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The Shocker

Grand Valley State University

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TSC7
"Make-It" program

GRAND VALLEY STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE THE SHOCKER



Co-Editors: Richard Brown
Wayne Isbell

Art: William D. Moody

Contributors:

PROSE

Ann Slagel	Marsha McKinney
Steven Dietrich	Steven Wright
Richard Brown	Melvin Cole
Marie Lemay	Leslie Little

POETRY

Richard Brown	Larry A. Moore
Lewis Brown	

ESSAYS

On Marat/Sade. Steve Wright
On Short-Comings of American Education . . Marsha McKinney

Editors Note: The following snatches of creative work were compiled during the first five weeks of the "Make It" program. By and large the entries represent writing done in our workshop, an ad hoc complement to the program. Some of the work was written entirely without our prodding and submitted to us voluntarily. We feel that the need to express oneself is as vital as breathing, and to recognize that function we have created this informal publication.

One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms...Elliot
(Exercises in description.)

In the still, foreboding darkness of the night, I sought the refuge of my chamber. The walls, stretching as far as they would, still only allowed enough space to walk around the bed. I padded to the petite window to let the cool night air in. Reverently, I lifted the covers of my bed as though they were fine jewels, even though they were thin white cotton pieces of hand-me-down material. The tangerine lights reflected off the barren oyster walls, where there was no hint of beauty, color, or cheer. The table stood like an expectant child ready to follow if you but ask. It carried three gifts, a silent, sour-faced clock, an ash tray, black, small, and brimming over, and a selection of E. E. Cummings poetry that lay there challenging me. In this small space, I felt contentment and security.

Ann Slagel

The room I am in is full of colors, like a rainbow turned into a peacock. The walls are a very dangerous dingy "ofay" color that blends with some of the life in the room. The life is a hazard that I must not deal with because the color in the room is death. I am enclosed in this room like a man who is put between the dingy, dirty, filthy walls of a prison. I realize I am enclosed, and I am now trying to separate the walls which are colored with death, and the life which relates very much to these walls. I cannot separate them though I have tried. I am now a color that is only a mere fraction of that peacock which now is a rainbow, once a room.

Richard Brown

This depressing room. Dark, shaded, strewn with cob webs and broken glass. It has seen a better day. Merely a dry, empty, forlorn and forgotten room that no longer serves any purpose.

Four walls, a ceiling, and a floor, smashing together to form the boundries of a endless existence of foulness and rot.

Ah, yes, this room has seen a better day. A day that has long been forgotten, the happiness, atmosphere, the security which all sifted through the cracking plaster. A shelter for someone but no one that is soon to die.

Steven Dietrich

As we tramp into the pool hall I hear a pair of mixed voices snarling threats to one and other. All the tables and chairs are relieving themselves of the past weight they had endured through the early night. The musty smell of smoke that had lingered here all night is now escaping through the doorway into the now quiet streets. The lights that hang over the dirty green worn tables are swaying and throwing shadows along the cracked and forgotten walls. The crack of pool balls is heard while the whirring sounds of a pinball machine hover in the air. Butts are scattered amongst the dust that has settled upon the floor. Now everything is clearing and a man is coming in to start the task of cleaning.

Steven Wright

There is a street within a slum where housing and living conditions are extremely poor. On this street houses have very little color of their own. They all seem to blend together to make one shade of gray or some kind of smoke brown. You can smell the garbage can that is this street. Could this really be a street? But it is a street in my slum.

Melvin Cole

Today is my first day off in five weeks. The sun is out and the trees are green from the last two days of heavy rain. Young black girls in groups are walking down the street towards me with beautifully patterned African dresses on. The dresses vary in colors and style. Everyone seems to be headed towards the root beer stand. As we pass the record shop from which the latest records can be heard we are confronted by another group of young black men with African garb. From Hall to Madison it is just a mass of color and excited greeting going on. Young girls with softly kinked hair, that is covered by colorful folds of material which add height and sculpture to their faces. Beads and golden earrings drape the faces and necks of the young girls. People are stopping their cars to notice the beautiful graceful stroll of the young blacks back to South Middle.

Marie Lemay

The noonday sun beat down upon the crisp, inert bodies that lie scattered on the swaying raft. The movement of the water was gentle, yet firm, and pulsating from the hot summer breeze. As time passed on, the few people left on the sandy beach became drenched in their own sweat and entered the warm but refreshing water.

The vast body of water enveloped them as they swam lazily among its waves, and the gulls circled over them with cries of delight at the peacefulness of the scene below them. Occasionally an infrequent gull decided to join the human intruders and dipped into the soft, foamy waves, rising to fly again in the cloudless sky.

Marsha McKinney

When I was out in the country a few weeks ago, I noticed a dog stalking a rabbit. The dog whose fur was the color of autumn's fallen leaves was moving slowly through the knee-high grass. He moved professionally through the wire like grass and around every hazardous obstruction so as not to betray his position to his innocent furry-tailed prey...

Leslie Little



BILL M.

All great poetry should produce the instantaneous conviction,
this is true.

John Keats

Silence

Once,
a quivering, rumbling
kind of sound;
echoed through a long
chambered hall-way,
but now;
It is gone;
solitary reigns;
a good tyrant.

