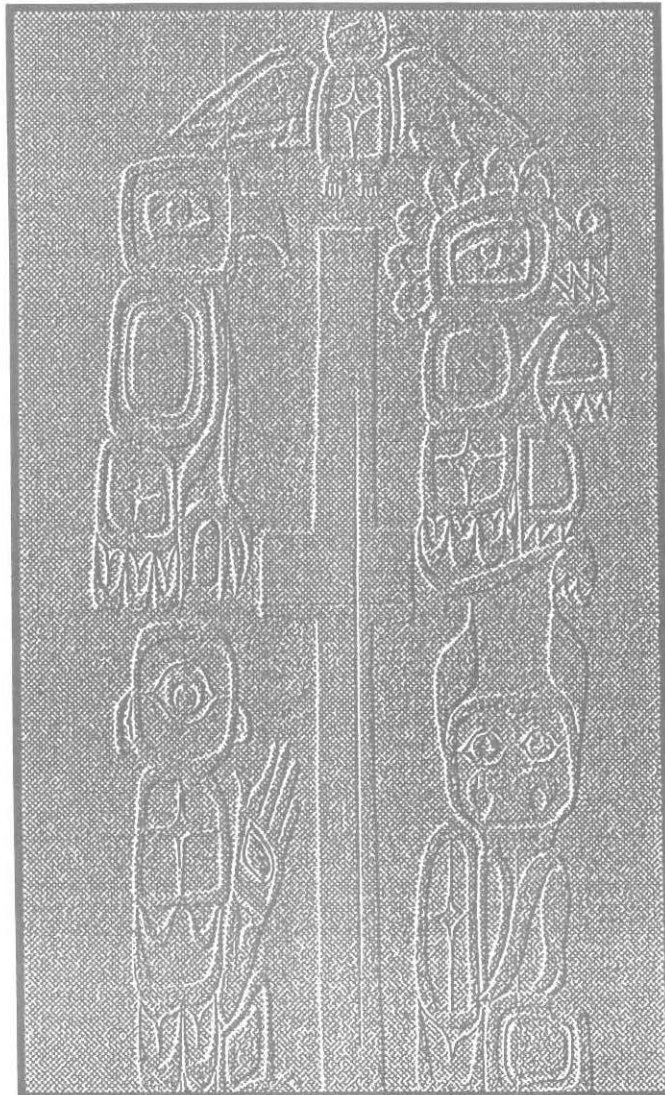


Spring 1996 Volume 4, Number 2

the Promethean



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From the Editor

andrew rothery

Ah, spring. The time of year when a young man's thoughts turn to thoughts of how to fill this page without lapsing into meaningless babble. And love--but at the moment, that isn't foremost on my mind.

Modern technology is often a wonderful thing. Oh, sure, I know it has its critics--most notably that Unabomber guy-- but most people tend to agree that it tends to be useful most of the time. A perfect example is this issue's cover. If you haven't seen it yet, go ahead and sneak a peek now. I'll wait.

See, you didn't miss anything. Anyway, this piece of art started out as a relatively simple drawing (a copy of which can be found right across from this line). I scanned it and saved a copy to disk. As a result, I was able not only to make it whatever size it needed to be for this magazine, but I could play around with it a little using a program called Adobe Photoshop™. I was just messing around, not planning anything serious, but I ended up with something I thought looked rather sharp. The artist, Caitlin May, agreed with me, and a cover was born.

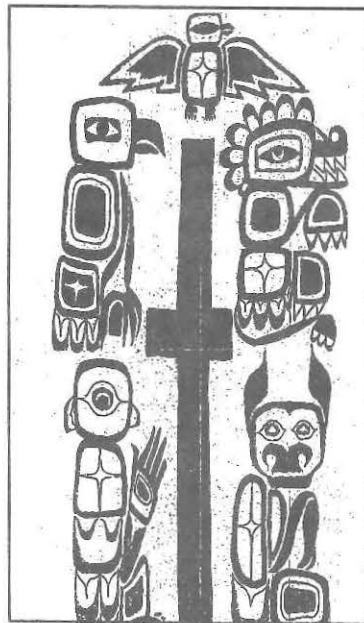
I firmly believe that this issue represents a new standard for *The Promethean*. It is a standard that would not have been reached without the efforts of many people. First, Caitlin deserves another mention for not only the prize-winning artwork, but for agreeing it looked neat when "enhanced."

Special mention should also go to Dr. Lynnell Edwards, who decided to require her

Creative Writing students to submit work as a part of the course.

Finally, a special thank you goes to Dr. Dan Wright and the rest of the staff--to Dr. Wright for continuing to show his faith in my skills (as well as writing an article which is sure to generate thought and maybe spark some controversy), and to the staff for putting up with my annoying little control issue. Weekly meetings aren't really so terrible, now are they?

I am so glad that's out of the way. Now can go back to thinking about love. Enjoy this magazine.



Russia: Land of Contrasts, Land of Opportunity

charles kunert

Impressions of Russia speed through my mind almost as fast as the Moscow driver with whom we had hitch-hiked to a meeting with the second-in-command of Russia's vast forest resources. The meeting time had been confused, due to the language barrier between myself and my gracious Russian hosts, the Shubins. Sergei Polozov (my guide in Russia and my colleague from the biology faculty at Concordia University) and I were now twenty minutes late to a meeting with Dr. Anatoliy Pisarenko, Deputy Chief of the Federal Forest Service of Russia. The problem was compounded by the fact that we were still thirty minutes away by car and, in light of Moscow traffic, the chances of us reaching our meeting before Dr. Pisarenko had to leave for another meeting were slim to none. Because of the importance of the meeting, however, we decided to make a go of it. Waiting for us in Dr. Pisarenko's office was Sergei Volkov, Superintendent of the Smolensk Lakeland National Park, and personal friend of Sergei Polozov. To not make the meeting could have caused significant damage to Volkov's position, since Pisarenko is Volkov's superior and Russian politics is no child's game.

Russian politics is no child's game

With Volkov's reputation at stake, Polozov and I hurried out to the busy street near the apartment complex where I was staying and, in the manner of the entrepreneurial

Moscow citizens who might be persuaded by American dollars to abandon what they were doing and take us to our destination. Amazingly, within three minutes a man of about 25 pulled his white Nissan sedan over, and, after a very brief negotiating session, agreed to take us to the Forestry Building in downtown Moscow for \$20 U.S. I should have known we were in trouble by his

This was a Nissan, the ticket to total road domination.

trembling hands and the fact he was not driving a Lada or Volga or another of the other traditional working-class Russian automobiles. No, this was a Nissan, a foreign car and, as anyone who has observed Moscow driving recently realizes, the ticket to total road domination. No sooner had we settled into our seats than the driver roared off into the middle of the heavy traffic, weaving in and out of spaces I swore were impossible to penetrate, speeding at rates in excess of 110 kilometers per hour, squeezing between cars stopped at traffic signals, and even moving into oncoming traffic lanes, causing the cars in them to swerve dangerously out of the way. This trip made any thrill ride at Disneyland look like child's play. At one point, for just an instant, I thought we faced sure injury as, at 70 kph, our driver misjudged the traffic and switched lanes behind a truck doing 50 kph and we found ourselves staring into the truck's differential, our hood some two feet under the truck's

back bumper. I knew now what St. Paul was speaking of when he told us to be "instant in prayer."

