

Literature Drama Arts **Bohème** Film Revolution

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GRATIS

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The Next Issue of Bohème
Magazine Online Will Be
Published:

1 November 2004

Note From the Editors

Welcome to the October issue of Bohème Magazine!

We are particularly excited this month by the publication of our first manifesto which defines the Bohème philosophy as well as by the newest Bohème creation: a series of official Bohème T-Shirts designed by Karen Melissa Graham and available through CaféPress. For more information, see page 4 of the online edition.

As we already announced last month, the Bohème staff is currently preparing Bohème's first quarterly print edition which will be available for sale beginning November 1st for US\$8.00. You will be able to place your order for a copy of the winter 2004 issue at our website. This professionally printed magazine will feature over 40 pages of original articles, artwork and literature not available online. If you would be interested in purchasing ad space in the winter 2004 issue, please contact us at boheme@boheme-magazine.net. Quarter-page spaces will be available for US\$8.00, half-page spaces for US\$15.00 and full-page ad spaces for US\$28.00.

We would like to remind you that this is the last month to enter the First Annual Bohème Visual Arts and Literature Competition. This free competition is being held as a way to encourage undiscovered/unpublished artists and writers. You have until November 1st to enter the competition. Winners will be announced in the December issue. To learn more and find out how you can participate, read our guidelines on page 5 of the online edition. We hope to receive many entries!

We thank you for your continued support and hope you will enjoy everything this new issue of Bohème has to offer!

Sincerely, The Editors

“What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche

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Bohème is a monthly, non-profit magazine dedicated to arts, literature, and opinion.

For more information about Bohème Magazine or to learn how you can contribute your own work for publication online and in the print edition, please visit our website at the web address given above.

September Readership: 3000

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Bohème T-Shirts Now on Sale

This month, Bohème is happy to announce the creation of six official Bohème T-Shirts designed by Karen Melissa Graham, featuring your choice of two different designs and six different styles.

To see the different designs and styles available, and to learn how you can place your order today, please see page 4 of the online edition.

All sales will bring a small profit to help keep Bohème Magazine online. Thank you for your support!

First Annual Bohème Visual Arts and Literature Competition

1 June 2004 - 1 November 2004

The Bohème Magazine Group is excited to announce the 1st Annual Visual Arts and Literature Competition! This is a free competition. The First Prize winner of the Visual Arts Competition will have one of their works featured on the cover of the December issue, as well as have other works featured in that issue, and will also receive a Bohème Gallery in our Gallery section. The First Prize winner of the Literature Competition will receive a feature and interview in our December issue and will have their works published in our future Library section.

The Second Prize Visual Arts winner will have a cover and feature in a future issue of Bohème and the Second Prize Literature winner will have their winning submissions published in the same issue.

Two entries from both the Visual Arts Competition and the Literature Competition will receive honorable mention.

Winners will be announced in the December issue of Bohème.

Check page 5 of the Online Edition for Complete Guidelines!

Poetry

Two Poems

By Yahya Abdal-Aziz

“Some Words”

Some words resonate:
long after they're spoken,
their sound lingers on
in the still air
that inhabits corners
of the unquiet mind.

Or sends chill ripples
thru the hot beating heart;
makes king tides
in the waters of the loins
that crash against the walls
of barrier reefs, built to no purpose
by myriads answering
the urges of the moon.

Some words pass too soon
beyond the grasp
of all our arms, whose reach
encompasses swarms of gnats, each
feverishly dancing away, eluding
any real chance of touch;
it's all too much, and much too late.

Some words, carved in stone
are all the legacy we own
from our forebears:
those who went away,
it seems, forbore to stay;
and their still lines
march up and down the stone,
and they alone tell
of those who went before.

What, then, if they are crumbling,

far from shore, beneath the waters
of a newer sea than
any that those others saw?
And if they spoke a language long since dead
and quite forgotten?

Yet other lips,
of quiet crawling fish, may trace them still,
give them the kiss of memory,
till all have tumbled into oblivion,
sibilants above the sand, rising
like sybils; what knowledge will they tell?
These soft blind oracles, far from your horizon.

Some words still sound on
long after the one who made them is gone.

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“4 Quick Verses”

For I am fond of life,
And choose to be as well as I can be,
And being fit, can better know
And savour, the time that's left
For life, for living
And for loving. I feel
That it's a favour.

A certain energy's required
For getting out of bed.
These days I find
That my own Will has fled,
But do it anyway,
Forgetting what I said.
For this is a clean habit;

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Poetry

“4 Quick Verses”

Continued from Page 3

When one comes your way,
You'd better grab it.

Oh, what a melancholy man,
That dwells upon the shortness of his span!
This is a man that longs for death,
Who worries at the shortness of his breath.
I long to help him if I can,
This melancholy man.

From laughing at some bird,
Absurdly tugging on a worm,
Or saying some familiar word
Until it's strange and makes him squirm,
Or being tickled with a gentle feather,
By some rude Heath or bonnie Heather,
Will he arrive at his true place.
And if he dare a little to unlace,
Why, yet there may be Grace.

For only with a smile upon his face,

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“Just Thinking About The Journey”

By Brother DeBuff

sometime wondering about what it's all going
to come to
praying to the lord
have mercy
cause some people confuse
whispering about everyone
cast it in the wind
let the rumor disappear
we are a people strong
with saying about us we go on and on
take my hand brother and sister
walk into the ancestor dream
our common ground the stand we take
hold to the prize inside
struggle to be as strong in vision
as in word the greatness in our journey
as we step into our place as people of
the most high
stand by and by we come this far
can't turn around keep on moving
just step nothing easy step on to unity
destroy the image create of negative
we the people stand in strength of all the blood

spill to soak make this ground scarce
hold your head up to sky for God has allow us
dreams the dreams of your children of your
nation
we come this long way
we go into all next step with ancestor blessing
we the royal blood of the struggle must
continue
looking to past only to see the honor of our
ancestor
a mighty people of true connection to power
in positiveness
we look a head to hill from which God love
shine on us
knowing that the journey to come is no way
easy
there is no turn back no way can you stop
you got keep moving you must keep on doing
keeping to grace
righteous keeping on loving keep on
respecting all done
in our behalf

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Poetry

“Together in Tight Space”

By Brother DeBuff

In dark corner of hell
We and laid against the living and on the dead
Our shout and whisper were unheard
As we sail to unknown terror that would take
 our cultural
Our rightful place in the world
Even the custom of our father would be stole
From mind like the body of our black was stole
Out of African by plans of were rulers
Yet our soul is still ours
Water chill body still the soul with stand
All you to kill me
I am still eating at the table of life
I still seek my ancestor's ways
As I speak in tongue of our long ago
Drum beat all in my and mind in the beat the
 drum
Clap your hand and dance with the spirit of
Yesterday when were free from all the troubles
Of the world
Remember we sat on the throne of life
I was first one to talk to God
And the God I knew was good to my people
His spirit enter me still
And to his glory as father's father did
I dance the dance of all grace as my ancestors
 watches me
Proud am I be born that African man and
 woman
In were chains they were bring to the shore of
 America
Some how we broken injustice that bind us
As stand tall each defeat evil would denied us
 the right
To be as great as our ancestors
A new day to stand up and kwon who you are
The people who withstood the sin of hate and

even
Beats of labor sold off of wall and to death we
were worked no joy in the field of this
hate

One day I be as I know this day as I be before
they took me away mother Africa strong in
blackness stand up for my children being with
my family holding on to my wife
While loving my black self in all brother and
sister we truly will a be community cast out
all negative and embrace what we know to be
righteous this plan can be continue by you my
future as a elder I tell you must keeping up the
banner of life as the ancestor did this is job
that you must within faith do with all your
honor learn to love one and other as you love
your own self your heart be true to people
God and our ancestor who paid the greatest
price for us to be with what we have today

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“Our empty books speak,” a Haiku

By Mina

Our empty books speak
And crush virtue's proud moonlight,
Always to the ground

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Send Us Your Events and Links!

Have an art or cultural event you'd like to announce? Perhaps you'd like to exchange links with Bohème? Check out our Links page and Events Calendar page to learn how you can share your cultural event or art website with us!

Poetry

Two Poems

By Eamon Graham

“My love has hair spun from brown silk”

My love has hair spun from brown silk, chestnut hair that's soft and falls in gentle curls to her shoulders.

My love has eyes like the deep brown swirls in a tiger-eye, but not hard like the stone, nay, soft like the hair of her head. They glent like a gleed and skire like a star set in the sky by the Hand that stretched the Heavens. They twinkle like the sun's bright blink on yonder horizon.

My love has cheeks that are round like the sil'ry moon, stented in the skies by Divinity to light the hairst night.

My love has lips that are pale pink like the skin of a peach. They flow on her mouth like two small powes running in to the skin of her face.

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“Casagemas's Funeral”

To exist, or to fly from existence:
Should one merely accept the blows of fate,
or rather struggle against them?
Or can one die - escape -
And by ending life end the heartache that is our condition,
The world's hatred, the poor man's poverty, the rich man's oppression;
Loneliness and hunger, time's delay, the phony's indifference,
And every other pain which we know which pounds the brain and drains the spirit?
Or does one instead sleep?
And if we sleep then we must dream;
But what dreams does death's sleep hold -
The Lover's happy smile or the Fiend's torment?
And does one ever wake from such dreams
And if so to what?
Ah! Here is the dilemma:
The promise of action hides an uncertainty,
And thus resolution loses its façade and takes on the colour of dread.

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Poetry

“Casagemas’s Funeral”

Continued from Page 6

The cigarette's smoke, the heart's beating, the quiet room, the clock's mocking slowness,
Even the solidness of the blade all tell me that I am alive,
And if all my enterprises are to be in vain, then so too must this one;
But if there is resolution in action,
Then would it not be better to embrace an existence where action is possible
Than to fly to a sleep where action is uncertain?
To sleep, to dream, or to struggle -
And by struggle define oneself and create a new world?
To define, to create, to live.

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“The Bitter Honey”

By Sabrina Laurent

Bees' harvest,
Venomous like a snake
Gold Poison
Acrid like the smell

Of cyanide.

The bitter honey
Stings my tongue
Like pernicious bees
And their vicious queen

The bitter honey
Burns inside
Like a branch of holly
Yellow like a flame

I feel its bite,
The exquisite arsenic,
Consuming my soul
Eating me alive

Let me succumb,

One more time,
To the delicacy
Of the hemlock,

Let me succumb,
For the last time,
To the delights
Of bitter honey.

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In Next Month's Issue:

- ◆ November Cover Artist Karen Melissa Graham
- ◆ Great Pictorial Movements: Rococo Art
- ◆ The Bohème Style Manifesto
- ◆ Bohémian Postcards: Florida
- ◆ The Art of Thierry Jourdan
- ◆ And much, much more!

Poetry

“The Ace of Stars”

By J.D. Nelson

jumping jackals invade the text
slugs hide between the lines

where's my dog whistle?
where's my container of salt?

someone's been playing tricks again.
I looked under the bed,
behind the television set,
inside each & every soda can --

no whistle, no salt.

then I remembered that I'd
traded these items for a pack of
playing cards -- Bicycle brand,
but the backs were green instead
of the usual red or blue.

I examined the cards
& was surprised to find
that the kings, queens & jacks
were all photos of missing children,
instead of the standard monarchs,

I shuffled the deck & drew a card
at random. It was the Ace of Stars --
not the death card, something different.

I grabbed my telescope & looked up.

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Two Poems By Victoria McCabe

“Heir”

i have your hands
and your stubborn streak
your love of books
your half smile
and deep inside
that same dark wish
a reckless desire
to quench curiosity
and find release
from mortal pain
you are my dark glass
a cracked reflection
of an alternate path
her light has me balanced
on the edge of your abyss
awaiting the slightest breeze
to send me tumbling over

“Daemon”

your hollow affability
reduces me to this tenuous form
a weak rendering, devoid of substance
a representation of the images
flashing through your distorted imagination
my insurrection, a sacrilege
in your constricted perception
your rapacious appetite for righteousness
devours my humanity
i am your preternatural creation
the beast of condemnation

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Bohémian Postcards: Arizona and the Grand Canyon

Karen Melissa Graham

On my most recent trip to the American West I had planned my trip to take me through Arizona. Unfortunately Arizona was plagued with wild fires (this happens rather often) and travelers were asked to avoid Arizona if they could. The smoke clouds were already making travelling some parts of New Mexico difficult, so I had to turn around. Someday I will go back, but until then our virtual road trip will take you deep into my memories as I recall Arizona.

I have only been to Arizona once. I was a little girl. In all honesty I only have flashbulb memories of our trip, but what I do remember I will never forget.

Weather

Thinking back on Arizona the weather is the first thing that comes to mind. As you travel Arizona the temperature changes rapidly.

On our trip we were traveling Southeast to Northwest. Our first stop was Tucson and then on to Phoenix. Tucson and Phoenix were about the same as far as temperature goes. **VERY HOT! VERY DRY!** We were always used to more humid climates and I remember the dry air very well. I can't explain to you exactly what it was that left such an impression, but it was so strange to breathe such dry air. Unfortunately, lack of humidity does not ease the sting of the desert heat. Before our trip, everyone told us "Yes, the temperature does get very high, but it's a 'dry heat'." Apparently everyone who told us this had never been to Arizona in the middle of August before. We learned that 120 degrees Fahrenheit is 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.89C) no matter what the humidity. The heat was stifling. I remember being carsick everywhere we went! At night it would cool down to 98F, and we would always be grateful.

After our time in Phoenix we moved on North to Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon. It is only a 2-hour drive (usually) from Phoenix to Flagstaff. In that two hours something strange happens. The temperature drops very quickly, and by the time we got out of the car in Flagstaff we had to put on our jackets!

