"But more recently we have come against the problem of expanding the bookstore, and it occurred to me that this bridge over the parking lot to the FAC would be a great location for the bookstore. That plan is pretty far along."

—William Fyfe, the architect who drew up Calvin’s Master Plan, Dialogue, April/May 1992

"...So in that sense I was trying to be—in the broader sense of the word—a sacred critic, whereas I’m now trying to be a profane screenwriter."

—Paul Schrader, Dialogue, December 1975

CONTRIBUTORS

Amy Adair is a junior and the editor of Prism. She quotes Frost: "I have miles to go before I sleep. Miles to go before I sleep."

Julia Anema is of mixed descent: 75 percent Frisian and 25 percent Gronigen.

Claire Basney is a senior English major/German minor. She enjoys pining under a crescent moon.

Tricia Bos wonders if you have ever considered calling your siblings "gillets."

Mike Byl invites you to see his work at Grand Rapids' newest gallery, Arcadia.

Sarah Byker is not the president's daughter. Her family resides in a Land of Enchantment.

D.H. Chung is a senior art major. His cat Boris likes to chew pencils.

Katherine Cummings is a junior from Cleveland, Ohio. She likes to sit in an Adirondack chair by the seashore.

Jon Den Harteigh wants you to remember the good old days with the Rockabilly crowd [just forget the teddy boys].

Gary De Witt wants you to remind you to label jars, not people.

Kelley Evans woke up on a Groovy Tuesday. Now she knows that nothing lasts.

Matt Forsythe hails from Dayton, Ohio and dedicates his story to Alexandra the squirrel.

Jason Glerum is a senior psychology major. People say he has a secret wish to be in the fine arts program, but he would deny it if you asked him.

Ian Griffin's goal is to become master of time and space.

Shannon Hoff is afraid to write anything lest it come out as nonsense. She is leaving in a month—the Dialogue staff will miss her.

Robert Huie, while still in his tender infancy, was foisted upon his own petard.

Holly Huisman is pursuing a degree in philosophy and fine art. She is currently working on overcoming her life-threatening addiction to California Fruits Starburst.

Jane C. Knol wishes she could fly.

Matt Miller is tall. Matt Miller has big feet. Matt Miller likes intransitive verbs.

Rebecca Lew recently debuted in a Broadway production of All the King's Men, in which she played a woman tragically addicted to orange.

Greg Scholtens wonders, "If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy?"

Mike Skih couldn't be reached for comment.

M.B. Smith hopes to learn to write with the intensity of Egon Schiele's paintings and the simplistic efficiency of his drawings.

Kelly Van Andel, a junior English Major, is a New Mexican first and last.

Lambert J. Van Poolen enjoys life with colleagues and students in the Engineering Department.

Susan Van Sant did not have any art in Dialogue last issue, despite her appearance in this section [oops!]. She is still a Black Crowes fan.

Sometimes Sarah C. Vos wants to crawl into a box of silence.

Karl Voskuil is the official hero of the Dialogue staff. He types swiftly too.

Joel Zwart is a senior history major with minors in both French and Art. Photography is somewhat of a hobby for him.

Cover art by Gary De Witt, oil on canvas, 42x42"
POETRY

Interstate 96 to Budapest
by Claire Basney

Desire
by M. B. Smith

spirits
by Lambert J. Van Poolen

encompassed
by Sarah Byker

Impotency
by Katherine Cummings

Lull
by Ian Griffin

paperdoll
by Jane C. Knol

SHORT FICTION

Eileen
by Amy Adair

A Matter of "Principle"
by Matt Forsythe

GALLERY

Aware
by Mike Byl

Abandonment
by Mike Shih

Pocket: Looking Inside
by Julia Anema

One Crow, Two Crow
by Susan Van Sant

The Silent Observer
by Joel Zwart

Un titled
by Jason Glerum

Portfolio: D.H. Chung
Light Motifs:
I. Shadow Climbing Wall
II. Three Rays of Light
IV. Stability
V. Action

Some Dreams Last Forever...
by Greg Scholtens

Mother and Child II
by Holly Huisman

The Display
by Tricia Bos

Cover Art
by Gary DeWitt

MEMOIR

Bus Heat
by Sarah C. Vos

ROUND TABLE

Multicultural Year:

In these two round table discussions, the Multicultural Year Committee and several students talk about the Multicultural Year's merits and goals, and the success it might achieve.

BOOKS

Redrawing the Circles that Enclose
by Kelly Van Andel

In Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism, David A. Hollinger examines how Americans can move beyond the divides of multiculturalism.

Under the "Underclass"
by Kelley Evans

Herbert J. Gans looks at how labels affect the status of the poor in The War Against the Poor.

DEPARTMENTS

Quotes & Contributors
by Shannon Hoff

Editorial
by Shannon Hoff

Cartoon
by Gary DeWitt

Flotsam & Jetsam
by Matt Miller & Friends

Random Illustrations
by Gary DeWitt
"I say to you: one must still have chaos in oneself in order to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos in yourselves."

- Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra

America's "compassionate soul"—represented by great secular monuments and aspiring constitutional commitments to liberty, equality, and care for its people—lends itself well to the denial of that which threatens political stability. The subversive speak [usually of intellectuals, artists, or social/political activists] rumbling below the surface—concerning the play of power and domination, detachment and alienation, subject and nation fragmentation—is suppressed for the sake of safe and comfortable political existence. The complexity of identity is driven to silence insofar as comfort and stability are needed to keep identity "whole" and unproblematic. This phenomenon is especially apparent in the United States, the country most intent on aspiring to the possibility of true constitutional liberalism. No other country in the world idealizes democracy's potentials to a comparable degree, nor feigns such ignorance of potential threats to democratic practice.

An intimate connection can be drawn between political and individual identity that can be seen especially through reference to this desire for stability. Human subjects experience a constant process of discovery in relation to themselves; self comes to know itself as an "other" revealed to self over time. We are inherently incomplete and unfinished; we work and exist in the present and take the manifestations of self as they come, not able to predict future reactions to experiences that we will eventually incorporate into our identity. The self is subject and lived experience, nothing solid or determinable, but something nevertheless—something that must continually reaffirm its existence moment by moment but does so with a trust in temporal survival or extension over time. The political "self" also has this indeterminable and temporally-defined character, and it too strives to suppress this uncertainty for the sake of definitive self-affirmation. Political leaders claim to offer all-embracing solutions to the problems disturbing the political circle. The people expect and require these solutions out of their desire for stability; although constantly skeptical, they are always strangely prone to this idealism. Such an atmosphere is overly-simplistic [and, ironically, antidemocratic] also in that it tends to generalize identity until all members are incorporated into one. Any drive for stability often becomes a drive to suppress the voices of those who threaten the stability, or the voices of those who "deviate" from the identity of the majority.

To observe and consider the temporal world—a world stricken by panic insofar as comfortable notions of truth, knowledge, and the human subject are quickly dissolving, a world on the edge of "throwing-away"—is often insufficient. To be safe, sane, and comfortable with our well-groomed and lasting conceptions of the way things are, the way things should be, and the way things will be for ever and ever is a furious contradiction of the way we are as social and political subjects, as temporal and fragmented—even unto ourselves. Identity is ambiguous and therefore not worth getting comfortable in; it seems to consist of an ongoing head-centered discourse that unifies self with self, but at the same time is always unfinished and only given definitive boundaries through its relation to others.

The same can be said for the political identity of a country or continent—there is no real stability and no comfortable plateau on which it can rest—and any denial of intellectual or political ferment is unrealistic and simplistic, hastily embraced for the sake of maintaining an illusion of stasis. Those who "represent" American identity often pass over contemporary political, philosophical, and social theory because of the latter's desire to turn over reality and reveal it in contrast to that with which we feel comfortable. The polity and the human subject seem to have the same problem—they incline towards repressing the nagging presence of human dissent in a "stable" world, human alienation in a "communal" world, and human
incompleteness in a world that would like to think it is whole.