With a thankful sigh of relief, we arrived at our destination, paid the \$20, and rushed up the stairs to the Deputy Chief's office. Volkov was there to meet us, and, more importantly, so was the Deputy Chief. Still trembling from the ride, we entered the room to present our vision of the Concordia International Environmental Council. And so began yet another in the series of meetings that brought me in touch with the heartbeat of Russia.

The view of Russia I received in my two-week visit was eye-opening. To be honest, my first impressions of Russia were unfortunately skewed by events surrounding my arrival at Sheremetsevo Airport in Moscow. Deplaning the Delta airliner, I entered the airport and was greeted by a nearly empty building with grim decor and a population of equally grim Russian militia. Herded into long lines--first the passport clearance, then customs--I was impressed with the starkness of the facility, its lack of cheer, and the apparent coldness of the officials. After more than an hour of processing, it was a relief to see the cheerful face of my good friend and colleague from Concordia, Dr. Polozov, running up to greet me.

I was impressed with the starkness of the facility, its lack of cheer, and the apparent coldness of the officials.

The warm feelings left quickly as we were apprehended not 200 meters from the airport by police and army regulars carrying machine guns. Apparently we looked suspi-

ciously like Chechnyan rebels. Sergei had been loaned the car; that fact alone was enough for the policemen to demand an under-the-table payment of \$40 U.S. in order to avoid impounding the car. It's the price of doing business in Russia, I was to find out. As Sergei was in the midst of his discussions with the police officer across the street, I stood guard outside our Lada. Meanwhile, the two young army officers waved down a second car, and, when it turned onto an exit ramp instead of stopping, one then let out

There is never a dull moment in Russia.

with a burst of machine-gun fire, less than 20 meters from where I stood. The car stopped. So did my heart. As Sergei is fond of saying, there is never a dull moment in Russia.

Continuing early impressions were based largely on the sensory impact of new surroundings. I noticed things that differed significantly from America. People wore clothing that was of a poorer quality, and drove cars that tended to be old and small. Many disabled cars lined the streets. Traffic was incredibly confused, with impatient drivers making three lanes where only two existed, and anxious people jaywalking at will. The buildings were older and in need of significant aesthetic improvement. Streets were generally littered and only rarely did anyone bother to plant gardens or cut lawns. The apartment in which I first stayed, with Andrei and Genya Stepanov, was generally run-down, with a crumbling front porch, waist-high weeds, abandoned cars nearby, graffiti-coated walls, paint-chipped hallways, and an odor of unsanitary conditions. It almost appeared as if the complex had been

abandoned to entropic decay years ago. The Stepanovs' apartment measured about 600 square feet, with a tiny kitchen, two small bedrooms and a small dining room. The furnishings were of poor quality by U.S. standards. The bath and toilet were standard Communist issue, common in all apartments I entered in Moscow. There is barely enough room for one person to stand between the bathtub and the wall. Even the toilet paper was depressingly sandpaperesque. Food was

Vodka, at a little over one dollar a bottle, was ubiquitous.

spartan, with the typical meal consisting of excellent Russian black bread, cucumbers, tomatoes, and a bit of sausage and cheese. Vodka, at a little over one dollar a bottle, was ubiquitous. Water, more expensive than vodka, was almost never drunk due to high contamination levels in the Russian water supply. Bottled mineral water, heavy in sulfur and mineral taste, was substituted instead.

We left Moscow for the more rural Smolensk region later in the week, and I was again greeted by significantly depressing, yet at the same time fascinating, sights. The Minsk-Moscow highway, which serves as the main arterial between Europe and Moscow, is a belt of asphalt with no lane demarcations. As a result, it is often three lanes in one direction and one in the other, dependant only upon the whim of the maniacal, suicidal drivers who take it as their personal Indy 500. The many trucks that line the highway carrying consumer goods to and from the marketplace of Moscow are generally ill-tuned, smoke-belching behemoths whose exhaust pipes are places strategically to emit

their foul-smelling pollutants directly into the windows of passing passenger cars. Coupled with the undulating, pock-marked road surface, it is enough to make queasy the strongest of stomachs. Rest areas consist of an open area along the road where people dump their trash into non-existent bins and relieve themselves wherever they see fit. The few restrooms that do exist consist of concrete slabs with holes cut in them. Those who choose to use them must squat to defecate, and many miss the opening, making these wretched places of the worst description. Food is sold by operators of small booths along the roadway, or simply by individuals hawking anything from mushrooms to teapots. Gas stations are few and far between and none sell anything except gas from pumps that date to the Stalin era. Many gas truck drivers simply sell directly

Woe be the person unfortunate enough to be injured in an accident!

from their trucks, along the side of the road. The combination of speeding drivers and gawkers deciding whether to stop for eggs or not is a deadly combination, a fact evidenced by frequent wreck scenes along the highway. And woe be the person unfortunate enough to be injured in an accident! Ambulances as we know them in the West do not exist, and tow trucks are virtually unknown.

The countryside is full of the remnants of Communist cooperative farms, now mostly decaying. The original policy of the communists to remove the relatively wealthy, successful farmers from their farms and replace them with the poor has had a devastating

effect on Russian agriculture. The replacement farmers were often poor because they lacked motivation and the ability to manage time and resources well. Movement to the farm did nothing to improve them. The result was a return to 19th century farming methods. While trucks whiz by on the Minsk-Moscow highway, farmers still use horse-drawn wagons overloaded with hay. Village houses are small, wooden structures with ornate windows, relics from another era. No paint has seen their walls in many years. Indoor plumbing is unknown. Water is still drawn from a shallow well using a bucket attached to a board on a fulcrum. Roads are torturous, with stolen manhole covers in the cities providing an exciting obstacle course for the unsuspecting driver. Hay is still cut by hand, using a broad scythe in the style made popular by the grim reaper. Wooden rakes are then used by the babushkas and old men to pile the hay into huge mounds to await transport on the hay wagons. Most village homes have small potato gardens, perhaps with cucumbers or tomatoes as well. Grocery stores have bare shelves with only the staples of life at the barest minimum. Flea

It is life on the edge. The edge of total poverty.

markets in town squares supply the rest of life's needs. On a basic salary of about 200,000 rubles per month (\$40 U.S.), most people cannot afford to buy anything anyway. It is life on the edge. The edge of total poverty. Over 70% of Russia's population lives below the officially designated poverty level.