Tucson

My memory of Tucson is very vague. I clearly remember being there, but I think it was just a day or two. According to the AAA Tourbook 2002 Edition, Tucson has a lot to offer, but none

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Bohémian Postcards: Arizona and the Grand Canyon

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of it sounded familiar. *My apologies.*

Phoenix

Phoenix is BIG! Off the top of my head that is the first thing I remember. The next thing I remember is the swimming pool! I don't have a clear memory of the hotel or our room, but I have a very clear memory of the pool! It was the biggest hotel pool we had ever seen. The 'deep end' was 12 feet! It was the first time I got to swim in the deep end without arm floats!

To an adult planning a trip to Arizona this is the most useless information I can give you, but if you tell this to a little girl who judges the quality of a hotel by the size of its pool I can assure you that she will be very impressed!

Aside from the hotel pool there were lots of other things to keep small children happy in Phoenix: zoos, museums, art galleries...we stayed busy the entire time we were there.

Probably the strangest memory I have of Phoenix was the **rodeo!**

I don't even know where to begin on this topic.

We drove to a place that was a recreation of an Old West Ghost Town. I don't remember much about the actual rodeo itself. I couldn't see very well where we were standing, but judging by the crowd's reaction it must have been really nice. We did get to walk around and look at the old style buildings and the cows and horses. There was a restaurant on the premises and when you walk in you get your picture taken with a goofy looking man dressed like a cowboy holding a bunch of paper roses. He knelt down next to me on one knee and put his arm around my shoulder. After our picture was taken he gave me a pink rose to match the pink roses on my blue dress. The cowboy was only for the girls. The men would get their picture taken with a lady dressed like a saloon girl with a really bad frizzy perm. Then she would give them a kiss on the cheek and put a garter on their arm. *(I don't think my family bought any of the pictures, but I did find the garter given to my Dad!)*

The food either wasn't very good or I was still feeling nauseous from our latest trip in the mobile oven, but I remember everything was smoky, burnt, and covered in barbecue sauce. Even though I didn't eat all of my supper I still got to have dessert. It was an ice cream sandwich made out of chocolate chip cookies and vanilla chocolate chip ice cream! It was called a Wagon Wheel. Everything to eat was named after vague cowboy references. I had

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Bohémian Postcards: Arizona and the Grand Canyon

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never seen anything like it before. It was very good and it was the size of my head!

I doubt anything I have told you so far inspires you to go to Arizona, and I admit that is a long drive for cookies and ice cream, but I loved Arizona when I was a little girl and some day I am going back! The scenery is amazing! The Painted Desert, the cactus, and of course...

The Grand Canyon

There are many different ways to see the Grand Canyon: hiking, climbing, mule trips, rafting tours, but none of those are good for small children. We did most of our sightseeing around the Grand Canyon Village area of the park.

There was a museum, and movie about the canyon. To illustrate how deep it is they showed a cartoon of how many Washington Monuments you could stand on top of each other before it would reach the top (I don't remember how many). We also learned all about the cute animals that live in and around the canyon. There were roads we drove to view different parts of the canyon and we stopped at a place where you could get out and walk to the edge and look out and over! (There was a safety rail) It was just AMAZING! I am sorry that I cannot describe it better than that, but you have to see it to understand. I remember most looking down at the Colorado River. We had just finished hearing how the mighty Colorado River had carved out the gigantic canyon. The Colorado River looked like a little stream.

One day I will get to go back, and I will take you with me. Until then, next month we will continue our virtual road trip with Florida! I realize Florida is no where near Arizona so if we start walking now we should make it by next month.

See you in the "Soggy" Sunshine State!

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The First Bohème Manifesto

Eamon Graham

The Spectre of a New Bohemianism is haunting the so-called Art Establishment, a dictatorship that has none of the blessings of art and all of the curses of the establishment.

After half a century of decline, it is time to re-claim Art from bourgeois posers, from

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The First Bohème Manifesto

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anti-artists who have for too long monopolised the field with slashed canvases, lazy and talentless sofa-sized canvases splattered with paint, tasteless and imaginationless "installations" and "performances." The time has come for the artists of the world to overthrow the establishment of bourgeois darlings, lazy posers and no-talent anti-artists.

The rosy dawn of a new art revolution has come.

I. Defining Art and Anti-Art

What is art? Art is the creative ritual of human authenticity and expression. It is the creation of beauty and of new things, and the consequent expression of humanity's existence, ideas and emotions. Art is revolutionary: it inspires the births of new worlds and separates the wheat from the chaff. The last part of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century exploded in new styles and experiments in all the arts, leading to an unprecedented era of creation and beauty in what was arguably humanity's ugliest and most destructive century. The last half of the 20th Century, however, has seen the embourgeoisement of art, and the establishment's drowning out of everything but what is easily marketable: Pop Art and abstraction for the sake of abstraction (or as a mask for lack of skill, talent and imagination) have received the establishment's protection and sanction, and the establishment has declared war on genuine artists who expose, through their skill and imagination, the total lack of talent of the establishment's darlings.

Anti-art is the result. It is the opposite of art. It is counter-revolutionary, it brings nothing, it expresses nothing, it creates nothing; it is nothing. It threatens nothing, it makes no government tremble, it does not inspire the creation of new values - it is not even beautiful. To see anti-art one only needs to seek out the most "avant-garde" art galleries, take a quick look at the best-selling works on eBay.

To see art, one needs to dig underground - where art has been forced by the muscle of the establishment.

Art is painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, cinema, drama, music, poetry, prose, philosophy, architecture, floral arrangement, glossopoetry, interior design, jewelry design, fashion design, crafts, calligraphy, web design, animation, games, engraving, gardening - the list goes on and on, and new arts are waiting to be discovered.

Anti-art pretends to be these things, adopts their forms, but is simply not art. It is not beautiful, it is not authentic, it is not even useful. It is vulgar in every sense of the word.

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The First Bohème Manifesto

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II. Diagnosis of the Current State of Art

"Modern" or "Contemporary" art is sick with the gangrene of anti-art.

Blame for the illness of "Modern Art" must be placed on: 1) Market forces which have forced artists (except for a lucky few) to either remain authentic but starving and unknown or to sell out to the current establishment sanctioned trends (the slashed canvases, the puerile messes of paint on oversized canvases); 2) the rejection, by the establishment, of the centuries of evolution of art in the name of "free expression" and its subsequent rejection of anything resembling talent; 3) the embourgeoisement of art, by which art has been stolen from proletarian Bohemian artists filled with soul and made the domain of bourgeois posers full of money or - just as bad - sell-outs whose only talent consists of being able to con bourgeois patrons with pseudo-intellectual babble; 4) the muscular control of the "art world" and any access to it by bourgeois art galleries, snobbish, counter-revolutionary "fine art" schools, art cliques like unions, guilds, syndicates, etc. all of whom impose a market friendly style on would-be artists and ensure that new ideas will be killed in their infancy.

Thus, in order to ensure the salvation of art, what is called for is the complete overthrow of establishment forces in art: alternatives must be set up by any means possible to the establishment galleries, schools and cliques; the setting up of outlets - such as Bohème - for against-the-grain artists rejected by the establishment; the holding of our own exhibitions; the usage of every resource at our disposal to propagate the work of underground artists and the ideas and ideals of anti-establishment art. Furthermore, until the market can be overthrown, ways must be found to use the market for our own benefit.

A Proletarianization of Art is called for: do not trust the so-called artist who has not once in their life pushed the broom or soiled the hands or known hunger for the sake of Art.

It is important to note here that an "underground" artist is emphatically not the pseudo-underground, in fact subterranean, artist who fancies that by engaging in infantile shock strategies that were worn out 30 years ago, or by plagiarizing Warhol and Pollock that they are revolutionary. The truly revolutionary artists of the past had style, talent, technique, insight, imagination and genuine ideas. These are the traits that will be required of the new generation of art revolutionaries.

III. On Style

In matters of style - Expressionist, Impressionist, Abstract, Cubist - the "art world's" attitude

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must be to let a hundred flowers bloom. The artist should use style in the same way as the speech writer uses vocabulary: different styles, or aspects of style, should be used for different purposes, different effects. The artist should not be limited to one style, but should learn to use style and techniques like vocabulary. The skillful use of style, and the creation of new, modern styles out of the collective success of the past centuries of artistic evolution, will be the mark of the new art revolutionary. Furthermore, the artist must open themselves to the art of other cultures - Asia, Africa, Oceania, Aboriginal Australia, Native America, and the Middle East will be important for Westerners and the West for them; countries formerly dominated by Socialist Realism will discover Abstraction and the work of the Expressionists; etc. etc. and all of us will benefit from this cross-pollenization and hopefully rediscover our own cultural roots, whether it be Celtic, Sinitic, or whatever.

Whatever truly works will survive. It is only through a new appreciation of style in general, a new education in styles, and an exploration of style that new styles will be created. If we are to destroy the styles that have evolved over the centuries - as the modern establishment would have us do in order to make room for hyperabstraction - the result will not be freedom, as they pretend, but rather slavery to ignorance and ugliness. Let them spend their time re-inventing the wheel; we, on the other hand, shall stand on the shoulders of giants, and from there launch into new orbits.

IV. A New Bohemianism

A New Bohemianism is necessary, required, awaited. The art revolutionaries of the past - such as the Impressionists, the Symbolists, the Decadents, the Expressionists, the Dadaists - devoted themselves to a revolutionary lifestyle based on art. They were called Bohemians and we will be their descendants. Inspired by their example, we will overthrow the establishment and build the foundations of a new revolution in art for a century that will revile all previous centuries in artistic evolution and creativity.

This new movement must have all of the passion of the Expressionists, all of the rebellious energy of the Dadaists, all of the skill and talent of the Impressionists, all of the imagination of the Surrealists and all of the appreciation of beauty that was the mark of the Symbolists and the Decadents.

The goal of this movement, this New Bohemianism, is nothing less than the overthrow of the art establishment and the building of a new revolution in all the arts.

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Art? Anti-Art!

Sabrina Laurent

It is hard today to get enthusiastic about the artistic production. Very few artworks nowadays seem to have a real artistic value, and it is quite depressing to see what the evolution of Art has led us to. Most "artists" seem to have a minimalistic vision of Art, so minimalistic that it does not even rely on a minimum of talent.

The decline of Art seems to have started in the second half of the 20th century, particularly with movements such as Abstract Art and Pop Art. At this point, Art ceased to be the monopoly of artists and became a profitable, trendy hobby for bourgeois wannabes. While some early Abstract Art reveals a real aesthetic and emotional power, abstraction soon became minimalistic, and anyone who is able to cover a canvas with paint could, technically, be called an artist. Piet Mondrian, for instance, is remembered for his geometrical compositions, but who couldn't take a ruler, some paint and do the same thing? Neither the technique nor the vision are interesting and yet, Mondrian is to this day considered a genius. Same is true of Joan Miró, a painter who started out with outstanding original compositions but later evolved towards a more abstract style that leaves many of us quite perplexed.

In a different style, Pop Art is no more interesting than Mondrian's work. Andy Warhol had the peculiar idea of leading a movement which name in itself is quite antonymic, and there resides the weak point: the

popularization of Art. Warhol's boring repetitions of a banal subject, still quite fashionable today, are quite vacuous. By integrating pop culture to Art, Pop Art contributed to the degradation of contemporary art, which was already quite off-track, spoiled by the laws of market and a severe lack of imagination.

Art having become a mere business, the collections shown in the museums and galleries often leave the majority of us perplexed if not disappointed, to the point that contemporary Art seems to have lost a certain credibility and is definitely overrated by pseudo-art experts. Beyond the laws of market, which only see the monetary potential of a work and cares very little about its artistic value, a genuine artist can only be shocked when learning that one of Monet's or van Gogh's paintings has just sold for millions, when the painters themselves spent most of their life in poverty. Didn't Monet and van Gogh deserve to earn that money when they were still alive? The establishment, unfortunately, is always too shy to recognize true talent; some might say that late is better than never. At any rate, this might prove that the bourgeois who buy and trade those works are not as educated as they try to show, and are not able to see the artistic value of a work.

Today, only commercial, popular Art seems to sell. A quick look at the current E-Bay auctions featuring contemporary artists gives you a taste for what sells. Mass produced,

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souless "paintings" (in the most generic sense of the word) often representing grotesque and banal subjects, invade the endless list of items for sale. Each one vies in lack of talent and bad taste but, rest assured, they will all be accompanied with a certificate of authenticity. You can't help but wonder if the buyers know anything about Art or if they simply try to look smart and educated, and end up being fooled by the seller (I'll avoid the term "artist," even if you do find exceptions). At any rate, the painting (sometimes) decorates a wall and impresses other people, not because they realize how tasteful and educated the buyer is, but rather how wealthy they are.

Art has become a bourgeois hobby and in most cases, a painting or a sculpture has simply become a currency. Because they can afford the artist's lifestyle, they've replaced most "starving artists," (not all of them, luckily) and we may not forget that many master painters came from poor backgrounds - van Gogh, Monet, Picasso, etc. The list could drag on and on. Museums of Modern Art across the world are filled with those pseudo-artworks, and if one carefully takes a look at the evolution of what we will call "Modern Art," they can easily see the slow, but radical, decline. A visit to the museums of Modern Art in Paris, for instance, gives you a clear idea of this trend; following the chronological order, the collections usually start with fascinating works by the Fauvists, the Expressionists, the Futurists and the Cubists. Masters such as Pablo Picasso, Raoul Dufy, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Pierre Bonnard and George Braque vie in expressive power, creativity, style and vision. Moving on to the middle of the 20th

century, the Surrealists and the Dadaists, as well as the early Abstract artists (such as Kandinsky) also contribute to the rich and complex evolution of Art, an evolution that would eventually turn into nothingness, or almost so. As we progress in time, imagination and good ideas seem to suddenly escape the mind of those who call themselves artists, and the end of our visit to the museum appears to be quite anticlimactic. Magritte, Derain, Dix and Delaunay are far behind and replaced by the sterile abstractions of Hans Hartung, Yves Klein, Simon Hantai and Pierre Soulages. At this point, becoming an artist seems to get easier and easier. Buy a canvas or save a piece of cardboard, take a brush, tubes of paint (one colour can even be enough), apply a few traces on the surface, and you're done! You can then be proud of having realized your first masterpiece and, to be honest, you probably deserve to be exposed as much as those "artists" do. You don't even have to bother finding a good title for your work, or even try to make a certain sense of it. Laziness and lack of imagination also affect the modern (or more correctly, the "Contemporary") artist, and if you bother enough to read the titles of those pseudo-masterpieces, you'll see that they are just as exciting: *T 1956-14, Portrait, Figure 5, M MI7, Peinture 19 juin 1963*, etc.