Though difficult to accept, "reality" exists in an interplay of comfort and discomfort, of withdrawal and connection, of tension and tenacity. We must live in this hapless compromise [or choose to ignore it], finding ourselves frustratingly incommunicative and our lives incommunicable. Yes, beauty and truth still beckon—yet we, often disappointed, find them infused with and infiltrated by negation, ambiguity, and resistance until they are no longer recognizable as their traditional portrayals would have them be. The strident combination of non-meaningful, non-articulate uncertainty and the subjective and political drive to "wholeness" becomes that to which we must resign ourselves but that which, as it turns out, actually drives us to live. Stories and identities coincide in time, abrasive and embracing. We can only give them a place and a voice, be it a fragmented one, and thrive on the unpleasance-aware that it is the spurring motivation for further growth.

These are no definitive answers for the human and the political subjects. Maybe both have compassionate souls eager to live up to liberal ideals, but they are inherently disturbed and incomplete, continually and eternally required to redefine themselves in reaction to and in interaction with their unstable environment or self. This tension demands celebration, not grievance or denial—a celebration of the chaos that births dancing stars.

-Shannon Hoff

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 5
"Can I help you?" An elderly woman asked me.
She perched on a stool behind the nursing station. Her hands rested gently on the desk. She wiggled her long, wide nose and gave me a toothless grin.

She pressed her lips together, shook her head and began babbling, "The spiders on the floor...The spiders on the floor...The spiders on the floor..."

"They're not spiders, Eileen, they're the spots on the linoleum." I reminded her.

"Yes," she raised her voice and shook her hands violently above her head, "I know THAT!"

"They're black specks."
"Stomp on it! Stomp on it! Stomp on it!" She screamed hysterically, pointing at the floor.

I raised my foot and smashed the black speck on the linoleum.
She smiled, leaning her nose towards the floor, and in her deep voice she exclaimed, "You squashed it."

After inspection, she jerked her head up from the floor and shoved her gnawed fingernails under my nose.

"Will you please paint my fingernails?"
"What color?"
"Polka dots, please."
"Eileen."
"Who?"
"Eileen."
"I don't have any idea of what you're talking about."
"You're Eileen." I said pointing to her.

"Yeah, so. But," she said raising her crooked finger and pointing to a man sleeping in a wheelchair, "He thinks HE'S Eileen."
I began to get frustrated, "No, Eileen. He knows who he is. He knows his name is Francis." I grabbed my clipboard full of my patients at the nurse's station and scanned Eileen's chart. Eileen was my only patient that had severe Alzheimer's Disease and dementia. I knew that in all the years that I had worked at the nursing home her visitor files remained blank, even though her husband was still alive and living in the area.

"My mom is coming today."
"Eileen, your mom is not coming today."

"Oh, she died." Her eyes rolled back into her head as though she were searching for a lost page in the book of her life. Her sad eyes looked at me, "How old am I?"

"Eighty-seven." She squinted her eyes, and wrinkled her nose. The door to her memory slammed shut.
"My dad is coming today."
"No, he's not coming either."
"He's dead too?" Distant memories flickered in her timeworn eyes.

"Yes, Eileen."

Somewhere amidst all the babbling nonsense was her memory, a memory that Alzheimer's Disease had destroyed.
"He died when I was much younger." She remembered.

"Yes." I nodded. Her mind had erased the pages of her memory, and a door blocked her memory from forming any kind of recollection.

"Eileen, it's time for bed."
"OK," she agreed.

She placed her thin white arm around my waist and leaned on me for support as we walked down the hall to her small, private bedroom. I flipped back the yellow and peach afghan that dressed her bed.

"I made that for my husband," she stated.

I knew he would never come to pick it up.
I helped her climb into bed and tucked the yellow and peach afghan around her.

"Good night." I said as I flipped off the lights.

She smiled, "Maybe my husband
will come tomorrow. Then I can give him his afghan.” She turned her head and shut her eyes.

I had to quit my job to return to college. I knew Eileen would never remember our conversations—or me.

When I returned home, my mom had saved newspaper clippings for me. The headline in the obituary read, ‘Eileen Patterson died at age 87.’ The story continued on to say that no immediate family came to the nursing home to pick up her belongings.

I returned to the nursing home and asked where Eileen’s personal items were, but they had already been given to the Salvation Army. None of the faces in the nursing home looked familiar until I saw Francis sleeping in the hallway. He was wrapped up in a yellow and peach afghan.

Francis woke up and looked at me, “She gave this to me to give to you.” He folded the afghan and handed it to me.

“She remembered me?”

“As much as she could.”

I thanked him. I folded the blanket under my arm. And on my way out, I squashed a spider.
Multicultural Year: One Painting in the Studio

The 1996-97 academic year at Calvin has been designated a Multicultural Year, with each month focusing on a different ethnic group. Dialogue undertook two round table discussions, one with the Multicultural Year Committee and one with seven students, to rearticulate the goals of the Multicultural Year, evaluate its progress, and foster exchange on multiculturalism at Calvin. The Multicultural Year Committee includes: Rhae-Ann Booker, Director of Multicultural Student Development; Rev. Al Luke, Director of Race Relations, Division of Pastoral Ministries of the CRC; Steve Timmermans, Dean for Instruction; Anne Zaki, student; Peter Sztó, Professor of Sociology; Chris Stoffel Overvoorde, Professor of Art and Director of the Multicultural Year. This subcommittee works under the Calvin Multicultural Affairs Committee, abbreviated below as MAC.

The Multicultural Year Committee discussion, presented below, begins with an explanation of the Multicultural Year as a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Comprehensive Plan for Integrating North American Ethnic Minority Persons and Their Interests into Every Facet of Calvin's Institutional Life, hereafter abbreviated as the "Comprehensive Plan." The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1985, outlined Calvin's position on multiculturalism and set goals in the critical areas of minority presence among faculty and students, curriculum, and multicultural Christian community.

The student round table discussion follows the Multicultural Year Committee discussion. Rob Huie and Rebecca Lew conducted both round tables.

Dialogue: How did the idea for the Multicultural Year grow out of the Comprehensive Plan? What do you hope to achieve, and how do you plan to ensure that it is achieved?

Al: The Comprehensive Plan has been a working document for ten years, and it culminates in a celebration: the Multicultural Year. The Multicultural Year is not going to be an end but rather a beginning or a turning point. We want to have integrity in what we're doing. It seems to me that we're shifting gears. We're doing some different things. We're bringing some colors on the canvas, but we've got to keep on working on the mosaic that's going to develop. I'm excited about it and that's what drew me in. The percent of minorities on Calvin's campus is not too much off the target goal set by the Comprehensive Plan. This goal was 20 percent minority presence. This may seem unrealistic, yet if you don't have something to reach for, you are not stretching too much. Something has to stretch us and force us to leap ahead. It seems to me that what we're trying to do has to be somewhat realistic, and yet optimistic, because otherwise we're not reaching beyond—it feels like we're just treading water. And I don't want that.

Chris: As an artist, I bring something to this year that most academicians don't. I want to bring the experience of the various cultures to this place. When National Geographic describes a culture, they do it rather well, both visually and verbally, but that is not enough. It's not like being there. No, listening to a CD is not the same as going to a concert. At least, not for me it isn't. I have to be there, and I think that's what we are doing this year. We're trying to bring the best of these cultures with the cooperation of the various communities—and I think that's another key. We're going to these communities and saying, "Please teach
us.” They’ve never been invited before, and so we’re building bridges with new communities, and people are crossing the bridges. That’s the exciting thing for me.

Dialogue: The proposal for Multicultural Year suggested that September focus on Dutch ethnicity. That no longer has a place on the lineup. Could someone comment on how that came to pass?

Chris: It is true that on MAC’s discussion, there was at least one member of MAC who insisted that we have Dutch month and would have really rather started with Dutch. Nevertheless, the Multicultural Year Committee selected the ones it did. I remember very vividly when I came before the Student Senate and they asked me about the Dutch. And I remember saying, “The Lord Jesus said, ‘The poor you have always with you’ and I say unto you . . . the Dutch are always with you!”

In response to that, I find a certain irony. When I was doing the fifteen paintings for the various dormitories, I was criticized because I was dealing with old Dutch people. I said, “Study them! These people have a world vision! They weren’t narrowly Dutch, they were citizens of this world. They were all over the place!” It’s funny to me that when I was doing that, I was criticized for being too narrowly Dutch.

And now, when we’re trying to do a Multicultural Year, it’s hard to find the road between the two. I have challenged each one of the dormitories this year to invite me to come talk about the person whom their dorm is named after. I want to tell their story this year, because I do think that one must have a good, healthy understanding of one’s own heritage before one can add others. Many people are confused when we talk “multicultural.” They think you have to deny something. No one has to deny anything. One merely has to be enriched by others. It’s a very different thing, but I think a lot of people are still confused about that.

