



Charles Dellschau

A Higher Vision Is A Basic Demand Of Poetry.

Thomas McEvilley

In the Wake of the Doges -



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ist, because like
indestructible.
has always been a
amount of life and
ays will be the
You cannot create
You cannot destroy life
cannot multiply life."
dison expects his immo-
ty machine to establish
is theory scientifically.

He discredits ouija boards,
mediums and other methods
of spiritism.

"It is the crudeness of
these methods that makes me
doubt the authenticity of pur-
ported communications with
deceased persons," he said.
"Why should personalities in
another existence waste their
time moving a three-cornered
piece of wood over a board
with lettering on it? Why
should such personalities tra-
vel on tables? The whole business
seems childish.

"Nevertheless, the life units
which form a man do not die.
They pass out of one impor-

is walking arsenal soldier
y for any emergency.
s going to catch him. "No-
He carries 17 "unpre-
mmunition. He was
soldier. He was

One of "Them Experts"

Are you inclined to lean overmuch on expert
Or do you listen to the expert then make up
for yourself?

We were looking over a bunch of old clippings
ran across this, from the Boston Daily News Re-
14, 1920:

"Boston, July 13.—President Wood of the
Woolen Co. today issued the following statement:

"It will be well for the retailers to remember
is 30 per cent higher today than it was a year ago

"That there will be no change downward in
labor;

"That coal and fuel oil are over 100 per cent
a year ago and very difficult to obtain;

"That within a few weeks transportation
threaten to be 40 to 50 per cent higher than a year
undependable service about which everybody knows

"That the interest account is certainly double
was a year ago and that general supplies, including
entering into the manufacture of cloth, remain
or with a higher tendency.

"The only important reduction has been in
that is partly due to the curtailment of product
mills and partly because the English government
leased its hold upon the wool of its colonies.

"This decline has averaged between 15 and 30
depending upon the quality, but there is a tendency
feeling in fine wools, the very best of which are
somewhat stronger value in London, so that the
permanent reduction is problematical.

"Wool is only a component part in the fabric
anybody can readily see for himself and form his
as to the future value of cloth."

Following this was a comment saying:

"Boston clothing"

Charles Dellschau

A higher vision is a basic demand of poetry.

By Thomas McEvilley

Charles Dellschau (1830-1923) was a German-American Outsider artist who emigrated to the United States in 1849. Subsequently he lived most of his life in or around Houston, Texas--with one significant break in the late 1850s, when he lived for several years in Sonora, California. Very little is known about him, but an extensive body of artwork is attributed to him--drawings, paintings, collages, and accompanying writings--though he seems to have had no audience or readership to speak of, or perhaps literally none at all.

For forty years after his death his work was left in the attic of the house he had lived in. After some years a fire elsewhere in the house led to the clearing of the attic. Dellschau's life's work then went from a heap in the gutter, to the city dump, to a local junk shop, and finally, through various intermediaries, into several museums and private collections. His oeuvre survived this Odyssey primarily in the form of twelve hand-bound volumes filled with artworks and writings. Four of these books are owned by the Menil Collection, two by the San Antonio Museum of Art and two by the Witte Museum of "South Texas heritage," also in San Antonio. The other four are in various private collections.

Still, despite its presence in several museums, Dellschau's work is virtually unknown to the art viewing public, though it is somewhat better known to the more specialized public preoccupied with Outsider Art. Since 1969 some of the work has been seen in about twenty group exhibitions mostly of outsider art. The first of these was at the Menil Collection but then his visibility saw a lull until 1996 when the American Visionary Museum exhibited his work in the exhibition "Wind In My Hair", curated by Susanne Theis. In addition there have been only two solo shows: in 1998 "Charles Dellschau: Aeronautical Notebooks" a commercial gallery in New York specializing in Outsider Art, and in 2002 "Flight or Fancy, The Secret Life of Charles Dellschau", was curated by Tracy Baker White at the San Antonio Museum of Art. The present show at Intuit is only the third. Thus, though Dellschau's work has

become known through these exhibitions, it is still something of a well-kept secret, and it is with a continuing feeling of discovery and revelation that the works of Dellschau are being presented in the public arena.

The first term used for this type of art--art brut (usually translated "raw art")--was the term used by Dubuffet in 1945 to refer to a collection he was putting together of work made by patients in mental hospitals. He intended the term to designate primarily artworks of mental patients or of the insane, and the collection consisted of such works.

About a generation later the phrase Outsider Art is said to have been coined by the British critic Roger Cardinal in his book by the same title published in London in 1972. (But Cardinal himself seems to deny this, saying: "The coinage dates from 1972, when Jenny Towndrow, of Studio Vista Publishers, London, proposed the title Outsider Art as a more palatable equivalent in English to the French Art brut.") In any case the term has come to be used more broadly. Intuit declares its purview to be the "work of artists who demonstrate little influence from the mainstream art world and who seem instead motivated by their unique personal visions." This formulation was based on an earlier explanation of the term by Dubuffet: "What we mean by this term [art brut] is work produced by people immune to artistic culture in which there is little or no trace of mimicry . . . so that such creators owe everything . . . to their own resources rather than to the stereotypes of artistic tradition or fashion. Here we are witness to the artistic operation in its pristine form, something unadulterated, something reinvented from scratch at all stages by its maker, who draws solely upon his private impulses."

Colin Rhodes agrees in his book *Outsider Art*, seeing "the raw unpremeditated nature of their art arising as an imperative out of their 'inner selves'." This is what Dubuffet called "the artistic operation in its pristine form." It is the idea underlying Jackson Pollock's famous statement, when asked if he painted from nature: "I am nature; I paint from myself." The idea seems to require something like Jung's theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious. Only through some such theoretical apparatus can influence from the external world be excluded from the art-making process.

But at the same time Rhodes recognizes that, "in recent years the term



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Associated Press.
Washington, May 13.—Contracts for at least 500 airplanes of the very latest types would be awarded American manufacturers under plans prepared by the army air service and sent to Secretary Baker today for his consideration. The primary purpose would be to...

seven types of planes have been approved by the American air service as representative of the most modern developments in the science of aviation. They are the Le Pore observation, the Lockheed monoplane, the Thompson...

trans-Atlantic service, other services on which airship transport would effect great economies in time would be: London to Cairo (Egypt), 2,050 miles; Cairo to Colombo (Ceylon), 3,400; Colombo to Perth (Australia), 3,150 miles. By train and mail steamer, the journey to Colombo at present takes 15 days, and to Australia over 30 days, as compared with the figures already given for the dirigible service.

