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# The Independent Professional Point: Use of a recorded musical story, entitled The Point, for teaching English to speakers of other languages

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*School for International Training*

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THE INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL POINT:

Use of a recorded musical story, entitled The Point,  
for teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Robert Stuart Duncan

B.A. University of Winnipeg 1979

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the  
School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vt.

June 1982

This project by Robert Stuart Duncan is accepted in  
its present form.

Date Aug. 4, 1982 Principal Adviser Michael Gerald

Project Adviser/Reader: Clare Oglesby

## Abstract

This project discusses use of The Point, a recorded story of songs and narrations, as a TESOL tool. A brief summary of the story line is provided followed by why the author feels it has valuable TESOL application. Actual case studies, in which The Point was used, plus suggestions towards classroom applications are presented.

The following materials are included: letters to students which introduce The Point; a transcription of the recording; a comic book; a do-it-yourself dictionary; a cassette recording of The Point and an animated film suggestion.

The project encourages creative thinking and creative teaching.

ERIC Descriptors: English (second language), Audiovisual Instruction, Creative Thinking, Creative Teaching.

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## I. A Note to the Reader

The purpose of this project is to introduce a musical story album, entitled The Point, to the TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) field. Some advantages of using The Point to improve speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities are discussed. Case studies, in which The Point was used with a beginner and an advanced level student, are shared with the reader. The cassette recording, various supplementary materials and some suggestions as to how they may be used are included.

Use of The Point is intended to be flexible. In an intensive language program it is suggested that The Point serve as supplementary material. For a group that just met one hour per week, it might serve as the main material for a ten week program. Readers are encouraged to think of how it could be adapted to their purposes.

This project is dedicated to those who feel that language is beautifully mysterious, yet can and should be fun to learn. Renee Descartes, a mathematician by trade, made the following comment: "...I am convinced that it (mathematics) is a more powerful instrument of knowledge than any other that has been bequeathed to us by human agency, as being the source of all things."<sup>1</sup> Descartes died in 1650 but his thoughts live on, in a technological world that tries to quantify everything.

Ironically enough Descartes had to resort to language to convey his opinions on mathematics! Today so many language materials and methodologies purport to offer some single best way to learn a language. I refuse to believe it's that simple. Language cannot be explained by mathematics nor does it conform to any quantitative scientific, mechanical model. As an antithesis to the many structured approaches to language teaching, I offer The Point.<sup>2</sup>

This project provides no guaranteed formulas, axioms or recipes for teaching English. Rather it is food for thought, directed at creative language teachers. The heart of the project lies in the recording itself. Let me suggest that before reading any further the reader do three things:

1. Take the cassette from the back cover of the project;\*
2. Turn to The Point comic book (see Table of Contents);
3. Listen to tape and follow the comic book.

Now that you've listened to the recording, check the "Table of Contents" to see what sections of the project might interest you. There are also many materials provided to benefit students and teachers alike.

One final comment: Students learning a new language must learn to accept certain cultural and linguistic differences.

The Point is a brilliant vehicle to this end.

II. What's "The Point?" A brief summary of the recording.

\*For those who don't have a cassette player (or the time to listen) the next section of this paper summarizes the story.

i) The Narratives: The Point is life, adventure, fantasy, dreams, everyday things and strange things. It is an eclectic collage of life as experienced by a little boy (Oblio) and his dog (Arrow). Sometimes serious, sometimes bizarre and always entertaining this story frees the imagination to gallop in all directions.

Oblio was born, the only pointless person in the Land of Point. Everybody and everything else in the Land of Point had a point. Most persons accepted Oblio's pointless condition but certain evil forces demanded his banishment. Hence Oblio and Arrow were banished to the Pointless Forest.

Anticipating some amorphous, asymmetrical forest of formlessness they set off. Their visit was one of unexpected revelations, for all things and all people in the Pointless Forest turned out to have a point. Oblio encountered many peculiar types in these strange woods, each with their own unconventional beliefs.

Upon reflection, Oblio realized that the citizens of his homeland held many misconceptions regarding the Pointless Forest. Oblio returned to the Land of Point stating that he may have been unjustly accused. The major wicked element in society, represented by an evil count, became violent with Oblio. However, good triumphed over evil and Oblio and Arrow were allowed to remain in their country.

ii) The Songs: Preceding each narrative there is a song. These songs cover a broad spectrum of musical



classification and should appeal to a wide range of music tastes. They make use of much poetic and idiomatic language.