The establishment can only be interested in the promotion of "bad art," for it follows the trend that has affected all artistic fields: the popularization of Art. Everyone nowadays wants Art to be accessible, but because only very few people are actually able to

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understand it, Art had to become reachable for the majority. The presence of such contemporary painters in a museum is not a proof of their quality and value as artists, no more than your local theater shows the most intelligent movies. Visual arts, like music, film or literature, has reached a similar level of popularization and what is shown today is just as artistically good as the latest Hollywood blockbuster or trendy CD. This decline has been slower and more discrete in visual arts than most other artistic fields (probably because it was less accessible to the majority), but it is obvious. However, in visual arts, the most despicable fact about this popularization is the tendency of the establishment to try and make everyone believe that the works shown are masterpieces and that they have a profound, intellectual value and meaning. No one tries to make you believe that the latest Hollywood big release is as much a classic of cinema as one of Charlie Chaplin's films, but the Art establishment will struggle to explain (often with the help of fancy, pretentious pseudo-intellectual vocabulary) why Lucio Fontana's blank slashed canvas is just as revolutionary as van Gogh's *Starry Night*. One thing that is sure, museums greatly benefit from that easy-to-understand Art (when there is indeed something to understand) and, sadly, Robert Maplethorpe's photographs of sado-masochist scenes often leave a stronger impression on the minds of the masses than Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

In visual arts, like in many other artistic fields, some clichés are particularly persistent. Rather than relying on talent to be

remembered, many contemporary "artists" use and abuse clichés to reach the easily-impressed masses. In fact, we can count two categories of clichés that have been used for the past fifty years in all art fields with the hope of "shocking" their audience: religion and sex. Approaching either one of these themes, from an angle that relies more on provocation than substance, ensures immediate attention from the public - and often becomes a financial success for the museums and galleries. Very few of these works have a real artistic point and value, but in the end, it does not really matter, for it satisfies the vulgar appetite of the masses and feeds the establishment (both artists and museums). Obviously, the idea is not to ban religion and sex from Art, but rather to use these themes to make a real artistic point. An artist should know that showing a breast or a penis cannot be an end in itself. Thus, we can only be perplexed when reading that Korean Shu Lea Cheang was planning to film couples having sex at a Norwegian music festival, back in July 2004, in what the program chief of Norway's National Touring Exhibitions claimed was an authentic artistic approach, "about humanity, nakedness and intimacy." "This is a society-critical exhibit. It's commentary on how we have handled the AIDS epidemic, and it's a bridge between popular culture and art." As always, the establishment finds pretty - but empty - justifications and try to make what is nothing more than pornography an intellectual concept, as if there was not more subtle and clever ways of making the same point through a real, artistic creation. Surely finding intelligent,

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original ideas is a lot harder than using what is easily within reach (and therefore vulgar), and you also have to take into account the fact that most of the audience is probably more likely to understand what there is to understand about a porn movie than more clever concepts. Luckily, for the sake of Art, Cheang's plans were canceled.

Today, it is also quite easy to make artworks out of banal, pointless creations, provided you can "sell" it to the right person. In fact, some examples are quite astonishing. If you were in Paris in summer 2003, for instance, you might have seen the vacuous photographs taken by Yoko Ono and exposed at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. We'll probably never know why the picture of a woman fixing her bra seemed so "artistic," but it was apparently worth being shown to the world. Yet, I doubt that if an unknown individual took the same picture anyone in the establishment would be so impressed. Having become an icon for football fans, David Beckham has also become an artistic subject in the eyes of photographer Sam Taylor-Wood, who filmed the football player asleep for over an hour. The work was presented by the National Portrait Gallery in London, which sounds like it is seriously running out of decent ideas. Same thing of Danish Marco Evaristti, who had the idea of painting an iceberg red, explaining: "We all have a need to decorate Mother Nature because it belongs to all us. This is my iceberg; it belongs to me." Very often, giving an explanation is worse than not giving any. Marco Evaristti had already committed an artistic slaughter in 2000, when he displayed

working blenders filled with goldfish and invited guests to turn them on, grinding up a pair of goldfish. Poor goldfish.

Minimalism has become a very popular trend among the pseudo-artists, for it has the benefit of not requiring much thinking or effort. Niele Toroni, for instance, likes to regularly apply small, square brush strokes on to a canvas or a wall. Robert Ryman's *Chapitre* is no more than a piece of linen covered with white paint. The same is true of Richard Serra, who took the time to put a piece of steel on top of another. Greek Takis wasted a very large canvas to only put on it a few magnets. One of the most sterile individuals featured in the museum of Modern Art in Paris is, without a doubt, Lucio Fontana, who simply slashed blank canvases. Today these "artworks" are hanging on the walls of the museum, as masterpieces of the Spatialist trend. In the same spirit, we also find Alberto Burri's *Combustione Plastica*, which is no more than what the title explains: a piece of plastic that has been partially burnt. Mario Merz, on the other hand, realized an artistic installation made of neon letters displayed on top of an assembling of potato bags. There are many, many examples available in the museums of Modern Art across the world that could prove the decline of Art.

Part of the problem comes from the untouchable, almost sacred, importance given to the concept of *self-expression*. There is a trend, today, of making self-expression the most important part of the creative process, leaving much of technical skills behind to the

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benefit of what is a rather abstract concept. Many painters seem to use their canvas as a form of "diary" where they express their feelings but leave technical consideration - and often talent - out of the process. Creation is very much a form of self-expression, but it cannot be efficient and artistically convincing without a minimum of technical skill. Like the poorly-written poems that you often read in a teenager's diary, the paintings that rely exclusively on the concept of self-expression and do not show a minimum of talent and structure, often lack real substance. Unfortunately, with the importance that has been given to psychology and the respect of individuals' emotions - which are otherwise very respectable - self-expression has become an almost sacred concept that only the heartless ones would question. From the moment that a painting was born out of self-expression (and particularly from tragic situations and painful emotions), it becomes untouchable no matter what its artistic value is. However, real artists (just like real poets) should know that a piece of work needs a solid basic structure before it can become a good support for self-expression. How many bad, often abstract, paintings have we seen that were presented as great works because they expressed the painter's torment? There is a difference between the use of a canvas and some paint as a form of catharsis and the creation of a masterpiece. Just like any teenager can assemble words to create "poems," yet, how many of those heartfelt diary entries have become classics of literature?

that seems to affect the quality of Art is not the monopoly of contemporary Art but has always existed. Surely "bad Art" has always existed, and not every painter in 1900 was a Degas or a Renoir. The major difference here is that, those are the artists that we remember today for that time period. What will be remembered of what we call today Contemporary Art? What master painter was revealed in the past few decades? What true genius is shown today in a museum of Contemporary Art? There is not a single new van Gogh exposed in museums of Contemporary Art, so we have to admit that the proportion of master painters that are revealed (because they surely already exist) to the public today has seriously decreased. In fact, it's even been several decades since a big artistic or literary movement has come out and was extended to more than one individual.

Of course, leaving as much subjectivity out as possible, a re-definition of "good art" would be necessary. The fact that we have no more great painters and artists should already speak for itself. Everything mentioned above should give a hint of what "good art" is. Without falling into a snobbish elitism, the popularization of Art needs to cease. Those so-called artists need to open a few books, study the masters and simply work before calling themselves painters. They need to stop thinking that because they have the ability to apply some paint on a canvas that they have created masterpieces, just like it would be naive to believe that anyone who can assemble words on a sheet of paper *is* a writer and *will* become just as famous as Shakespeare or Balzac. It is time

One could also argue that this general trend

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also for them to realize that it takes more than pseudo-shocking concepts based on sex and religion to truly "shock" the audience, and that those kinds of cliché shortcuts have already been used too many times.

Of course, this decline does not only affect visual arts, but all artistic fields. As mentioned earlier, and this is no news to most of us, most movie theaters exclusively show commercial movies, that is to say Hollywood blockbusters produced in chain that have no artistic point and are often not even entertaining. But why would producers and film makers care? We learn from the international box-office, for instance, that mediocre movies such as *The Sixth Sense* and *Twister* respectively made a total of US \$368,000,000 and US \$253,000,000. Those are only two examples, but the list is long. The salary earned by the current popular actors and actresses in Hollywood is just as indecent. To name only a few, Brad Pitt made US \$20,000,000 for his role in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (2004). John Travolta earned the same amount in 1999 for his part in *The General's Daughter*. Actress Julia Roberts made US \$25,000,000 for her role in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003). Such facts prove that, in Hollywood, monetary value of a production has definitely replaced its artistic value. Luckily, outside of Hollywood, artsy independent film still exists. In fact, it *survives*, for it has very little opportunities to be promoted.

In music, the leading market is just as poorly populated and suffers from the same commercialization. The music played on the radio is standardized to the extreme, each

song has to be formatted to last a certain amount of time - usually rather short - for radio stations have a certain number of songs to play throughout the day. The songs played are not those preferred by the audience, but rather those for which record companies have paid the most money - thus explaining why some songs are repeated again and again on a same day. Criticizing pop pseudo-artists may not be seen as subversive and alternative anymore. After all, I won't be the first person to complain of the lack of talent of those who regularly invade music stores, as well as the cover of most popular magazines. This makes us wonder why those "stars" got so incredibly popular when most people seem to hate their music, movies or even personality. Are we simply influenced by the media? To a certain extent, probably. Plebian standards of talent are never really high, and any "wannabe" with some acquaintance can easily become popular by reaching one of these standards - which can often be reduced to a simple physical quality. I have been wondering if we should include the Britney Spears/Christina Aguilera duet here for the simple reason that, once again, criticizing them is not very original. Most people over the age of 13 will admit that they're both lacking talent whether on a disc or on a screen. At the same time, it would be hard to review pop icons without exploring the Spears/Aguilera case; so rather than just stating the fact that they're both untalented, let's take a look at some of the lyrics of their songs to really understand why, in an objective point of view, they are bad. The clichés are numerous. Only pre-teenagers will appreciate the lyricism of

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lines such as: "Dear diary/Today I saw a boy/
And I wondered if he noticed me/He took my
breath away (...) No one in this world/Knows
me better than you do/So diary I'll confide in
you" (from "Dear Diary", by Britney Spears)
or "E-mail my heart and say our love will
never die/and that I know you're out there and
I know that you still care./Email me back and
say our love will stay alive./Forever, Email
my heart." (from "E-Mail My Heart", also by
Britney Spears). Britney's rival Christina
shows a certain talent in accumulating clichés
as well, in songs such as "Loving Me For
Me" : "I've been kissed by destiny/Oh, heaven
came and saved me /An angel was placed at
my feet/This isn't ordinary, he's loving me for
me". These few lines are enough to prove why
such songs are simply bad. As you were
reading those lines you were probably
wondering where you had read or heard those
words before. Unfortunately, this impression
of déjà-vu is not just an illusion, and those
"singers" are now millionaires. Jennifer Lopez
(a.k.a J.Lo) is another good example of those
ready-made singers, who completely forgot
about the artistic point of music and rely more
on an overly-sexualized image than authentic
talent. However, it would be unfair to limit
our examples to female singers, as male
singers do not seem to do much better,
especially rap singers (let's name R.Kelly,
P.Diddy formerly known as Puff Daddy and
Enimem) whose lyrics we will not reproduce
here out of simple decency. Once again, sex is
an old, easy shortcut to get attention from the
masses, and even if the result is despicable,
the cash still flows.

and harder to have your work even considered
if you do not already have a famous name and,
if possible, a sleazy story to tell. Contemporary
literature has lost all of its nobility and
bookstores are now regularly invaded by pop
icons and celebrities who felt the need to share
some kind of personal (and often trashy)
experience. The sales being always very
lucrative, publishing companies have found
there a real gold mine. When it comes to actual
literature (or fiction), the quality is often
questionable and like in visual arts, it would be
hard to name the contemporary successors of
Hemingway and Baudelaire. Contemporary
literature suffers from the similar clichés
involving pseudo-shocking concepts and ideas,
the main ones being, once again, sex and
religion (sometimes even combined together).
Once again, the point is not to ban sex or any
other topic from art and literature, out of a
mere prudish concern, but rather to only use
such themes when they make a point, which
they rarely do. Gratuitous violence and
obscenity have never been proofs of
intelligence and originality but, unfortunately,
they sell and unscrupulous individuals abuse
them. Experimental writing is rarely as
experimental as it pretends to be, and what is
presented as "subversive" is usually an
accumulation of dirty words, without any real
point or meaning. When it is not sleazy and
pseudo-subversive, literature becomes an
annoying, pointless assembling of words that
recounts banal stories, supposedly revealing a
simplicity full of talent, when it is just simply
boring. Many examples can be found in *The
New Yorker*, yet considered a reference of

Last, in literature, it seems like it gets harder

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contemporary literature. Like in visual arts, the establishment is full of pretentious, "intellectual" justifications to reassure the neophytes of the quality and fineness of those writings.

