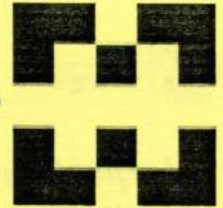




# The Challenger



A Publication of the  
William Rainey Harper College Honors Program

## Transformation: Part of Your Identity

by Kuniko Baba

If we could transform ourselves into different characters or personalities, what kind of person would we choose? Do you have courage or energy to transform yourself?

Transformation has two clearly different parts: your appearance and the inside of yourself, your character. I have never tried to transform myself in appearance since my children were born. I have tried to be a nice mother for two sons. Before they were

born, I sometimes tried to change my image through appearance during the times I was out of work, when I got bored with playing a serious career-woman role. Now I cannot change my appearance on a lack of free time and energy due to being tied up with children's activities.

Let me confess my honest feelings to *The Challenger's* readers. To play a good mother

among my friends, who are mothers of my sons' friends, I wear simple, normal clothes without heavy make-up. I pretend to be happy to do errands for other mothers or their children, which I hate to do. I tell myself that I should be patient, that I should keep good relationships with them for my children.

As a result, I  
(Continued on page 4)

### *Parallels between Transformers and the United States of America.* by Tim Ophus

A few weeks ago, it was decided that this final *Challenger* issue would focus on the theme of "transformation." This can be interpreted a number of different ways and can lead to articles not solely on thick, political themes, the kind that have dominated issues of the *Challenger* all year long. But to be honest, I enjoy those thick political issues, and I've struggled in deciding what to write about. So I visited my favorite online encyclopedia, Wikipedia.org, and typed in "transformation," just to get the creative juices flowing.

And that's when I saw it: Transformers. My favorite Robots in  
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### *Hildegard von Bingen: Celestial Transformation* by Mirja Lorenz

In the Middle Ages, a time of unquestioned male supremacy over female submissiveness, the German nun Hildegard von Bingen, in all her humbleness, simply arose far above the earthly shadow of man-made hierarchy and kindly looked upon the befuddled men beneath her. She composed music and lyrics, wrote several books, created her own monastery, corresponded with the pope, had visions, and became a well-known healer and advisor; in short, she was an expert in many things.

Over 1000 years ago, more exactly  
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May 2006  
Transformation

Editors:  
Kuniko Baba  
Brian Bellows

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## *Harper's Indelible Impact* by Brian Bellows

In the fall I will be transferring to Roosevelt University and continuing my pursuit of a Political Science degree. The transition from one college to another evokes both nostalgia and rumination in my thought process. When I think back to all of the events that transpired during my two-year college career, the clubs I participated in stand out most in my mind. They have defined my college experience the most and have had a positive impact on my life. Being in them has helped to cultivate a vast array of important qualities in me that were applicable to other areas in my life. The Literature and Creative Writing Club, the Harper Democrats, and the Student Senate helped to instill in me a greater sense of leadership and political savvy. I hope that those who read my account of club participation are inspired to join clubs at Harper.

The first club I joined was the Literature and Creative Writing Club. Due to my linguistic inclinations, I quickly began to take a central role in the club. The faculty advisor, Anne Davidovicz, informed me that only two members had been showing up. I endeavored to change this. After the second meeting of the Literature and Creative Writing Club, I had assumed a leadership role. It taught me important leadership skills. As soon as I procured a

leadership position in the club, I had to figure out ways to advertise it and get people to come, and the ability to assert a leadership role drastically altered my personality. Before joining the Literature and Creative Writing Club, I was an introvert. Being the leader, I had to introduce the events. Early on I was afraid to stand behind the heavy wooden podium and deliver a message to the loyal club participants. The first two times I introduced the



events, I was shaky and the club members looked at my leadership skills dubiously.

During the Student Carnival I proved myself, gathering the names of potential club interests and passing out half-sheets of literature. To me, the Carnival was more than just passing out fliers; I learned how to sell myself to an audience, and the club was rewarded because of this. At our second meeting of the year, over thirty-seven people arrived to hear poetry. I actually began to feel like a part of Harper. Before joining the Literature and Creative

Writing Club, I would go to classes and then leave; there was no reason to talk to anyone, and it was difficult to meet people.