Supplementing the narrations with lyrics about traditions, friendships, customs, dreams, and love, the songs also pose many questions. They look at things from different points of view and then ask the listener whether it's necessary to have more than one outlook on life. Creative thinking is a natural by-product in the search for answers to such questions.

### III. Points in Favor of Using "The Point"

#### i) With Listening and speaking

I had a French Canadian friend, from the Province of Quebec, who told me that he knew almost no English. He then began to recite voluminous amounts of lyrics from popular English songs. He had memorized large strings of words but attached no meaning to these chunks of language.

One lyric he had set to memory was, "I'm gonna love yuh till the end uh time." (I have attempted to write it phonetically as it is sung and as he pronounced it.) With a bit of instruction I had soon helped him attach meaning to this song line. The whole process was simple since he had already developed his listening and speaking skills. He had learned so much English unconsciously, at ease and on his own.

The rock group Pink Floyd was one of his favorite bands. Had their music been strictly instrumental or had all the lyrics been in a language other than English, he would have

learned no English from them. Yet, as it was, Pink Floyd acted as a teacher combining phonemes into meaningful forms and passing these on to the young man. Without tedious listening and pronunciation exercises he had made great gains, becoming fairly proficient with the English sound system.

The idea that music can affect one's body is not new. It has been found that music can influence the rhythm of breathing and thus relax the body, heightening awareness and mental receptivity. For centuries important information has been memorized and passed on through songs and poetry. It has been found that foreign languages can be taught more effectively and rapidly, and with greater recall, through the use of songs rather than mechanical classroom drills.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to offering music, The Point contains a great deal of language to listen to and talk about. There are about five hundred separate lexical items listed in the dictionary at the end of this project. These words, through various inflections and as they appear in different contexts take on multifold meanings within The Point.

The Point can be of benefit to students of all levels, albeit in different aspects of any given skill. A song may well prompt an advanced student to share his or her views on an abstract concept expressed by the lyrics. During the same period of time a beginner might simply understand and be able to repeat one of the song's lines. Both are appreciable accomplishments in the development of their listening and speaking skills. The Point gives one a creative framework within which to improve English aural/oral ability.

ii) With reading and writing

The Point covers numerous facets of life. It deals with everyday things like towns, a forest, people and a dog. Less tangible concepts such as friendship, depression and loneliness are also examined. Such a broad gamut of ideas provides students with a wide array of reading and writing alternatives.

One learns to read by reading and people are most motivated to read material that interests them. Music continues throughout the narratives on the recording, making them very listenable. Relaxed and receptive students can follow the transcriptions as they listen to the narrator. Since the narrations are read at quite a quick pace some students could actually quicken their reading ability by this method.

The comic book, provided with the materials, supplements the audio and written material. It is fun for everyone and can be especially useful for beginners. Containing some script along with the cartoons, it allows new words to receive visual reinforcement. Beginners can grasp general ideas even if they don't understand each word. The cassette, comic book, transcription and dictionary all play a role in motivating the student to read and write. The Point tends to generate discussion. The teacher can then provide reading and writing exercises related to the discussions.

It may well be impossible to teach language... language is received, understood, processed, stored and eventually called upon to express an idea. It

has then been learned. 'Teaching' language is arranging the environment so that this process occurs.<sup>4</sup>

Creating an atmosphere where such learning occurs is the goal of every concerned teacher. It seems many persons in literate societies have learned to read and write in spite of the methods they were taught by. Whereas readers and writers in literate societies are numerous, the numbers of persons with critical reading and creative writing skills are immeasurably smaller. Use of The Point is a stimulus to the development of basic reading and writing skills. Furthermore, it will nurture and not repress a student's desire to use these skills in his/her own personal manner.

IV. A Case in Point: two case studies in which "The Point" was used for TESOL.

Up to this point, the paper has suggested some reasons as to why The Point deserves TESOL application. This section will talk about some actual work done using The Point. Both situations to be described represent my working one-on-one with the learner. Section V of the paper will comment on more general classroom applications.

The one-on-one situations served as windows through which I could closely observe and analyse what took place. Would it be successful? Would the students enjoy it? Would I find the material useful? Could it work with students of very different language levels? There were many questions to be

answered.

The case studies were performed in response to these and other questions. The major question being: Was The Point pragmatic; would it work? What follows is not a daily journal and collection of lesson plans. Rather it is a synthesis of what transpired in two real situations.