Further than the saving in time in the actual journey, there is the saving by using an airship service in the elimination of the time taken for trans-shipping and waiting at the various ports and so on, where the air-crafts could be situated quite close to the terminal stations. Owing to the variation in weather conditions, there would be of course some latitude in the time of arrival at the destination; but in those cases where there is a saving of several days in the total journey, the variation of a few hours in the time of arrival would not be of much account.

Much more could be written on the time-saving and other features of the aerial transport service proposed, for the engineers have gone down to the very bed rock of all the factors entering into the operation of the dirigibles. They have figured out the costs to a nicety, even including the costs of overhauling and repairing, insurance premiums, depreciation, interests on capital invested, fuel, crew, and so on.

But from the viewpoint of the layman the interest now shifts to the craft to be employed. After all, it is the dirigible covering the route which deserves particular attention, since all plans stand or fall by the practicability of the carrier.

A Greyhound of the Skies

In brief, the proposed rigid dirigible, which is herewith illustrated as well as in the cover illustration of this number, has the following characteristics:

Gross gas capacity, 3,500,000 cubic feet; overall length, 800 feet; maximum diameter and overall width, 100 feet; overall height, 105 feet; total lift (at 68 pounds per 1,000 cubic feet), 105 tons; disposal lift, 68 tons; total maximum power of engines, 3,500 horse-power; cruising horsepower, 2,000; speed at full power, 75 miles per hour; speed at cruising power, 60 miles per hour; endurance at cruising power, when carrying 15 tons of passengers and freight, 80 hours for 4,800 miles, and when carrying 10 tons of passengers and freight, 90 hours for 5,400 miles.

It should be noted that the "disposal lift" is the lift available for fuel and oil, stores, crew and passengers' mails, and freight. The particulars and performance stated are based on present design, and the actual performance of ships of 2,000,000 cubic feet capacity now in service. It is believed that the figures given are conservative, and that actually the increased size of ship would enable greater structural efficiency and consequently greater disposable lift available than that specified.

The shape of the trans-Atlantic dirigible is to be of the most perfect streamline form within the limitations of constructional requirements. An internal keel corridor, running along the bottom of the hull, will afford access to every part of the dirigible. Petrol and oil tanks and water ballast will be contained in the hull structure. The outer covering would be made of special weather-proof fabric to give the longest possible life when subjected to the weather effects on continuous voyages; also, to be as efficient as possible in insulating the gas from change of temperature, and so avoid great variations.

The gas capacity of the dirigible would be divided into gasbags made of suitable rubber-proofed cotton fabric lined with goldbeater's skins. The gasbags would be fitted with automatic relief valves and hand-controlled maneuvering valves, operated by the pilot

from the navigating quarters located well up forward. The engineers have planned on six machinery cars or "power eggs," each containing a 600-horse-power engine, directly connected with a propeller fitted at the aft end. Thus the dirigible would have a maximum power of over 3,500 horse-power, the engines being designed to develop their maximum full power when flying at a height of 5,000 feet. The engines would be fitted with special exhaust silencers in order to reduce the exhaust noise to a minimum, and special consideration would be given to the transmission gear, cooling system, self-starting features, and so on.

Promenade Decks and Salons Among the Clouds

But how about the living quarters, now that the mechanical details have been glanced over?

Well, the main living accommodations would be in a salon fitted along the top of the airship, provided with

would be served in the salon. Heat for salons and sleeping quarters would be radiated by electric heaters.

It is interesting to note that such a dirigible would be equipped with the last word in wireless apparatus, enabling it to keep in touch with land stations and ships, and also permitting of the reception of directional signals at all times. In fact, directional wireless signals today make it possible for an airship to be piloted with considerable accuracy, even if it is enshrouded in thick fog or is operating at night.

So much for the airship. But how about the landing facilities? It has often been said of the dirigible that it is far better in the air than on the ground, and that the problem of getting it up is nothing compared to that of bringing it down—safely. Again we find that the British engineers have done their work well and thoroughly; truly, they have taken up this matter of air transportation in all seriousness.

At the terminal point of each airship route, it would be necessary to make provision for the following: 1st. An air base about a mile square. 2d. A double ship shed capable of housing two of the airships. 3d. A mooring-out tower, with a mooring gear. 4th. Mechanical handling gear for transferring the airship from the mooring tower to the shed. 5th. Hydrogen generating plant and storage. 6th. Repair workshops and stores. 7th. Meteorological office and wireless telegraph installation. 8th. Electrical night signaling and lighting arrangements for the airbase. 9th. Offices, etc.

The airbase should be within direct communication and a short distance from the city served by the airship service, and, if possible, would be advantageously situated near to a chemical works where hydrogen would be obtained as a by-product. In this connection it is interesting to note that the British engineers have figured on hydrogen instead of non-inflammable helium, although it is practically certain that the latter would sooner or later take the place of the former.

The double sheds required to house the size of airships called for would require two berths, each with a minimum size of 850 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 115 feet high, with opening doors. The sheds would be provided with hydrogen filling mains and with gear for slinging the airships from the roof when deflated for overhauling. Special arrangements would be made to enable rapid replenishing of the ships with gas, fuel and water ballast.

A Hitching Post for Dirigibles

Most interesting of all the airbase arrangements, however, is the proposed mooring-out scheme which has been made the subject of a patent by the British organization. This scheme, which forms the opening page subject of this number, would be introduced at each airbase, in the shape of a fixed mooring tower about 150 feet in height, with a revolving head to which the airship would be rigidly attached by the nose and be able to turn round in accordance with the direction of the wind. This tower would be provided with a hauling-in winch and rope to haul the ship up to the mooring point. Means would be provided at this mooring tower to enable the airship to be supplied with hydrogen, fuel and water ballast whilst moored out. An elevator from the ground to the top of the tower would enable passengers to embark and disembark whilst the airship was riding at the mooring, and would also serve to convey mails, freight, stores, etc., to the ship. The airship would be moored to this mast and ride out during even the worst weather, and would only require to be taken into the shed when lying up for overhauling and repairs. And this scheme is based on substantial fact; for it is a matter of record that a British dirigible has been anchored



Courtesy, Illustrated London News

In the no distant future captive balloons, equipped with electric lamps of high power, will mark important airbases and landmarks for the aerial pilots of commercial and pleasure craft

tables and chairs in the style of a Pullman car, which would enable the passengers to be comfortably accommodated during the daytime. Part of this salon would be fire-proofed to allow of being used as a smoke room. An open shelter deck would also be provided at the aft end to enable the passengers to take the air. The salons would be provided with windows, giving the passengers an all-round outlook.

