured his studio’s future. Finally, as a beacon of mirth in my own life, *Mary* has unfailingly continued to deliver inspiration, creativity, and infallible advice whenever I feel glum or reluctant to help the medicine go down.

Over the years, therefore, I have become mildly offended when watching other films that attempted to capitalize on the magic of the original by rehashing plot formulae, reusing actors, and coaxing the same songwriters to return in hopes of hacking a path to another success. The undeniable inferiority of films like *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is astounding. Even more surprising are the remaining reverberations of relevance these musicals have in society today, misleading some of my peers into believing that their childhood love of, say, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* is as valid as my own admiration of *Mary Poppins*—clearly a malignant fallacy.

No amount of written praise for *Mary Poppins* could do this glorious opus justice. One need simply view the work to be enchanted by its witty dialogue (inspired by P.L. Travers’ children book), its finely wrought musical score, and its moving dramatic themes. For example, the songs themselves serve as meditative delights as well as historico-social commentary on early twentieth century London. Sings the father, George Banks, at the beginning of the film: “It’s grand to be an Englishman in 1910 / King Edward’s on the throne; it’s the age of men!” Soon after, Mrs. Banks bursts in with a musical number espousing women’s suffrage, proclaiming, “Though we adore men individually / We agree that as a group they’re rather stupid.”

Indeed, the music and lyrics of Richard and Robert Sherman won the brothers two Oscars (for best song and score) and a Grammy in 1965. The Academy also lauded Julie Andrews’ faultless performance in the title role, awarding five Oscars (out of eleven nominations) to the film. *Mary* was responsible for Disney’s most successful evening at the Academy Awards up to that date.

This unqualified success certainly sat well with Walt Disney, saving his studio from financial ruin just two years before his death. Other production companies certainly envied the jackpot of this European-themed children’s fantasy musical. Just a few years after the triumph of *Mary Poppins*, MGM Studios tried their hand at the production of a loveable, memorable family film based on a children’s novel; 1968’s *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was the result.

It is rumored that the studio sought to cast Julie Andrews for the film. She turned them down, supposedly wishing to veer away from the role she had been typecast into over the decade. MGM did, however, get their grubby mitts on Dick Van Dyke, who had played Bert the chimney-sweep in *Mary Poppins* to great comedic and dramatic effect. He was fully aware of MGM’s attempt to emulate Disney’s success; he declared haughtily in a press release that *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* “would out-Disney Disney” (this insolence did not go unanswered: Van Dyke has not starred in another Disney film since). MGM also managed the coup of acquiring the Sherman brothers to compose for the film. That’s right: the same folks who penned “Chim Chim Cher-ee” also wrote the alliteratively similar “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.”
The gaggle of forgettable child actors, extended dance sequences, and token elements of magic (it’s a flying automobile!) brought the film moderate success, though nothing at the level of *Mary Poppins*. Perhaps some children and families were put off by the bizarre plot. The original book, it should be noted, was written by Ian Fleming, who is best known for writing the James Bond novels. This might explain both the film’s tired reliance on gadgetry and the peculiar (if not slightly inappropriate for a children’s movie) name of the heroine, Truly Scrumptious.

Perhaps no studio is better at capitalizing on Disney’s previous successes than Disney itself. As contemporary flops such as *Pocahontas* attest, the company has always harbored steadfast willingness to compromise quality in favor of strict adherence to a successful formula. *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971) is the deplorable result of just such attempts. Set in England again, the film features some cute kids and their nanny figure who has secret, magical powers over household items. As in *Mary Poppins*, the group of protagonists witness extended dance sequences in London and travel to fantastic lands where they interact with various cartoon animals. Once again, attempts were made to garner cast members from *Mary Poppins*; Julie Andrews was considered, of course, but the producer and director (the same team from *Mary Poppins*) had to settle for Angela Lansbury as the lead. David Tomlinson, who had played George Banks in *Poppins*, was given the lead male role. Richard and Robert Sherman, apparently always game for a bit of laurel-resting repetition, were commissioned to write music and lyrics.

The similarities end as soon as one begins listening to the stiff, stale dialogue, and attempting to follow the circuitous yet remarkably uninteresting plot. The developing romance between Lansbury’s and Tomlinson’s characters is listless and somewhat frigid; the special effects are psychedelic but thoroughly banal; the musical numbers are mostly slow and forgettable. As it happens, the most redeemable of the songs, “The Beautiful Briny”, was originally written for a sequence in *Mary Poppins* that was eventually dropped. The inferiority of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* is manifest: though we are not subjected to Dick Van Dyke’s dubious attempt at a Cockney accent, we are presented with a film whose best song was scavenged from the cutting-room floor.