After such disappointing statements, should we consider the artistic scene (of any field) hopeless? Assuredly not, or else most artists would have already given up their activities, leaving those considerations to the utopists. However, the next artistic renaissance will definitely not come from the establishment. It might not even come from Western civilizations, unless they become aware of the problem and feel like doing something to change the situation - which would also mean be less interested in the financial aspects of art, which will probably sound idealistic. How disappointing is Contemporary Art! How anticlimactic is it too, after centuries of evolution and clever creation! One could have expected Art to become better and better, especially once freed from the chains of academism. Instead, Contemporary artists seem to completely disown their great artistic heritage, with the justification of being "freed" from it. This is a great mistake! Contemporary Art has created its own shackles.

Sunday artists and writers need to stop pretentiously thinking that their works are masterpieces and worth being shared, and that vacuous pseudo-intellectual justifications can make up for the mediocrity! Instead, let's open our minds to new cultures and backgrounds, and take a look at their creations. Many great contemporary work has come out of African, Asian, Polynesian, Aboriginal and South American peoples, who have stayed faithful to their cultural heritage, and whose creations have retained great technique while still allowing a touch of modernity and much originality. Maybe this new, long-awaited renaissance will come from them.

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Symbolism

Jean Moréas

Translated from the French by Eamon Graham

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For two years, the Parisian press has been much occupied by a school of poets and prosateurs known as the "Decadents." The storyteller (in collaboration with Mr. Paul Adam, the author of Self), of Le Thé chez Miranda, the poet of Les Syrtes and Les

Cantilènes, Mr. Jean Moréas, one of the most visible among these revolutionaries of letters, has formulated at our request, for the readers of the Supplement, the fundamental principles of the new manifestation of art.

Like all arts, literature evolves: a cyclic

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evolution with strictly determined turns which become complicated by various modifications brought about by the march of time and the upheavals of surroundings. It would be superfluous to point out that each new evolutionary phase of art corresponds exactly to senile decrepitude, to the inevitable end of the immediately previous school. Two examples will suffice: Ronsard triumphed over the impotence of the last imitators of Marot, Romanticism spread its banners over the Classical debris that was poorly guarded by Casimir Delavigne and Étienne de Jouy. It is that every manifestation of art fatally manages to impoverish itself, to exhaust itself; then, from copy to copy, from imitation to imitation, what was once full of sap and freshness dries out and shrivels up; what was the new and spontaneous becomes the conventional and the cliché.

And so Romanticism, after having sounded every tumultuous alarm of revolt, after having had its days of glory and battle, lost its strength and its grace, abdicated its heroic audacities, made itself orderly, skeptical and full of good sense: in the honourable and paltry attempt of the Parnassians it hoped for deceptive revivals, then finally, like a monarch fallen in childhood, it let itself be deposed by Naturalism, to which one can only seriously grant a value of protest, legitimate but ill advised, against the dullness of some novelists then fashionable.

A new manifestation of art, therefore, was expected, necessary, inevitable. This demonstration, incubated for a long time, has just hatched. And all insignificant anodines of

the joyful in the press, all the concerns of serious critiques, all the bad temper of the public, surprised in its sheeplike nonchalance, only further affirm every day the vitality of the present evolution in French letters, this evolution noted in a hurry by judges, by an incredible discrepancy, of decadence. Notice, however, that the Decadent literature proves essentially to be tough, long-winded, timorous and servile: all the tragedies of Voltaire, or example, are marked by these specks of Decadence. And with what can one reproach, which one reproaches the new school? The abuse of pomp, the queerness of metaphor, a new vocabulary or harmonies combining themselves with colors and lines: characteristics of any renaissance.

We have already proposed the name of Symbolism as the only one capable of reasonably designating the present tendency of the creative spirit in art. This name can be maintained.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this article that the evolutions of art offer an extremely complicated cyclic character of divergences: thus, to follow the exact filiation of the new school, it would be necessary to go back to certain poems of Alfred de Vigny, back to Shakespeare, back to the mystics, further still. These questions would demand a volume of commentaries; therefore, let us say that Charles Baudelaire must be considered as the true precursor of the current movement; Mr. Stéphane Mallarmé allots to it the sense of mystery and the ineffable; Mr. Paul Verlaine

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broke in his honour the cruel hindrances of verse that the prestigious fingers of Mr. Théodore de Banville had previously softened. However the Supreme enchantment is not yet consumed: a stubborn and jealous labour requires newcomers.

As the enemy of plain meanings, declamation, false sentimentality and objective description, Symbolic poetry seeks to clothe the Idea in sensual form which, nevertheless, would not be its goal in itself, but which, while serving to express the Idea, would remain exposed. The Idea, in its turn, must not be deprived of the sumptuous simars of external analogies; because the essential character of Symbolic art consists of ever going until the concentration of the Idea in itself. Thus, in this art, scenes from nature, the actions of humans, and all concrete phenomena cannot manifest themselves for their own sake; here they are the sensual appearances intended to represent their esoteric affinities with primordial Ideas.

The accusation of obscurity thrown in fits and starts by readers against such an aesthetics has nothing which can surprise. But what to do? The Pythian Odes of Pindar, Shakespeare's Hamlet, Dante's Vita Nuova, Goethe's Faust Part II, Flaubert's The Temptation of Saint Anthony - were they not also taxed by ambiguity?

For the exact translation of its synthesis, Symbolism needs: a complex and archetypical style; unpolluted terms, the period that braces

itself alternating with the period with undulating lapses, meaningful pleonasms, mysterious ellipses, the anacoluthon in suspense, all too audacious and multiform; and, finally, good language - instituted and modernized - the good and lush and spirited French language from before Vaugelas and Boileau-Despréaux, the language of François Rabelais and Philippe de Commines, Villon, Ruteboeuf and so many other free writers, darting the term of the language like so many Thracian Toxoteses with their sinuous arrows.

Rhythm: the ancient metrics revived; a learnedly ordered disorder; rhyme illucescent and hammered like a shield of gold and bronze, near rhyme with abstruse fluidities; the Alexandrine with multiple and mobile stops; the use of certain prime numbers - seven, nine, eleven, thirteen - solved in various rhythmic combinations of which they are the sums.

Here I beg permission to make you attend my small INTERLUDE drawn from an invaluable book: The Treatise on French Poetry, where Mr. Théodore de Banville mercilessly thrusts, like the god of Claros, monstrous donkey's ears on the head of Midas.

Attention!

The characters who speak in this piece are:

A DETRACTOR OF THE SYMBOLIC SCHOOL

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MR. THEODORE DE BANVILLE
ERATO

First Scene

THE DETRACTOR. - Oh! These Decadents!
What pomposity! What gibberish! As our
great Molière was correct when he said:

This figurative Style of which people are so
vain,

Is beside all good taste and truth

(Translator's Note: From The
Misanthrope, Act I, Scene 2)

THEODORE DE BANVILLE. - Our great
Molière committed here two evils towards
those who themselves partake as much as
possible of good taste. What good character?
What truth? The obvious mess, vivid
craziness, passionate pomposity is the very
truth of lyric poetry. To fall into excess of
imagery and colour is not a great evil, and it is
not by this that our literature will perish. In
the worst of times, when it dies decisively (as,
for example, under the First Empire), it is not
pomposity and the abuse of ornamentation
that kill it, it is dullness. Taste and naturalness
are beautiful things undoubtedly less useful
than one thinks poetry to be. Shakespeare's
Romeo and Juliet was written from beginning
to end in a style as affected as that of the
Marquis de Mascarille; that of Ducis shines
by the happiest and most natural simplicity.

THE DETRACTOR. - But the caesura, the
caesura! They're desecrating the caesura!!

THEODORE DE BANVILLE. - In his
remarkable prosody published in 1844, Mr.
Wilhem Tenint establishes that the
Alexandrine verse admits twelve different
combinations on the basis of the verse which
has its caesura after the eleventh syllable. He
returns to say that, actually, the caesura can be
placed after any syllable of the Alexandrine
verse. In the same way, he establishes that
verses of six, seven, eight, nine, ten syllables
admit variable and variously placed caesuras.
Let's do more: let's dare to proclaim complete
freedom and say that in these complex
questions the ear alone decides. One always
perishes not from having been too bold but
from not being bold enough.

THE DETRACTOR. - Horror! Not to respect
the alternation of rhymes! You know yourself,
Sir, that the Decadents dare to even allow
hiatus! Hiatus even!!

THEODORE DE BANVILLE. - Hiatus, the
diphthong making a syllable in verse, all other
things that were forbidden and especially the
optional use of masculine and feminine rhymes
have provided to the poet of genius one
thousand means of delicate effects, always
varied, unexpected, inexhaustible. But to use
this scholarly verse, genius and a musical ear
were necessary, while with stationary rules the
most mediocre writers can - while obeying
them faithfully - make, alas! Tolerable verses!
Who therefore gained anything from the
regulation of poetry? Poor poets. Only them!

THE DETRACTOR. - It seems to me,

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however, that the Romantic revolution...

THEODORE DE BANVILLE. - Romanticism was an incomplete revolution. What a pity that Victor Hugo, this victorious, bloody-handed Hercules, was not completely a revolutionary and that he let live a group of monsters which he was put in charge of exterminating with his flaming arrows!

THE DETRACTOR. - All innovation is madness! The imitation of Victor Hugo is the salvation of French poetry!

THEODORE DE BANVILLE. - When Hugo had liberated verse, one was to believe that, educated with his example, the poets coming after him would want to be free and only to raise themselves up. But inside us is such a love of constraint that the new poets, as if in competition, copied and imitated the most typical of Hugo's forms, combinations and cuts, instead of endeavouring to discover new ones. This is how, fashioned by the yoke, we fall again from one slavery to another, and that after the Classical conventions, there were the Romantic conventions, conventions of cuts, conventions of sentences, conventions of rhymes; and convention (that is to say, the cliché become chronic) in poetry, as in anything else, is Death. On the contrary, let's dare to live! and to live is to breathe the air of the sky and not the breath of our neighbour, though this neighbour be a god!

Scene II

ERATO (invisible). - Your Small Treatise on French Poetry is a delicious work, master

Banville. But the young poets have blood up to the eyes fighting against the monsters fed by Nicolas Boileau; you are asked for on the field of honour, and you keep silent master Banville!

THEODORE DE BANVILLE (dreamer). - Curse! I would have failed in my duty as elder and lyric poet!

(The author of The Exiles breathes a lamentable sigh and the Interlude finishes.)

Prose - novels, short stories, tales, fantasies - evolves in a sense similar to that of poetry. Elements, seemingly heterogeneous, converge there: Stendhal brings his translucent psychology, Balzac his exorbitant vision, Flaubert his cadences of sentences to the full arches. Mr. Edmond de Goncourt brings his modernly suggestive Impressionism.

The conception of the Symbolic novel is polymorphic: sometimes a single character moves in surroundings distorted by his own hallucinations, his temperament; in this distortion lies the only reality. Beings with mechanical gestures, with shadowed silhouettes, are agitated around the single character: to him these are no more than pretexts to sensations and conjectures. He himself is a tragic or comical mask, of a humanity however perfect although rational. - Soon the crowds, superficially affected by the set of ambient representations, carry

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Symbolism

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themselves with alternations of shocks and stagnations toward acts which remain incomplete. At times, some individual wills appear; they attract, agglomerate, generalise each other towards a goal which, either reached or missed, disperses them in their primitive elements. - Sometimes mythical phantasms are evoked, from the ancient Demogorgon to Belial, from Kabirs to Nigromans, appear ostentatiously dressed on the rock of Caliban or by the forest of Titania to the mixolydian modes of Barbitons and Octochords.

So scornful of the puerile method of Naturalism - Mr. Zola, himself, was saved by a marvelous writer's instinct - the Impressionist-Symbolic novel will build strong its work of subjective distortion from this axiom: that art should seek in the objective only one simple, extremely brief starting part.

Jean Moréas.

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Bohème Reviews

⊗ = Bad B = Not so Good BB = Good

BBB = Very Good BBBB = Excellent

MUSIC

Greatest Hits

Arrested Development

BBB

Whoever has any prejudice against rap music should take the time to listen to Arrested Development's music. *Arrested Development Greatest Hits*, released in 1998, gathers the greatest hits of the group, from "People Everyday" to "Ease My Mind," from "Tennessee" to "Give a Man a Fish." Arrested Development, often seen as the "alternative rap group" concentrates on a positive philosophy and blames gangsta rappers for doing a disservice to the African-American community. The result is intelligent and refreshing. (S.L.)

FILM

The Cell

Directed by Tarsem Singh

⊗

The Cell begins like any other "thriller" film, with its share of horrific crimes, a looney serial killer and, over all, a serious lack of originality. The rest of the film, rather than being truly creative, leads us into a maze of confusing scenes – where we are supposedly entering the killer's psyche. Implausible and absurd, *The Cell* leaves you with the feeling of having experienced a very bad drug trip and ends like it started: predictably. (S.L.)

MUSIC

Disc One: All Their Greatest Hits

Barenaked Ladies

BBB

Greatest Hits collections are usually for die-hard fans, but BNL's *Disc One: All Their Greatest Hits 1991-2001* is also a great introduction for those unfamiliar with the Barenaked Ladies, much like *Rock Spectacle* was back in the day. These 19 tracks offer a thorough sampling of the BNL flavor, including two new songs, "It's Only Me (The Wizard of Magicland)" and the tragicomic "Thanks That Was Fun," and a rare cover of "Lovers in a Dangerous Time." Enjoy Disc One while you wait for Disc Two. (E.G.)

FILM

Pirates of the Caribbean

Directed by Gore Verbinski

BBB

With Gore Verbinski's 2003 film *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Johnny Depp has finally found his character. While we loved him in *Donnie Brasco* and *Blow*, *Pirates* and *Edward Scissorhands* prove that Johnny's real talent shines through in fantastic, lovable, comical characters such as pirate Jack Sparrow. Add to this the always delightful Geoffrey Rush, outstanding cinematography (much of it filmed in St. Vincent and the Dominican Republic) and a simply fun story and you have a great, light-hearted film. (E.G.)