A passenger elevator would be provided for communication between the passengers' quarters and the lower part of the ship. An observation car, fitted below the hull towards the aft end of the airship, would also enable passengers to observe the land and sea immediately below the ship. As for sleeping quarters, these would be in the form of berths provided in small cabins fitted on top of the huge hull, forward of the living salons. Cooking would be done in a mess kitchen, thoroughly equipped with electrical cooking apparatus. Meals

would be served in the salon. Heat for salons and sleeping quarters would be radiated by electric heaters. It is interesting to note that such a dirigible would be equipped with the last word in wireless apparatus, enabling it to keep in touch with land stations and ships, and also permitting of the reception of directional signals at all times. In fact, directional wireless signals today make it possible for an airship to be piloted with considerable accuracy, even if it is enshrouded in thick fog or is operating at night. So much for the airship. But how about the landing facilities? It has often been said of the dirigible that it is far better in the air than on the ground, and that the problem of getting it up is nothing compared to that of bringing it down—safely. Again we find that the British engineers have done their work well and thoroughly; truly, they have taken up this matter of air transportation in all seriousness. At the terminal point of each airship route, it would be necessary to make provision for the following: 1st. An air base about a mile square. 2d. A double ship shed capable of housing two of the airships. 3d. A mooring-out tower, with a mooring gear. 4th. Mechanical handling gear for transferring the airship from the mooring tower to the shed. 5th. Hydrogen generating plant and storage. 6th. Repair workshops and stores. 7th. Meteorological office and wireless telegraph installation. 8th. Electrical night signaling and lighting arrangements for the airbase. 9th. Offices, etc. The airbase should be within direct communication and a short distance from the city served by the airship service, and, if possible, would be advantageously situated near to a chemical works where hydrogen would be obtained as a by-product. In this connection it is interesting to note that the British engineers have figured on hydrogen instead of non-inflammable helium, although it is practically certain that the latter would sooner or later take the place of the former. The double sheds required to house the size of airships called for would require two berths, each with a minimum size of 850 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 115 feet high, with opening doors. The sheds would be provided with hydrogen filling mains and with gear for slinging the airships from the roof when deflated for overhauling. Special arrangements would be made to enable rapid replenishing of the ships with gas, fuel and water ballast.

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Outsider Art has begun to be used extensively to describe a bewildering range of artistic activity situated outside, or in opposition to, mainstream concerns.” So the difference between Outsider Art and mainstream contemporary art is that works of the latter category have been cooked, works of the former category have remained uncooked or “raw.” Cooked seems to mean saturated with the aesthetic values of the culture roundabout; raw indicates the work of uncultured or uneducated artists. Before the twentieth century, “cooked” art was always preferred to raw art--in fact only “cooked” art was regarded as art. Dubuffet changed all that with his insight that art that is not cooked, by artists who are not educated, is purer--more pristine, as he put it. The educated artist, dealing with the same subject matter as an Outsider, will clutter his version up with things he learned in art school which will only get in the way of the viewer’s attempt to experience the art in its plain raw taste without any added spices.

Dubuffet, to avoid any ambiguity about his idea, focused his seminal investigation exclusively on mental patients actually living in institutions. His focus on that limited category was based on what David Maclagan refers to as “the traditional association between art and madness.” That was the work Dubuffet originally intended by the term art brut, which was designated as uncooked to pierce all the way down to the hidden essence of art, the pure unseen essence from which the poem blossoms in the mind that is either blank or troubled or feels “inspired”. In time the term Outsider Art came to be applied more widely as including all art created outside the mainstream gallery system and the art school education usually associated with it. Still, In keeping with its origin as a comment on mental illness and mental health, “often, outsider art illustrates extreme mental states, unconventional ideas, or elaborate fantasy worlds.” The association with “elaborate fantasy worlds” connects Outsider Art to Surrealism, and in fact when Dubuffet founded the Compagnie d’ Art Brut in 1948 Andre Breton was a founding member.

The original orientation of the term toward mental patients started with the research of Dr. Walter Morgenthaler, a Swiss psychiatrist, in 1921, and the book *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (Bildnerei der Geisteskranken) by a German psychiatrist, Hans Prinzhorn, in 1923. Since then the category has proliferated into various sub-categories and has developed broader meanings to encompass them all. One such

approach sees the central trait of the Outsider artist as the fact that he or she did not go to art school or otherwise receive art education. Hence another common term is Self-taught Artists. This line of thought leads to the term “intuitive”. If the self-taught artist did not learn art from someone else, then he or she must have intuited it by himself or herself. But intuited it from where? Where was it lurking, waiting to be recognized? In the Collective Unconscious? (Or some forebear such as Plato’s theory in the *Phaedrus*, where he states that real art comes to the artist as an inspiration from a transcendently higher realm of reality (which in Plato’s case means the “realm of Ideas.”) The vision of ultimate reality is viewed by the soul as it is led through the realm of Ideas in preparation for being incarnated. Later on, while growing up in a body, the soul of the artist remembers this original vision, through the doctrine of Recollection. The value of his work depends on how accurately the recollection is remembered.

But perhaps there are more empirical explanations, involving some mechanical process like similar responses to similar circumstances. What might these circumstances be? Mental disturbance, religious obsession, advanced age, and isolation have all been proposed. And indeed these traits have been displayed by several members of what might be called the pantheon of Outsider Art. In regard to art’s traditional association with madness, Dubuffet wrote, “It is my belief that madness has a positive value, a fertile and precious resource.” He went so far as to suggest that Outsider Artists “did not practice art to cure their madness but rather to stimulate it.”

Though little is known of Dellschau’s life, there is no hint of mental illness or religious obsession in its brief record. Old age, however, is another trait that has been suggested as a condition for Outsider Art. “The old,” as Michel Thevoz said, “have come to occupy the position once reserved for the insane.” Thus they live under a bubble of permission, like someone in a mental hospital who can do more or less what he or she wants. The fact that the outsider artist’s career tends to start at an advanced age is a more widespread phenomenon. Bill Traylor started making art at age 85; J.B. Murray (1808-1888) started painting and sculpting at 70; Henry Darger did most of his work in his old age; “Gaston Teuscher, Alois Way, and Hans Krusi only discovered their vocation as artists after reaching retirement age.” “They led ordinary lives only to blossom as artists in old age.” There are many other

examples, and Dellschau, who made art from his early 70s until his death at 93, seems to be one of them.

It is not altogether clear how to account for this connection. Perhaps the retired person, with a lot of time suddenly on his or her hands, adopts a hobby. Or, he or she becomes aware of an impulse that had lurked long unseen deep inside but now in the solitude and silence of old age can come out in the open and be felt. The no doubt long-desired cessation of capitalist wage slavery which comes from retirement (with a pension) may be enough to account for the sudden new life. Or perhaps the function of old age in the Outsider process is more organic, influenced by changes, say, in hormonal balances and proportions. In addition there is the natural tendency of the elderly soul to want to confront one's death as it approaches and try to shape one's cultural legacy as an opening into the beyond--to show the way to others who have been left behind.