Lewis Brown

Blacks and Whites why not unite?
Blacks not Whites must make demands.
Blacks not whites burn down cities.

Whites sit back and say what a pity.
Blacks hate what the Whites have done.
Whites hate Blacks for their color tone.
Blacks and Whites why not unite?

Black is beautiful and real.
White is powerful and ill.
Black is proud and a man.
Whites rule this land.
Blacks are here and here to stay,
Whites will realize this someday.
Blacks are not fools anymore.
We've finally woke up, now open the door.
If not we'll declare all out war.

MESSAGE TO MY PEOPLE

Black! Black! Black!
Back! Back! Back!
White! White! White!
Forward! Forward! Forward!
Black! Black! Black!
UNITE! UNITE! UNITE!

Richard Brown

BLACK POWER

Richard Brown

Revolution, why?
System, why?
Right wing, why?
Left wing, why?
War, why?
Peace, why?
USA, why?

Richard Brown

The Deep Dark Veil

People lost, the veil of mist,
The sea of gloom,
Existing in fear, of one season, one year,
A tear, a room.

To work, to toil, to sweat, to earn,
To exist, to live, to learn.

People lost, the veil of mist,
The sea of gloom.
Existing in fear,
Of one season, one year, a tear, a room.

Larry A. Moore

Hill 871

Ready Marines
Charge that hill
Don't think, don't hesitate,
 don't lay still.

A few will falter,
A few will make it
But no mortal will soon
 forget it.

Hill 871 must be taken,
The enemy wounded or killed
 but badly shaken.

No retreat, just hold.
Men wounded, dying,
In tormenting pain crying.
Opponents holding a
Supposedly pat hold,
Neither will be indiscreet
 and fold.

Victory or defeat measured in inches,
For every mathematical gain
Is equaled in part with blood.
To generals and strategists
These are but cinches.

How many lives will flow
The river of red horror
Before man, can learn
Or grasp peace anymore.
"What an ill setting",
The props, the puppets,
Comprising this nightmare,
 this show.

(Con't)

(Hill 871 Con't)

Hill 871
Isn't the end.
There's more to come
Not for all,
But for a few
 selected some.

How many,
Will swim
The pool of red
With the courageously
Dammed already dead.

Ready Marines
Charge that hill.
Don't think,
Don't hesitate,
Don't lay still.

Larry A. Moore

Men become civilized, not in proportion to their willingness to believe, but in proportion to their readiness to doubt.

H. L. Mencken

On Marquis de Sade

Marquis de Sade is a realist. That is, he thinks that he is a realist and the way he sees everything is the way it is. He has taken time to analyze himself in order to analyze other people and things.

He is trying to destroy the revolution he helped form because he doesn't think it is right. It will not get the changes that are needed. He does not know what is the right way to get changes for the people but knows that the revolution will not.

He is an individualist and knows that the revolution kills individualism. He doesn't care about any country. He feels the revolution is an escape for the people. They conform to this because they don't have what they want.

He sees that death is meaningless in revolution. Everything is lost. They are just killed by the guillotine instead of going through all the torture that he feels is needed. He feels all this is senseless.

This revolution is only for people to help themselves not others.

Steven Wright

On the Shortcomings of American Education

The American school system is incompetent to say the least. It is full of people who don't care, or who are unfit to fill their positions in teaching and administration. The people who do care and can help children learn are often eventually ruined by the system or thrown out. The schools don't teach, they don't help a child learn to think. If they do anything, they stuff the memory for a while.

The American school system is the greatest institution for discouraging the desire to learn that I know of. Even the people concerned with it from the outside don't expect it to educate. Parents send their kids to school, not for an education, but because it's a "babysitting service" and sometimes to raise their children. Teachers feel put upon because they don't want to be overeducated, underpaid babysitters, and they have every right to resent it. The people who set the standards for education aren't even qualified generally. They are elected to a position where they can control, but they've had no training.

The restrictions set on the teachers and on the students are ridiculous. When teachers cannot teach certain things about their subjects without having someone - board, parents, administrators - harassing them, they can't possibly make that subject interesting, because they can't be interested in it themselves.

Then there are the teachers who don't care, or don't like what they are doing. These aren't just a few; there are far too many teachers who shouldn't be teaching.

I once had a counselor who said that "the only reason we have schools today is that there is no market for kids. Nobody wants them after they reach a certain age." If this is true, and I believe it is, is it any wonder that after 12 years of schooling we come out with rebellious or apathetic, but uneducated men and women? Is it correct to have people go through all the training to become a teacher who tries to standardize human beings? Not because they actually want to, but because they have been standardized, and indoctrinated into the system to that extent? Is it fair to have schools - whether

they're modern, upper-middle class suburban or in condemned slum areas - that are filled with rules and staff members that only try to deteriorate the students desire to learn, and often try to kill their ability to be a full-fledged person, an individual?

Schools should encourage learning, encourage the children to think. Teachers should accept questions, and if they don't know the answer they should help the child find it. The quality of teachers, of administrators, of text books, and of subjects should be raised. Parents, and community members should expect it, they should demand it. Parents should expect schools to teach their children, not raise or discipline them. Teachers should be able to teach their subject as fully and as correctly as they think possible, with little or no restrictions. Schools should, and will be changed.

Marsha McKinney