1) Use with an advanced level student:

Olivier, a native French speaker, had been studying at an American high school for three years. His aural/oral skills were very good. His desire was to improve his reading and writing skills in preparation for college. He was meeting with a private tutor for six hours a day over a three week period. During this time I met with him for two or three half-hour sessions per week. We worked with The Point to supplement his regular class activities.

To begin with he was given a copy of the first song, "Everything's Got 'Em." Some of the words had been blanked out, and the assignment was to listen to the recording and fill in the blanks. The exercise proved to be unchallenging and much too simple. However it led to a discussion on the point of life in the Land of Point, the point of life in Brattleboro, Vermont and the point of life in general. What started as a "flop" exercise became a very good first lesson.

Transcribing involves making a written copy of recorded or dictated material. We examined the transcription and noted

how at times it did not conform to standard written English. We discussed how intonation, pause, stress and sound-effects on a recording cannot always be easily transferred to paper. Sometimes the writer must choose more precise vocabulary to get a point across. On his own initiative Olivier would rephrase various parts of the transcription. In doing so he made fine use of a thesaurus.

In one of our early meetings a goal was set: to write something and have it published. Since we were working with recorded material we decided to incorporate a tape recorder into the project. I did a sample interview in which I asked a fellow about a college which Olivier was interested in attending. This served as an introduction to English interviewing techniques.

Olivier had toured a nuclear power station and found it very interesting. Therefore he decided to cover a local nuclear disarmament rally and submit a report to the School for International Training newsletter. Olivier attended the rally accompanied by his teacher (Kevin O'Brien) and me. He recorded pertinent portions of the speeches and did all the interviews by himself. With encouragement from his teacher cum editor, the cub reporter met the deadline! A reprint of his article appears on page 102.

The music of the now deceased Roland Kirk (winner of Playboy magazine's musician of the year award, miscellaneous instruments category) was once described as, "predictably

unpredictable." This phrase was an apt description of my meetings with Olivier. But even if the outcome were unpredictable, the directions were always positive. When we talked about the word "banishment", the word "ostracized" came up. This led to a discussion on Henry Miller, the American author who did much of his writing in Paris. Miller, was for a long time ostracized in America, because his writing was considered pornographic. Olivier read a short article on Miller and answered some questions which I had prepared.

There seemed to be no end to the things we could have done but time ran out. The Point had proven itself a valuable teaching source in this case study. Hence I recommend its use with students of very advanced levels.

ii) Use with a beginning level student:

Nori, a Japanese speaker, had a very limited knowledge of English. He had great difficulty with pronunciation and could seldom write or utter one complete sentence that did not contain at least one major error.

I wanted to try The Point out with him as a contrast to the work done with an advanced student. The only guideline used was to dwell on actual material in the transcription. With Olivier, the materials had served as a starting point (as opposed to the central lesson focus) for most of the work.

Nori was not a raw beginner but his needs were absolutely different than those of Olivier. I met with Nori for about

six separate half-hour sessions and we never got beyond the first song. Lessons included a lot of work to explain the meaning of the song. This was accomplished through the use of rods, role playing and diagrams. The comic book (see Appendix) was also helpful and Nori learned much through the use of it.

Nori had many pronunciation difficulties which became apparent as we worked through the song. During this time he became aware that "rice" and "lice" were different sounding words. I noticed definite improvement in Nori's aural/oral capabilities as we did pronunciation exercises based on the song.

The fascinating thing about this case was that Nori never lost interest. He would tap his feet as he listened to the song again and again. He said he enjoyed it and he memorized most of the lyrics. At the end of our time together, I silently pointed out some of the pictures in the comic book. Nori commented with proficiency on these pictures. Even after all the repetition we did, he remained refreshed and enthused.

Nori has asked for copies of the cassette, transcription and comic book. He wants to supplement his present English program with them. He also wants to send the material to his friend who is studying English in Japan. Nori feels it would be useful as self-study material.