Dubuffet adds another element when he observes that "these works are created from solitude." The loneliness of the retired older person may be what he meant by solitude, in which case both old age and solitude become necessary parts of the recipe. In fact, old age, loneliness, and insanity may all be involved in the transformation. This was the case with a number of the artists in the pantheon of the Outsider: Darger, Wolfli, Ramirez and now, it seems, Dellschau.

Another powerful suggestion connects the awareness of Outsider Art in Switzerland and Germany in the early 1920s with the fact that it arose in the immediate wake of the discovery of the schools of the avant-garde--Constructivism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and others. A culture which had become accustomed to discovering new and formerly unknown forms of art would also have become prepared for the "discovery" of some more.

As time has passed, several groups of Outsider artists have been recognized in addition to Dubuffet's initial concentration on mental patients. There are rural artists, often unschooled, mostly in the American South, who used to be called Folk artists and now are more likely to be called Outsiders. Some prominent members of this category are Bessy Harvey (1929-1994), Lonnie Holley (born 1950), and Howard Finster (1916-2001); then there are urban painters, mostly European,



This sketch, showing the probable development of future airplane designs and construction, was originally published in the "Scientific American" 50 years ago.

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whose work developed in isolation and could be called Folk or neo-primitive (again Wolfli and Ramirez are famous examples). In addition there are visionary and mediumistic artists (Finster and Murray, for example), and some who thought themselves to be insider artists but in time found they had drifted to or over the edge, such as the American artist Eric Orr (1939-1998). Orr's early mature work was often compared to Rothko, and as post-Modernism picked the Modernist canvas apart thread by thread he found his transcendental Modernist approach itself was now Outside. This last sub-category has come to be called Neuve Invention, meaning artists who were established in a more or less conventional art practice and suddenly at an advanced age drifted over some boundary into the Outsider category. Louis Soutter was the case that forced Dubuffet to recognize this category. It has become somewhat common in post-Modernism--as artists who had thought they were Modernists found a "new invention."

In a way it is contradictory that there should be a canon of Outsider art, since being an Outsider means producing a type of work to which the criteria of the canon, such as a stylistic fit into art history, do not apply. But all schooled art is regarded from a post-Modern point of view as a cover up of the (pristine) art event in the inner sanctum of the unconscious--and that is a mediation that might not be welcome. In any case, the basic pantheon of the recognized Outsiders includes Adolph Wolfli (1864-1930), Martin Ramirez (1895-1963), Achilles Rizzoli [1896-1981], Henry Darger (1892-1973], and others. Another group of Outsiders is the African-American artists from the American South mentioned above, such as Thornton Dial, Lonnie Holly, Bessy Harvey and others. The first group seems possibly to be in touch with the Collective Unconscious; the second group seems to continue the black village healer tradition from West Africa, as Robert Farris Thompson has argued. The first group is primarily white and preserves remnants of European art; the other group is primarily black and inherited the slave heritage. The first group--to which Dellschau seems to belong--is concerned with ordering the world, whose experience can sometimes seem chaotic. The works of Wolfli, Rizzoli, and Dellschau, for example, involve grid like arrangements of semi-abstract shapes which seem to express their view of what the world is like. These also all bloomed as artists in their old age, or at any rate after the retirement age, and may have been impelled by a desire to immortalize some element of themselves. Several of them were mentally

ill, spent much of their lives in institutions, and followed the familiar Outsider pattern. Bill Traylor, for example, didn't start making artwork till he was 85. William Hawkins made some crude early works, but his career is regarded as beginning when he was about 75.

Finally the explanations mentioned above--madness, lack of education, old age and isolation--do not seem enough. An even more important factor than these may be that in old age these individuals reconnected with their childhood. "They picked up anew," Thevoz says, "the thread of a childhood impetuosity which had been thwarted during their working lives. . . . Between the ages of ten and seventy, they had hung around waiting for a dull interlude to pass." In a retired person's life the mind is granted an opportunity to expand and reach higher--toward that transcendent realm that was long in hiding and may even now be only dimly sensed. This is a mental growth that artists in general tend to undergo --but only after recognizing themselves (recollecting themselves) as artists--even in old age.

It is tempting to put Dellschau into this category, but only in connection with his old age. In his case there is no evidence of institutionalization, nor does one see signs of insanity in his work--though it may be there in an inconspicuous way and some have claimed to see signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder or schizophrenia. Dellschau presents a world in which decorative airships (which he calls Aeros) float about. He seems to claim that some of the Aeros were actually functional flying machines, and perhaps this should be regarded as one of the elaborate fantasy worlds mentioned above. On the other hand, perhaps it was simply an artistic presentation somewhat paralleling the French artist Yves Klein's prophetic view that the world was about to enter an age of levitation that would indicate an increasingly refined spiritual or mental state. Klein himself was in part an outsider (unschooled, never learned basic techniques such as drawing, regarded himself as a religious prophet, and so on). In work with these prophetic transcendent ambitions several strands of art merged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Cardinal seems to feel on the edge in terms of the alleged connection between Outsider Art and insanity. First he speaks of autistic art, but it is not clear that he is using the term as a clinical psychiatrist would use it. He may mean no more than Dubuffet meant by saying Outsider Art comes out of solitude. He agrees with



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Dubuffet that Wolfli was definitely both an outsider artist and insane. Wolfli, Cardinal says, was the touchstone for Dubuffet, that is, he was regarded as absolutely authentic and real and right. He affirms “Wolfli’s sanctification as an untutored genius.” Martin Ramirez, “schizophrenic, mute, locked-up for decades,” was, Cardinal feels, a “textbook Outsider.” His work “can . . . be seen as the external record of an enigmatic discourse . . . within an estranged consciousness.” Ramirez was the basis of “attempts to generalize about a ‘schizophrenic’ style” in art.

At this point in his argument Cardinal seems to back away from the identification of Outsider Art and actual insanity, saying, “what attracts us about the outsider artwork is . . . more often its autistic air than any evidence of literal autism.” But there are many artists whose work can be said to preserve an autistic air; indeed, this is a trait of many modernist and late modernist works and may even be the central trait of post-modernist work. Not only outsider art but most modern and post-modern art in general involves the “pristine” or inner spiritual appeal to private sensibilities which are often regarded as precious and sacred. So the edge between Outsider Art and madness is vague and ambiguous. In Dellschau’s case, for example, some have suggested that his later works shows mental deterioration leading to a decline in quality. But others have felt that in reality he underwent in his later works an expansion and intensification of his role as an artist and introduced more expressive elements into it along with the prophetic streak. So the art viewer or collector or critic must spin a narrative out of silence--a narrative that he or she, as an honest scholar, can never have full confidence in. In any case, though not clearly defined, Outsider Art has become an established part of the art world. The Outsider Art Fair in New York has happened annually since 1993. Raw Vision magazine deals with the intuitive and visionary, as does the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. A few galleries in New York and elsewhere specialize in Outsider Art, and its devotees (somewhat in the Zen tradition of Dogen and Hakuin) must live in the excitement and frustration of what those Zen teachers called the Great Doubt.