Contrasting with these grim pictures of the realities of life in Russia is a different picture, one which emerged in the later

stages of my stay. It is a picture colored by personalities, not environments. The people of Russia, I am learning, are a very proud people with a very proud past. The blight of Communism has taken its toll on many of the more intelligent members, relegating them to positions of secondary status in society and burdening them with salaries incapable of supporting a comfortable life. The average professor at a state-run university makes the equivalent of approximately \$60 U.S. a month. The independence necessary for creative thought has been repressed by the sameness of the dwellings and the buildings that surround them. Communism has also wrested from many the self-respect necessary to make the choices that will foster growth, be it of their personal well-being or of the well-being of the environment.

And yet, despite these factors, many continue to struggle for ideals and principles, for beauty and environmental soundness, using the few tools available to them to support their cause. Sergei Volkov is a prime example. After sixteen years in the militia, he had risen to a level of prestige and power. Upon being notified of his advancement to the rank of colonel, he immediately resigned to take up the role of superintendent of the new Smolensk Lakeland National Park. This meant moving from the city to a primitive village, and from a comfortable salary to a significantly reduced one. It also meant supervising 250 workers whose average salary is \$20 per month and attempting to inspire them to fix up buildings in total disrepair with scant tools and no prospect for significant amounts of materials. In addition, this position is highly unpopular with the surrounding villagers, since the park has infringed on their ability to freely hunt, fish, and cut wood for heating and cooking. And yet Volkov's spirit seems indomitable. He has

struggled now for three years, eking out an existence for himself and his family, while slowly building a respectable park program. He will continue to do it because he has a

Everywhere I went, from the busy center of Moscow to the tiny villages of the forest region, children played like children.

vision of what the Russian people once were and will yet become again, and because he has an abiding love of the natural beauty of the Russian countryside.

Andrei and Jule Shubin are another example of hope for the future of Russia. Both highly educated individuals, they live with Andrei's father, Oleg, and their daughter, Olga, and their rather largish Doberman pinscher, Agata, in a small apartment in Moscow. On their combined income of about \$180 a month, they have managed to furnish their apartment comfortably, have a good TV-VCR system, and even have scraped together enough for a beat-up Volga automobile. Andrei continues in his pursuit of understanding the birds of Russia and inspiring his students at Moscow State Pedagogical University to the same by taking them on extended field trips to remote sections of the former Soviet Union. He is a very soft-spoken, intelligent type, excited by the new ideas that have been generated following *perestroika*. Jule works as a curator in the Darwin museum of Natural History in Moscow. Her specialty is the genetic aspect of Darwinian evolution. She and a host of ill-paid professionals are in the midst of moving to new quarters and quietly developing a first-rate museum. The sense of professionalism portrayed by both Andrei

and Jule, despite overwhelmingly difficult circumstances, is one of the happy anachronisms that provide the seeds for great opportunities in Russia's future.

But finally, the cause for the greatest optimism comes from Russia's children. While many adults are burdened by their history of relationships with the oppression of Communism, the next generation is not so weighed down. Everywhere I went, from the busy center of Moscow to the tiny villages of the forest region, children played like children. They were no different than the myriad of children around the globe who have the potential to become something different and better than their parents. Their smiling faces and freely-given laughter are signs that they still have hope. Couple that with this vast country's tremendous natural resources, and one can again be assured that greatness will again return to Russia. The economic opportunities are endless.

And while economic growth is a given in this land, since they have nowhere to go but up, spiritual growth is a more difficult nut to crack. Seventy years of officially sanctioned atheism has taken its toll on the moral fiber of the country. Alcoholism and abortions are

Seventy years of officially sanctioned atheism has taken its toll on the moral fiber of the country.

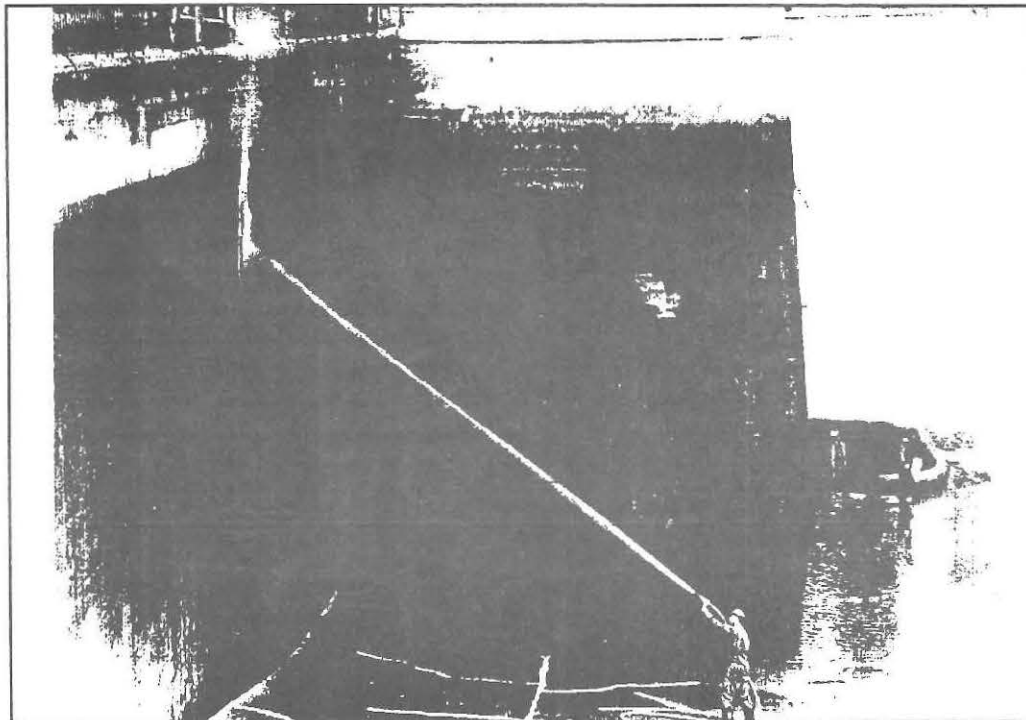
both approximately four times the U.S. levels. Greed and avarice raise their ugly heads in the daily business of everything from government to industry. The mafia and black-market businessmen have a great influence in the flow of money through the economy. Meaningful laws are handcuffed

by inadequate enforcement and bribery. Until there is a spiritual and moral renewal in Russia, the economic improvement and environmental protection will be limited and improperly directed.

But here, too, there is hope. Young people particularly are showing a much-increased awareness of and longing for spiritual values. In the great Orthodox cathedrals one finds an interesting mix of old babushkas and young men. The seminaries are at full capacity. Christian churches from all over the world have entered Russia in force and taken advantage of the opportunities provided by *perestroika*. In fact, in Russia the church has more of an influence on the state than in the U.S. For example, a recent monument to World War II victories in Moscow included a new, functioning

Orthodox cathedral . . . paid for by the state! It is the first new church building in Russia since the 1917 revolution. Another, similar, state-supported Orthodox cathedral is being built on the site of the great cathedral torn down by the Communists in 1935, just outside the Kremlin wall. Great opportunities abound in the spiritual realm.