Dialogue: On the issue of Multiculturalism, Gene Edward Veith Jr, in his book Postmodern Times [one of the texts that is standard for Calvin’s Christian Perspectives on Learning class], writes: “Is eating a burrito at Taco Bell really equivalent to entering into the experience, history, and values of the Mexican people? Is listening to reggae music on a Japanese CD player really a multicultural encounter with the West Indies or Japan? Contemporary Westerners’ understanding of other cultures often only skims the surface, like tourists sampling cultural stereotypes, instead of genuinely engaging in other civilizations. Postmodern multiculturalism might affirm all cultures, but in doing so, it might destroy them all.”

Is it possible to walk away from this Multicultural Year with only a complacently superficial sense of Multiculturalism? Is eight months adequate to eight cultures?

Rhae-Ann: No, but I would say it’s a place to start. It’s like planting a seed, and helping students to see how you go about becoming more multicultural in your daily life. What’s being shown in the activities that are being planned for the year is that there are some basic steps to getting there, and in the end, you’ve got to crawl before you walk. It’s helping students to see that, in talking about multiculturalism in the classroom and the residence halls, yes, they too, can take a little ownership of this. And I think that when they do enter the world, this will make things a little bit easier. They are going to be one step closer to being able to have better interaction.

Chris: We have made a genuine effort to involve the community out there. In going to those communities, the question that I placed before them was, “What do you want to show us? Tell me, what is representative of your culture?” That’s the big difference. Before, when we talked about minorities, or when we talked about multiculturalism, it was so often,
Car lithograph 12 1/4x8 7/8" Jon Den Hartigh
"What can I do?" But it should be a matter of what that person can do for you. Give that person a chance, and don't assume that you have it, and that they don't.

I think often there is an American attitude that we have the resources, we have the know-how, and therefore we tell others, "You listen." No, no, no. I went to these communities to listen, and that surprises them. It really does. They say, "What, is this guy for real?" The first two meetings, they don't know where I'm coming from. And they soon find out, I'm for real! I mean it! And I think that's the big difference, and yes, anytime you put different cultures together, they can be understood in a superficial way. That possibility is always there, but I think our general intent, our connections, and our attitude are very different.

Steve: There's another dimension, referring back to that quote. Yes, multiculturalism as it is discussed in universities and colleges around the country is a scary topic, because it's a relativistic, free-flowing kind of thing, and that author is right. But we have a theology here that drives this multicultural year, and although we use the term "multicultural" just as the secular university does, we mean something very, very different, and when Chris meets with a Latino community on the southwest side of town, he doesn't do that in the same way. What he's saying is, because we take our faith seriously, we want to understand how with our differences we can be one in Christ. That is the theme of the year: "That they may be one." I think there are still people who are a bit nervous about whether we are just jumping on the PC bandwagon. Heavens no! We have a theology here that drives us, and we're trying to be faithful to that theology.

Back to what Rhae-Ann was talking about on getting students to crawl before they walk: a student will hopefully get much out of this year. But even if they get very little and don't even begin to understand what Korean-Americans are all about or don't understand anything from these various months—if they at least remember one thing, it should be that Calvin College thought it was important for us to do this. It's tied to our beliefs. Ten years later when students finally start breaking out of their own limited ethnic identity and start to experience the broader world, they'll also hopefully remember, "I'm driven by my theology to do this, and my theology has something important to say about this."

Al: I went to one of those lectures by Dr. Carasco, and I was intrigued by the title because it was something about a Dr. Loco and red hot chili peppers, and I wanted to know what it was all about. In his presentation, he mentioned a group that takes a civil rights song, "We Shall Overcome," and sings it somewhat traditionally, then sings it bilingually, and then changes it to a Latin rhythm. I said "This is great!" I mean, I wouldn't have known that had I not come to the lecture. If even one student had some "a-ha" experience, that's more than they would have had if we had never had that. You can build on that afterwards.

Dialogue: In the spring you're going to meet and reformulate goals for the future. What do you foresee the goals being after this multicultural year?

Steve: Well, at the conceptual
MAC is just one thing; I think one of the most significant things that Calvin has pushed lately is off-campus programs. For the individual student, this is a tremendous way to learn and to cross over into new cultures. So this is not the only college effort; it exists in a whole studio of painters, all in the middle of painting.

Anne: I guess that's why I don't see the multicultural year being a big bang and then dying. Some of you have this concern, but I don't. As I see it, students are becoming more aware of what's going on and that there are things that exist beyond their own communities, even if they're not living

For a lot of these students, it's just a meal once a month at the dining halls. And they still serve the "same-old same-old" food plus something different, so you don't even have to try it.

it yet. You're right, eight months is not enough. But these eight months for me are almost like the syllabus you get the first time you go to class. It's not the readings, it's not the lectures, it's just something that gives you some level of awareness of what the lesson is going to be like, what's expected of the class and what's expected of you. It's not enough, but it's essential to have. And for me, that's what the multicultural year is about; it's that one syllabus that gives you a taste of things. But it's not living it, it's not becoming multicultural yet; it's just to get a taste.

I can't talk about goals for next year yet, but what I hope to see is Calvin become a multicultural community. The point is the level of awareness of having this multiculturalism around to do it for you. It's the same for multicultural year: it will be a different experience for every single student here, provided that students attend the events that interest them.

The second round table discussion addressed student perspectives on the Multicultural Year. The participants were: Jason Andringa, Abraham Fowler, Sangeetha Kumar, Roxanne Rupke, Ken Shum, Becky Thomas, and Andrew Weeber.

Dialogue: What have students heard about the Multicultural Year? Has there been good publicity? Have you seen a good turnout?

Jason: Honestly, I really don't feel like I have heard a whole lot about it. You hear little bits and pieces at different events and that sort of thing, but the whole broad reach of it, no.

Sangeetha: The publicity for it has been pretty good. I've seen publicity posters everywhere in the school, and I don't think that's actually the problem. But I think, from students, there's a lot of apathy. Okay, it's the multicultural year, but nobody's doing anything about it, nobody's checking out stuff--me being at fault too. I think that's where it's lacking--the students. Most students would agree that the Multicultural Year is a good thing. I don't think many students would say it's bad. But, I don't think enough people are actually seeking out the events and really wanting to know the ethnic groups that are being introduced.

Abraham: Many people aren't used to thinking this way, and maybe they need to be awakened. For example, I went to see the evangelist Joy Kim, and I was really disappointed at how many people showed up. I bet there were no more than twenty people there, and most of the people were Koreans. We got a glimpse of what the Korean church was doing, and I think that's one of the best things about the multicultural year, or multicultural emphasis: that you can get to see the body of Christ in other cultures, not just the culture itself.

Becky: I went to the Echoes from Korea, and I thought it was awesome. But events like that tend to go more to the rest of the community rather than the Calvin community, so I don't think as many Calvin students were
there as much as Korean children that had been adopted. For a lot of these students, it's just a meal once a month at the dining halls. And they still serve the "same-old same-old" food plus something different, so you don't even have to try it.

Abraham: I think that a good way to get more people interested would be to have the professors aware of what's going on and have them encourage students.

Dialogue: Is there enough professor awareness at this point?

Sangeetha: I think they know. Everybody knows it's the multicultural year, blah blah blah. But I don't think the profs know much about it or if they do know they think other people are already thinking about it, so nothing's really getting said to encourage it. I think it would be great if I walked into a classroom and heard my professors encouraging me to go to the multicultural events. I haven't really had that this year.

Andrew: Yes, but do professors ever actually encourage students to go to anything that doesn't have to do with the department?

Becky: A good professor would.

Dialogue: Are there certain Multicultural Year events that you think are better than others? What do you think of the dinners in comparison to the galleries, or the programs?

Ken: I like the food the least.

Sangeetha: No ethnic group is going to say that Calvin Food Service is going to have the best of multicultural food. When they serve Indian food—let me tell you: it's not Indian food. But I think it's good that we have the dinners, everyone just has to take the perspective that it's not going to be authentic.

Dialogue: What do you think of adding a multicultural component to the core, perhaps incorporating multicultural issues into core courses like History 101 or 102?