Virtually nothing is known about Dellschau’s life before he arrived in Galveston in 1849, except that his father was a butcher and Dellschau probably worked as a butcher in Prussia, since that is the occupation he entered in Texas and practiced for some years there. It seems also possible, maybe even likely, that he had already

developed an interest--perhaps a hobbyist's type of interest--in aeronautical developments and the idea that flight might be around the corner, as suggested in the contemporaneous experiments of the Wright Brothers and others, which he followed in the newspapers.

In addition to aeronautical developments around 1900, Dellschau's work invoked a second earlier period when the dream of flight was giving rise to a lot of experimentation, mostly with balloons and dirigibles. It seems that soon after emigrating to Texas he came in contact with someone involved in such experimentation, and heard about a group who would come to be known (partly through Dellschau's writings) as the Sonora Aero Club. In any case, in the early 1850s Dellschau, according to his own account, moved to Sonora, found such a group of people and either joined them in some capacity or became a hanger-on. There is no hard evidence for Dellschau's trip to California. In his still rather unorganized writings he mentions events from that period that can be checked out in newspapers and other sources of the time. But he could have read about these events in the library after retiring and beginning to pursue his (new?) hobby. In any case it is not implausible in the least that such a group should have existed around 1850. Whether Dellschau was actually there, or was developing fiction writing as another hobby, has been much discussed.

According to Dellschau's writings, there was one member of the Sonora Aero Club, Peter Mennis, possibly also from Germany, who had somehow acquired a supply of an antigravity liquid which under the right circumstances could provide lift to a heavy object. (One drop was supposed to be enough.) Peter Mennis also designed and built an airship, called the Aero Goosey or Gander, which Dellschau attests actually flew and was observed to do so by members of the Club, including himself. These things seem to have happened in the years 1856-1858 or so, a time when ballooning was a craze both in Europe and America. According to a theory developed by Pete Navarro, one of the first people to study the materials, which can neither be verified nor disconfirmed, the Sonora Club was connected somehow with the mysterious acronym NYMZA, which Navarro felt, without any known evidence, was a European organization--probably German--which somehow was the supporter of the Sonora Club, though no person from the organization ever showed up and identified himself.

Again on Dellschau's account, he returned to Houston in 1861, married Antonia Holt and became sales clerk in the saddlery owned by the husband of his step-daughter Elizabeth Stelzig. In 1877 his wife died but his friendship with his step-daughter may have continued, as he continued to live in the back room of the Stelzig home and work in the saddlery. After about forty years (1861-1899), at age 70, Dellschau retired from the saddle shop but continued to live in the Stelzig's house. It was at this time that Dellschau, living it seems a very private even reclusive lifestyle, began to make drawings and writings first on small sheets of paper, later on sheets of butcher paper about eighteen inches square.

In time Dellschau began collaging newspaper clippings (mostly articles about recent aeronautical events) onto the painted pages. As the carefully wrought pages (or paintings, or 'works on paper') accumulated Dellschau ordered them carefully and bound them (with shoe-strings) into volumes about four or five inches thick, each with a binding of heavy board like paper. By the time of his death Dellschau had completed twelve such books and there is reason to believe there were about as many more, whose whereabouts are unknown.

What Dellschau actually witnessed and perhaps participated in during his years in Sonora (assuming he really was there) is unknown. Individuals including Pete Navarro, have tried to locate names which Dellschau has ascribed to Aero Club members, consulting tax records, cemeteries, voting records, and such--with little success. Those who have really looked into it find it increasingly hard to believe Dellschau's story. Most think it was just something he made up fifty years later; others grant him some of the elements of the story but only some--accepting, for example, the trip to Sonora but not the actual flight of the Aero Goosey. Those who wish to accept Dellschau's overall story, including the flight of the Goosey, must assume that it was basically a balloon, presumably using helium gas rather than the mysterious lifting fluid provided by Peter Mennis. The designs of the aeros illustrated by Dellschau can be interpreted this way. At the top of each is a rounded area that suggests the texture of a fabric that has been filled with gas.

There remains the question why Dellschau began making his elaborate painted and calligraphed papers. Perhaps it was just a creative impulse which is part of the human soul or its genome and which some--perhaps fortunate--



THE SUPERB
BIPLANE

BRISTOL PULLMAN TRIPLANE

WETLAND FOUR-SEATER LIMOUSINE

AVRO BEARDMORE
PASSENGER CARRYING TRIPLANE

GRANAME
AERO

Courtesy, Illustrated London News. Copyright, Illustrated London News

Leading types of British airplanes now being used for civilian flying in Great Britain

Forerunners of the Flying Liners

ONDERPEET, as is the progress in aircraft, greater developments are predicted. Aero



Great Britain and on the Continent, both for regular passenger service and for private use

passenger, besides pilot, speed 120 miles per hour. Avro "Baby" Type 514 (40-horsepower Green; pilot only, 70 miles per hour). Avro five-seater, Type 541 (400-horsepower Beardmore; four passengers; 73-90 miles per hour).

individuals become aware of and act out. In that case Dellschau was not trying to convince anybody of anything, simply titillating his soul in his old age, perhaps as a part of a preparation for death. Viewed in this way the work seems to foretell an ascent to heaven for which the artist's soul has opened itself, partly through the activity of making his or her art. In the universe Dellschau has created in watercolor, the sky is dotted by decorative floating airships mostly round or involving roundnesses. It is as if the round aeros were ascending to heaven, or preparing to. It could be Dellschau's vision of the afterlife, or of his anticipated transition to it. The same seems true of Yves Klein's fantasy of levitation.