So we see in Russia phenomenal contrasts between old and new, between rich and poor, between environmental beauty and devastating pollution, and between atheism and spiritual renewal. It is possibly because of these disparities that the opportunities are so great today. We of Concordia University have much to learn from and much to teach to the Russian people. God grant us the courage to do both.



Night Sounds

beverly moon

Screaming sirens, crying children
lost souls . . .

Cries for help sometimes heeded

Lonely streets, bitter cold who is
to care . . .

Why are they there, they are the
future . . .

To touch but one, is it enough
Someone needs to extend that
helping hand . . .

To help them understand

Learn to respect themselves
All is not lost out there
someone cares . . .

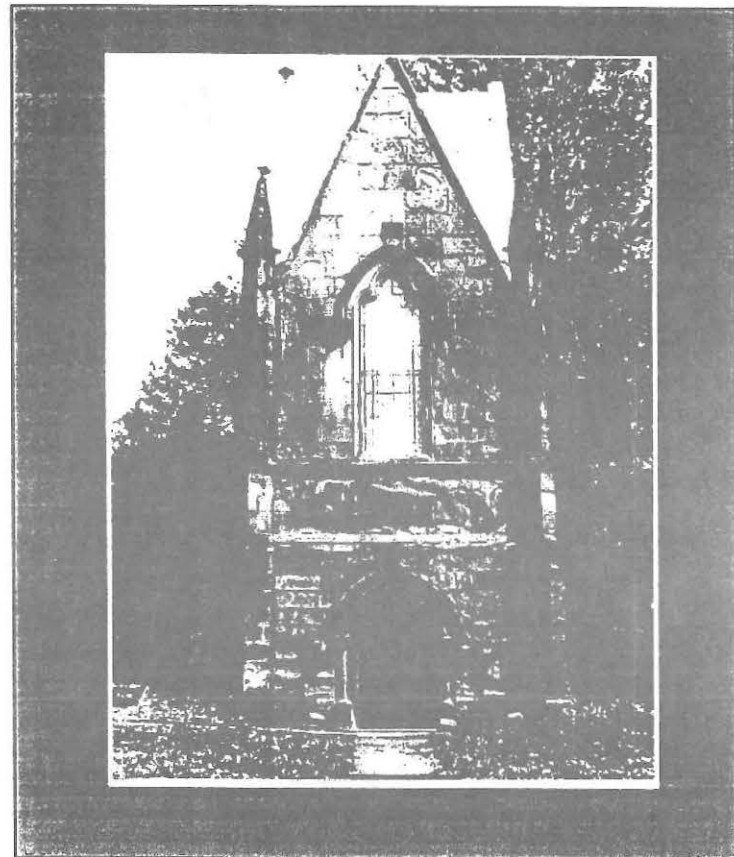
I've seen, I've felt their pain
I cry for them

But help can only come from
within . . .

Kiss

jenna mason

Lids slide quiet shut
 Noses nudge and tuck
 Lips give and take
 Breath mingles
 Kiss



Shedding the Myth

koty zelinka

Luscious dream, essential to sleep,
 Aches to manipulate part of me,
 It's mad trip a sordid whisper

Images of passing day
 Become one with night,
 A mosaic of truth and fiction

Greek god with slick black hair,
 Finger outreached, beckoning me to believe,
 His apparition a sensual sleep-aide.

I fight the impulse to submit, and although the dark weighs me down,
 Lethargic notions of casting of my comforter remain,
 The resulting cold a remnant of my tattered self.

Fitful sleep, eyes rapidly scanning though trapped in their shades,
 I at last surrender to my summoner,
 To the facade of a life lived for the light.

The night becomes a subjection of senses,
 Soul oozing out through lids shut in a land
 Not understood, yet cherished and loathed, imagining
 The emperor, fully unclothed.

Visions

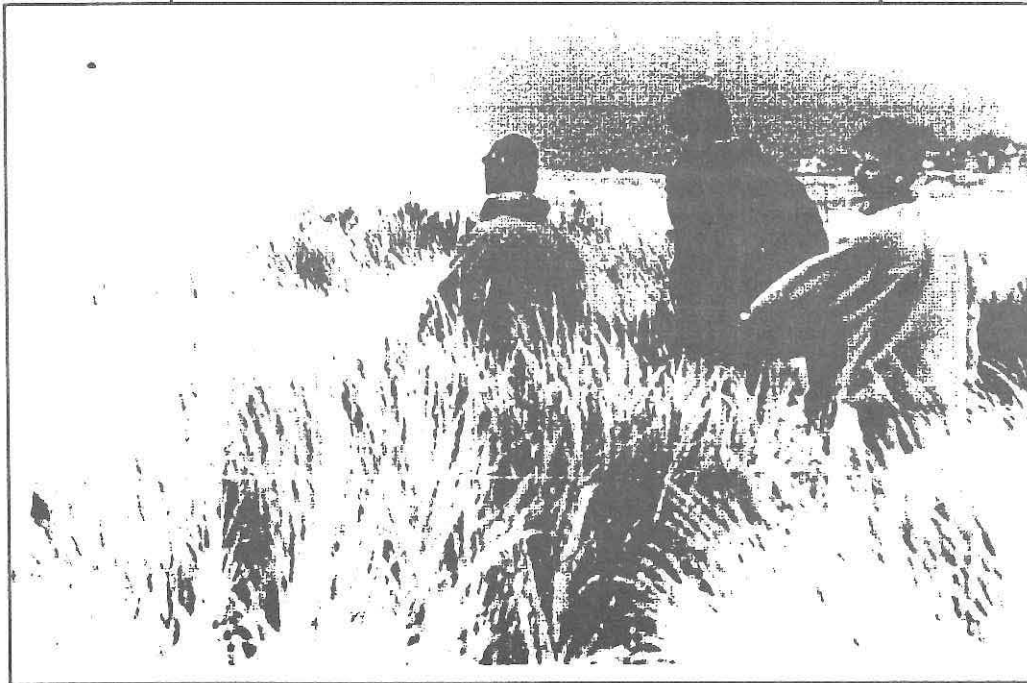
andrew rothery

The albums
Were the only things that
He left for us.

The covers range from
Cracked, stained leather
To the latest in high
Quality plastic, but it is what
Can be found inside them
That make them so special.

Windows to a life that was,
A collage of memories that
We can only guess at,
But can never really know.

The oldest are the easiest,
Ancient, black and white images
Fixed to black cardboard made gray
With the passage of time,
Each picture carefully labeled
In white ink. The newest,
The windows to the recent past,
Have not yet been labeled, and
Would be unidentifiable,
If we were not in so many.
We will have to label these, just
So we do not forget.