The Literature and Creative Writing club afforded me an outlet to read my works. This unique opportunity helped to alter my writing style. Reading my works out loud helped me to hone my style of poetry and to build my oratory skills. I would read an average of ten poems a night and the people who came to the poetry club began to look forward to my works. By the fourth meeting, twenty people were showing up to the club on average. This striking success compelled me to join the Harper Democrats the following year.

Joining the Harper Democrats helped me to hone my debating and political skills. I started off the year as a secretary, taking notes and helping to promulgate advertisements for the club. I designed half-sheet leaflets to hand out at the Student Carnival and put together all of the posters in Photoshop. Being in a Marketing 245 class at the time, I was able to create concise fliers and utilize my new-found marketing technique in interesting ways. My fliers were balanced with borders and designs that employed the class' principles in order to attract the eye.

Promoting for a politically oriented club was difficult. Club members came and went, but we had various interests. Later in the year this club helped to expand my abilities: I researched the information for an entire debate. This arduous process illustrated

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## Contradictive, Confusing Change

by Chris Poulos

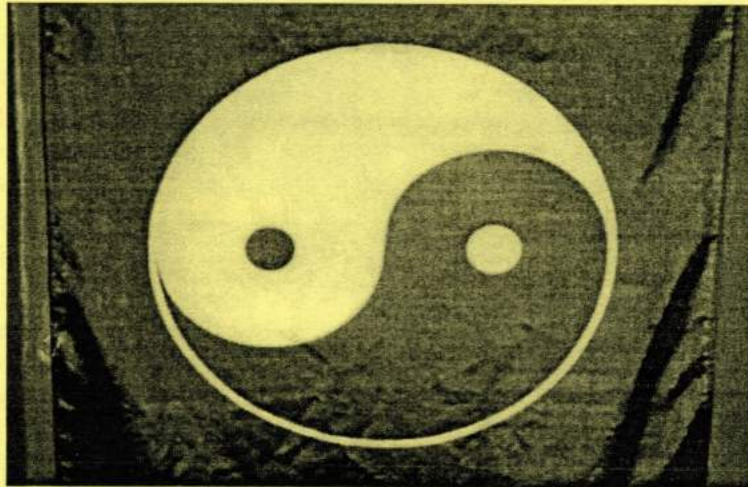
Things are always changing and transforming. What might have been held as a norm in the 1950s (with regard to family life or how to treat women and minorities) is probably not regarded as a norm today. Politics, economics, and social phenomena are always moving and transforming. However, there are many, including myself, who would argue that change on a large scale has not occurred. This does not mean that it cannot occur. History is always moving: maybe not always forward, but it is always moving.

This is an optimistic view to have; however, when one tunes in to the history and current events of this world and learns about all the crazy, horrific, mind-boggling things happening even within a single day, such a philosophy can become overwhelming. Change can no longer be simply defined. It is no longer just your own life of growing up, going to school, getting a job, finding a partner, living on retirement, and then dying. It is far more than all the unexpected mishaps that could happen in your own life. Change is worrying about a declining economy, which may ruin all your idealized plans for the future. Change is thinking about the civil war in Iraq and how that will affect the U.S. and the world. Change is getting headaches wondering why after 140 years black people are still segregated into ghettos. Change is all the progress forward. Change is all the regression backward. Change is the expense of that

progress and regress. Change is this incredibly intertwined, confusing thing.

How can one possibly cope with this? For the sake of length I have summarized two types of people and how *they* cope: Robots and Romantics.

Robots are the emotionless type, the type that thinks of things in abstract, objective terms. It is what I imagine God would have to be like in order to cope with all the muck he/she created. Robots eliminate emotions as a sort of coping mechanism. 30,000 kids dying from malnutrition a day is *just* a statistic, not another one of those confusing, gut-



wrenching problems that accompany a crazy, fast-moving world. Another example of a Robot would be a man like Lawrence Summers. Take his memo suggesting the migration of dirty industries to less-developed countries, for example. I think even Nietzsche would have felt *some* empathy after reading that memo, but that is the point: empathy is not part of a Robot's thinking process. Robots are objectively detached. This is how Robots cope.

Romantics are just the opposite in terms of empathy and emotion. Romantics feel bad about *anything and everything* that gets hurt or dies. So a man like Lawrence Summers would be seen as the sort of Antichrist in a Romantic's philosophy. This does not separate them from Robots, for while they do differ in the emotions category, they both find their ways to cope with the world. Romantics will detach themselves from the world mentally and physically. They will live in communes and eat organic foods. They listen to folk-punk music and feel that one day *everyone* can live like them. They ignore their contribution to society and see themselves as separate entities, free from all worldly ills.