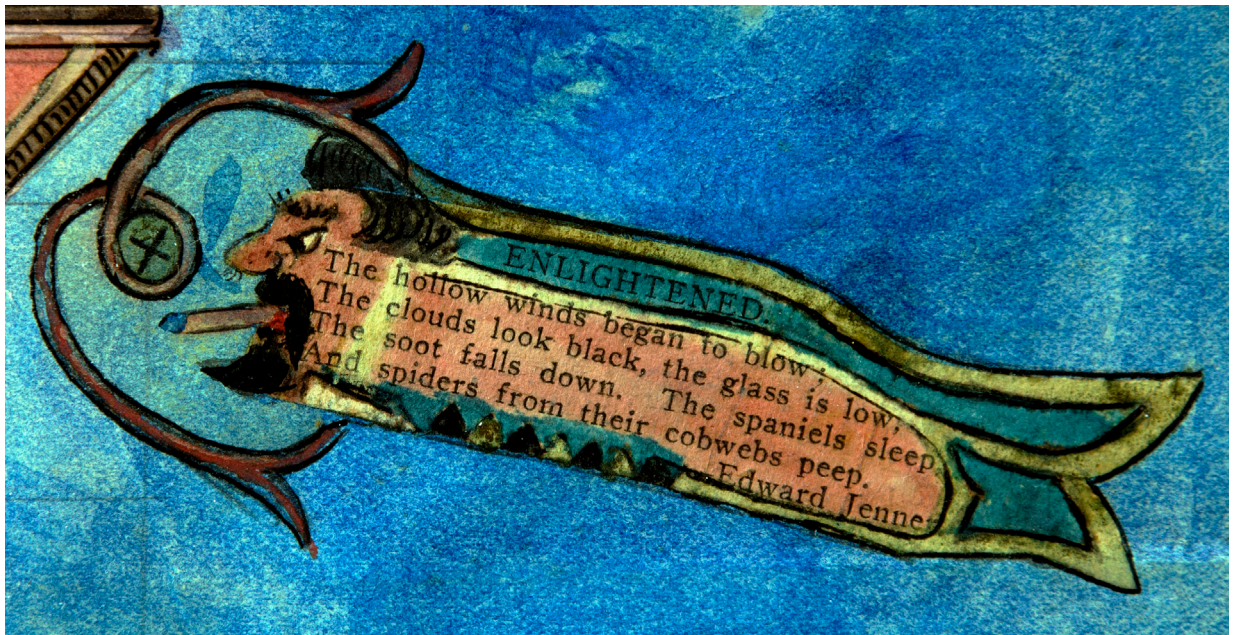
Other scholars who have studied Dellschau believe that Dellschau's work was connected somehow to the tradition of the balloon hoax. In the ballooning craze of the mid-nineteenth century, dirigibles were invented and various kinds of airships (essentially just balloons) are known to have flown considerable distances. Both Jules Verne and H. G. Wells worked fictional balloon flights into their novels, and in 1844 Edgar Allen Poe wrote an article for the Baltimore newspaper with the headline "Balloon Hoax."

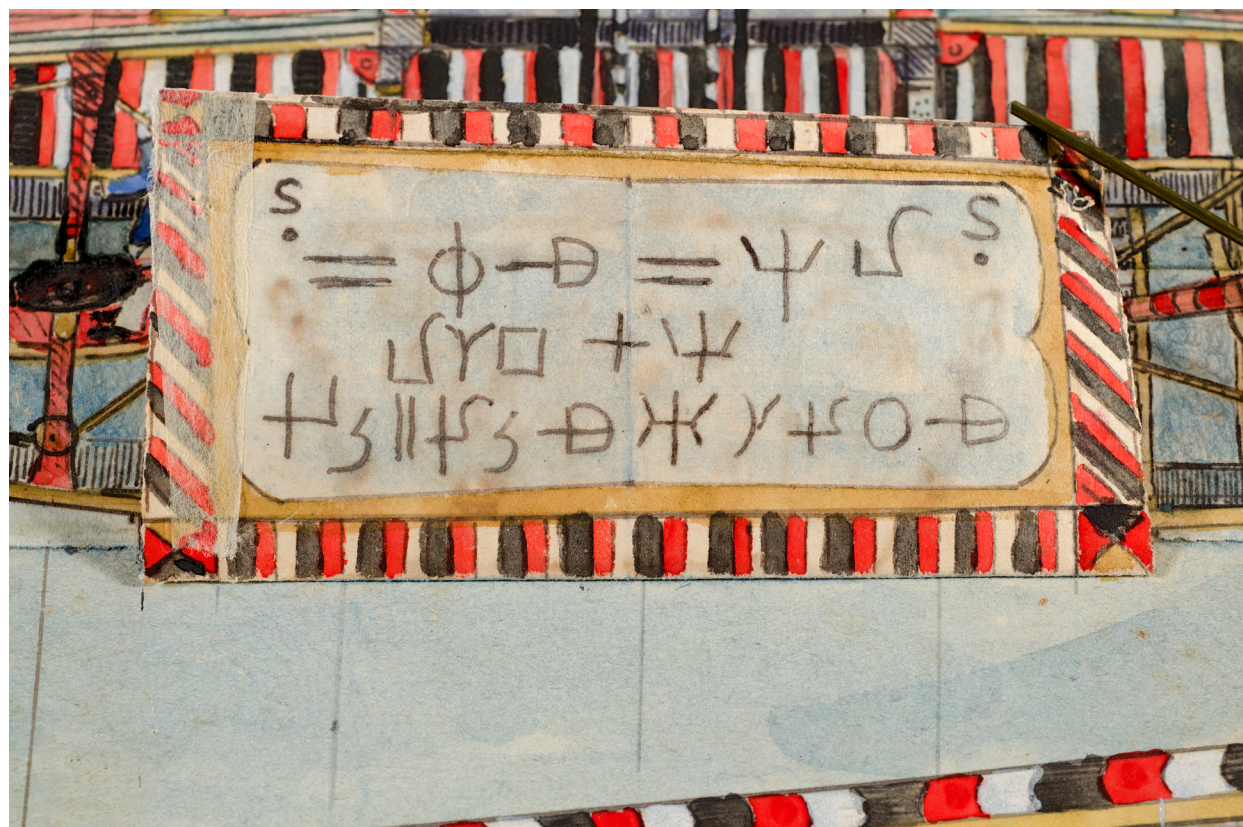
Retiring after forty years as a sales clerk Dellschau may have hearkened back to his Sonora experiences, or his imaginings about them, and begun to make his elaborate and detailed drawings of aeros (about one hundred of them) in preparation for making exaggerated claims about the Sonora experience, claims which he felt would be backed up somewhat by his detailed and consistent drawings of aeros. He was, in other words possibly venturing a balloon hoax of his own, but never was able to pull it off. Perhaps he became so obsessively absorbed in the drawings and pages that they gradually became the point of it all. Somehow publishing them in context of some kind of balloon claims (involving Peter Mennis no doubt) no longer seemed the point. Perhaps Dellschau had, in his last years, become an artist, who now drew satisfaction from the work itself rather than any goal beyond the work.