Andrew: The people that actually need that course are the people that are not going to absorb it.

Abraham: But it's an exposure, it's a beginning.

Andrew: You really need to sit down with this person who is not from your background, who might be from the other end of the world, who does not speak like you, who does not eat the same food as you, and sit down and figure out what you both have in common. If somebody is open-minded enough to sit down with anyone, from anywhere, within ten minutes you're going to find something. Then you start building on that. For those who are not open minded enough, I don't think taking a course at Calvin is going to crack open their minds. I'd like to try, of course.

Sangeetha: I think part of understanding others involves emphasizing the Christian perspective through it all. We must break down barriers instead of just saying, for example, "This is a Korean dance." You can be presented with a million multicultural events, and it can mean little to you later. We must understand that Christ didn't create a dominant race.

Abraham: We are one race and one family. We have to get past the surface differences and see ourselves as one.

Dialogue: That's the theme of the Multicultural Year, "That they may be one."

Andrew: Which is actually quoted from Christ's prayer; to, for, and about all of us.

Dialogue: Do you foresee any negative consequences to the Multicultural Year? Is there any way it could actually hinder the movement toward multiculturalism?

Becky: I think it could do damage just if it brings about misunderstanding.
Abraham: I have always heard about schools which promote multiculturalism, and a lot of the stuff that they're doing is not good. So I have had a preconceived negative notion of multiculturalism. But when I came to Calvin, I started to realize that, directed properly, it's a very very good thing. I think a lot of people still have that prejudice against "multiculturalism"—they hear that word and draw back. We have to make sure that multiculturalism here is not that way—make sure that it retains it's focus, and that it emphasizes the Christian part of multiculturalism.

Becky: I don't think there is any true teaching in some of the events. I went to Echoes of Korea, and I read the pamphlet, but it didn't really teach me. Maybe I need to have a little more history taught to me, so I can understand what's going on more clearly. I came with a little prior knowledge, but the person who was with me thought it was really neat but didn't really understand it. And I think a lot of events are going on without a true understanding of what the real cultures are.

Here's an analogy: Say if I had an apple, and say I bruised it up, and then I put caramel on it and ate it. Well, the caramel might taste good, but you realize the apple is still bruised. That's a reflection of this community. "Celebrate everything, celebrate the diversity," but you're covering it with caramel; there are still so many problems underneath. People have bitterness and resentment and misunderstandings that haven't been dealt with. I think we need to go back and repent of what has gone on between each other's communities and cultures and right outside Calvin; we're not in an area that's appreciative of other people's cultures. You look around at Calvin, and you see that there are more things that need to be dealt with before we just say, here try this food, try this, try that. That's great and all, but there are some deeper problems that need to be dealt with.

Dialogue: So you would say there are some interracial bruises, so to speak, at Calvin?

Becky: Definitely.

Dialogue: Last year the faculty considered having one of the months of the Multicultural Year be designated as Dutch month. Although it was in the original plan, they decided against it. What do you think about a Dutch month?

Sangeetha: At Calvin we hear about the Dutch all the time, but in actuality, we just hear the stereotypes. We hear Dutch jokes. A lot of people don’t know anything about the actual culture itself, the heritage of it.

Becky: I think it’s important for people, like you said, to celebrate the Dutch culture and heritage that’s here. Because I don’t understand a lot of it, I’ve just come up with some of my own thoughts about it.

Abraham: I think having Dutch month would be good for two reasons. It would help us who don't know about the Dutch to learn about them, and it would help the Dutch people to say, yeah, we're taken into account too. And it would reinforce the fact that multiculturalism is not an anti-Dutch thing.

Desire

You took me in,
and I withdrew from you.
The pleasure is not either of these:
but the contrast of the two.

In two states of being:
to have and to have not,
only the country in between—
lends the heart taut.

Desire. Not the child of the have,
or begotten of the not:
the true creator lies,
in the ripe seed of the want.

M.B. Smith

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 17
Dialogue: What should we keep in mind as our Multicultural Year progresses?

Roxanne: I think the thing that’s so difficult about the multicultural year is that in other places that I’ve been it just happens naturally—you talk to people from other cultures. Everywhere you go you meet people; it’s just a way of life. But at Calvin it’s so easy to go through school and never step out of your comfort zone.

Sangeetha: All of us need to go out and encourage each other to go to the events. If you don’t have time, make time. There are so many events, you can make time for some. Or ask people that went to it how it was, what it was about. Interaction with people from other cultures is the first step toward a truly multicultural society.

Special thanks to Christine Swenson and Rob Huie for taking the photographs and to Andrew Weeber for developing and printing in our hour of most dire need.

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**spirits**

one year later we sat quietly near mountain visted grave [the placed rocks wintered well] while his orange butterfly kept company then followed us part way away.

we had a beautiful Saturday morning hike to where we sadly laid Wally's marmalade ashes to rest covering him with rocks that were miniature mountains which stayed mountains so that we could come back and visit and while we sat and read and viewed an orange butterfly stayed with us for our several hour rest and then it came along the trail partly on the way back.

-Lambert J. Van Pooelen
The Silent Observer photograph 7 1/2 x 5 1/8" Joel Zwart
A Matter of “Principle”
by Matt Forsythe

“Ted. Customer.”
I glanced up from my struggle to reunite a Winnie-the-Pooh watch with its stubborn caseback. “Where?” I asked.

“Gemstones.”
“T’ve almost got this watch back together,” I protested. “Can’t you handle this one?”

“Sorry, kiddo,” Judy, my cohort in jewelry sales for the afternoon, answered. “But I’ve been on the floor since noon, and I need a break.”

“And what about me?” I objected. “Am I just some tireless sales machine?”

“I guess,” answered Judy as she headed off in the direction of the company breakroom. “Either that or a big whiner.”

I set the watch down beside the nearest register and walked over to the gemstone counter. The section appeared empty. I scowled in Judy’s direction, then turned back for more fun with the watches.

A small voice stopped me after a few strides. “Hey!”

I turned again to look. At first I still didn’t see anyone; then I spotted him. He looked about six or seven years old, maybe younger, and could barely see over the countertop. So he bent down and stared in through the side of the case, his forehead pressed hard against the glass. Breath fogged the pane inches from his mouth.

I’d need to clean the glass later, but I suppressed my irritation. “Can I help you?” I asked as I silently reminded myself that Judy could do the cleaning when she returned.

“Yeah.” He stood as tall as he could and stretched one hand over the counter. Pointing a finger into the case, he deliberately announced, “I’d like that one.”

I maintained an impassive sales face. “Which one?” I inquired.

“That one.” He pushed the finger into the glass for emphasis. “With the purple stone in the middle.”

“Oh, the Amethyst.” I slowly enunciated its name.

“Yeah—the ring. Can I see it?”

Against my better judgement, I opened the case and carefully removed the piece. But I refused to hand the ring over—instead, I displayed it from a distance.

“How much does it cost?” he questioned.

I didn’t even bother checking the tag. “Lots,” I replied.

“A million dollars?”

“Close.”

“A thousand dollars?”

“Almost.”

“A hundred dollars?”

“A little more than that.”

“Oh.”

I began to return the ring to the display, but he didn’t leave. Instead, he brought his other arm above the countertop and opened a clenched fist to reveal a few bills and random coins.

“How much do I got?” he asked.

I counted his money without touching it. “Four dollars and thirty-seven cents,” I informed him.

“Is that enough?”

“I’m afraid not.”

“Almost?”

“Not really.”

“Oh.”

I closed and locked the case, then glanced around for any waiting customers. No one—except him.

“Can I get anything else?” He seemed determined to purchase a trinket from me.

“What are you looking for?” I asked.

“A gift. For my mother.”

“Well—” I paused, then led him past the fine jewelry and into the fashion section of the department. “Let’s see what we can find. What’s she like?”

“She’s real nice,” he informed me.

“And she likes jewelry.” That seemed to settle the question for him.

“Then we’re in the right place,” I commented. “Aren’t we?”

“Yes.” He either missed or ignored my sarcasm.

I wanted to stare him down and say, “Listen, kid—you’re cute and all that, but you’re also annoying me, and
I've got better things to do with my time than lead you on a field trip through the shiny rocks." But I didn't.