The Subversive's Dictionary - X

Eamon Graham

Red - The colour red is intimately tied to the concept of revolution, and has been so at least since the Commune of Paris, the red flag being the banner flown over the City Hall of Paris by the Communards. In Asia, red is the colour of autumn, which makes October a fitting month to celebrate revolutions and revolutionaries: revolutionary Oscar Wilde was born October 16th, Martin Luther launched the Reformation on October 31st. It was in October 1943 that Albert Camus joined the "Combat" anti-Nazi resistance cell. On October 3rd of 1965 Che Guevara officially bade farewell to Cuba saying, "Other nations of the world call for my modest efforts" and it is on October 8th of 1967 that Che was wounded in Bolivia a day before he was executed. October 15th marks the anniversary of the birth of Nietzsche and the 18th marks the death of José Ortega y Gasset.

Here in the West, red is the colour we associate with passion. A truly passionate revolution is called for in our contemporary art, in our present society, in our corrupt government, in our unjust economy, in our daily existences. This Red October, let us meditate on the passion of a truly existential revolution!

Revolution (Revisited) - The Chinese word meaning "revolution," *gémìng*, is made up of two characters, the second of which signifies, by itself, "fate." The first can mean "remove." If we put these together in to a hyper-literal reading, we can argue that the act of revolting is to remove fate as a factor in the game of existence. Are the oppressed fated to be so forever? The weights that hold me down, are they fated to be there forever? Revolution answers: "Not important!" The decisions of fate are unimportant to the revolutionary, who removes fate from his or her existence; fate is not allowed any role. Fate is not something to be submitted to or even to be overcome but simply to be removed. "Fate" is even removed (in a sense) from the revolutionary's vocabulary; the revolutionary sees only freedom from fate.

When "fate" - which is merely a shackle - is removed from our existence, we have our first revolutionary experience. Indeed this experience is our first act of existence. To remove fate is to take control of our lives in an existential coup d'état. This revolution overthrows the past, prior mistakes, limits imposed on us by others or ourselves...

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Eamon's Bookmark: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Eamon Graham

This month, in honour of the 150th anniversary of Oscar Wilde's birth, Eamon's Bookmark is buried deep within the pages of Oscar Wilde's first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Written in 1890, five years before his downfall and imprisonment, *Dorian Gray* is several things at once: it is a novel, a manifesto of Decadence and Aestheticism, a sort of confession of Wilde's relationship with Bosie Douglas, and maybe also as a forerunner to Magic Realism.

The novel begins with one of the most famous expressions of Decadent thought; a short preface in which Wilde maintains that "There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." and "All art quite useless." Wilde thus places himself firmly on the side of Decadent Aestheticism which championed l'art pour l'art, or, "art for art's sake."

Dorian Gray's preface argues a Decadent definition of the artist, of art itself and art's aim. Wilde, spitting in the face of Victorian English hypocrisy, shifts axiological attention from morality and utility to beauty: "We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely."

The preface also illustrates the link between Symbolism and Decadence: "All art is at once surface and symbol." This summarizes the words of Jean Moréas in his Symbolist Manifesto (see Symbolism in this month's issue of Bohème) when he says that the goal of Symbolist art is to "clothe the Idea in sensual form which ... while serving to express the Idea, would remain exposed... The Idea, in its turn, must not be deprived of the sumptuous simars of external analogies..." In other words, the plain words and plain meaning that is seen in Naturalism (for example) are not permitted in art. The purpose of art is not to provide exposition in obvious terms but rather to *suggest* through symbols that appeal to us on a more subconscious and universal level (we can imagine that the Decadents would have fallen in love with the work of Carl Jung).

The novel itself, full of the expected Decadent finery and flowery images, contains a magical symbolism that stands out in an otherwise realistic narration. It is here that *Dorian Gray* can be seen as a kind of proto-Magic Realism and as also a subversion of Realism-Naturalism. Without giving too much of the story away, the eponymous portrait of Dorian Gray is the symbol *par*

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Eamon's Bookmark: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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excellence.

The main characters of the novel are Basil Hallward, an artist; Lord Henry Wotton, something of a dandy who might be the voice of Oscar Wilde himself; Sibyl Vane, a young actress; and, of course, Dorian Gray.

The novel begins in the studio of Basil Hallward. Lord Henry, who delivers his lines in the epigrammatic style typical of Oscar Wilde, is lounging in Basil's studio as the artist tells him of his new friend, Dorian Gray. Many of Wilde's most famous and most beloved quotes are to be found in the speeches of Lord Henry. Among them are:

"There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

"The only difference between a caprice and a life-long passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer."

"There are only five women in London worth talking to, and two of these can't be admitted into decent society."

As Basil paints Dorian's portrait Lord Henry expounds on his theories of youth and beauty, beginning the young and naïve Dorian to seize his youth while he has it, to realize it and take every advantage of it, because while his portrait will remain forever twenty years old, he will one day be old and decrepit. Dorian wishes aloud that the portrait would age in his place, while he would stay as his picture is forever: "I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June.... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that--for that--I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" The power of words to cause a metamorphosis, a common trait of Magic Realist literature, will lead Dorian's wish to come true.

This is Dorian Gray's epiphany, and Lord Henry takes him under his wing, much to the consternation of Basil who realizes that what Lord Henry will do is actually to mould Dorian into something Basil feels he truly is not. On the contrary, Lord Henry assures Basil that what he sees is "the real Dorian." While it is true that Lord Henry takes delight in "experimenting" on the young Dorian, Oscar Wilde here is an Existentialist: Dorian is who he is (and will be what he becomes) through his own Will and Choices; Lord Henry is merely the accident. Under Lord Henry's influence, Dorian is transformed from the Hellenic ideal young boy in to a vile and

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Eamon's Bookmark: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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dispicable character.

One can almost see, mirrored here, the relationship of Wilde with Bosie Douglas: Wilde is the sophisticated, witty and cynical Lord Henry who, in the beginning, admired Dorian's (Bosie's) boyish naïveté and youthful beauty, and sought to mould him. Dorian reminds very much of Bosie, right down to his fickle temper. In the end, however, it was Wilde who would fall under the tragic influence of Bosie.

While it is his relationship with Lord Henry that leads to his epiphany, it is Dorian's love - selfish, as it were - for Sybil Vane that will lead eventually to his transformation from youthful innocence to corruption.

There is a great ambiguity - if not contradiction - in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that Wilde probably took great pleasure in: while beginning the novel saying that there are no moral or immoral books, one cannot deny that *Dorian Gray* has a moral, and that moral is itself contradictory. While the novel proposes a cult of artifice and decadence as the way out of a boring, dull and conventional existence, it seems to be artifice and decadence that Wilde's chosen Symbol is preaching against. Perhaps the contradiction is resolved in an axiological term beyond both morality and beauty: authenticity. Lord Henry, decadent and art-ificial, does not appear to be an evil chap, and at one point Basil even asserts that Lord Henry's talk about his wife and allusions to affairs are merely intended to mask the fact that he is such a good husband. Dorian, on the other hand, is clearly corrupt and evil. The difference arises out of the fact that Dorian Gray only embraces the decadent lifestyle under the influence of someone else; Lord Henry, on the other hand, crafted it himself for himself. If Dorian had chosen to be the perfect Victorian gentleman, out of difference to Society's expectations, then he would have been just as inauthentic. Dorian has denied his responsibility, the cardinal sin of Existentialism. In the end, he has not crafted himself the way Wilde's cult of art-ifice suggests after all; rather he has allowed himself to be transformed by someone else.

Indeed, Dorian never does take responsibility; even his attempts at reformation are merely only for the sake of his own soul, and thus corrupted by selfishness.

Next month, Eamon's bookmark will be in *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie.

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Bohème Suggests...

Visit Danyl Strype's House Party at <http://strypey.orcon.net.nz/>

Combing the Fringe

Danyl Strype

Due to a series of mishaps I missed the grand opening and the first few days of the Dunedin Fringe Festival 2004, which runs from 24 September to 4 October. I left Christchurch on the Tuesday, making the 5 hour journey by car with a couple of friends, cleansed by rain for the first hour or so then emerging into beautiful sunshine.

In Oamaru we stumbled on filming for the BBC series Kidnappers happening in the back blocks. When we stopped for a stretch in a patch of sunlight on the main street, my companion Sugra the Juggler was approached by a local and offered a paid performance at a local school fireworks night. I was happy to swing my firestaff in the sunlit alley and grin at the irony of his giving up a gig to drive us all down and having it replaced on the way.

We made another stop in Waitati, just half an hour north of Dunedin. Here we visited a legendary freakarium known as 'the pera House', a rambling Hundertwasser-esque building - its toilet made of parts of old cars with a floor of gravel - set in a post-apocalyptic zone of recycling art.

As the nearly full moon rose over the hills we made our grand entrance to the Dunedin and proceeded to the Arc cafe, the Fringe hub, where we picked up programs and chose a show for the evening.

Life 101
8pm, Tuesday 28 September
Playhouse Theatre

Michael Fowler is a Wellington based actor. No he isn't related to the namesake of the Michael Fowler centre and he's sick of people asking. He is the proud presenter of his first one-man show, written, directed and performed by... himself.

The show begins with a montage of television programming both real and imagined, giving a feeling of a series of theatresports scenes. While some of the skits suggest potential that is never explored or seem to borrow heavily from existing work or playground humour others, given time to play out, indicate a sharp creative wit. The manic peppiness and bitter sarcasm of the aerobics instructor and the inspired comic timing of certain skillfully underplayed lines demonstrate a comic talent with great promise.

Life101 is both the title and the central theme of the piece, a McPhilosophy thesis that suggests our existence on this planet is part of a course of study or perhaps a game show. Fowler expounds upon this theme energetically, by turns passionate and satirical. His abilities as a physical comedian suggest a background in dance while the biting anti-corporate satire walks the line between artistic license and product placement.

Fowler is at his best when hurling himself into spasms of earnest angst and spleen venting and convincing shows of blinking, disassociative fury and aggression. Fowler's

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Combing the Fringe

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delivery is clear and articulate although he makes the best use of his voice when he remembers to use his deeper register during the more impassioned speeches. If theatre is legitimate insanity then Fowler is a lunatic par excellence.

Finally we make our way to our respective billets for a night's sleep and an afternoon's relaxation in preparation for the next evening's show.

Off The Wire
6pm, Wednesday 29 September
Arc Cafe

Arc was full to bursting by the time the crew were ready to start recording this news-based quiz show for National Radio. We were introduced to our role as audience by the plummy, BBC-esque tones of host John O'Leary who demonstrated the gesture that we should respond to with roars of laughter and wild applause and the lesser gesture for titters and guffaws. After a few practice runs we were introduced to the crew and the celebrity contestants, newshound and computer columnist Russell Brown, local comedian Mike Loder, Ozzie comedian Justin Hamilton and veteran newscaster Dougal Stevenson whose own plummy tones nearly overwhelmed O'Leary's at times.

The show began and the audience played their part with undisguised enthusiasm. The format is similar to such BBC radio quiz show as "My Word" and "My Music" with O'Leary posing cryptic questions - in this case about recent stories in the news media. The

unhesitant answers from the four contestants were interspersed with carefully scripted interjections from the rest of the panel. At one point an attempt at audience participation was ruthlessly doused by Brown, "hear that silence? you did that!", all in good fun of course.

Various current affairs were mercilessly sent up including: dirt-digging in the Auckland mayoralty campaign, "Dick Hubbard is known to drink cask wine!;" the use of cows to discourage quickies in Dutch parks, "cows have judgmental eyes;" and Cat Stevens being detained by the FBI "the peace train he sang about never existed." The pieces about the Freemasons going on a membership drive and the Buffalo, New Jersey Baptist church that has opened its own Subway store were definitely news to this reviewer.

Hilarity ensued when various attempts were made to re-record stuffed-up lines and non-linear audience sounds to be edited later on. The audience seemed to enjoy the show and although there were a few 'ooohs' at some culturally dangerous jokes the smattering of toilet humour met with hearty approval and gestureless laughter. I can't wait to hear the broadcast.

Microclimate
with Golden Circle
9pm, Wednesday 29 September
Isis Bar

I saw Golden Circle at the last Dunedin Fringe

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Combing the Fringe

Continued from Page 34

in 2002 minus their drummer so it was a treat to hear their full range of traditional sax, bass and drums jazz compositions. The audience clearly knew where they were with this act and nodded and chattered along creating a lovely New Orleans meets Paris left bank atmosphere.

Some of them might have been a bit disorientated when US improvisational trio Microclimate took the stage. Their sound and stage presence was a different creature entirely to the classical jazz approach of the supporting act. The musicians playfully incorporated an eclectic range of sound sources including soprano and tenor sax, guitars, flute, djembe (hand drum) and various boxes of electronic wizardry. This gave them a broad sonic palette with which paints their spontaneous soundscapes. One player would choose an instrument and start a beat or tune and the other two would follow suit, accepting 'offers' and making their own like a form of musical theatresports.

The variety of the different songs was impressive, ranging from rhythmic workouts

driven by trancey djembe to more ambient free noise experiments. At one point I closed my eyes and was taken on an amazing ocean voyage, the drifting music bringing forth all sorts of undersea imagery in my mind's eye. At times electronic beats threatened to overwhelm the live instruments but it only added drama to the performance, moments of indecision and confusion where all the elements are there but haven't yet melded into a satisfying whole. Once each jam got off the ground though it really soared.

Audience participation was encouraged in the form of a wonderful interplay of their fluid sound and the fluid movement of Sugra the Juggler. This reviewer even took a turn on the djembe towards the end adding a local tribal drumming spice to the international flavour of the band.

My Fringe odyssey has just begun. Many more amazing people to meet, shows and installations to see, food and sleep to fit in where I can. Look out for the rest of my review in the next issue of Bohème. Viva La Fringe!