Dellschau had a standard subject matter and aesthetic treatment. His colors are usually tinted, meaning mixed with added white, making them somewhat pale and almost transparent. The aeros are usually covered with colorful stripes--red and white, yellow and black, red, blue white and yellow. This is where the primary colors mostly occur. This colorful surface sets them off from the pale blue

backgrounds which seem to represent the sky. Sometimes there is an airman or two inside the cabin area of an aero--occasionally, there are three aviators represented...

Dellschau's most basic composition has a rounded aero in the middle of the usually square pictorial surface, surrounded on all four sides by an elaborate decorative border. These borders usually describe squares or rectangles in which the angelic visions of aers are held in place in the sky. The roundness of the aero held in place by the surrounding square suggests the angelic nature. The surrounding square is the material world while the aero is lighter than air and rises into the sky like an angel floating or a soul ascending to heaven after death. The square equals the earth--the compass-like measurement of flat space to be divided into square plots for earthly habitation. The rounded nature of the aers differentiates them from materiality and elevates them to a more spiritual and metaphysical function as in Plato's metaphysical levels. Above the level of the moon, in the Platonic-Aristotelian view, every entity is circular or spherical. Sometimes the aers show a division like that of the cosmos--square below, like a building on the earth, rounded above, in the balloon section where the gas produced by the lifting fluid carries it toward heaven, square below, like a building on the earth. In some cases there are wheels on the bottom, suggesting a desire to move while still in bondage to the earth; on the top, offsetting the theme of earthiness suggested by the wheels, is the gas-filled balloon, which is soft and cloud like. The bottom will meet the earth with the mechanical mediation of wheels; the upper part rises to meet heaven, but with a soft and cloud like presence. Aers of this type are devices to mediate between earth and heaven, or above and below. They are, on this interpretation, transformative devices whereby the square materiality of earth is transformed, in the hidden inner space atop the aero, to the floating angelic cloud like softness of heaven. The content of the news clippings that Dellschau glued into many of the collages has two interesting qualities. First, they are usually about aeronautical experiments and developments. Some headlines include: "Youth Is Inventor of Airplane Engine," "Our Latest Aerial Creations," "Flies Across Channel," and so on. Sometimes the news clipping is about a recent experiment by the Wright brothers or others working on the challenge of flight. Second, they often have a tragic tinge: "Trans-Atlantic Flyer is Killed," "Plane Carrying Serum to Save Lives Delayed,"





“Snowstorm at 16,000 Feet Drives Flyers to Crash in Swamp,
“and accompanied by a hand-drawn skull and crossbones.

Perhaps no certainty will arise, still. But the researcher can expect at best only some certainty about the degree of uncertainty he is dealing with. Is it the case that each channel of partial vision shows, say, one facet of a faceted problem whose whole scope cannot be seen? Or is each facet of the problem in itself a troubled misty vista?

Is this going to be one of those problems about which one concludes that it is not really a problem because it has no solution? It's like a watery aero, flickering in the waves of mist, floating by on the stream of time. . .

This mass of evidence sketched out here has channels, levels, and transition points. It can seem to change shape as one works with it. It can probably be taken apart and put back together in different ways. Over it all, floating like an image projected into misty air, a small balding man watches. One waits for him to smile but he doesn't. Perhaps he is a great artist, the one who concocted this puzzle (like someone who designs video games but always from behind the scene). Does the image wink, or is that just a flicker in the mist? Is it a butcher back there behind the image with his cleaver? . . . a blogger without a network ?. . . a man who made a few friends for a little while fifty years ago ?. . . At least he didn't close us in with any certainties. Or the accidentally though not quite random accumulation of otherwise disconnected scraps of meaning (or anyway implication).

Many passages of poetry have belonged to this tradition. A higher vision is a basic demand of poetry. A passage of Wallace Stevens, the poet of uncertainty, for example, seems to refer to an experience like that of looking upward into a sky of angelic round aeros floating around, and so to comment on its ambiguity; there is a hint of the transcendental nature of the sky, the terrifying visions it enforces as the night descends::

**“Thinkers without final thoughts
In an always incipient cosmos”**

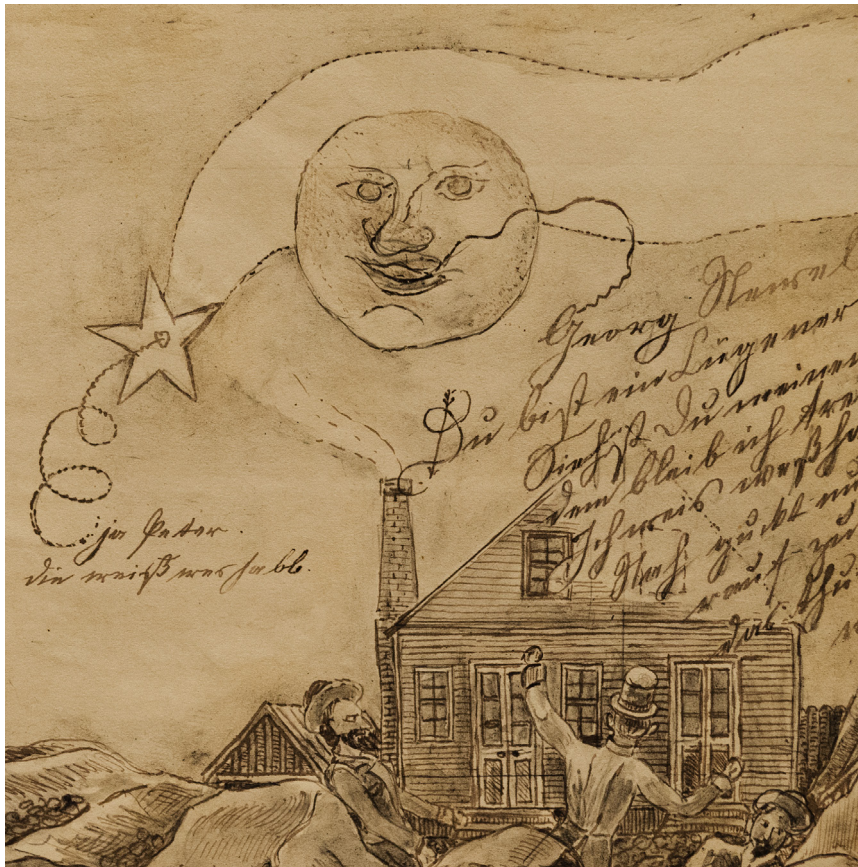
**”Point A
In a perspective that begins again
At B”**

**“Look in the terrible mirror of the sky.
Oh, bend against the invisible; and lean
To symbols of descending night; and
search
The glare of revelations going by!”**

OUT TAKE

Roger Cardinal says you can't speak of a tradition of outsider art, for each outsider is supposed to be born a virgin genius of his or her own. That is an idea derived from Dubuffet's art brut manifesto. But in European Folk Art, on the contrary, a young would-be artist growing up in a village would have contact in various ways with a local artist of a kind of outsider/shaman type. Maybe he would be given to such a person by his parents. The same is true in African tribal arts and in outsider art in the American South. The term self-taught ignores this aspect of the situation.