Racism as a Manifestation of Class Prejudice: A Marxist Reading of Shakespeare's *Othello*

Racism pervades our society, and it is commonly be classified as racist, despite the efforts commonplace today to hear bourgeois liberals decry the evils of racism as though these evils were mere bedevilements that mass education and a general renewal of federal aid to various government programs might relieve--or perhaps even eliminate. Such proposals, however, though well-intentioned and compassionate in their prompting, are astonishingly naive in their inspiration and invariably inadequate in their application. As more radical social critics know, racism is spawned and nurtured within the larger class struggle. As such, only the achievement of a classless society will eliminate the evil of racism, for the ruling classes will never offer any serious attention to or remedy for racism, as they well know and fear that the end of racism requires the overthrow of the system of exploitation by which the capitalist state thrives and racism is nurtured. That racism is not an inherent component of human society as such, but rather a constitutive part of such societies as ours that are fraught with contradiction and class struggle is well-attested in humanity's literature; one need only look to Shakespeare's *Othello* for validation of the point.

Racism, as such eminent authorities as Professor Derrick Bell and journalist Clarence Page have noted, is a function of oppression. Only oppressive societies are racist, and only oppressors within those societies can reasonably be classified as racists. While a measure of prejudice or resentment against members of the privileged racial class may exist among individuals of oppressed races, such natural responses of contempt and disdain, engendered by subjugation and humiliation, cannot cred-

ibly be classified as racist, despite the efforts of the ruling classes to seek such demonizing attribution; indeed, such attempted assignments, upon reflection, ought to be recognized as absurd. To contend, for example, that oppressed classes within racist societies are capable of racism themselves is tantamount to arguing that Nat Turner's Rebellion or the heroic struggle of the ANC against apartheid were race-motivated wars by people of color against whites *because* they were white. Rather, a truthful reading of history requires one to recognize that when oppressed races rise up in revolutionary outrage against the coercive authority wielded by the oppressor race and its functionaries, such races do not act on *racist* but *revolutionary* impulses--for such revolts would not even *occur* were it not for the propagation of the conditions which occasion these rebellions in the first place. Racial violence that erupts against representatives of ruling class authority is almost entirely attributable, therefore, to the propagation or maintenance of oppressive, hateful, racist, conditions--conditions forged by the savage ignorance and divisiveness of ruling class authority which make such uprisings inevitable. Discerning observers realize, for example, that white persons in South Africa were not attacked by black South Africans during the years of apartheid because of some supposed innate hatred of Caucasians that lurked in the minds of black South Africans; they were assailed because they were representatives and beneficiaries of the racist state authority; anyone who thinks otherwise would do well to consider that, indeed, all revolutionary struggles are pros-

ecuted by an underclass against the representatives of an enemy power, although many of those representatives, as individuals, may be innocent of the crimes committed by their government.

But now to *Othello* to demonstrate the relationship between class and race. Most of us are familiar with the plot of the tragedy, so there is no need to recount that; however, even in our familiarity with the outline of the play, we may be inattentive to the embedded --and likely unintended--commentary on the relationship between class conflict and racism which, in my opinion, provides the drama with so much of its poignancy, intensity and contemporary relevance to those of us committed to the cessation of class conflict and all of its attendant evils.

Consider the conflict, for example, in the play, wherein Iago's hatred of Othello is enkindled, and note the forms which that hatred assumes. Iago's racist invective is spawned by the disappointment he suffers when Othello advances Michael Cassio, rather than Iago, to the lieutenantcy; Iago's venomous racism, therefore, is substantially attributable, not to Iago's hatred of people of color, but to Iago's *failure to achieve social advancement and an enhanced class position* ("I know my price, I am worth no worse a place" [I.i.11]).

Iago's perceived injury to his class identity and place incites Iago's confidante, Roderigo. In dull-witted sympathy, Roderigo appropriates Iago's rage and makes it his own; he calls Othello "thick lips" (I.i.66), and Iago urges him to inflame a similar hatred of Othello in Brabantio by an appeal to racist prejudice ("Call up her father./ Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight, / Proclaim him in the streets; incense her [Desdemona's] kinsmen, / And though he

in a fertile climate dwell, / Plague him with flies" [I.i.67-71]). Roderigo, in a vicious, racist assault on Othello, alludes to bestial acts in describing the act of love shared by Othello and Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona; he warns the senator that "an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (I.i.88-89). Iago seizes the imagery and advances his slanderous attack on Othello by pricking Brabantio's latent racism and arousing him to anger; Iago goads the senator: "[Y]ou'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you" (I.i.111-12).

Invoking the old racist horror of a black man making love to a white woman is insufficient to Iago's morbid purpose, however. Othello is also assailed as "lascivious" (I.i.126) and Desdemona, in the embrace of a man of color, is derided as one who, against Nature, "hath made a gross revolt" (I.i.34). Brabantio agrees; as he declares, his daughter's love of Othello is nothing less than "a treason of the blood" (I.i.169)--a passion in his *daughter* for which Brabantio would have *Othello* arrested! Furthermore, to reduce, diminish and trivialize Othello's person, Iago, we note, refuses to acknowledge Othello by name or title (and Othello, after all, is a general); instead, Othello is repeatedly referred to merely as "the Moor"--a depersonalizing label that calls attention to and identifies the bearer not by name or dignity but race.

That Brabantio would have preferred his daughter's choice for a mate to be from those representatives of his own class and race is evident from the second scene of the first act. The senator cannot comprehend why Desdemona would reject "[t]he wealthy curled darlings of our nation" and "[r]un . . . to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as [Othello]"

(68, 70-71). To Iago too, Desdemona's choice of Othello is also an unnatural desire governed by rude instinct; as he assures Roderigo, "when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice" (I.iii.350-51). To both Iago and Brabantio, therefore, that a woman could choose a husband apart from considerations of wealth and race is inconceivable; Brabantio would have the affection explained as "merely a lust of the blood" (I.iii.334).

Many readers of *Othello* either have ignored or subordinated these racist emphases and trivialized their relationship to class conflict. For example, David Bevington, a noted Shakespeare scholar, regards *Othello* pre-eminently as a "tragedy of love" (xx), and Antoinette Dauber thinks that the play is essentially an exercise in dramatic irony (126). Others, like Margaret Webster, even appear to give some credence to one of the more patently ridiculous stereotypes urged upon Othello by readers inclined to believe that Othello, as a black man, is a dull-witted fool, a slave to mindless passion for white women:

Iago . . . knowing every twist which can be given to the Moor because of his alien and "inferior" race, does not reckon with the full primitive power of the passion which he unleashes. (218)

Essential to any responsible reading of literature is the ability to penetrate its exterior polish to perceive its inner substance; the ability to read literature such as *Othello* with an eye to its embodiment of the perspectives of the world as those perspectives are defined and focused by the ruling class and mediated to the world through its literary messengers is crucial to the multiculturalist's critical task. Any critical reading of the world's literature which seeks to discover literature's participa-

tion in and reflection of the class struggle of any era is vital to those who are interested in and dedicated to better understanding of the role and function of class-based authority and rule in history. If one is to discern how to confront and transform or revolutionize those voices and institutions of oppression that guide and inform the social order--which, in our day, are, of course, ordered by a capitalist "ethic"--we must be attentive to the degree that art mirrors life. We better see the invidious character of class rule in all of its ugly manifestations when we see how thoroughly the precepts of that rule have embedded themselves in all that surrounds and supports and informs our lives--including our art and literature. One therefore acquires more than the superficial impression of *Othello* as a lover's tragedy when one pauses to consider *why* the characters in the drama speak as they do--especially when one takes particular note of the class and office of those speakers.