V. Point of Departure: some comments on getting started with the material.

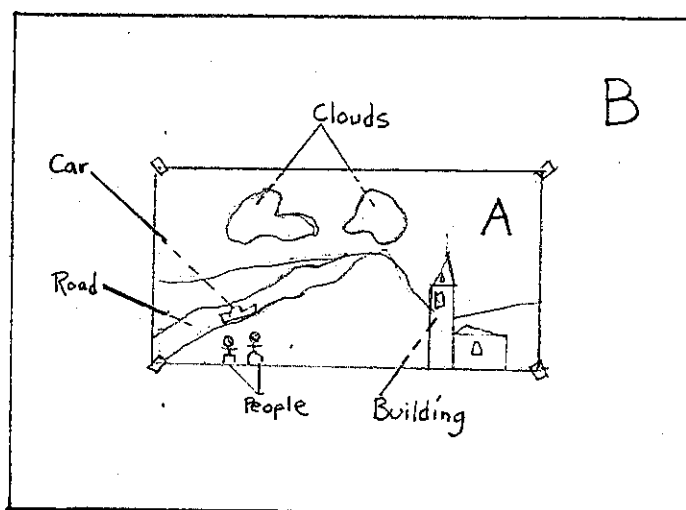
During his remarks to the 1981-82 MAT group of the School for International Training, Caleb Gattegno addressed the question: "Where is the correct point to start, when learning a language?" In responding to the question, he drew an analogy between language and a forest. There is no one special place or gate through which to enter a forest, all points of entry are equally valid. Once learning goals have been established, you may want to use The Point as one of the means to accomplish these goals. The Point is a valid point of departure to achieve so many language needs.

The Point is a story which follows a chronological order. Therefore, if time permits, it would be interesting to develop lessons around the songs and narratives in the order they appear on the recording. Assuming one starts with the first song (Everything's Got 'em), here are some ideas that could be used:

First hand out "Letter to Student" (translated in the case of beginners), contained in Appendix A.

- draw pictures representing parts of the song
- rewrite the song in another way
- memorize part or all of the song
- listen to song and fill in blanks on copy provided
- sing the song
- substitute antonyms - alter meaning
- substitute synonyms - retain meaning

- write composition about one's hometown
- write composition about town/city in which language class is located.
- oral substitution drills based on song
- scrambled sentences based on lyrics
- make pointed caps and do role playing
- mini theatre production
- field trip to record all pointed items found
- pass a pair of objects behind backs and guess, "Who's got 'em?"
- tape town/city scene on blackboard and have students identify items (see below)



- A = Picture
- B = Blackboard
- chalk line on blackboard
- lighter chalk line on picture

- student orally recounts, using rods, a description of a town scene important to him or her. For more information on this technique see Islamabad Procedure.<sup>5</sup>
- photography field trip: take a picture of a pointed

section of an object and try to have other students guess what the object is.

The best preparation for using The Point is to approach it with the correct frame of mind. It doesn't go from simple present to present continuous to simple past but don't let that scare you. Don't plan too much as to the specifics of what you will do with The Point. An incredible amount of creative energy went into the production of the record album. Save your energy so that you can respond creatively as students react to what they see and hear.

Teachers should encourage students' use of materials in the Appendixes. Transcription vocabulary can be found in the "Do-it-yourself Dictionary." Students can then give their own definition and provide a sample sentence using the word. This could be done in small groups, as homework or together in class. The teacher could keep a copy of dictionary and as satisfactory definitions were found, have them typed in. Much language can be elicited from students by silently guiding them through the comic book and allowing them to talk about what they see.

Proficient language use means...that language is listened to with understanding, spoken with meaning, read with comprehension and written with clarity and style. Language is learned at varying rates, at different stages within individual development and at a different pace for each learner. This broad range of language acquisition rates makes materials that are flexible and adaptive to all learning rates and levels desirable, if not essential.<sup>6</sup>

The Point provides such materials. Don't try to fit it

all into structured lesson plans placed neatly along a continuum. Remember that you are teaching language and not mathematics. Then turn on The Point and allow the creative energy to flow.

Be a creative teacher, risk a little and gain a lot. Get The Point?!

VI. Appendixes:

- A. Letter to Students. This is to be handed out to students prior to starting work with The Point. Translated copies should be used for beginners.
- B. Comic Book.
- C. Transcription. Space is provided to record at what point each transcription starts/finishes on your cassette.
- D. Do-it-yourself Dictionary. Alphabetical listing of transcription vocabulary. To be completed by students. (See Section V, p. 14 re: suggested uses)
- E. Animated Film: The Point.
- F. Olivier's Article.
- G. Photograph: Photo of author and the case study participants.
- H. Cassette Recording: The Point. (Inserted in back cover.)

## Appendix A: LETTER TO STUDENTS

To be handed out to students prior  
to starting work with The Point.  
Translated copies should be used  
for beginners.

LETTER TO STUDENTS

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad days.

It's natural!