This is the basic geometrical rule about the space above the level of the moon. Above the level of the moon is the eternal realm where things only have spherical shapes and only move in circles; below the level of the moon is the phenomenal realm where things have chaotically meaningless shapes moving in scattered and disorderly entropic rundown.





Barefoot

*By Associated
PI Press.*

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VETERANS TELL OF ORDERS TO BURN PLANES

House Sub-Committee Hears Testimony of Air Service Equipment.

WASHINGTON, August 7.—The sub-committee of the House of Representatives, which has been investigating the activities of the Air Service, today heard the testimony of several veterans who claimed to have received orders to burn planes. The testimony was given by a group of men who had been in the Air Service during the war and who had been discharged after the war. They claimed that they had been ordered to burn planes that were not needed by the Air Service and that they had been ordered to do so by their superiors. The sub-committee is currently investigating the activities of the Air Service and is looking for evidence of any wrongdoing. The testimony of these veterans is being taken as part of this investigation.

HOUSTON, TEXAS
AUGUST 7, 1919

BALLOON WHICH PLUNGED THROUGH BANK'S ROOF



THE AIRLINE SERVICE, which has been investigating the activities of the Air Service, today heard the testimony of several veterans who claimed to have received orders to burn planes. The testimony was given by a group of men who had been in the Air Service during the war and who had been discharged after the war. They claimed that they had been ordered to burn planes that were not needed by the Air Service and that they had been ordered to do so by their superiors. The sub-committee is currently investigating the activities of the Air Service and is looking for evidence of any wrongdoing. The testimony of these veterans is being taken as part of this investigation.








MAX ALBERT O. SMITH

MAX ALBERT O. SMITH, JR. is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, where he received his B.S. in 1954. He is currently a member of the U.S. Army, where he is serving as a Captain. He is also a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, where he is serving as a Major. He is a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, where he is serving as a Major. He is a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, where he is serving as a Major.

[illegible]

HOUSTON, TEXAS, MARCH 1, 1919

[illegible][illegible]

**FRENCH FLYER
PLANS FLIGHT
OVER ATLANTIC**

By Associated Press

Paris, Feb. 25.—Captain Golt, who recently crossed the Mediterranean and made the return trip within 24 hours, will make a flight by the way of Madrid to Yps and Agaña, Mexico.

He will make a reconnaissance of the American coast and will fly over the United States at the extreme point of Cape Horn. The flight will be made in a biplane, and will be a special mission of the French Air Force.

The flight will be made in a biplane, and will be a special mission of the French Air Force. The flight will be made in a biplane, and will be a special mission of the French Air Force.

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Leave San Diego

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easy payment plan provides you a definite system of saving—an opportunity to provide a home of your own—which otherwise you are not likely to ever own—and accumulate additional wealth for future com-

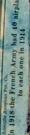
FOR RENT

We Pav

H. J. COHN CO.
THE CONGRESS, PRESTON 4117,
TURNING POINT, C. & B. STATION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

What Our Sister Republic Paid in Life and Treasure Toward the Victory of the Allies, as Told by the Official Figures





Women's Colored Kid Brooms
All this season's new styles, in dark
brown, golden brown, light and dark
gray, field mouse, in Louis heels and
walking heels.

**Single Tax Advocates to
Hear Next Spring**

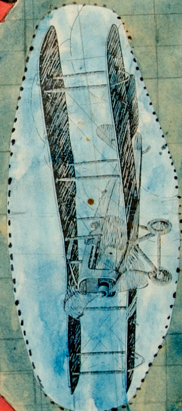
Annual The Aeronautical Exposition

of the
Manufacturers Aircraft
Association

HOUSTON OFFICER
WILL PILOT BIG
AIRPLANE HERE

Leave Pittman's Departure
From New Jersey With
Handley-Page For Elling-
ton Delayed by Mistake

From Lafayette, Wis., June 10, 1911.
The Handley-Page aeroplane, which was
to have been flown by Captain Pittman
from New Jersey to Ellington, Texas,
has been delayed by a mistake in the
arrangement of the flight. The plane
was to have been flown by Captain
Pittman, but it was found that the
arrangement was incorrect. The plane
will now be flown by Captain Pittman
from New Jersey to Ellington, Texas.
The flight will be made on June 11th.
The plane is a Handley-Page model
H.P. 1, which is a biplane with a
span of 40 feet and a length of 30
feet. It has a maximum speed of 100
miles per hour and a range of 1,000
miles. The plane is now being flown
by Captain Pittman from New Jersey
to Ellington, Texas. The flight will
be made on June 11th.



Madison Square Garden, New York City

at Madison
Square Garden

OHAS
OBIN

HOUSTON, TEXAS
MARCH 12, 1911

4332

TO START on a Trans-Atlantic flight in a ship's
hull plane (read strength) is likely
to be made by the Navy. The
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Thomas McEvilley (born 1939, Cincinnati, Ohio - died March 2 2013 nyc) was an art critic, novelist, curator, editor, and professor. He lived in New York City and in the Catskill Mountains region of upstate New York. He had held appointments at Rice University, Yale University, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the School of Visual Arts, and elsewhere. He held a Ph.D. in classical philology and taught numerous courses in philosophy, art history, the Greek and Latin languages, Greek and Indian culture and philosophy, history of religions, and film studies. Dozens of his monographs have appeared in a variety of journals, and a major work of interdisciplinary scholarship, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies*, was published in 2001. For his writings as an art critic he received a Fulbright grant, a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and the Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Art Criticism, given by the College Art Association. Major works in art criticism include *The Triumph of Anti-Art: Conceptual and Performance Art in the Formation of Post-Modernism* (2012), *Art, Love, Friendship: Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Together & Apart* (2010), *Yves the Provocateur: Yves Klein and Twentieth-Century Art* (2010), *Sculpture in the Age of Doubt* (2001), *The Exile's Return: Toward a Redefinition of Painting for the Post- Modern Era* (1994), *Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale* (1993), as well as "Anselm Kiefer: Let 1000 Flowers Bloom", Paul McCarthy, and Dennis Oppenheim. Thomas McEvilley's previous essay, "Charles A.A. Dellschau's Aporetic Archive" appears in the monograph on Charles Dellschau published by Marquand DAP.

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