During my childhood, I probably did not pick up on certain subtleties of dialogue, acting, or songcraft in the movies I saw. At the same time, I did recognize that my desire to watch and re-watch *Mary Poppins* remained much stronger than the curiosity or annoyance inspired by thematically similar drivel. Now, from the distance of relative maturity, I can reexamine childhood films through a more finely honed analytical lens and descry new gems of joy amidst the dust and chimney soot of old favorites. What emerges is a cinematic memory informed by aesthetic reflection and not idle emotiveness; in short I challenge the reader to cast off childhood movie devotions when they are wrong.

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**Curio continued from page 45**

suddenly he said “Well, Pearl, if you’ve seen enough, let’s go.”

So, much to my regret, we went, and I’ve never been to college since, though I know there’s loads more to see. Brother Dick won’t take me, he says its a “beastly bore to lug a girl around” (don’t he use simply terrible language?). I’m going to ask Mr. R. to take me again some day, and then I’ll write you a perfectly delightful letter and tell you all about it.

Please write and tell me you don’t think me too awfully horrid for writing you. (Kitty put me up to it, she’s terrible.)

Now, dear Editors, you must send me loads and loads of copies of the *Blue and White*, if you print this (but of course you will), for I’m simply wild to see anything of mine in print, and I’ll want to send copies to all the girls I know, so do send plenty.

Yours,

**Pearl Rogers.**

[This little gem was found by one of the editors, a few days ago, lying on the sidewalk in front of Hamilton Hall. Though no clue has yet been disclosed, it is confidentially expected that the fair authoress will eventually disclose her identity.]
AVEDON continued from page 47

photographer is the most unique part of Avedon’s work. As Avedon said in an interview with Charlie Rose, “I can’t do it alone. It has to be a collaboration. I’m always limited and released by the subject. It’s a strange collaboration. The control is with the artist, the photographer always.” Thus the photograph captures Avedon’s experience and response to his human subject.

Yet despite the decidedly subjective nature of his photography, Avedon never showed signs of distortion or editorializing. That clarity in his work, rightly celebrated, combined with the simplicity of his composition created a reality so distilled it can hardly be questioned. Avedon’s masterful subtlety will remain a lasting and intimidating benchmark both for The New Yorker and for photography itself. ⚫

HORSEMEN continued from page 42

entiation and separation of the damned, the typed up proposals begging for salvation in the face of imminent doomsday etc. Thank god he was getting out on the jet-ski with Gary this weekend. Work was getting to be a real bitch. He’d get to a meeting late, only to find that everything had gone to hell. Well that was an extra forty-minute commute.

Sometimes he just wished the others would pull their weight, give him a fucking break every now and then. He glanced around just in time to see Bert impale the bartender on the Sword of Infinite Pain, Leon incinerate a group of nubile co-eds, and Larry assume the fetal position under a booth.

It was going to be a long night. ⚫

FERRISS continued from page 37

may not build on the scale it did during the twenties, but whenever it gets the chance it shows it remains enamored with Ferriss after all these years. There is no better example than the World Trade Center competition design, which is little more than a Ferriss superblock distorted by both political and architectural tragedy. Sure, the Freedom Tower looks a little beaten-up and broken, but such is the fate of tired tropes. And Ferriss’ smoky charcoal has been traded for the equally unreal and maudlin white glow of digital rendering programs. Still, the basic pattern is undoubtedly there. The smaller buildings point subserviently to the central tower, all lifted up from the rest of the city grid. Looking at this updated ghost, one is astounded that the capitol of the world is still taken with ideas so vintage and so naive. One might be justifiably grateful that Ferriss’ cities never got beyond the drawing board in full, but his vision hardly lost out. Hugh Ferriss celebrated engineering, economics, and zoning, yet these very things ensured he would never build anything. Nonetheless, New York escaped the full physical form of the Metropolis of Tomorrow only to be enraptured hopelessly by its essence. Ferriss’ drawings aren’t buildings but rather postcards sent from Manhattan’s projected and inflated image of itself; decades later, the city is still admiring them. ⚫

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Microscopic microchips, plastic made of corn, hoverboards—break out the monorail, kids, for Tomorrowland is upon us. In this whirlwind of technology, however, certain things are being thrown asunder, and lest we forget who delivered us to this current age of magnificence and hoverboards, I bring you Nikola Tesla—titan of eccentric inventorship, pigeon enthusiast, and inventor extraordinaire. History would relegate him to the dust and/or loony bin, leaving him criminally underrated in the world of science—Edison receives the proverbial pat on the ass, despite being outdone by Tesla on more than one occasion. For history, there was the man; for those in the know, there was the legend—the sleepless nights in his laboratory, the epic personal rivalries, the unbelievable eccentricities, the millions of volts harnessed by human ingenuity alone!