When Senator Jesse Helms, in our own century, denounces revolutionary, experimental, and just plain unconventional art, he is expressing more than just personal dislike for that which is invigorating and novel; he is denouncing the artistic voice of persons discontent with the patterned and regularized channels through which they are supposed, according to conservative, preservationist voices like Helms, to filter their message and medium in order to preserve the status quo and utter no critical complaint against the hegemony of contemporary capitalist culture. When Pat Buchanan, Lon Mabon and their cheerleaders in the Republican Party parade self-righteously beneath the banner of "traditional family values," they invoke a reactionary response in like-minded followers to everything novel and new that challenges the

suffocating sameness with which the ruling class would have people socially anesthetized. The outcry for a restoration of "traditional values" is not so much a call for regenerated values, therefore, as it is a demand for the reassertion of social control; if a decaying society in accelerating collapse cannot preserve its mechanisms of social regulation and guaranteed assent to its authority, it faces the spectre of annihilation. Conservative, capitalist America's waving of its hands in pious horror is only a newer expression of Brabantio's outrage against that which challenges the world over which he, as a ruling class elite, has been privileged to preside; it is but a new form of reaction.

Othello, therefore, is more than light entertainment for a quiet afternoon's reading;

it is an exposition of the tragedy which defines and accompanies all forms of class rule and injustice; *Othello* summons us to a recognition of the perpetuity of the terrors inflicted on the exploited and oppressed in all forms of class-based authority; it is an alarm awakening us to revolutionary consciousness.

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Watching the Evening News

vicki kramer

My mind shouts and my flesh crawls--
Images of horror invade my living room.
I'm drawn into conflicts of rebellion and extermination,
Visual testimony to the cult of war.

I turn away for release and absolution--
But huge black eyes draw me into a world of pain and filth.
Bloated belly, scabby limbs and lazy flies
Desperately shout: Hunger!

Racing now, I seek escape in sitcom hell,
But it's too late--
I am my brother's keeper.



On Reflecting

chris martin

The image on the mirror
reflects life.
Splicing and Shredding the
Picture, a person;
At the speed which models . . .
A flash; I know all.

The image on the mirror
Prints life, flickering,
Projecting,
An image that .
Forces one to . . .
Rewind; And vision again.

The image in the mirror
Prints life, Forcing
One's rewind, and
Reflection--
This image that, at first,
Appears false.

The image in the mirror
Doesn't lie; it knows,
Sees and feels
All. The image doesn't
Fade; it becomes
Stronger.
The mirror's image
Illuminates one's being, so, in
Rewinding and inverting
Our lens of life, and
Shuddering old Thought . . .
I can change my image.

The Crawford Legacy

andrew rothery

As a history major at Bay Harbor College, Nicole Crawford was accustomed to long hours spent gathering and then synthesizing information. As daughter of Bay Harbor City Council president Carl Crawford, she was used to spending nights at home, alone while her father was at the office with what he liked to call "annoyingly important business." The two coincided rarely, and whenever it did, she was more than willing to take advantage of the time. She sat at the desk in her father's home office and looked over what she had to make sure she had not forgotten anything: notebook, chips, diet soda, computer, disks full of notes, music playing softly in the background. But not her books. She laughed at herself as she ran back to her room to get them. Now she had everything.

She had just finished going over the notes her professor had made on her latest draft when she heard a voice call out her name. The voice was almost familiar; Nicole could almost but not quite match a face to it. "Is someone there?" she asked.

"Nicole, help me, please!" Nicole got up and followed the voice to the door leading to the basement. She stopped there for the briefest of moments before opening the door.

The house the Crawfords lived in had been built before the widespread acceptance of electric lighting. When the house was finally wired for lights, the lightswitch for the basement was placed at the bottom of the stairs. Though the wiring had been upgraded several times since then, the switch had never been moved up. As a child, Nicole was

scared to death of walking down the stairs when the lights were off. She had been convinced that someone or something was waiting to do something horrible to her as soon as she flipped the switch. That was years ago, and the basement was no longer anything more than a room with the lights turned off.

But, sometimes, the old fears would reassert themselves.

Nicole opened the door and ran downstairs.

The basement was divided into two sections. The first was a spacious family room, complete with home entertainment system and comfortable chairs and couch. These loomed large in the murky darkness, casting shadows created from the blue glow of the TV. It had been left on between channels, so that nothing came through except static. Nicole turned the lights on and the TV off, returning the room to its usual friendliness. There was absolutely nothing amiss in the family room, so Nicole turned to the plain wood door--a sheet of plywood on a hinge, really--that led to the basement's other room, which was much smaller and used for storage. A glow came from the other room through the small crack between the door and the frame, but this was no ordinary, lights-on-in-the-other-room kind of glow. This was different. This was purple.

Nicole pulled the door open and stepped through. In the middle of the room, floating about two feet off the floor, was a silver cube she had never seen before. It measured about two and a half feet along each side,

and featured lots of little multicolored blinking lights. On one side was a gold disk; the source of the purple light, to judge from the large, purple circle it was projecting onto the floor. Where had this come from? Nicole put her foot into the light, testing the waters. It was some kind of hole in space. It was also cold.

"For God's sake, help me!" the voice cried out again. It was obviously in pain. And coming from within the hole. Putting aside any doubts she had, Nicole jumped in.

As she fell through the light, she was overcome with a variety of sensations. She was freezing, burning, everywhere, and nowhere. She was standing still, but falling, and falling fast. She opened her mouth to scream, and got all the air sucked out of her body.

Then, as quickly as it had started, it finished. She slammed hard into a cold metal



wall, which then slid to the side and allowed her to tumble through.

She landed unceremoniously onto a tightly-woven green carpet. She coughed several times, trying to catch her breath, then saw the dark red stain in the carpet. She followed it with her eyes, until she saw the man slumped against a bank of computers, his knee bleeding profusely. He was wearing a dark gray bodysuit, with black gloves, boots, belt, headpiece, and cape. His face was covered with a featureless gold mask.

"It's about time," the man said.

"Who are you?" Nicole asked. "What happened?"

"No questions," he snapped. "Help me into the healing chamber."

"The what?" Nicole asked. The man slapped his hand against a plexiglass tube. It had an opening along one side, and was connected to the computers by a large cable.

"That thing," he said.

She lifted him into it and asked what she should do next. "Green . . . button," he said, wincing as he slumped against the back of the canister.

Nicole looked at the bank of computers. There were several monitors, but only one keyboard. There was a large green button where the numeric keypad would have gone. She pushed it.

The entire room began to hum, and the canister began to glow. The man grew healthier, and less injured, with every passing second. For several long moments she stood there, transfixed by the display. Finally, the man reached up and pushed something on the top of the canister. "It's over," he said, coming out of it and limping over to a chair beside the computers.