Instead, we looked at the fashion rings; they started at six ninety-nine. The fake pearl earrings proved too expensive as well. My shadow grew impatient, but he grinned when I pointed out an old display of imitation gold bracelets.

"She loves gold," he notified me, so I took one off the rack and showed it to him. I didn't bother to explain the difference between genuine and simulation merchandise.

"How much?" he inquired.

I checked the tag. "Four twenty-five."

"I've got that!" he exclaimed, and he triumphantly held out his fistful of cash.

I scanned the bracelet at the register; the total amounted to four fifty-three. I swore under my breath. Sales tax.

My hand reached into my pocket, grasping for the quarter that would suddenly appear aus ex machina and save the day. Instead I felt the ten dollar bill that represented my dinner.

"No, Ted," I told myself. "He's not that cute."

I'm a "Selling Specialist," not Santa Claus. I can't offer free hand-outs to every shopper who comes to drool at the pretty stones. If that sounds harsh, welcome to retail; wake up and smell the profit. Don't mess with me—I'm a jeweler.

I faced my young customer. He waited expectantly for his purchase, unaware that I was about to ruin his afternoon. I began with "I'm sorry, but—" and entered into some garbled lie about why the bracelet wasn't for sale. Then I returned it to the rack.

He blinked twice, but no tears fell. After a few seconds of silence, he quietly asked, "Is there anything else?"

"That you could afford?"

"Yes—for my mother."

"Not really."

"Nothing?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Oh."

By then other customers had arrived. They clamored for my attention, and I missed the moment my young shopper slipped away.

Eventually Judy returned, and I took my dinner break.

An hour later I resumed my shift.

"How was dinner?" Judy asked.

"Not bad," I replied. "Sweet and sour chicken from that Chinese place."

"You missed all the excitement."

"What happened?"

"Security caught some brat pinching merchandise from the fashion section."

"Really?"

"Some fake gold bracelet. Not even worth five bucks."

"Oh?"

"But they busted him anyway. You know—matter of principle."

"Oh. Yeah—I know."
Etymologically, photography means “light-drawing.” Usually light drawing means using light as a medium in which to learn about the object. In this project, I have treated light as the object instead of the medium. Perhaps this is a more literal interpretation of the word “photography,” as in “drawing light” instead of “drawing with light.” All of these photographs were taken around my apartment, school, and other places I normally spend my time. I have tried to capture the interesting way light behaves in ordinary everyday contexts.
Light Motif II: Three Rays of Light

photograph

6x4"
Light Motif IV: Stability
photograph
6x4"
Light Motif V: Action photograph 6x4"
It's morning, and the sun is up. I sit and wait on my front steps for the yellow bus and Miż Woods. I don't know if she's a Miss or a Ms.—I only know what the kids call her, Miż Woods. They call me Miż Sayruh.

The bus pulls up, not bothering to pull over to the side of the street. Miż Woods puts out the stop sign, and I grab my purple insulated lunch bag and run out to the bus. She closes the doors after me and waits for me to fasten my seat-belt. Miż Woods is one of those lovable people who cannot break any of the rules or make exceptions for anyone. She never lets her foot off the brake until I have finished.

I work at a day camp for severely emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children. For six weeks, five days a week, and six hours a day, I become someone else. Officially I am a teaching assistant, but this means I am also a bus aide. Mornings on the bus aren't bad. The kids get on board fresh and eager for the day. Afternoons can be horrendous with the heat and the noise; some afternoons I wish I never took this job.

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These kids I work with fall through bureaucratic holes. They go in and out of psychiatric hospitals and guidance counselors' offices. Ideally this camp should keep them from getting hospitalized, at least for the summer. Their parents can't afford hospitalization and neither can the state.

I look out the window as Miż Woods chats. She tells me she got up at five to go weed at the library. This summer Miż Woods works three jobs in addition to reshingling her roof and running a Bible school camp. She has a son in California. It isn't that I don't enjoy her morning small talk. Some mornings I look forward to it, savoring bits of information and passing them on to others, but today I am tired. Soon, too soon, we will begin picking up the kids, and then I will have no rest until the day is over, and we drop them off again.

We drive down 13th Ave.—my street—only now we are on the west side of town. We pick the kids up one by one, and they climb in, bringing towels and swimsuits. Today is Friday, swim day.

Only one kid is slow—Matthias. We wait as he walks down the driveway with Mr. Wilson, carefully holding his hand. Matthias stops at the bus and says, "Don't make me go. Let me stay home."

"No. Get on boy. I'll be here when you get back," Mr. Wilson answers, and from his tone I can tell this question has been asked many times this morning.

"Come on, Matthias," I coax, "Today is swim day, and it's bus treat day. You don't want to miss today, do you?"

Matthias reluctantly climbs on, takes his seat, and fastens his seat-belt. I sigh in relief.

Matthias is not in my classroom, so I don't know his diagnosis. I don't have access to that sort of privileged information. Miż Woods knows more than I since Matthias has been on her route for three years. Sometimes, when he lived with his mother, Miż Woods would go to pick him up, and he wouldn't come out the door. She could see him in an upstairs window where he stood in his underwear and looked blankly out at the bus. Miż Woods tells me that things are a lot better since he moved in with Mr. Wilson. But Matthias fears Mr. Wilson. Whenever Matthias misbehaves, he begs me not to tell Mr. Wilson.

Most mornings Matthias can't remember my name. "Hey," he stutters out, "What's your name?" I tell him and then the other question, the one he wanted to ask in the first place, bursts out: "Miż Sayruh why..." or, "Miż Sayruh what..." or even
sometimes, "Miz Sayruh I love you," followed with a fierce hug which squeezes my ribs tightly.

We drive up to the pool and wait for the other buses to arrive. I start a song to keep the kids from getting distracted. We sing, "If you're happy and you know it." The kids clap their hands, stomp their feet, and yell, "Praise God!" The song quickly becomes a contest to see who can be the loudest and the most obnoxious. The bus shakes under their enthusiasm. The teachers, waiting outside, worriedly look over, and one even comes up to the bus. They fear mutiny, and my reassurances don't help; I am young and inexperienced. The kids wouldn't do this with anyone else; it's as if they can sense my discomfort. I need to think of quieter songs.

The other buses arrive, and we disembark forming our different classes. My class, being the oldest, waits impatiently for the others to change and leave the locker rooms. We go out to the pool and wait for the signal to get in. Most of the kids start swimming while others wait for the prescribed amount of time.

Swimming is an earned reward. All week long the kids earn points based on their behavior. We spend five minutes out of every hour to evaluate their individual behavior with each of them and come up with a number out of ten to rate their performance. On Thursday afternoon we tally up the points and figure out how many minutes out of fifty the kids will get to swim. Supposedly the system works to reinforce good behavior. I have my doubts.

Almost all the kids play in the water, laughing and bobbing up and down. By the end of the hour, only Matthias waits on the side. The heat hasn't done anything to help his disposition. No wonder he didn't want to come this morning.

Too soon the whistle blows, and the kids rush from the pool. A few linger in the water not wanting to leave. Miz Phyllis, my supervisor, warns that she might take away from next week's swim time. The stragglers reluctantly climb out. I run into the dressing room and strip the wet suit from my body, toweling dry as fast as I can. I pull my hair atop my head and step into my shoes, crunching the back ends down. I run to the bus and relieve the teacher who's been impatiently waiting.

The kids climb on after me with their heavy damp towels. On Fridays the ride back to school rarely goes smoothly; no one can calm down after the pool. Matthias climbs on with a scowl. I walk from the back of the bus, making sure everyone has their seat-belt on. Only Matthias doesn't.

"Matthias, can you put your seat-belt on for me?"

Instead of answering me he glares.

"Matthias, you know we can't earn points unless we cooperate and behave." He does not answer. I can't figure out why I've started using the plural unnecessarily. It seems to go along with this profession. I sit down beside Matthias and take the seat belt around and in front of him. He leans down with his mouth opened and his teeth bared; his teeth hit my arm, and I jerk back. He looks up at me, innocently. We can't move the bus until Matthias has his seat-belt on. I reach around him and take the seat-belt from the other side, this time avoiding his mouth. I fasten it. As Miz Woods moves the bus, I hear Jimmy and Johnny fighting in the back. It isn't a real fight yet, but it's one starting. I get up, hoping Miz Woods won't stop.