Both Romantics and Robots detach themselves, but in different ways. The Robots detach themselves mentally. Hypothetically, a Robot could physically be massacring a people from another country and not feel bad about it. A Romantic, on the other hand, could *never, ever* do such a thing. A romantic copes with a strategic balance of mental *and* physical detachment. Let's say you have a white, affluent, male Romantic living in a college dorm. Let's also say, this Romantic is anti-corporate, vegan, and organic. This will give him a feeling of detachment because his funds are not going to any evil transnational corporations or any bad food companies.

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### *Transformation: Part of Your Identity*

*(Continued from page 1)*

sometimes feel extremely tired of playing a good mother. I really want to tell them what I am thinking and my feelings and I want to run away from reality. But it is impossible for me to do that because the Japanese community here is so small and I will be criticized if I tell them how I feel straight out. That does not only apply to the Japanese community in a foreign country, but it can also apply to all different nationalities. I hide my real personality and I always put on the mask of a good mother, which is why it has become stressful for me to live in this country.

In order to keep my mentality healthy, I often try to change my environment completely. Thus, for a few hours, two days

per week, I would say that I transform myself into a part-time student taking a class at Harper College. I even feel as if my personality is transforming whenever I speak in English to Americans or non-Japanese. When I speak to Japanese people in Japanese, I can create a different personality because of my fluent Japanese ability. But when I speak in English, I cannot pretend to be a good person due to the language barrier. Therefore, I can be my natural self. I am able to keep my mental balance between a stressful mind in the role of a good mother and a fulfilled mind as a part-time college student.

Through my big mental transformation—back and forth between these completely differ-

ent personae—I wonder which is the real identity for me. The transformation into a student for a few short hours of a few short days might reveal my real, original character. Yet, I feel as if I were transforming myself into a disguised person, a pretender, while I also pretend to be a good mother for other people throughout most of every day. While doing this back-and-forth transformation, I need a lot of positive energy and courage, and at the end of each semester at Harper, I almost feel burned out from the extremely busy life. However, I need the change to survive.

So am I deceiving people who see me as a mother? Do they get angry when they know about it? No, I don't think so. Some of them understand why I am living a double life because they also might be transforming themselves into different characters in other worlds. Everybody has a different face or different transformation, and they need it. Therefore, transformation could be a part of our identity, although we do not realize it.

From my experience, I encourage you to challenge yourself, to transform yourself into a totally different personality. You will find an unknown personality. What a thrilling experience!

And some day, I want the courage to transform my appearance, even if only for a day, and even if only to surprise my good friends in this country.

### *Harper's Indelible Impact*

*(Continued from page 2)*

the demands of researching debate information on a two-day deadline. I pored over many books and cross-referenced internet articles in order to put together a solid debate. Due to my work ethic, I was voted in as the Vice-President of the Harper Democrats at the end of the last semester. Such a leadership position was rewarding. With my participation in both of these clubs, I was an invited to go to an officer's luncheon, which I knew little about.

I was invited to a lunch-

eon with the other club officers, and this was the first time I heard of the Student Senate. The President of the Student Senate offered an invitation for any club leaders to join. It took me a month of contemplation, but I applied for a Representative role, and I received a phone call later that week for an interview. As a Representative for the Liberal Arts Division, I was then thrust into the middle of the Student Senate.

Through the first two weeks I was baffled by the goings-on of the Senate. After the initial adjustment, I became an