Born in Croatia in 1856, Tesla came to New York in 1884 with only a few poems, four cents, and computations for a flying machine in his pocket. Nineteen hours a day Tesla toiled, bending the laws of nature to his whim. The breadth of his work is staggering, having a hand in such technological triumphs as the invention of the radio, the discovery of X-rays, and alternating current, the method still used to light our dormitories with sterile impersonality. In the midst of all this history-making, Tesla took time out of his busy schedule to concoct a special feed recipe for his favorite animals: pigeons. Never married, with family scattered across Eastern Europe, Tesla counted on this unhygienic aviary for much needed companionship, and if time allowed, message carrying. The closest we have to a 21st-century Tesla is Dean Kamen. He has received over a hundred patents in the last thirty years, an impressive feat indeed, yet where is the panache? The eccentricity for the ages? The disturbingly close relationship with winged rat-birds? Not that there wasn't promise. Kamen's magnum opus, the device that was to leave his mark on history, was known simply as it “IT” and a perplexed public proceeded to let their imaginations run wild, rumorizing it to be everything from a new form of interstellar travel to a vehicle that runs on unicorn feces. Of course, it turned out to be nothing more than a $5000 scooter. With gyroscopes. Lots of gyroscopes.

Now, just as my love for gyroscopes is finite, my adoration for mass destruction knows no bounds. Is it any wonder then that I must insist upon the superiority of Tesla, a man who discovered the resonant frequency of the Earth, in effect allowing him either to turn the entire planet into a giant tuning fork or, in his words, “split it like an apple” as he saw fit. Tesla also wanted to line the coasts of America with his self-styled “Beam To End All Wars,” a giant death ray capable of destroying thousands of planes at a range of hundreds of miles.

Now, you may ask yourself, “Should I be concerned about this death ray you speak of? Or the destruction of the Earth though what seems to be nothing more than an unfortunate taste in music?” Perhaps. While Tesla is gone, and none of these inventions have come to fruition, there remains an underground contingent of potentially high-strung electro-geeks, worshipful of all things Tesla, with which the world must contend. Tesla enthusiasts are a thriving, obsessive breed: overlords of a seamy Internet world, where countless men and women showcase their hottest, steamiest Tesla coil pics.

Although his later career managed to push the bounds of his own peculiarity with claims of alien transmissions sent to his laboratories, these events only add to his monumental genius. When the aliens come, take away our hoverboards, and subject us to a life of servitude in a backwater spice mine thousands of light years away from Earth, that crazy Serb will look down and cackle with manic glee, pausing only to adjust his coil, and feed his grimy pigeons.

Illustrated by Angelique Wille
A Note from the Office of Vertical Transportation

Dear valued transportee,

It has come to our attention that there have been certain complaints about the quality of vertical service here at Columbia University. Visitors to the campus have noted that many of the floors of the university’s buildings have a tendency to shift unpredictably, causing much confusion among the vertically traveling population. We have received word that the seventh floor of Schermerhorn is now the fourth, that students have been entering Butler through the fire escape on the roof, and there is nothing but a gaping, smoldering abyss in place of Philosophy Hall. Needless to say, we are concerned, especially in cases such as the last, where accusations of aggravated metaphor have been raised by student population. We would like to take this space to re-emphasize that your vertical needs are our top priority, and that this suspicious incident will be investigated by the members of our symbo-interrogration committee as soon as their winter session commences.

Also, we have received a number of phone calls outside of business hours asking if our staff is willing to service certain horizontal needs as well. To these inquisitive minds I repeat, our interests are purely vertical in nature and we have no authority on movement more than three degrees to the obtuse or the acute. We also relinquish all responsibility for implied vertical movement among the herbally inclined and request that those individuals may be better serviced by contacting Steve on Carman 3.

A final reminder: as of December 10th, zeppelins are no longer under our jurisdiction. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Parkinson, assistant director of our hydro-nostalgic division, located on the tenth floor of Lerner.

Sincerely,

Albert Q. Tillingsworth
Director of Temporal-Spatial Relations
Office of Vertical Transportation
Columbia University

Illustrated by Michael Mallow
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ometimes, inflated GPAs aside, Columbia students just want to feel appreciated. As soon as a prominent Philosophy professor finished observing a CC classroom, where he had been evaluating the graduate student teacher, the graduate student burst out “That was definitely one of the top ten most nervous moments of my life. Thank you guys so fucking much for not screwing up.” You’re fucking welcome.