"What just happened?" Nicole asked.

"The machine did its job. The wound's

been healed, but the damage has been done. I cannot do this anymore."

"Do what?" Nicole asked, her fear and nervousness working to eliminate her patience. "Who are you? What just happened? Where are we?"

"Good questions, all of them. We're in a small, underground bunker outside of town. It has no real name, though I've taken to calling it the Windtunnel. Thanks to one punk kid with a gun, we've witnessed the end of at least one of my careers. I am, or was, Nightwind."

Nicole gasped. Everyone in Bay Harbor had heard the tales of their nocturnal protector, who appeared wherever injustice was and vanished into nothingness. Most people, and she had to include herself in this group, had written Nightwind off as nothing more than an urban legend, some sort of big-city Bigfoot. A few, mostly in the criminal element, thought of Nightwind as supernatural, a vengeful specter or guardian angel. No one ever seriously thought that Nightwind could have been a man, but the evidence was right there in front of her and in the carpet below her.

"But I'm also your father." Nightwind pulled off his mask, revealing the face of Carl Crawford.

"Dad?" Nicole exclaimed. She stood there for a few moments, then said, "I have to sit down." She sat.

"Of course you do. I probably should have told you about this before now, to get you ready for when you would have to replace me."

"Replace you? I don't understand. Didn't the machine heal you?"

Carl shook his head. "Yes and no, unfortunately. It has its limits. The healing chamber is great at repairing injuries, but it can't replace what isn't there anymore. Like

my kneecap. And you have to become Nightwind, the way I had to when my father retired, the way he did when his father was killed in that plane crash."

"Wait a minute, this is some sort of odd family thing?"

"It's not so odd when you think about it. Bay Harbor has got one of the lowest crime rates among cities this size."

"It's not so odd when you think about it. Bay Harbor has got one of the lowest crime rates among cities this size. Nightwind is the reason for that. There's never been a female Nightwind before, though. It's always been passed down through the first son, but your mother left before we could have one."

"I don't think I can blame her," Nicole said coldly.

"She never knew. But you're right. I don't think I would have blamed her, either. We have to get an outfit put together for you so you can finish tonight's patrol."

"I can't make that decision tonight! You can't do this to me! I mean, I'm only twenty years old!"

"I was eighteen, and I didn't like it either. I got used to it, and so will you. But you're right. The city can probably take care of itself for awhile."

"How are you going to explain how you got hurt?"

Carl smiled. "That's easy. I'll call it a freak home improvement accident. Bay Harbor is my home, and I was trying to improve it." He stood, and used his chair to support him as he crossed over to a bookshelf. He pulled an old, leatherbound book off the top shelf and handed it to Nicole. "You're going to have to read this. It's the history of Bay

Harbor through Nightwind's eyes."

Over the next several weeks, Nicole found herself busier than she had ever been, balancing classes and her social life with Carl's personal "How to be a Nightwind" class, as he called it, despite the fact that she still had her doubts. She had always been active in sports, especially gymnastics, so physically she would have no problems with the role. She was skilled in self-defense, and couple of pointers from Carl helped turn her strong defense into an excellent offense.

Her biggest problem came in understanding the Windtunnel. There were actually two separate Windtunnels. One, of course, was the Cold War-era fallout shelter. The other was an experimental transport technology. It was used for getting to and from the physical Windtunnel, and for getting around town quickly, thanks to a remote control device included in the costume.

"I am never going to figure this out," Nicole complained, taking off the cape and gloves.

"Yes you will, it just takes practice." Carl put the cape and gloves on. He touched a spot on the glove, then stepped back into the cape, disappeared into it, and came out three feet from his original position. "Your problem is that you're actually trying to go through the cape. Don't. Just go toward it, and let the Windtunnel do the rest. Try it again."

She did, and reentered reality outside the BHC library. A quick step back into the cape, and she was back in the physical Windtunnel. "I think I finally get it," she said. "But I'm still not ready to go out. By the way, there's something I've been wondering; where did all of this come from?"

"I found it while I was fighting this clown calling himself Mr. Exit. You're not going to get very many real 'super-villians.'

The bad guys just don't seem to like to dress up. Anyway, Exit had been entering banks and jewelry stores--the usual--, taking everything, and leaving, all without opening a single door or setting off a single alarm. I finally worked out the pattern to his crimes--detective skills are often important in this line of work, too--and was waiting for him when he appeared at his next stop. During the fight, I grabbed his arm and we both ended up here.

"I didn't know it at the time, but he was a former employee of Austin Technologies who had recently disappeared with some valuable tech. All I knew was that I had a chance to regain the ability to teleport that Grandpa took to his premature grave. I had already beat him up pretty good, so I gave him a choice: he could either show me how it worked, or I could beat him up some more. He showed me how it worked. Then, since

"Detective skills are often important in this line of work."

he had kept all his loot in here, I took him and the evidence to the police, dropped them off, and made this my 'secret headquarters.'"

Carl also showed Nicole many of the possible nightly patrol routes she could go on. Bay Harbor was a relatively peaceful city, but it still had its share of neighborhoods where one would not want to be caught after dark; most routes went through at least one of them. In fact, Carl had been shot in one of those.

That led to another problem for Nicole. Carl's Nightwind costume had been a spandex bodysuit over a bulletproof vest. It hadn't been enough, and Nicole was worried that it would not be enough for her, either. The day after she voiced her concerns, Carl

had a surprise for her.

"It's body armor made out of Kevlar: enough to protect your entire body, completely bulletproof, and light enough to move around in."

"Nice," Nicole said as she put it on. "Why didn't you ever use anything like this?"

"Overconfidence, mostly. But I did have a bulletproof vest, so you can't say I didn't try."

She was beginning to warm up to the idea of becoming Nightwind, but then, nearly a month and a half after the night Carl retired, it all fell apart.

"What is this?!" Nicole demanded as she stormed into the physical Windtunnel after her last class of the day. She did not notice that she was not disoriented by the transport anymore, but at the moment, she did not really care, either.

"What's what?" Carl asked. He was busy installing a new operating system into the computers.

"This," she said, shoving a small magazine into his chest. The cover featured a common criminal, a thug, really, running from a ghostly figure in a flowing cape. A caption above the UPC symbol read "Night of Fear." The title of the magazine, spread across the top of the page in black and red Gothic letters, was "Nightwind."

"Oh, that," Carl said.

"Oh, that? This great family heritage of ours is a comic book and you pass it off with 'oh, that'? I refuse to be a part of this anymore!"

"Nicole, wait. Believe it or not, that comic is an important part of what we do. Since it's a comic, people won't think about the possibility of a real Nightwind until he--or she--is right behind them, breathing down their necks."

"What made you think that was a good idea?"

"It wasn't my idea. A comic book gets published once a month, and I was Nightwind for twenty-five years. What you have is issue 326. Do the math."

"Thirty years ago? So Grandpa did it instead of you. What difference does that make?"