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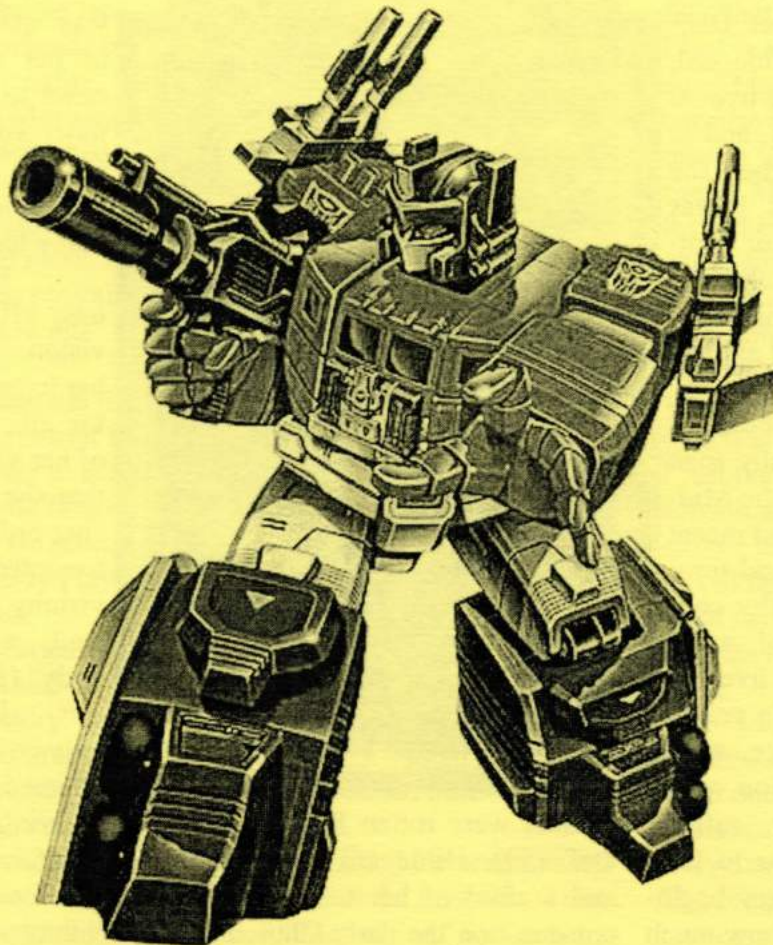
## Parallels between Transformers and the United States of America

*(Continued from page 1)*

Disguise. With such delightful characters as Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots, and Megatron, the headman of the Evil Decepticons, I figured if there's a way I can write about this, I'll have it made. Sadly, however, I started thinking that this probably wouldn't work for me, because as I said earlier, I lean more towards quasi-weightier subjects than the toys and corresponding cartoon series of my youth. Then, I recalled the Transformers' backstory (taken from Wikipedia.org) . . .

Ravaged from the war between the Autobots and the Decepticons, the planet Cybertron was almost completely drained of its energy resources. Neither side had enough energy reserves to continue the battle, which led to a stalemate. The Autobots, with their leader Optimus Prime, left their home planet on a mission to avert the threat posed to it by an asteroid field. The Decepticons pursued them and boarded the Autobot starship (called the Ark in the comic). During the ensuing fight, they crash-landed into a volcano on prehistoric Earth.

Awakened in 1984 when the volcano erupted, the Decepticons were repaired by the ship's computer and fled, leaving the still-deactivated Autobots behind. Decepticon leader Megatron soon discovered that Earth had nearly limitless energy resources. Hoping to tip the war's balance in favor of the Decepticons, Megatron planned to transfer Earth's energy to Cybertron even if it meant ruining the Earth in the process.



Unfortunately for them, the Decepticons made a fatal mistake. After the Decepticons were awakened, the Autobots had remained deactivated on the Ark. But upon leaving, the Decepticon Star stream had simply blasted the rocks

around the ship to seal the entrance, rather than destroying the helpless Autobots altogether; the jolt from the explosions moved Optimus Prime within the Ark's repair beam. The remaining Autobots were subsequently revived and rose up to become the protectors of life on Earth and the Decepticons' nemeses. (Wikipedia.org)

Yes! The quasi-weightiness I was seeking is here, and I'll point out some key sections. First, Cybertron's resources had been depleted, and both the Autobots and Decepticons needed to find alternative sources for their resources. Second, the Evil Decepticons, having discovered resources from a far away land (Earth), started a war in order to gain these resources. Not only that, but they were so set on gaining these resources they were willing to ruin Earth in the process.

So let's now take the Transformer universe and use it to examine our own. First, we, like Cybertron, are beginning to notice our resource limitations. From rising gas prices, to our President warning of our oil addiction, the signs are everywhere. Some estimates

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*Hildegard von Bingen: Celestial Transformation**(Continued from page 1)*

in the year 1098, in the small German town of Bermersheim, Mechthild of Merxheim was lying in her bed, shaken by the aching arrival of her 10<sup>th</sup> child, a baby girl, Hildegard, who in turn was bitterly howling her first hello into the world (Maddocks 17).