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The First Quarterly Print Edition of Bohème on Sale Next Month! #1 Winter Edition

This Special Print Edition of Bohème Magazine will feature 100% original material, not available online, including:

- The Great Pictorial Movements: Art Déco
- Eamon's Bookmark: *The Satanic Verses*
- An exclusive interview with artist Jan van Gogh
- Original artwork, literature, games and more!

This Month's Quiz

1. Juan Carlos Onetti was a writer from
 - A. Uruguay
 - B. Colombia
 - C. Argentina

2. What is the last letter of the Greek alphabet?
 - A. Delta
 - B. Omega
 - C. Sigma

3. The Harlem Renaissance was an art and literary movement involving artists of what ethnic group?
 - A. Hispanic Americans
 - B. Italian Americans
 - C. African Americans

4. Akira Kurosawa's 1985 film *Ran* was based on what play?
 - A. Macbeth
 - B. Hamlet
 - C. King Lear

5. Which writer was not a representative of *Sturm und Drang*?
 - A. Rilke
 - B. Goethe
 - C. Schiller

6. When was The Beatles founded?
 - A. 1960
 - B. 1962
 - C. 1965

7. Frédéric Bazille was a French
 - A. Painter
 - B. Composer
 - C. Novelist

8. What was Salman Rushdie's first novel?
 - A. Midnight's Children
 - B. Grimus
 - C. Shame

Word Search									
L	L	O	C	P	A	E	R	T	A
P	T	D	O	H	T	V	A	T	C
O	I	V	N	C	U	R	P	O	M
R	A	E	O	T	N	A	G	R	E
T	R	N	P	M	A	R	U	P	T
O	I	T	I	C	P	B	P	P	A
N	G	E	N	C	U	L	P	H	T
A	H	C	R	B	E	E	E	O	R
R	O	C	E	U	C	R	T	R	I
T	N	D	U	C	T	O	A	I	V

Act	Doll	Portrait
Chart	Genre	Puppet
Conductor	Marble	Topic
Convention	Metaphor	Trivia
Cube	Organ	
Cup	Part	
Curve	Path	

Quiz and Word Search Answers on Page 54

The Great Pictorial Movements: Classicism

Sabrina Laurent

Last month, Bohème Magazine introduced you to Baroque Art, as the thirteenth article of a series on the Great Pictorial Movements.

Around the same time that Mannerism and Baroque art developed in Europe, a generation of artists from Italy and France remained faithful to academic standards; the tendency they represented is nowadays called Classicism. Classicist artists rejected the shallow excesses of Mannerism, preferring a more moderate and precise style that would further the teachings of Renaissance art. They also refused the Baroque trend, considered too fancy, and preferred instead a more sober and classic technique.

Reactionary in spirit but harmonious in style, the Classicists aimed towards a perfect depiction of their subjects, a perfection that would particularly reside in perspective and proportions, following the antique Greco-Roman model. Classicism, which was meant to also be a support for meditation, was developed in many art fields such as painting, architecture, literature and philosophy, and imposed a rigorous, well-ordered style throughout Europe from the late 16th century to the early 18th century.

The Characteristics of Classicist Art

Classicist art was often represented in frescoes that would decorate the walls and ceilings of many castles and palaces of Italy and France but, unlike Baroque art, the use of illusionist perspective was extremely limited.

The subjects depicted are faithful to those of Renaissance art and find their inspiration in mythology and religion, as well as antique history and literature. In all cases, priority was set on noble subjects that emphasized the merits of human action.

One of the most important differences between Classicist art and Renaissance art resides in the apparition of human emotions (known as *affetti*) on the characters' faces to represent feelings and torments. However, the drawing of the bodies still follows academic rules, the characters are often sculptural in look. Nudes are very common, as well as outstanding fabric-like textures and draperies. Influenced by the lines of Raphael, Classicist artists depicted "perfect" faces, with straight noses and triangular foreheads.

The composition itself is also very classic, following a pyramidal construction and an opposition between horizontal and vertical lines, and revealing smooth brush strokes. The study of mathematics and proportions, the precision in perspective, the refinement of the details give Classicist artworks a very harmonious and balanced style, emphasized by uniform light effects and a priority set on shape rather than colour.

Last, Classicist artworks had the particularity of emphasizing the importance of nature. Much care was brought to the depiction of the landscapes and to the observation of nature in relationship to humans.

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The Great Pictorial Movements: Classicism

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Annibale Caracci and Classicism in Italy

Annibale Caracci (1560-1609) initiated Classicism and inaugurated the historical landscape. His work, sometimes even close to an early Baroque style, rejected Mannerism and combined a close observation of nature, the study of Raphael's later works and an inspiration coming directly from antique times. With his cousin Ludovico (1555-1619) and his brother Agostino (1557-1602), Caracci founded in Bologna, in 1582, the academy of the *Incamminati*, where he proposed an education both spiritual (with studies of Aristotle and the Renaissance master painters) and technical (with the practice of drawing and caricature). Accused of being too "eclectic," Annibale Caracci

Where Can You See These Works?

Although you are likely to find Classicist artworks in museums around the world, the best selection will be found in the countries that participated in the movement: Italy and France. Some of the best picks are the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna, the Galleria di Palazzo Rosso in Genova and the Louvre in Paris.

However, Classicist artists mainly composed frescoes, so you can see their work in many Italian and French palaces.

remains a revolutionary figure in 17th century visual art. Some of his greatest achievements are the frescoes he composed for the Farnese palace in Rome, but we can also name other works such as *The Virgin Appearing to St. Luke and St. Catherine*, *The Coronation of the Virgin* and *Two Children Teasing a Cat*.

Bolognese Guido Reni (1575-1642) was very much inspired by Raphael and painted sculptural figures that seem to be in a kind of dancing animation. He also emphasized the expression of human torments (*Deianeira and the Centaur Nessus*, *Baptism of Christ*, *Head of Saint Francis*). Francesco Albani (1578-1660) was also from Bologna and attended Caracci's academy of the *Incamminati*. His style, although uneven, was graceful and harmonious (*Ecce Homo*, *The Young Bacchus*, *Battesimo di Cristo*). Domenico Zampieri, also known as il Domenichino (1581-1641) also attended Caracci's academy. An outstanding drawer, he participated in the elaboration of Classicism and revealed his talent in impressive frescoes as well as on smaller canvases (*Diana*, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, *Communion of St Jerome*).

Last, Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662) was influenced by Baroque painter Pietro da Cortona and painted mainly historical and mythological scenes, with a palette of light colours, including a very unique shade of blue (*Venus tells Aeneas and his friend Achates to go to Carthage*).

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The Great Pictorial Movements: Classicism

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Nicolas Poussin and Classicism in France

Classicism in France was led by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), a famous figure who worked mainly in Italy, after a first trip to Rome in 1624. Poussin's art was intellectual, poetic and sensitive, setting his priority on the quality of the shapes and a balanced composition. With a bright palette, Poussin painted religious, historical and antique subjects, marked by the influence of Stoicism, as in *Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice*, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, *The Holy Family on Steps* and the famous *Shepherds of Arcadia*. Original and traditional at the same time, Poussin was extremely rigorous in his compositions and his work was the result of an intense reflexion. The quality of his landscapes was remarkable, and Poussin later inspired *Neo-Poussinism*, a school born in France during the 19th century.

Several other French painters marked Classicism, beginning with Claude Gellée, known as Le Lorrain (1602-1682). He spent his life in Rome where he painted many landscapes (including harbours), as well as Biblical and antique scenes. His compositions are particularly luminous and announced Turner (*Morning in the Harbor*, *Sunrise*, *The Disembarkation of Cleopatra at Tarsus*).

Charles Le Brun (1619-1690) was also a major figure of French Classicism and Louis XIV's first painter. Le Brun was highly influenced by both Poussin and Baroque master Simon Vouet. Le Brun painted frescoes, canvases and tapestries in a sober, but monumental style. He also composed thousands of drawings and directed the royal Academy of painting and sculpture, inaugurated in 1648. One of Le Brun's greatest works is the decoration of the arch in the Hall of Mirrors, in the Versailles castle, and we can also name other works such as *Alexander in Babylon*, *Expression of the Passions of the Soul: Anger*.

Belgian-born Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674) realized many austere compositions for churches and monasteries (*The Ex-Voto of 1662*), as well as portraits (*Jean Baptiste Colbert*). Sensitive to the Flemish schools, to Baroque Art and Caravaggism without ever completely giving into any of these tendencies, Philippe de Champaigne had a style marked with the perfect symmetry of his compositions, his outstanding draperies and the usage of fresh colours.

Other figures of French Classicism are Jacques Stella (1596-1657), who depicted sculptural figures in cold, bright colours (*Mariage de la Vierge*, *Sainte Cécile*), Pierre Mignard (1612-1695), who painted many portraits and landscapes in soft, refined tones (*Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, *Le Christ au Roseau*), and Laurent de La Hyre (1606-1656), who was born and

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worked in Paris. He depicted many antique figures but progressively attached more importance to landscapes (*The Kiss of Peace and Justice, Allegory of Music*). Last, Gaspard Dughet (1615-1675) lived and worked in Rome, where he found most of his inspiration and painted many Roman landscapes (*Landscape with Shepherds, Heroic Landscape with Figures*).

Academic and traditional, Classicism can be seen as the natural evolution of Renaissance Art, although it does have its own unique characteristics in style and execution. Classicism symbolized harmony, stability and balance, and reflected the importance of intellectual values. Born in the 17th century, Classicism would be later revived with the Neo-Classicist trend.

In Next Month's Issue of Bohème: Rococo Art

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“The Things We Take With Us, The Things We Leave Behind,” a Short Story

By Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta

One by one, the things in my sister's house are disappearing. Yesterday she brought her Russian colleague home to look at some of the stuff. He bought the airbed for ten dollars.

It's funny how some people aren't attached to things. Like her Sony music system. Ivan wanted it, so she has sold it to him, even though she's had it from her years in Japan. Postdoctorals are experienced travellers, taking with them what they can, knowing what they want, buying good and sturdy things cheap when they find them, and selling off the rest.

Now that she is coming back to India next month, she is selling the dining table and chairs. Thirty dollars. It's a good table, white tiles on the surface, painted white wooden frame. "I bought the set for sixty," she says. "I'll sell everything for half." He'll pick them up next week, after he, who has just arrived from another contract in Paris, buys a car.

Some things you have to let go. She's letting go of her life in this country.

I've come to visit Nina in Denver. Joe died last month: a sudden relapse, too soon, the doctors deciding that any more chemotherapy would only do more harm than good. Nina told us about it only after. "I'm fine," she said. "I'm cutting short my contract here. I just can't be here right now, that's all. I'm accepting that offer in Bangalore. Maybe I can stay in

Appa-Amma's house."

There had been a quiet funeral. Just Nina, and Joe's brother, their friends, and some of Joe's colleagues and students from the school where he had taught. His father and stepmother were in Europe and couldn't make it in time. His mother lived in Florida, but she was away on a cruise.

"They were all very upset," said Nina across the surging silences and clicks of the international line, "that they couldn't reach."

I remained silent. This proved everything I had feared about Americans, I said to Anil later: "All those marriages and permutations, and no one there when you really need them."

"Shouldn't you go and be with her," asked my husband. I looked at his face to see if he was trying to send me away. We did that a lot these days, trying to read each other's faces. No, his face seemed to say, or perhaps it said: Not yet.

"Yes," I said, "I'll go."

I brought almost nothing with me. My suitcases were almost empty. You get to check in two pieces on your way to and from the US, sixty-two kilos in all, and I wanted to

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bring back as many of Nina's things for her as I could. Not only the microwave and coffee grinder, but also the little things she loved, like her thermals, her hiking boots. Things that she would need again, later, when she moved out of India again to the next place.

Nina likes to move. She's never been attached to a place, but maintains her friendships across the globe. Not like me. For me – and this is neurotic, I know – it is people that I can do without, but every move is stupidly, physically frightening. Every move is an uprooting. Even travel is filled with some sadness, for places – mountains, rivers, roads, coffeeshops – that I will never see again. I'm afraid of new places, passports, visas, always afraid I've forgotten something.

Nina, who is younger than me, has lived in Italy, France, Japan, and now here. She thrives on newness. An international driving license, an international credit card, a sturdy backpack – that's all you really need, she always says.

Though of course that's not all that you need. You need much, much more. You need family, heritage, your own soil – all these things to cherish you. You need everything.

When she moved into the new apartment with Joe, and sent us Before and After pictures of the house, I thought my sister was going to be settling down at last. Denver was far, but as my mother used to say: "Wherever you are, whatever you are, be happy."

Easy enough to say, I suppose.

But my mother, too, had learned to be happy, following my father to all those faraway river valleys where he went to build bridges.

Now Nina will be in India for a year, two years at least, I know, before she feels the need to travel again. And so there are all these things that have to be taken back. Not Joe's things – they have almost all been given away, and there is little trace of him in the house. Nina has efficiently removed it all even before I arrive. How tidily he has disappeared: I can't even find photographs. She must have put them away.

Her own things are quickly being sorted: what to throw, what to give away, what to sell, what to take back? In India she will need to start over, for Appa-Amma's house – our parents' house, we still call it that, even after all these years – is empty. "You get everything in India now," I tell her. She will need her rice cooker, textbooks, blue jeans, papers.

Our parents' house could have been rented out, and I think I would have liked that – families, children, voices, a clock ticking somewhere, cupboard doors banging shut, P.T. shoes being painted white, schoolbags being stuffed with books and pencilboxes. Somebody's books lying open on the writing desk, someone sitting in my father's old chair, somebody's dog thumping his tail at the sound of the doorbell.

But Anil, who is always practical, said that if

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at some point we needed the house and the tenants stayed on, refusing to leave, we would have problems getting them evicted. "Possession is nine-tenths of the law," he said (a phrase that struck me as being true of human relationships as well). So the house has been left locked, with one of us – and it is usually me – going to check on it whenever I'm in Bangalore, which is not often.