"Miz Sayruh," it's Timmy from behind me. "Miz Sayruh, Matthias ain't in his seat."

I turn around, and there he stands in the middle of the aisle. His head hangs a bit crooked like always. He stares at me through his thick glasses. It's a dare. He's only eight, but he's daring me to mess with him.

"Matthias, I am sorry we are having such a poor bus ride. But you really need to get in your seat and fasten your seat-belt. I don't think you want to lose any more points. I know you want to be able to get in that pool next Friday." It doesn't work; Matthias just stands in the aisle. Miz Woods brings the bus to a halt, and the bus behind passes by. I try again.

"Matthias, could you please return to your seat?" He looks at me, and I step forward. The other kids watch and wait to see what I will do, what he will do.

"No." He looks to the side.

"Sir, you are in danger of losing a lot of points and, I'm afraid, your Friday bus treat. It is time for you to take a seat." He looks at me. The Friday bus treat is my last bargaining weapon. If he doesn't cooperate...but we can't just stand here and wait for an eight year old to sit down. We can't go either; Miz Woods never breaks the rules. Matthias sits, not in his own seat, but with Timmy. This isn't what I wanted. Matthias shouldn't sit with anyone—he'll pick a fight—but at least if he's down we can
encompassed

hasn't seen the upside of the comforter for days: he would wait.
sleepless stitches wind white-on-white
phone silent on the nightstand

[he sinks deeper in]
this sadness like a drug.
just as emptying but with permanence.
she left uncoasted her coffee once
on his best cd jacket

so hear i am, he says,
soon i can die

hasn't seen the upside of her face in the glass;
she's nearly happily married.
still no promise on her finger; arms only
circles in remembrance
today, he—tangled alone in her sheets

and she—knowing this,
[her loneliness], like a bomb
but only him to detonate her

she says, so here i stay.
helpless as the grave

quiet now, and brave prayers downcast.
the clouds are too high for where we wait.

death will ring louder than these times
and still go unanswered

-Sarah Byker


go. The other teachers would control
a situation like this. I look at Timmy
and hope.

Matthias grabs Timmy's hat.
"Damn it, Matthias, give it back!"
Timmy looks at me, and I try to
intervene.

28 DIALOGUE

"Matthias, does that belong to you?
Could you please return it to the
rightful owner?"

He scowls at me, and I know that
didn't help. Not even looking at
Timmy he swings his arm up and
down, still holding the hat and flapping
Timmy in the face. I move quickly,
more afraid of Timmy's reaction than
the actual damage Matthias might be
doing. Somehow Timmy doesn't
respond with violence. He shrinks
into his corner and covers his eyes. I
grab Matthias' hands, but I grab them
Some Dreams Last Forever...

photography

7 3/4 x 5 1/4"

Greg Scholtens
### Impotency

*Anima, in her essential being, lingers and lives in streams of conscia. her language, that of the soul, is not that of the mouth.

a distortion, a dimentia exists: the waters of her are filtered in the mind so that when the mind is consulted for communication, the words spoken convey a distilled form of self.

collections of the unworded cumulate.

Anima roams her confining room humming and listens to the echoes...

*Anima is the term used by psychologist Carl Jung to represent the feminine side of the soul or self.

-Katherine Cummings

---

wrong, pulling them across his chest instead of holding them uncrossed just below his rib cage. I can’t get him into a standing cradle from here—and I’m in danger of crushing his rib cage. I have to remember procedure. I slide Matthias down into the seat, prop my left leg up on the seat, and hold my balance with my right leg in the aisle. Miż Woods starts driving again.

Matthias struggles against me, kicks the seat in front of him, pushes back into me, leans down to bite my arms, and kicks my shins. I mustn’t let him know it hurts. If I don’t watch myself, he finds my weak spot. If I switch to the correct position he might get away and do more damage. The other kids watch, silent and wary. They are testing me to see if I’m tough enough, strong enough. I wish I had lifted weights. The coolness from the pool is gone. I sweat. I smell his sweat. My muscles clench tight, and I bite down on my lip. Quickly I flip one of his hands over into the proper position. Then the other.

Miż Woods looks back from up front in her mirror. I know she’s nervous—two women and a bus full of rowdy kids. I don’t look strong; Miż Woods looks weaker.

I try to think of something to say. In the training, they told us to calm the kid down by talking, but they never told us how. I don’t know what to say. What if he gets mad because of what I say?

My legs feel wet. It must be sweat. "Ohh, Miż Sayruh," Timmy points at Matthias and covers his mouth. I look down, and Matthias is spitting great big globs of saliva on me. My shorts are soaked, and the thin cotton sticks to my legs. The kids groan and yuck.

"Matthias, we don’t spit on people. That just isn’t very nice." He spits harder.

Johnny looks over, "Aww, Matthias what’d ya’ have to go an’ do that fur?"

"Mind youh own fuckin’ bizness," Matthias revolts against me, renewing the struggle. My grip tightens out of habit.

"Aww, Miż Sayruh, Matthias tol me to mind my own fuckin’ bizness."

"Johnny, I’m so glad that you are mature enough to ignore Matthias’ poor behavior. I know that everybody on the bus is earning extra points for the way they’re acting right now." I reward good behavior.

The other kids smile as Matthias gather up more spit. He won’t give up just yet. We turn the corner and bump over the train tracks; Matthias jolts against me.

"Let me go Miż Sayruh!" He lashes out with kicks and then tries to scratch and bite. He wants to hurt me—to make me feel as bad as he does.

"I'm sorry Matthias. I really do want to let you go, but I can’t until you show me and everyone else that
you are ready to behave.”

He aims a swift kick at my shin and hits. I clench my teeth and decide not to talk until he does. Miź Woods looks tense as she drives. I don’t think she thinks I’m very good at this. I don’t think I’m very good at this. We are half-way to school.

The kids start talking again. The thrill of Matthias wears off. Jimmy and Johnny don’t fight anymore but brag.

“I done quite smokin’ Miź Sayruh,” Jimmy puffs out his chest.

“I’m glad to hear that Jimmy. Smoking is bad.” My hands ache and sweat pools in my bra. Matthias seems to be tiring.

“My brother smokes.”

“Johnny—you don’t smoke, do you?”

“Yeah.”

I make appropriate sounds of disgust as I try to shift Matthias’ weight around. He hasn’t tried to kick me for a couple of minutes, but I am wary.

“I do dip now,” Jimmy announces.

“Oh Jimmy,” I reply, “That’s even grosser. You shouldn’t mess with tobacco.”

“But a man’s got to have his tobacco.”

I can’t argue with logic like that, so I turn back to Matthias.

“Matthias,” I ask, “are you ready to behave?” I start to ease my grip.

“No.”

“Matthias, I don’t want to keep holding you like this, but I need you to demonstrate that you are ready to behave.”

“Kin I still get my bus treat?”

I look up to Miź Woods, and in the rear-view mirror I see that she shakes her head no.

“I’m sorry Matthias, but you’ve already lost this week’s bus treat.” He starts to fight again. “Matthias!” He stops. “You are working on next week’s swim time and next week’s bus treat right now. I know you want to earn all your swim time for next time, don’t you?” He nods his head, and I loosen my grip again. The muscles along my fingers feel stiff and sore.

“Miź Sayruh, I be good now. You kin let me go.” We have almost reached the school.

I look down, not knowing if I can trust him, not knowing if he means it. I loosen my grip more and look down. He looks up at me, his big brown eyes staring through thick bottle glasses. He smiles slowly, to persuade me, and the lines around his eyes crinkle. I breathe deeply and hope he means it. I have to trust him. I can’t hold him like this forever. I look down again and his eyes beg me. How can I say no?

That afternoon when we drop Matthias off, he lingers on the bus hoping for his Friday bus treat—a brownie and a sticker. Miź Woods patiently explains that he lost his treat, but he can still get one next week. Mr. Wilson walks up, and Matthias gets off the bus. Slowly they walk back up the driveway holding hands.

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**Dad? Why did you want me to wait till December to join our church?**

**Yeah, I guess so.**

**Oh...They were also sending those new scooters out to the new members last month. I guess you won’t be needing one...**

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**Miź Sayruh, I be good now. You kin let me go.” We have almost reached the school.**

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Redrawing the Circles that Enclose
by Kelly Van Andel


Scanning the cultural landscape of the United States, one encounters a spectrum of ethnicity which an artist could portray in an animated conglomeration of oranges, browns, blacks, yellows, and reds. While the painting of the American cultural portrait is accomplished with fluid strokes, the framing of the work in its entirety creates problems. For, by framing the colors or cultures within inflexible boundaries, the artist places limits on ethnic community and creates alienation within the work as a whole.

In Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism, David Hollinger discards the present framework of the American cultural portrait and redraws the circles that bind the cultural portrait of the United States together as one. In so doing, Hollinger acknowledges the ethnic history of the United States as well as its non-ethnic ideology and introduces the reader to postethnicity.

What is postethnicity? Does it already exist within the cultural landscape? If it does not, why must it be created? According to Hollinger, the term postethnic "marks an effort to articulate and develop cosmopolitan instincts within a new appreciation for the ethnos." While the prefix "post" is often used to repudiate a preceding era rather than build upon it and critically refine its contributions, Hollinger notes that the project of postethnicity differs from many "posts" of our time: rather than repudiating ethnicity, it respects the ethnic or cultural diversity present in the past. For instance, a postethnic perspective acknowledges the ethnicity of multiculturalism, but refines the identity and fixity of multiculturalism into postethnic flexibility and affiliation.

Besides structuring the idea of postethnicity, Hollinger facilitates the reader's understanding of his text by defining the vocabulary and catchphrases of sociological and cultural jargon. Many of the terms are used as building blocks which comprise and explain larger ideas. The comprehension of "cosmopolitanism" and "pluralism" is particularly key to defining what postethnicity is and what it is not.

As Hollinger navigates through vocabulary and the map of the complexity of American ethnicity, he presents the reader with a clarifying view of the cultural landscape of the United States. To begin, he discusses the cultural labels and distinctions of the past such as Negro, Jewish, Caucasian, and Hispanic. He then proceeds to describe how these distinctions have evolved into a contemporary ethno-racial pentagon divided into Euro-Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics [Latinos], and Indigenous Peoples [Native Americans]. The five part structure of the ethno-racial pentagon supposedly embraces all and calls attention to diversity, but it denies any choice that would allow individuals to move from one grouping to another without difficulty. Furthermore, the structure of the ethno-racial pentagon is being threatened by double and multiple minorities, such as Hispanic/African American women or individuals who claim roots in more than one ethnic minority group and thus fill the pentagon as a mixed race people. Hence, the former dividing lines and definitive groupings of the pentagon are quickly becoming artifacts of the sweeping from species to ethnos.

The sweeping from species to ethnos represents a change in the source of individual rights and obligations. In the past, one derived rights from common membership in the human species. Cultural origins, then, were secondary to the fact that one was bound within the broader circle of the human race. Now, however, individual rights and obligations are no longer rooted in species but in ethnos. Hence, individuals understand themselves and their rights and obligations within traditions, tribes, and cultural groups.

With an emphasis on tribal traditions and the like, the ethnocentrism previously prevalent within species-
centered discourse now adopts a plight that renders escaping from ethnocentrism impossible.

In addition to affecting the individual's perception of identity, the shift of emphasis from species to ethnos has challenged the idea that there could be an American character and cultural unity because ethnos has come to be defined as being not only opposed to species but also to the closest national equivalent, the American nation. Thus, the melting pot has been replaced with a salad bowl. Placing the salad of ethnicity on the American table prompts the question: Does the United States have a culture of its own or is it simply a container of cultures? The difficulty that this question presents stems from the fact that no one suggests or supports monoculturalism. Its natural opposite, multiculturalism, then becomes the chosen framework for American identity.

Multiculturalism implies a heightened sensitivity to diversity, diversifying diversity to the point that the ethno-racial pentagon mentioned earlier cannot contain it; therefore, something different must be developed. Hollinger presents the postethnic perspective as a response to multiculturalism and to other cultural understandings of the past.

Unlike multiculturalism, postethnicity recognizes that most individuals live in many circles simultaneously. According to Hollinger, living in various circles simultaneously requires individuals to shift and weave in and out of the "we's" of which an individual is a part. The universalist also comprehends identity in "layers or we," but the postethnic perspective recognizes the psychological and political value of bonded groups of affiliation and does not diminish lines which separate groups, such as the ethnic origin of Hispanics or the language of the Navajo's, as universalism does. In fact, rather than diminishing the lines or the differences between cultural groups, the postethnic perspective extends them to enable individuals to move into other communities.

Within the circles of postethnicity, voluntary affiliations to groups is preferred over prescribed memberships. Hollinger explains that through voluntary affiliation individuals are allowed to affiliate or disaffiliate with their own communities of descent to the extent that they choose, while at the same time they can affiliate with non-descent communities that are available and pleasing to them. In addition to preferring voluntary over prescribed affiliations, postethnicity appreciates multiple identities and communities of wide scope; it recognizes the construction of ethno-racial groups, and it accepts the formation of new groups.

Grasping the ideas of postethnicity, Hollinger then creates a new perspective of the American nation from a postethnic point of view. Within the framework of postethnicity, the United States becomes a democratic state defined by a civic principle of nationality which rests in the hands of an ethno-racially diverse group that possesses an ethnos of its own. While national culture has been belittled by multiculturalists, Hollinger states that the historical conflict of the one and the many can be negated when we realize that the history that has led us to call ourselves Americans is just as "real" as the history that yields identities brought here during the migrations of the past.

Having explained his vision of a postethnic America, Hollinger acknowledges that economic, political, and cultural obstacles to a new cultural understanding are formidable. He also states that he takes for granted that revulsion against ethno-racial prejudice is strong enough in the United States to suggest that postethnicity can be developed. Furthermore, he notes that the chances for the survival of postethnicity will amount to nothing if the ideal is not articulated and defended.

In articulating his thoughts on postethnicity, Hollinger achieves his goal of presenting the reader with a new understanding of the cultural landscape of America. Moving beyond the muddled masses of colorful diversity created by multiculturalism, he envisions a society in which the boundaries of ethnic groups are defined, suggesting that we acknowledge and claim our ethnicity. However, claiming our ethnicity is not what sets Hollinger's ideas of postethnic America apart from multiculturalism; rather, it is his notion that an individual's cultural boundaries can be extended to participate in other cultural circles which formulate the crux of his postethnic ideology.

As the notions of defining, claiming, and mingling circles pervade the mind of the reader, confusion can ensue, for although Hollinger's rampage through the cultural landscape of postethnicity is explanatory, it fails to communicate...
how to redraw the circles that enclose. In other words, it could be concluded that while Hollinger leaves the reader with a noble ideal of ethnicity which begs for construction, he stumbles in showing the reader how to achieve his goal. Furthermore, the question of novelty must be raised. Is Hollinger simply presenting the reader with old ideas under a new tantalizing label? Is there evidence of cultural circles and circulating between different cultures in the American past? In some respects individuals have always been attempting to define their roots while simultaneously participating in other cultural narratives, though the participation in foreign cultural groups might have been forced by coercion. Whatever the case, readers are left with a noble cultural ideal and the responsibility of deciding where, with whom, and around what they will draw their circles.

An exhaustive and fascinating etymology takes the reader behind the scenes of American journalism. The journey begins in 1963 with Gunnar Myrdal, an economist from Sweden who used the term "underclass" nonpejoratively to describe those people who are forced out of the economy in the post-industrial age. The reader then continues through an approachable explication of data on the frequency and differing usage of "underclass" in some major newspapers and periodicals. Gans traces the progression of "underclass" as a purely economic term to its use as a racial and behavioral label; he even goes so far as to interview the writers of articles which marked a resurgence in the use of "underclass." In the process Gans adds a personal dimension by probing the motives of labelers and revealing those who fund the research that aims to substantiate the undeservingness of the poor.

Gans is quick to say that if "underclass" had not arisen as a label, another would have risen in its place. However, he puts off for the moment the issue of why the labels do indeed arise and first explains the dangers of using "underclass" as a pejorative label. He continually emphasizes that labeling inevitably relegates the poor to a "morally inferior," subhuman level.

Gans goes on to provide data which rebuts popular beliefs about the poor [such as the opinion that all welfare recipients are permanently dependent on the state]. The data here is not as convincing as his earlier data on the use of "underclass;" it is more sparse, and there are qualifiers for much of the data in the endnotes, should one take the time to read them.