Hildegard had always been weak and sickly. When she was eight, her family gave her as a tithe to the monastery of Disibodenberg (19). For Hildegard, this meant saying good-bye to her mother, to her father, and to her siblings for good when she was only eight years old. It was not unusual at that time for families to give one of their children to a cloister, reassuring their good relationship to God and the Church (18).

Hildegard was about 14 years old when she finally took the veil, voluntarily. In the Middle Ages, becoming a nun meant becoming Jesus' bride and turning away from any earthy concerns. Most nuns (and some monks) lived secluded lives in their simple cells, as if in prison (29). Extreme abstinence, such as starvation and isolation, was popular, bringing the sufferer closer to death, and thus to their groom. Yet, from the very beginning, Hildegard didn't show much motivation to exaggerate abandonment. The biographer of Hildegard's Abbess mentions that Hildegard, in contrast to many others, "seems not to have aspired to the higher flights of ambitious

asceticism" (Maddocks 54). Rather than denying life, she seemed more inclined to celebrate life as a gift of God.

However, according to Fiona Maddocks, "silence and humility [was] the only way [for women] to honor God" (59). Moreover, "If men, as the early Church Fathers considered, were evil merely from the waist down,



women were rotten from head to toe" (59). Hildegard was a nun and a child of her time. She did not question the early Church Fathers; rather, she embraced humbleness and agreed to common gender roles. Indeed, she didn't try to revolt by any means. Yet, something from deep within her would eventually overgrow her

chains of the time. From the age of three, she had been experiencing frequent visions. She was fairly shocked, and she did not tell anybody for forty years. "Out of fear of people I dared not tell anyone" (56).

In the year 1136, Hildegard became an Abbess (73). All of a sudden confronted with responsibility, Hildegard's (or God's) drive to expression was sparked, leading her out of her silence, and she was never to be stopped again. Her inner voice (or God's voice), now unhindered, "transformed" to the outside in many forms.

But first, a serious illness afflicted her. In another vision, God demanded from her to tell her visions once and for all. Describing the nature of her visions, she emphasized that she was fully awake, that "her ordinary sight was not interrupted." Rather, she saw her visions with "the eyes of her soul, not the eyes of her body" (58-59).

Hildegard was not the only nun of her time who claimed to have visions. In fact, having visions seemed quite popular for nuns, such as Benedictine Elisabeth von Schönau, Mechthild von Magdeburg, and Mechthild von Hackborn. Some historians suspect that the female passive character suits the mystical experience of becoming the receiver of God's voice (57).

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## Japanese Artist, Morimura's Transformation as a Self-Portrait

By Kuniko Baba

I wish I could be Vivien Leigh, staring straight at viewers and wearing a beautiful, satiny, old-fashioned dress. Oh, this is just imagination, a dream in my mind. Everybody would laugh at me if I say I wish to transform into Vivien Leigh. But have you ever thought about such a fantasy, turning yourself into a famous actor or actress?

I know of one brave Japanese male artist who succeeds in turning his fantasy into reality. His name is Yasumasa Morimura. Amazingly, he has transformed himself into more than 300 people, such as famous actresses, pop stars like Madonna, and more. He takes photographs of his portraits and has exhibited them as artworks.

Since his sensational debut of van Gogh's self-portrait in 1985, he shocked viewers to literally inserting himself into famous Western masterpieces. He placed himself into Manet's "Boy Playing Flute" and "Olympia," Velasquez's "Infanta Margarita," and various Rembrandt self-portraits in his "Art History" series. He broke the taboo in the art world by borrowing directly from a masterpiece. Although conservative art critics or specialists were puzzled by Morimura's unique expression in Japan, by the early 1990's he received a worldwide reputation. Foreign art specialists pointed out the great impact of his works, particularly because of his sexual, racial, and cultural ambiguities.

Ironically, the first time I saw his works was not in Japan but, rather, in America, at his first solo exhibition in Chicago's Contemporary Museum of Art in 1992. (This was the first time a contemporary Japanese artist enjoyed a solo exhibition in this museum.) The bizarre image of his self-portraits had a big impact on me, and I was very con-



fused by his approach. When I went back to Japan, I started to pursue his works because I wanted to know why he transformed himself into different persons.