Now the house will have to be cleaned, water poured on the floors and washed out with a sharp-sticked wooden broom, the way Amma used to do; and a fresh kolam drawn at the threshold with rice flour, instead of the sticker kolam that I've put there. Light bulbs will have to be screwed into holders, the fridge switched on, dustcovers removed, the garden replanted. And so much more, I realize with a thrill of pleasure. It takes some time and much effort before suddenly, imperceptibly, a house comes back to life.

Because I will have to keep room for what I take back, I haven't brought much with me. On the flight, I wore one of the three pairs of jeans I've brought with me. I've decided to dress western-style, leaving my Fab India churidar-kurtas at home. And my deep red bindis. My mangalsutra and loha, because I didn't want to be taking them off at every metal detector. I've even left my earrings in India.

I've brought two packets of Bru for Nina – she says she finds American coffee too strong – and some khakras. "They're like papads," I

explained, when the Agriculture officials asked me what's inside. They looked skeptical, and sent the suitcases through the x-ray anyway.

Other people had brought jellyfish from Southeast Asia, chicken sausages from New Zealand – and their suitcases went through the x-ray too. Someone else had brought mangoes. They had to throw them away.

When Nina meets me at the airport, she has a book in one hand, her car keys in the other. We don't hug, being undemonstrative as Indians are, but I know that she is glad to see me. And I am glad to be here.

We drive to the King Soopers and pick up sesame bagels, cream cheese, lo-fat milk and yogurt. And then we talk all night long.

Nina's house is neat and organised, unlike my untidy sprawl back home. The cereal boxes are lined up neatly on the kitchen shelf; there is a little plant placed at the edge of the fireplace; the coffee table is free of clutter. I've brought my chaos with me, peeling off my socks at the door, scattering pages of the newspaper on the couch, leaving an empty coffee mug near the TV – and I know it bothers her. She picks these things up sometimes when she thinks I'm not looking. And then I feel guilty, and I go to help her, telling her that I would have done it anyway, if she had only waited a bit.

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But I forget, sometimes. Last week when I put the laundry in the machine. I forgot to bring it back, because I was browsing the net looking for things to do in Denver. I had finished with the Molly Brown House, the Denver Zoo, and the Natural History Museum. I had seen King Sooper, Radio Shack, Target, Kohls. I was tired of American excess: I was beginning to feel scared of the wide open spaces. Suburban Denver was like South Bombay, smug and wealthy. I peered into the computer screen, trying to shut out the rest of the country, and googled for things to do in Denver. I got one interesting result: a movie, "Things To Do in Denver When You're Dead". I called Nina at her lab to tell her about it. Even as I said it, I felt like such an insensitive fool. I blurted, "Ohmygod, I'm sorry".

"Did you get the clothes out of the machine," she asked. "Yes," I lied, and then I went down and got them.

My brother Vinod thinks Denver is not 'happening' enough (I feel old when he uses these words). Too much nature, he says. "You'll be bored out of your mind, and you don't even drive," he told me when I stayed with him in Hong Kong on the way here. He had visited Nina and Joe six months ago, when I had still been thinking, debating, wondering whether there was a cheaper ticket, a better time.

"Don't let her take you on the trails," he told me.

But she does. We go on a trail, and I like it: the sun, the distance, the air shining around us. We go on the Mesa Trail, near Boulder. We take two bottles of water, two Granola bars, a bottle of sunblock, and the digital camera. The sun is already well into the middle of the sky when we reach the creek where the trail begins. The trail is long and dry and empty ahead of us. Occasionally a returning hiker passes us, smiling, nodding breathlessly.

Nina and I don't talk much as we walked the trail. We never have had many things to say to each other. She and Joe had liked walking here. I wonder if I should get her to talk about Joe, but I can think of nothing to say that would make any sort of sense.

One of the hikers has his dog with him, a black Labrador, tired and excited with all the walking. Froth coats his snout like white stubble. "How old is he," I ask, scratching him behind the ears, feeling his warm breath against my cheek. "She," says the man, smiling down at the dog, "Ten." And my heart gives a small lurch for something that every dog-lover knows and understands, that ten is not young for a Labrador, and that the years are going by.

It's because of Tara, after all, that Anil and I haven't moved out to the West. Sweet, lazy dog. Or maybe, as Vinod tried to analyse one night when we were all slightly drunk, we got

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Tara because we don't want to move out, and having her is a good reason to justify our inertia.

It seems to me, sometimes, that Anil would really like us to move out of India. He talks about his batchmates who go abroad for a second MBA: one at Wharton, one at London Business School, one who got recruited while doing summer training at Deutsche. This is what it costs, this is what it pays, this many thousand dollars a year, a job in the middle of the recession, he goes on. "And here we are in India, just the back office of the world," says Anil.

"I suppose the quality of life improves," I say lamely during one of these discussions, trying to be fair. And then I can't help adding: "But think of the loneliness. You need to telephone before you visit the neighbours! And think of always being the brown-skinned geek. Dilbert's Asok."

By then he always changes the subject.

Anil and I haven't really talked about us leaving. I'm glad. As long as we don't talk about it, surely it can't happen, I tell myself, even as I see the steady exodus of friends, first cousins, nephews and nieces to better-paying jobs in the West.

We only met Joe once. Nina brought him with her for a visit one December. He wasn't tall, blond, and blue-eyed, as I thought American

men were all supposed to be. He was just about her height, with curly brown hair and dark eyes. She told us that they had met on a hike.

I didn't know what to think. I wished my parents were there to decide what to do. I wondered if he was Jewish, and whether that was supposed to matter. Why was I behaving like a parent, I wondered. I suddenly felt much older.

"Do you think they plan to get married," I whispered to Anil in bed that night.

"Maybe. They're definitely living together," he replied, turning off the light.

I stiffened. Sometimes I thought he said these things deliberately, to upset me.

"How do you know," I asked him in the darkness.

"Well, it's obvious. Come on, Gauri, she's going to be thirty. Why wouldn't they?"

"We got married. We didn't live together."

"We do now."

"But we're married."

"We got married because of your parents, and my parents. Because this is India. Because that's how a family is formed. If we want to have a child-"

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He stopped.

"I thought you didn't want to have a child," I said.

But he did. Of course he did. It would always be between us, this trying and failing, my wanting to adopt, his wanting a child of our own.

Our own. I wondered what kind of ownership that was. I had asked him once.

"A biological child," he had replied. "Our genes. It would be so good, just think of it."

But this time I remained silent.

And then, in the silence, he pulled me towards him. "Gauri, don't be silly. Don't get into all that. They're as much a couple as you and me. They don't need to be married to be together."

How we got Tara was entirely providential. One of our friends is a vet. Most of our friends are bankers and corporate types – Anil's MBA classmates and their wives – but Lata we met in an odd way. We met her at a music concert. She was sitting in the row behind us. As we came out, it was raining, and she was standing there with her umbrella trying to flag a taxi. "Let's drop her to a cab," I said.

But then we drove her home, at Mahim, and she pressed us to come in for coffee. Her parents had been waiting up for her. A calico

kitten emerged from a half-open desk drawer to nuzzle against Lata, its tail standing up flaglike behind it, its yellow eyes wide open, ears up like antennae.

And then we saw the box. In a small cardboard box lined with newspaper and old towels lay a small yellow dog, still a puppy. It looked up at me with moist black eyes.

"She's ill," whispered Lata. "Her mother died on the operation table. We don't know very much about what she has. Or if she'll make it."

"Are you - keeping her?"

My voice must have trembled. Anil put his arm around me.

Lata smiled. A quick, comprehending smile. "Would you like her? I'm looking for a home for her."

In the rain, with me holding the box wrapped with more towels, and Anil holding an umbrella over all three of us, we walked to the car. I think I almost loved Anil again at that moment.

We were a family at last.

On the trail, a couple walking back in the sun stares at us. I smile, but they don't return the smile. I feel uneasy. Nina and I walk some

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distance, in silence, and she begins to tell me. About the man who shook his fist at her at a gas station; the forest ranger who didn't let her park at a higher level; the child at King Soopers who asked her if she was from Iraq.

But then, we've got crazies in India too, she shrugs.

We turn back: we have already finished one bottle of water. We must have done two, two and a half miles. I've taken some pictures. The Flatirons against a sand-coloured sky. A sunflower drooping in the sun. Beautiful Tosca, her snout framed in white froth.

On the way back I take a photograph of a man and a woman ahead of us in a sports car. Only their heads show, blonde and small against the long hot grey of the road.

"Did you know," I mail to Anil, "that one out of three women here has blonde hair; while only one out of every twenty women is a natural blonde?"

I download the pictures onto the computer and upload them on the net. I guess my emails home must be boring, because this is the way it is out here. Vinod talks to me on the IM chat every now and then when he's waiting for his girlfriend to appear on their personalized chat environment. They are still achingly young: they chat on screens filled with shimmering hearts and Charlie Brown cartoons. But when he is online with me, he is

usually rushing off somewhere, for a haircut or dinner or something. His goodbyes are quick and short – "Ok bye, gotta go" – and his status will suddenly blink off to "unavailable". That's probably when his girlfriend comes online.

And Anil, who doesn't like to travel mid-year because of his work, sends me one or two-word emails in his laconic style. He's a believer in "Less is more", too. "Gud sho", he will say, after one of my effusive mails; or "Talk to u later." But of course we don't talk. We stopped talking long ago.

I can see him there now, lying on the floor with the laptop before him, typing his brief messages steadily, once he has made up the words in his mind. He's not like me – he won't sit and look at a paragraph on the screen, reading it over, wondering whether to tinker with it some more. He'll type out his text, leave it as it is, make sure the email address is right, and then click "Send". That is the moment when, the reason why, even now, I almost love him.

And that makes me want to tell him more things. Every little thing, like that I had frosted bite-size shredded wheat cereal with cold milk for breakfast, and Nina had toast. That the bus stops here are called "The Ride". That there was this coffeehouse in Evergreen, where we stopped for espresso, where there are two leashes outside: "For Dogs. For Kids." That I need to talk to him, and that we haven't talked for years.

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Somewhere along the way, Anil and I have stopped talking. It hasn't always been like this. The first years of our marriage, we loved to talk to each other, and we loved each other. He would call me from work. I would call him on the cellphone. We saw the same movies, listened to the same kind of music, thought – almost – the same thoughts.

Perhaps it was the sameness: I felt the space between us shrinking. We began to argue, and then to 'have arguments', in low, controlled voices, very civilised, but clashing over everything. Even that was just the usual married couple bickering. Underneath these were other things. The child that he wanted, the one we kept trying for: the invisible child that had become this huge amorphous silence between us. My wanting to adopt, his wanting to try again. His wanting to start a new life in a new country, my wanting to stay in the safety of the old. Our thoughts, now, always fiercely divergent, and both of us defeated.

We continued in this way, waiting for something to happen. Wondering who would pull out first: who would be the tooth, and who the bleeding gums. But we have stayed on, the way some people can stay on for a lifetime with each other. It happens.

And then something did happen. Last month, while looking for a shirt that had to go to the drycleaners, I found a bunch of email printouts in his cupboard. He, who never keeps anything, never saves my emails, has

kept these. An old relationship coming back to life. It was to have ended when his she went to Australia to study filmmaking, but now she is coming back. I put them back where they were, and, my hands shaking, I closed the cupboard.

That night, Nina called, and I put the matter of the emails into a corner of my mind. I suppose I should have talked to Anil about them before I left. Instead of leaving this silence between us. But I took my cheap SARS ticket via Singapore, and I came here. I ran away.

I'm still running. I haven't talked to Anil about it, but I sometimes wonder - What kind of films do the Australians make? I know that Russell Crowe and Nicole Kidman are Australian, but they're actors.

She's coming back. Will they go to Australia? Will they leave, or will they stay? Where will I go...? And who will sort out my things when the time comes? I'm still wondering, and I haven't found any answers. Meanwhile – what can I do, I who hate confrontations? I continue to write to Anil, ccing some of the newsy mails to my brother, as always.

I write:

In this country, there is an abundance of organised detail. Fifty kinds of yogurt, a hundred kinds of salad dressing. A dozen festivals and parades going on at any time in

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every county. Five hundred different packages to Las Vegas.

And everything is done with coupons and cards. Like when you shop at King Soopers, you get a coupon for Subway. If you buy a foot-long sub at Subway, you get a six-inch sandwich free. If you buy a hamburger at Burger Plaza you get another free. Only the cheese is extra.

Nina just throws these bits of paper into the trash. Don't even think of eating at Subway, she says, shaking her head. She's on her Indian food trip, as always. She only wants to eat Indian, even when she is in India. And I always want to eat something else. (Anil once asked me why Nina and I took adversarial positions on everything. I said we didn't, but he just shook his head.)

Yesterday she wanted to eat at the Taj Mahal Restaurant. I can't even imagine eating at a place called the Taj Mahal. It sounds like a Moti Mahal in disguise, all oil and butter and spice. Live abroad for a year, you'll be eating Indian food every day, she said. I argued. I worked at a compromise. No Italian food, no Indian food. I haven't come to America to eat tandoori rotis, I tell her. We settled on Mexican. She had a veggie burrito and I had a taco salad. Mostly lettuce, some beans.

Organised detail, I think, but not the comfortable chaos of India. Not the colour, the cheer. Here the pavements are empty. No

walkers, no hawkers, no dogs lying in the sun. I am often the only person walking down the road. Sometimes a biker passes me, but otherwise I am alone. Everyone drives in this country. When I took the bus to Golden, there were three other people in the bus. There are no tiny corner shops – everything is in huge sprawling supermarkets. People shop on the internet, and in outlets. They telephone each other before visiting: no one just "lands up", as we do back in India. It's all exactly as I have heard and read.