Overheard in Butler:
Guy #1: So, I voted today.
Guy #2: I thought you weren’t going to?
Guy #1: I wasn’t, but my girlfriend said she wouldn’t have sex with me if I didn’t vote.
Guy #2. Oh.
(Pause)
Guy #2: What if you vote multiple -
Guy #1: No. I already asked.

Suggesting that hipster chic and intelligence are not always correlated:

Remarked to a girl, whose shirt read, “Nothing is good if other people like it”: “Hey, I like your shirt.” The girl responded, with frightening sincerity, “Really! Thanks!”

The BeW staff is perhaps too familiar with the reputation of Shakespeare scholar Harold Bloom. We respect, if not his scholarship, at least his prolificacy. While attending a book signing at the Columbia bookstore, however, one BeW writer discovered that Bloom should also be noted for his friendliness. Although he was not the object of the professor’s affections, the Columbia student ahead of him in line was much luckier. Although a little jealous that he wasn’t told that he “had a beautiful face,” or given the professor’s New York address and number so they could, according to Bloom, “discuss Chekhov,” our writer was pleased to remark that Prof. Bloom remains young at heart.

Girl, not a Columbia Student: “What are you reading?”
BeW Staffer: “City of God.”
(shows her the book)
Girl: “Wow, awesome! Are you reading it in Portuguese??”
BeW: “No.”

One Blue and White editor recently had another staffer visit his suite. At a point in the evening the staffer used his superior’s computer to check email and search for Jon Stewart on Crossfire. Much later, after the young gentleman had departed, the BeW editor was using his laptop, when an alert suitemate noted, “Umm...I hope you wash those keys sometime. Did you not see [name omitted]’s hands in his pants the entire time? They were hanging out there for quite a while, and definitely doing some scratching/exploring.” The horrified editor immediately went to work cleaning his laptop keyboard and touchpad with disinfecting wipes. Status of laptop: clean, sterilized. Status of editor’s innocence and trust: defenestrated, replaced with neurotic mistrust of friends’ idle habits.

November 2004
The Blue and White never rests in its efforts to bring you the freshest gossip available. One writer, distraught over a recent dearth of gossip, sent our alias the following agitated missive:

A BeW staffer walked into a McBain bathroom, where he saw a man doing his business in a urinal. After a bit of trepidation, the staffer proclaimed out loud: “I don’t have any problem peeing next to another man,” and he walked over. As the staffer began to urinate, the man next to him declared “big fart coming!”

The moral of the story: I am sure something funnier has happened—or, you have heard something funny—to every single one of you sometime within the past two weeks, and yet barely anyone has sent in a gossip. I will send in a gossip like the one above every day until you people start sending in gossip. Don’t hoard it and send it in one gasp of humored delight. A slow, steady stream—to continue the theme from above—makes everyone happy.

Two male students were overhead touting their latest prospects in the Mudd library.

"I just got back from bio recitation.”

"Yeah? How was it?”

“Great! I have Daniella. She’s so...” He paused to ruminate, unable to choose a word to describe Daniella; “HOT.”

“Nice!”

“Yeah. I asked her out today.”

“I don’t believe you!”

He hastily responded, “Well, I didn’t just walk up and ask her out. I wrote it at the end of my quiz.” He then paused a second and added with a meaningful look, “I think it’s the suavest thing I’ve ever done.” Alas, the BeW cannot help but agree.

Arriving late and unprepared to an art history seminar, one BeW editor slunk into the room only to be confronted by the usual nodding heads and scratching pens, plus one student in a rather large Winnie-the-Pooh costume complete with fuzzy adjustable mittens and retractable ear hood. This being well after the Halloween season, the editor wondered why no one seemed to notice this remarkable sight and remained in a state of neurotic confusion for much of the discussion, that is, until she noticed the essay she was supposed to have read that week: Rosalind Krauss’ “The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism.”

President Bollinger’s response to undergraduates in his Freedom of Speech class upon finding out that very few of them play the lottery: “Oh, you’re smarter than you look.”

ANTIQUE GOSSIP
Everyone is Interested in The Blue and White: Comments by our esteemed contemporary, The Spectator:

“CREAM & SKY-BLUE PUB. CO.—Mr. President, we are very anxious to learn how to run a paper, can’t you give us a few tips? What do you think of our latest bluff? At an enormous expense we have secured Mr. Talbert Perfume to write college notes, and Mr. Familton Hish to tell what he doesn’t know about boats. In order to make larger profits we have increased our price to ten pennies, and if you would only take charge of our funny column and write jokelets, we could probably pull the College for a dime and a postage stamp per copy.”

- The Blue and White, Vol. XVII, No. II (1892)

THE BULLIET FILES:
On having arrived: “I used to have interminable disagreements with my thesis advisor about this. But now he’s dead, so I don’t have to give his side.”

Tacqueria... it delievers!