In 1998, he placed himself squarely within the mysterious masterpiece, "Mona Lisa," by Leonardo da Vinci. (Take a *really* good look at the image just above, especially the face.) He used computer scanners to superimpose himself into the artwork. His complete transformation into the "Mona Lisa" was suc-

cessful because my son, who was three years old at that time, pointed out da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in an art book and said "That's Mr. Morimura."

Morimura mentioned my son's comment in his essay column in the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* newspaper later. He explained: maybe the boy felt "that Leonardo's 'Mona Lisa' is a painting that imitated Morimura's self-portrait because he had seen Morimura's 'Mona Lisa' version first." Morimura also wrote that other people had the same experience. When they saw the original masterpieces in art catalogues or museums in the world, they felt strange, wondering why Morimura's face was in the masterpieces. I feel the same way. I am sometimes confused by Morimura's humorous image mixed up with the image of great masterpieces. I often wonder which is the original work.

For his "Mona Lisa" exhibition, Morimura was invited onto the "Sunday Art Museum" program on NHK television in Japan in 1998. The program showed the process of his transformation into the Western masterpiece. He explained the importance of the process. He closely researches each character of actress or each image of the

(Continued on page 9)



### Hildegard von Bingen: Celestial Transformation

(Continued from page 6)

Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, Professor of Comparative Literature, states that the nuns' contemplative, enclosed and ascetic life style might have enhanced women's receptivity for mystical experiences (Petroff). Whatever the reason and the nature of this "fashion," visions provided women with an "official" voice. They gained importance and respect.

In the Middle Ages especially, nuns lived a humble, isolated life; however, at least they benefited from two highly desirable advantages. Besides the outlook of visions, nuns usually had access to the monastic libraries, the heart of information in the Middle Ages, which offered women the unique occasion to feast on knowledge, which was (luckily) accepted. Interestingly, at this time, the wish to become a nun became increasingly popular among young girls (Maddocks 57). However, when the center of knowledge shifted to universities, the opportunity to access knowledge was taken from women (149).

When Hildegard's secret about her visions was out, the monks (including Hildegard herself) longed for Papal consent. He agreed to read parts of her first book, *Scivias* (Know the Ways), and sent assistants who examined her in person. Finally, the Pope officially sanctioned her visions, making her popular and powerful

(78).

Her visions prospered as well. Next, God asked her to move with all her nuns to a new cloister — to Rupertsberg, away from the monks, who, not surprisingly, revolted when hearing this message. Like an answer from God, Hildegard became very ill again. A monk

### Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen



Matthew Fox

should control a woman's phantasm, but which monk can turn his voice against God? Eventually, they grudgingly let her go, causing Hildegard's immediate recovery and speedy move. She took only one male person with her, her secretary Volmar, who faithfully wrote down all her visions (93).

With Hildegard's writings, visions, music, and private monastery, her fame, reputation and wealth grew. Affluent families sent their daughters as nuns to Hilde-

gard's custody, offering generous dowries, such as houses or land. Numerous people traveled to Rupertsberg, seeking advice and Hildegard's healing powers, which she gladly gave. Moreover, she started to travel herself and to preach, two other taboos for women in the Middle Ages (213). Hildegard died September 17, 1179, at the age of 81 years (XVIII).

During her life, Hildegard wrote three visionary books: *Scivias* (Know the Ways), *Liber Vitae Meritorum* (The Book of Life's Merits), and *Liber Divinorum Operum* (The Book of Divine Works). Her visions are expressed in paintings and descriptions that explain creation, redemption, sanctification, how the world evolved, the fall of the angels, and the dialogue between virtues and vices (277-279).

She also wrote two "scientific" books, *Physica* and *Causae and Curae*. These works provide a thorough overview about medicine. She describes the physiology of the human body in detail, including the male and female sexual nature (280). For Hildegard, virginity is "the most beautiful fruit," yet her description about sexual intercourse does not seem to lack experience (163):

When a woman is making love with a man, a sense of heat in her

(Continued on page 10)





## Japanese Artist, Morimura's Transformation as a Self-Portrait



(continued from page 7)

masterpiece and prepares clothes, accessories, and wigs, which should be close to the real photographs or works. He closely studies poses and looks. Morimura seems to enjoy the process of transforming into a different person.