There was this bizarre thing that happened when Nina was in Japan. She had cycled back from the lab at half-past nine, microwaved something for dinner, watched the news on tv, and cycled back to the lab to finish something she had been working on. When she got back – it was past two in the morning – she found that her house had been ransacked. Nothing had been stolen, just a bottle of pickle. Sitting with the police at five am as they asked her to figure out whether anything was missing, she couldn't think of anything. It was bizarre, she told us later. They hadn't taken anything. Nothing missing, nothing broken. It was all just – in general disarray.

Very kinky, I think. Why would someone just ransack the house, and take nothing? What did they want to find out about her life? I was glad when she moved out of Japan and came to Denver.

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Colorado, she says, is safe. I can leave the French windows open, let the air in. I have done so. Nina is at the lab, finishing a paper. I am at home, sitting at the computer. Twenty-four hour cable internet is so great. An empty house, I think to myself, this is what freedom feels like. I try on my new yellow capris. They were cheap – they have a "Made in Ukraine" label on them. I guess it's a bad time for Eastern Europe, too, like the rest of us.

I heat milk on the stove for my coffee. If Nina were here she would make me put it in the microwave. She believes in using all that technology has to offer. But somehow it tastes better when I make it on the stove.

A new thing I have noticed about Nina is that she prays, every morning, in this country. She prays to a small line of gods neatly arrayed inside a wooden shelf that she bought in a DIY shop. They look incongruous in this American bedroom, like souvenirs in a gift shop. When she has finished praying, she lights an incense stick, and its woody fragrance fills the small house as she rings the little brass bell she has brought here from our parents' house. It is Amma's puja bell, the one she used for her morning worship ever since I can remember, and the sound of the bell, sweet and soft, takes me back to those sunny days when we were children. It is as if my mother is here in the room with us, smiling silently as she gives us the offerings she has

placed before her gods.

And, as Nina brings me the four raisins she keeps as an offering, two for me, two for her, I am struck by how much she looks like our mother. I take the raisins, hold them to my eyes as I remember seeing my mother doing years ago, and bite into them. Dry, sweet, small, they fill my mouth with memories of my childhood.

Nina has a photograph of our parents on the fridge door, held up by cheerful souvenir magnets – Yellowstone, the Strip at Vegas, Rocky Mountain National Park. Surrounded by all these, here are two old people, an Indian man and woman sitting on the steps in the garden. They look small and vulnerable. The sun is in their eyes. My father looks, as he always was, happy and impatient. My mother is looking directly into the camera – Nina must have taken the picture – and smiling. Her book is in her hand, a finger holding the place where she has paused for the picture. I try to see what she is reading, but I can only see the back cover.

I remember the only other time Nina and I have spent several days together, after we grew up and left home. It was when we had to sort out my mother's things. Opening cupboards, emptying kitchen shelves, sorting out what was to be thrown, what was to be given away, what kept. And how little we keep, at the end. Better to give as much away

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as possible. A few sarees that one can never wear without sadness; some jewellery that will lie in bank lockers until our children, perhaps, come to sort them out when our turn comes; a few small idols of the gods, a brass oil-lamp, the puja bell. And my father's spectacles, his watch, his Parker pen – the things my mother, in turn, had kept when she had to sort out my father's things. It was when I found those that I cried. He was the roof over my head, my mother had said when he died, suddenly, silently, one night.

Look after Nina, my mother had said. My bouncy brother, the baby of the family, always lands on his feet; but Nina has always been the problem child, the one who nearly died of jaundice, who fractured her collar bone when she was still a baby, who burned with fever when she got typhoid and missed an entire school term. The quiet one. Mother had always worried whether Nina would be happy in life. Would she get a good job, would she meet a nice person, my father worried. Would her little daughter be happy, worried my mother. Look after her, she told me.

"But she told me to look after you," Nina had said when I told her this, and I had smiled through my tears.

Last night we went to give away the last of Joe's things: his bicycle. It had stood in the balcony for weeks now, neither of us mentioning it. We were giving it to Manuela,

the assistant at Nina's lab, for her son, who had come home after spending a month with his father. It baffles me how these American families function. The boy has been in his room for weeks now, watching television, ordering pizza, refusing to come out of his room. He was still in his room when, putting our coffee mugs down at the end of our visit, we rose to leave. We never saw him at all. I imagined him looking at us, a kind of Boo Radley, as we stepped into the darkening road outside Manuela's house. But he was probably playing a computer game instead.

"That was a nice bicycle," I said to Nina as we pulled out. How much parking there always is in America, I marveled to myself. "Did you go cycling together?"

"No, we went hiking, but cycling – you know, he was going to teach me. And he was going to take me rock-climbing. We had just moved into this apartment..."

Her hands waved fractured arcs in the air, then froze. She put her head against the steering wheel, her arms stretched out, twelve o'clock position. "There's never enough time, is there," she said, looking at me.

In the dim yellow light of the street lamps I saw the tears drag down her cheeks.

For the first time in my life, I put my arms around her, awkwardly, and hugged her. This was an American thing, I knew, for Indian families don't hug and hold each other. And I

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“The Things We Take With Us...” a Short Story

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thought, as I sat there in the car, with my arms around my sister: maybe it's not so bad here after all. Maybe people are the same, wherever they are, trying and failing and trying again to make things work out.

"No, Nina," I replied. "There is never time."

This morning I am sending my husband a mail. It's going to be a large mail, 3 or 4 K. His emails are usually 1 K, and sometimes they just have the message in the subject line: "Going to dinner with Rahul and Lisa, will come online later".

This is not one of those. My stomach grows tighter as I write. "We need to talk, I write. There are things I need to tell you. I think it has been the right thing for us to take this break..."

I search for words. It's the right thing, I tell him, "the best thing to do under the circumstances". I struggle with the mail. I worry, and struggle, and look for words that are not clichés. Words that will say, this is not an absence of love.

But of course it is.

I wonder if I should call him, but this is not the kind of conversation you can have on a Netguru phone card. You need to be there, face to face. To know what the other person is saying. And not saying.

Colorado, this land of wide-open spaces, isn't far enough. The other end of the universe wouldn't be far enough. Pain crouches in wait a short distance away, at the other end of the lines.

I think of all these things, and suddenly they are too many, these questions that fill my mind and clamour to be heard, springing out of forgotten cupboards, walking out of hidden closets, raising their heads from shelves where they have slept for so long. They have been here all this while, and will not remain hidden now. Only the words remain to be put to the feelings, the sentences remain to be strung together and handed out.

And so I'm sitting here, smoking, tapping the ashes into a Holiday Inn plastic cup that I have half-filled with water, smoking and wondering if you're allowed to smoke here in this condo, wondering whether the smoke alarms will go off, whether I can put the cigarette butts down the garbage disposal, whether I can put everything down the garbage disposal, the things I want to leave behind, the things that leave me behind.

The bleeding begins this afternoon. So it will not be this month either, I tell myself, but without bitterness. Anil and I will work things out. Looking for tampons, I open one of the bathroom drawers, and find a box of earloop

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masks. Left over, I suppose, from the last chemotherapy.

I cover up the bag and push it back into the corner, and think: How strange, and sad, that I can't remember what Joe looked like. I will ask Nina to show me the photographs. We will talk about this, and remember; we will share, and be sisters.

A house lives around us, and it breathes as we breathe. This house hums around me, the refrigerator and the ceiling fan, as I sit in front of the blank Fujitsu screen, waiting for Nina to come home. Outside, the birds call; a dog barks, deep and urgent; a car engine coughs to life as it pulls out of the parking lot. Soon the dining table and chairs will be gone, the television will be gone, and the couches and the coffee table and the lamps, and this room will be empty. The closets, too: the good clothes packed and fitted into suitcases, everything else given to charity. Only the stone fireplace, the balcony, the bare floor and the pine cones will remain. Someone from the building will come to walk through the house, and then someone else will move in. Other feet will pad up and down the carpet and press down by the fireplace, other hands will reach into the fridge to pull out a milk carton, and a different music will fill the room.

And all trace of us will be gone.

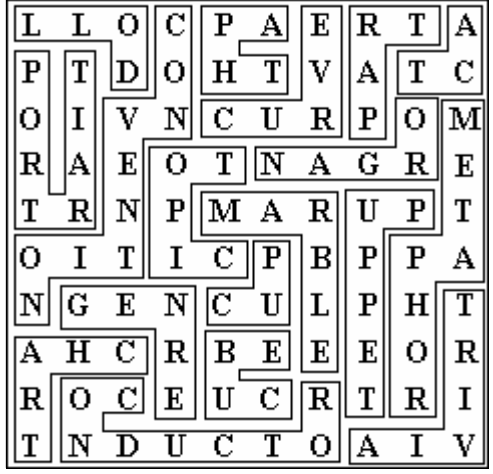
Suddenly I ache for a little girl, the oldest of three children, who moved from town to town

with her parents. Memories of a tired, white-faced mother closing her eyes, resting her head in the back seat of the car, the bars of the train window, the headrest of the airplane seat, as my father moved from position to new position of responsibility. Every move, from then on, full of wonder and pain.

I look around this room. I take out the digital camera, press the start button, hear the soft whirr and see the red light, and I press the camera to my eye. There is a heartbreaking intimacy to things, the way they just are, the way they make up our lives in their ordinary, incremental ways, moment by passing moment. The Sunday edition of the Denver Post, lying on the carpet. The plant in the corner, its waxy speckled leaves pushing towards the sunlight. The wooden tray filled with mail, the car keys lying next to it. The red light flashing on the answering machine. The metal bird candlestick, its wings outstretched, open, floating.

The metal bird: I can't get an angle on it. I turn the camera vertically, but something is always wrong – a table leg, an extension cord, a drab corner of the carpet. I want to photograph the bird alone, as if flying, in mid-air, its green wings stretched like branches growing into the air. I turn the camera and click, but something, as usual, comes in the way.

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<p>Suggested Links:</p> <p><u>Progetto Babel</u> www.progettobabele.it</p> <p><u>Artist Aboubacar Diané</u> www.fondationolivier.com/ dianeab000.htm</p> <p><u>Creative Mood</u> http://creativemood.free.fr</p> <p><u>Artist Alexei Biryukoff:</u> www.biryukoff.com</p>	<p>Quiz and Word Search Answers from Page 36</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Uruguay 2. B Omega 3. C African Americans 4. C <i>King Lear</i> 5. A Rilke 6. B 1962 7. A Painter 8. B <i>Grimus</i> 
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October Birthdays

Sabrina Laurent

Buster Keaton (born 4 October 1895) American actor and filmmaker. Buster Keaton was one of the most popular silent film comic actors; his filmography includes *Our Hospitality* (1923), *The Navigator* (1924) and *The General* (1926). Buster Keaton was of great influence for several generations of filmmakers.

Le Corbusier (born 6 October 1887) French architect, city planner and painter of Swiss descent. As an architect, Le Corbusier (born Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris) was one of the leaders of the International Style and he aimed to simplify shapes following rigorous patterns. As a painter, he co-founded Purism with Amédée Ozenfant.

John Lennon (born 9 October 1940) British singer, musician and composer. John Lennon became famous as the guitarist and songwriter of The Beatles, but he also led a successful solo career, with hits such as "Imagine," "Give Peace a Chance," "Woman" and "Instant Karma." He was shot on December 8th, 1980, by Mark David Chapman, a mentally deranged fan.

Giuseppe Verdi (born 10 October 1813) Italian composer. Giuseppe Verdi remains, without a

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October Birthdays

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doubt, one of the greatest composers of Italian opera. His work combines sensitivity, verve and an intense dramatic action: *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Nabucco*, etc.

Luciano Pavarotti (born 12 October 1935) Italian opera singer. Pavarotti is probably the most celebrated contemporary tenor. He debuted as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in 1961, and has become famous for his outdoor concerts (such as the Three Tenor Concerts, with José Carreras and Plácido Domingo) and television performances.

Mario Puzo (born 15 October 1920) Italian-American novelist and screenwriter. His most famous work was *The Godfather* (1969), which was later turned into a trilogy of movies by Francis Ford Coppola. Puzo also wrote *The Dark Arena*, *The Sicilian*, and *Omertà*.

Oscar Wilde (born 16 October 1854) Irish writer. An aesthete and a follower of "Art for Art's Sake," he impregnated his novel (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*), poems (*The Ballad of Reading Gaol*), essays (*The Critic as Artist*), short stories (*The Happy Prince and Other Stories*) and plays (*Salomé*) with wit and bitterness. Conspicuously amoral and ambiguous, he was imprisoned for libel in England and died in Paris.

Arthur Miller (born 17 October 1915) American writer and playwright. Arthur Miller's work is often autobiographical and violently attacks American society, with an intense style that combined obscenities and lyrical bursts: *The Misfits*, *The Crucible*, *All*

My Sons, *Death of a Salesman*. He lived in Paris from 1930 to 1938.

Sarah Bernhardt (born 22 October 1844) French actress. One of the most famous actresses of the 19th century, she started her stage career in 1862 and soon became famous in Europe and in the United States, with plays such as *Phèdre*, *La Dame aux Camélias* and *L'Aiglon*. She also played in one of the very first silent films (*Le Duel d'Hamlet*, 1900).

Franz Liszt (born 22 October 1811) Hungarian composer, director and musician. An excellent pianist, he composed many concertos, rhapsodies (*Hungarian Rhapsodies*), symphonies (*Faust*, *Dante*), oratorios, sonatas and requiems. His work first emphasized technical perfection but soon evolved towards a more profound and sober style.

Pablo Picasso (born 25 October 1881) Spanish painter, engraver, drawer and sculptor. One of the most famous painters of the 20th century, Picasso launched Cubism with his painting *Les Femmes d'Alger* in 1907, as well as the technique of collage. However, Picasso's career cannot be reduced to Cubism, for it also went through various "periods" and shows the influence of Expressionism and Classicism.

Roy Lichtenstein (born 27 October 1923) American painter. A representative of Pop Art, he used elements of culture (such as paintings) and of everyday American life (comics, posters, etc.) to create his own compositions.