"Maybe it doesn't. But listen, the City Council owns the Nightwind trademark. We then license the character to Venture Comics. The city uses the licensing fees it gets to help pay for really low taxes. I'm on the Council to make sure they don't screw the character up, and to deflect any suspicion as to the identity of the real Nightwind."

"Let me guess, I'm going to have to get elected to City Council after you retire from that, too? Our name is Crawford, not Kennedy!" She threw the comic to the floor and turned to leave.

Carl grabbed her arm and spun her around to face him. "Listen, if you feel that strongly about it, I can get the city to pull the plug in six months when the contract comes up for renewal. Before you decide anything, have you read that book yet?"

"Parts of it, the Nightwind who helped protect the Underground Railroad, and the one who fought bootleggers during Prohibition and Nazis during World War II."

"Finish it, from the beginning."

The first white people came to what would become Bay Harbor in the first half of the eighteenth century. There they found a peaceful people, easily exploited, then horribly mistreated. When the first rumblings of revolution began to be heard, the American colonists in the area decided where their loyalties lay and went back to England.

Sixty years later, Americans returned to

Bay Harbor. The years had not been kind to the tribe, whose name has unfortunately been lost to the ravages of history, and they were bitter about it. The first wave of settlers was wiped out, with the exception of Zechariah Crawford. The fact he survived led many, though not all, in the tribe to believe he was the Rider of the Winds at Night, a protector who, the legends said, would come at the time of greatest need. He accepted the role, albeit somewhat reluctantly, though there was not much for him to do until the next settlers arrived. In the meantime, he learned how to use the night to move from place to place quickly and silently. When they did arrive, he began to harass them, using what he had learned to sow fear and confusion, and tribal clothing to hide his identity.

His goal was to convince the small town, of which he was a part, during the day, to stay out of the Indian's village. It was selfless, it was noble, it was brave, and it was, in the end, futile. The town one night decided they had had enough, and set out with the goal of wiping the village from the face of the earth.

Zechariah was with the chief as the village burned to the ground. "Rider," the

**"The legends say that you have
come to protect the land in a time
of transition."**

chief said, dying from musket ball in his stomach, "our time here is through, we must now depart for the Great Beyond. But not you. The legends say that you have come to protect the land in a time of transition. That time is now, for this land is now theirs, now ours. The Rider of the Winds at Night must

protect those who live here. . . . Avenge us . . . then . . . keep them safe . . . always."

"I will," Zechariah said.

The wind howled through the village's remains. "The night wind comes . . . to carry us home. . . ." With these words, the chief died. Zechariah then went back to the town, carrying a torch lit from a fire the whites had set. He used it to burn much of the town, but when the sun rose the next day, he was first in line to help rebuild. He kept his promise to the chief, and remained Rider of the Winds at Night, though the name would later be shortened to Nightwind by a lazy newspaper editor.

Nicole closed the old journal and shook her head slowly. Aside from a few small artifacts, there was no evidence that an Indian tribe had ever lived there. Nothing in any of the books she had used in her paper. But it was true, she held the evidence in her hands. The family had always kept the promise; who was she to break it now?

"I'll do it," she said, returning to the physical Windtunnel.

Three weeks later, she stood at the edge of the roof of one of Bay Harbor's tallest buildings, a combination of fear and excitement working their way through her. A slight, cool breeze came at her from behind, prodding, urging her forward. She peered down, the night vision lenses in the mask showing her everything in a bright, green-tinted light. She took another deep breath to calm herself, then jumped. She spread her arms and legs out, letting feeling the wind rush past her as she fell. She tucked herself into a ball and turned a somersault, letting her cape catch up with her. Almost unconsciously, she teleported, skipping the rest of

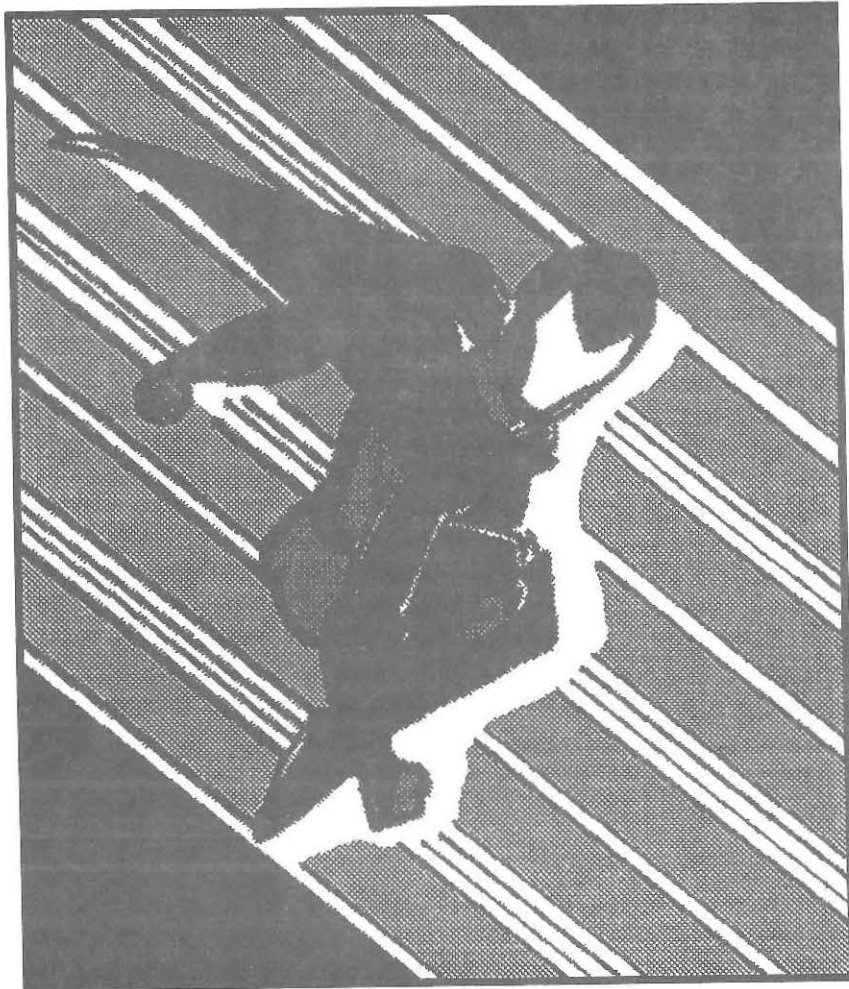
the distance between the roof and the sidewalk below, where she landed, catlike. In, and out, she tucked, looking for the slightest signs of trouble.

She found what she was looking for on her third stop. A group of heavily armed teens were about to attack an elderly man. She crossed the distance, silently hit one in the back of the head, knocking him out, then

retreated a short distance.

The rest of the thugs cursed violently. "What was that?" one of them asked.

She teleported to them, hitting three as she came out of the cape. "I am Nightwind," she said. The small microphone in the mask did its job perfectly, lowering her voice two octaves. After disarming the rest, and helping the old man to safety, she laughed. She was Nightwind, and at night, that was enough.



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