In his book, *Lecture of Artistic Anatomy*, Morimura wrote:

Rembrandt pursued himself seriously. "Who am I?" But I am different. I continue making self-portraits in order to discover the different characteristics of myself. I am experimenting so that I can continue to change—through what I call the "transforming-type self-portrait." (*Lecture 225*)

He confessed in my interview for the *Japan Times* in 1994 that in his youth he failed to deal with people. Graduating from Kyoto Art University, Morimura was employed in a major company. But he quit the company after three days. He ran away from the company's dormitory because he realized he couldn't even pretend to adjust to group life. Then he tried to be a teacher,

but he failed again. "It was an unbearable situation. For me the only way to get out was art," he said. He created art works to express his anger at society. Ironically, people began to say complimentary things about his works, and art became his link with society. "It is strange that I have been able to find a link to society through antisocial activity," he said. "I used to hate to talk to people, but since I started making art I've changed. . . . [A]rt is a kind of therapy, a tool to help me live."

Morimura's works are loved not only by art specialists but also by general young people. Somehow, they say Morimura encourages them, and they need Morimura's strength. Whenever Morimura's fans see his works, probably they have a strong instinct that they can share the same feelings of alienation from society. I have seen his enthusiastic fans often chase after Morimura whenever he lectures in Japan, treating him as if he were an idol on TV.

Some art specialists see Morimura's work as art for healing. Toyoko Tsukamoto at Soh Gallery in Tokyo said in a 1997 interview for the *Japan Times*, "Those young people who deal with kosupure (costume play) games are oppressed by society, so when a top artist like

Morimura completely changes himself into female characters, they are relieved."

In Japan, the popular trend of kosupure (costume play) is the style of dress of a popular hero or heroine from animated films or computer games in Japan. The young people's strong desire to transform themselves into those characters could reflect idea that value of society is always changing. According to a 1998 interview for *Japan Times*, Morimura gave me a big answer to why people experiment with transformation:

Society usually gives people roles, such as age, gender, occupation. Recently, however, the value of society has been shaken down,



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*Hildegard von Bingen: Celestial Transformation*

(Continued from page 8)

brain, which brings forth with it sensual delight, communicates the taste of that delight during the act and summons forth the emission of the man's seed. And when the seed has fallen into its place, that vehement heat descending from her brain draws the seed to itself and holds it, and soon the woman's sexual organs contract and all the parts that are ready to open up during the time of menstruation now close, in the same way as a strong man can hold something closed in his fist. (164)



Although the only purpose of sexual intercourse was reproduction, although sexual pleasure was directly related to sin, and although even thinking of a women's sexual pleasure was a taboo, she, the medieval, humble nun, shamelessly describes in all details the female orgasm.

Her music, finally, reminds us of the typical medieval, unison sound, but at the same time, it

sounds somehow modern. She used a high tone range, long phrases, and manifold melodic ornaments on one syllabus. Her music was exclusively written for the praise of God. Her main musical work is the *Ordo Virtutum*, which means "play of the virtues." In fact, she is the first woman who composed a musical oratorio. An oratorio is a musical play, in which the performers sing a religious story, accompanied by symbolic gestures.

Her humbleness gave her the credibility with which she overcame all her apparent chains. But was it merely humbleness that gave her the strength to prefer her own (or God's) will over others, or was it rather courage not to ignore her own knowledge for the sake of ridiculous rules? Was she so humble to respect God's will, or was it self-respect that connected her so well with her spirituality? Whether her visions were caused by her migraines, as some say (63), whether they were direct signs of God, or whether she actually just had a very deep connection within herself, she did transfer her spirituality into words, music, pictures, and deeds, at a time when none of her actions seemed to be possible. "Hildegard is in love with life. And life, for Hildegard . . . becomes a synonym for God" ("Hildegard von Bingen: A Renaissance Woman . . ."). After more than 1000 years, her music, paintings, writings, and her recipes still inspire people; her spirituality seems to be alive, transforming energies to those willing to listen.



*Parallels between Transformers and the United States of America*

*(Continued from page 5)*

say that if the world continues consuming oil at its current pace, we will only have 40 to 80 years of oil left. Our resource limitations are nearing pre-1984 Cybertron levels.