Under the "Underclass"

by Kelley Evans


By now we have all learned that the old "sticks and stones" proverb simply isn't true; words can and do hurt more deeply than the weapons brandished by bullies. We know first hand the stinging slashes that words impress upon our psyches. But few of us expand this notion to consider how words affect groups of people—how rhetoric and jargon distorts, most times unknowingly, to brand and stigmatize an entire segment of the population. It is language at this macrosocial level—specifically the slander of groups—that Herbert J. Gans explores in *The War Against the Poor.*

Gans attempts to uncover the root of the problem of poverty by uncovering the origin and implementation of pejorative labels for the poor, specifically those labels that connote "undeservingness."

Early on in the book Gans asserts his intention to counter the mainstream belief that the poor act in culturally deviant ways "because of moral deficiencies or bad values." "I argue instead," he counters, "that the causes of these behaviors... are in fact usually poverty-related effects," [2, emphasis his]. Furthermore, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated by the labeling of the poor with terms like "underclass," "undeserving," and "culture of poverty."

The book continues with a description of the labeling process. Gans distinguishes labels as being more broad and damaging than stereotypes; labels are devices which impugn their victims with a behavioral stigma and denounce their acts, whereas stereotypes only do the former. Gans carefully defines his terms as he broaches this subject of high emotional volatility.

The heart of the book attempts to convince the reader that the problem of labeling is more real than apparent, and that labeling demands our attention and correction. Gans demonstrates this by analysis of the term "underclass."
The text leaves the realm of empirical data here to explore the concept of the undeservingness of the poor in a theoretical sense. Believing the poor to be undeserving leads, Gans asserts, to the exaggeration of perceived threats to the middle and upper classes, including the threat of crime and more intangible economic and moral threats. Gans then performs a functional analysis of undeservingness in the tradition of Robert K. Merton. Although many of the ideas are not original, they do offer critical and effective insight on the existence of undeservingness. Gans potently reveals atrocities of our social system and disheartening evidence as to why the problem of poverty is perpetuated.

Gans never really explores why the problem of labeling the poor exists at all. To do this would require an exposition into the nature of human beings—questions such as, "Why do individuals—and societies—feel the need to have a scapegoat?" and, "Why is that scapegoat the poor and not some other group?" Gans appropriately leaves these issues for the reader to ponder; they are much out of the range of a 200 page book.

As Gans would certainly maintain, social theory is only as good as its applicability in the physical world. Gans begins with helpful suggestions on anticrime policy, which he contends must be at the forefront of antipoverty policy. This seems at first to be contrary to his belief that crime is a result of poverty, but its necessity becomes apparent given the reality of the situation. People's imagined fears of the poor will not decrease until at least their more realistic fears can be curbed. Gans proposes that prisons be transformed into rehabilitative institutions which produce people who can function in mainstream society—thereby shrinking the “underworld” of crime. Job-centered policy is essential, he asserts. Gans also proves most relevant and insightful on measures which could be taken to combat the labeling of the poor. He calls for a new, responsible journalism which provides counterevidence to damaging labels and also places much of the responsibility on social scientists to raise social consciousness through research to the same purpose.

One can see that Gans did a lot of brainstorming: his suggested policies include everything from public works programs, to increasing consumer demand, to community development. However, his ideas soon depart from the possible into the highly questionable and the nearly impossible. He begins with the notion of work sharing—lowering everyone's work week to less than 40 hours—and explains how it has been implemented in European countries. He admits that this would necessitate raising wages, but fails to provide a realistic method of how this would be absorbed economically. A move towards a more labor-intensive economy is proposed, but at the expense of an increase in production. Gans also proposes [among other things] a quasi-ludditism, recommending that humans be put back in place of some machines [although he is not for the abolition of the computer or technology as a whole]. These ideas, although innovative, stand in total opposition to the American business mentality, and they defy common-sense laws of economics. This is certainly not the extent of his suggestions, but the reader can judge for her or himself whether they merit more discussion. The basis for his long term trouble-shooting is the theory that there will be a gradual, global surplus of labor which will force many more workers out of the economy. One could argue that if this crisis occurs, there could be enough impetus to institute these radical policies; however, this is contrary to economists' popular belief that as the Baby Boomers retire there will be a labor shortage. Maybe the book will be more relevant in "the very long run," as he puts it.

On the whole, The War Against the Poor provides relevant and needed fuel to the ongoing discussion on the problem of poverty. It is not by any
Mother and Child II  mixed media drawing  15 1/8 x 20 1/8  Holly Huisman
stretch of the imagination a non-biased work, but Gans is thoughtful and deliberative in his presentation of this highly controversial issue. Some would criticize Gans for swinging too far to the left; his depiction of America in the "long run" looks more socialistic than America at present would ever allow. But these voices are needed to counterbalance those who swing far right; the reader can, then, synthesize a realistic view from the two extremes. Gans' more salient contribution lies in the exposition of linguistic paradigms in our society. He calls our attention to the underlying assumptions of everyday words we use to malign the poor. Espousing popular multicultural and postmodernistic views, he implores us to look beyond our internalized class norms. Only when we appreciate the complexity of society and language can we begin to abolish poverty.

'Undeservingness is meant here as a synonym for unworthiness, and does not mean [as I mistakenly assumed at first] that the poor do not deserve to be poor.

Merton is credited with developing the notion that damaging social structures can and often do have functions, both negative and positive, which help to perpetuate those structures' existence in society. A functional analysis, then, examines the inter-relationship of social structures, thereby revealing their functions.

For instance, if production decreases, the larger wage base needed to pay an increased labor force cannot exist.

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**paperdoll**

imagine walking around with crystal spiderwebs in front of your eyes:

a woman who writes wears broken glasses.

her collarbone is distinct as a necklace. man is the clasp

of her locket-shaped heart. but she seldom
guesses if he is plumline or a pendulum.
she knows that the handles crack off things.

a woman's typewriter always has ribbons

and they run out. but a woman is used to smoothing;
the purple, carbon paper between the typing paper and
she is used to typing blind.

a woman's typewriter has a rolling pin.

she unwinds the blind, carbon copies;
uncurls and peels the violet, pointillion
echoes of poems from the rolling pin.

and even if she removes her glasses, the last thing
she looks at, at night, is this elegance
and the calligraphy of cobwebs between the window and the screen.

a woman who writes lies between her bedsheets
like a bookmark. i imagine she is mutable:
you can close her in the middle of her story.

-Jane C. Knol
The Art of the Bluff
or How Professors Say “I Don’t Know”
by Matt Miller and Friends

PHILOSOPHY DEPT.
“Ooh. That’s very subtle.”

THEATRE DEPT.
“Yes, but how well would that translate to the stage?”

EDUCATION DEPT.
“I’m sorry. I can’t answer that question until you jump through the next hoop.”

MATHEMATICS DEPT.
“I think that entails a derivation…”

PSYCHOLOGY DEPT.
“Hmm. That warrants further study.”

ENGINEERING DEPT.
“Why don’t you build a prototype and get back to me.”

SOCIOLOGY DEPT.
“Well, you must realize that the inter-relationship of structures here is very complex.”

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPT.
“Indeed, that question brings us back to Oliver North…”

RELIGION DEPT.
“Of course, our finiteness as human beings prevents us from answering questions of that nature.”

FRENCH DEPT.
“Quoi?”

NURSING DEPT.
“Hmmm. Why don’t you ask your fiance?”

ENGLISH DEPT.
“Yadda yadda yadda...irremediable woe...yadda blah blah transcendentalism...blah blah blah yukka yukka yukka...returning to the text blah blah blah...which of course blah blah...and verily yadda yadda and therefore...blah!”

ART DEPT.
“I’m afraid I can’t articulate that in words.”

SPANISH DEPT.
“Tengo mis propios opiniones.”

P.E. DEPT.
“Why don’t you run ten laps, and I’ll get back to you on that one.”

MUSIC DEPT.
“Well, that’s a good question. Perhaps you could find the answer in our new music computer lab! Did I mention that we have a music computer lab? Well, we do and a damn fine one at that! Yessirree, we’ve got a new music computer lab that will knock your little musical socks off.”

CHIMES
“Hey, sounds like a good editorial to me!”

DIALOGUE
“The profundity is there, but the syntax is lacking.”

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