As for fighting a war in a far-away land for resources, this hits even closer to home. While it is debatable as to precisely why the United States is fighting the war in Iraq, resources have something to do with it. There are other dictators in the world, dictators whose people could really benefit from democracy. There must be some reason why we chose to "assist" Iraq first, and many would argue that that reason is oil.

By looking at these parallels, I find myself feeling a little uncomfortable. The U.S. Government and its people, in this model, do not come across as the Autobots, being led by an Optimus Prime-like George Bush. America instead looks a lot like the Evil Decepticons. And I was raised to think that they are evil. So if I hold true to my Transformer analogy, what does this mean? Well, perhaps the Decepticons were actually not so bad after all. They were just doing what they had to do to stay in control. Or does it mean that the United States, at least in some ways, is evil.

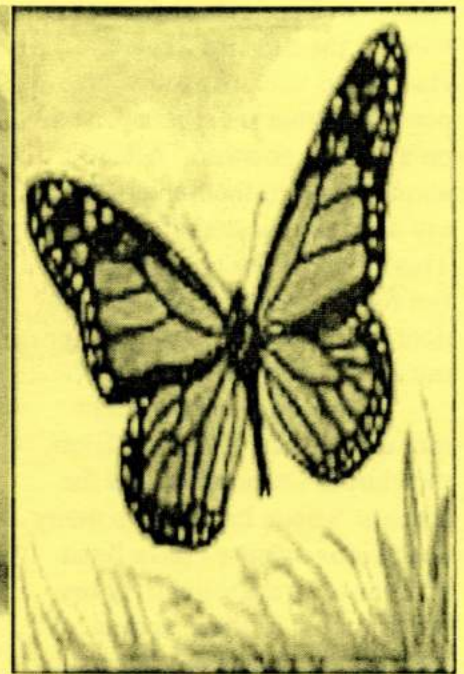
And while these parallels are obviously not perfect, and the people who created Transformers are not infallible, I still think it's worth pondering, if only as you read this article. As for me, I'll be anxiously awaiting someone to step up, like Optimus Prime, and heroically defend Earth from the forces of evil. Or if nothing else, maybe he or she can help me find some good deals on gas.

*Japanese Artist, Morimura's Transformation as a Self-Portrait*

*(Continued from page 9)*

so we ourselves have also been upset and are beginning to question why we have to act out such roles. Maybe people's desires to be different types of people are increasing. I can be anybody. I am just trying to show that everybody can be who they want to be in the future.

I am completely persuaded by his answer, and my fantasy to be a different person could come true some day.



***Contradictive, Confusing . . .***

*(Continued from page 3)*

The actual act of buying food, clothes, and other items is the physical detachment he uses, but where does the mental detachment come from? Well, he had to neglect that his race, gender, economic status already makes him part of an operating society. He mentally detaches himself from this aspect of life.

I am sure there are many ways to cope with this contradictive, confusing, ever-changing world. I have given you only two extremes. It is up to you to choose. Be a Romantic, be a Robot, be a mix between the two, or make one up—it'll be fun! Whichever one you choose is up to you; the point of the matter is that change and craziness is inevitable. And somehow, you must deal with it.

*Harper's Indelible Impact**(Continued from page 4)*

integral member of the Student Senate, completing all of the necessary activities it entailed, and carefully researching all of the issues that we were to vote on. At that time I did not have a Senator position, so I would craft my arguments and present them to the Student Senate. Having no vote, my job was to persuade other members to vote on a certain position. After about a month, the Senator from my division vacated his seat. This gave me the opportunity to run for his position, and the Student Senate assented to giving me his Senator seat.

My roles in the Literature and Creative Writing Club, the Harper Democrats, and the Student Senate have led to many auspicious events; I have been profoundly transformed by my participation in these venues. I very rarely missed any days during my two years at Harper college. Currently, I am in the Kappa Beta Delta, Phi Theta Kappa, and the Harper Honors Society because of the strong work ethic these clubs imbued in me. The ability to organize fliers, talk to large groups of people with relatively little anxiety, and research business-oriented club activities was applicable to all of my classroom lessons. I can attribute my scholastic success to the clubs I am involved in. Without their influence, my time at Harper College would have been devoid of many meaningful experiences.

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The Spring, 2006 staff of *The Challenger* hopes that you, the reader, will have your own wonderful summer of transformation. Please accept our very best wishes.