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

Point has different meanings in different contexts.

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblío) and his dog (Arrow).

We will join Oblío as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

Enjoy the story!



# JAPANESE STUDENT

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

これから "ポイント" というストーリーを勉強します。

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

このストーリーはミュージカルにできてあり、これにより、聞く、話す、読むそして書く力を上達させようというもので。

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

会話を学ぶことは上り下りの過程ですから、今日

"すべてがうまくいっている、素晴らしい!" と思えば

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

翌日は、"どうしてこんなにできななくなった?" と思っ

たりするということになります。

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad

days.

でも、いつも良い日か、悪い日か、あるにすぎないので、気にしないで下さい。

It's natural!

それは普通なのです。

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

わからない時はいつでも質問して下さい。

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

多分あなたの最初の質問は、"ポイント、何んたいう?" かもしれません。

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

これは良い質問ですが、はっきりした解答はありません。  
Point has different meanings in different contexts.

というのは、ポイントはその時と場合によって、違った意味を持っているからです。

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblio) and his dog (Arrow). このストーリーはオブリオという名の男の子とアローという犬の冒険を物語っています。

We will join Oblio as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

私達もオブリオの色々な体験、経験を通して彼の冒険に参加します。

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

このストーリーの転写は口語の英語ですので、時々標準文語体の文法にそわないことがあります。

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

このポイントを通して、数多くの意味を示す言葉のポイントと共に、

英語について興味ある多くのことを発見することができます。

Enjoy the story!

ストーリーを楽しんで下さい！

# ARABIC STUDENT

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

- نحن سوف ندرس قصه تسمى: "النقطة".

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

أننا قصه موسيقية ستتيح لك فرص لتحسين مهارات السماع، الكلام، والقراءة، والكتابة عندك.

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

تعلم لغة عملية في صعود وهبوط. في يوم تفكر أنك في قمة عظيم.

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

وفي اليوم التالي احتمال انه تفكر أنك في هبوط .. ماهه باله؟

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad days.

لا تتزعج لانه هناك دائما سوف يكون ايام جيدة وايام سيئة.

It's natural!

انها ماله طبيعي.

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

دائما اسأل اسئله عندما لا تفهم.

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

ربما سؤالك الأول يكون: ما معنى كلمة النقطة؟

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

انه سؤال جيد ولكن ليس هناك اجابه واحدة .

Point has different meanings in different contexts.

النقطة " لها معاني مختلفة في مواقف مختلفة .

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblio) and his dog (Arrow).

القصة تتناول مغامرات الولد الصغير اوبليو وكلبه "أرو".

We will join Oblio as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

نحن سوف نشارك اوبليو في خبرته للعالم الذي حوله ولعالم الذي بداخله .

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

القصة يتقاسم الصوت بالانجليزية وأحياناً تتجنب قواعد كتابه الانجليزية.

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

خلال " النقطة " سوف تكتشف نقاط متنوعة عن اللغة الانجليزية تشمل معاني مختلفة للكلمة " نقطة "

Enjoy the story!

تمتع بالقصة!

CHINESE STUDENT

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

我们将学习一篇题为“波音特”的故事。

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

这是一篇配乐故事。它将使我们有机会去提高我们听说写读的能力。

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

学习语言的过程是会有起伏的。某一天你会想，“嘿，我（学的）真棒！”

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

第二天你又可能会说，“我的英语完蛋了！怎么搞的！”

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad days.

不要发愁，因为总是有时候好，有时候不好的。

It's natural!

这是很自然的！

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

有不懂的地方就问人。

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

你的第一个问题大概会是，“‘波音特’这个词的意思是什么？”

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

问题提得很好,但答案不止一个。

Point has different meanings in different contexts.

'波音特'这个词在不同的上下文里,意思也不同。

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblío) and his dog (Arrow).

这篇故事是小男孩奥布里欧和他的狗“箭”的冒险记。

We will join Oblío as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

让我们和奥布里欧一起去周游世界,沉浸遐想吧!

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

本篇故事使用的文字是口语化的英语,幸而避免使用规范的英语书面语言。

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

在'波音特'这篇故事里,你会发现有关英语单词的许多趣闻,当然其中也包括'波音特'这个词的种种含义了。

Enjoy the story!

(现在就)请大家欣赏故事。

SPANISH STUDENT

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

Vamos a estudiar un cuento llamado "El punto"

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Es un cuento musical que les va a dar la oportunidad de mejorar sus habilidades al hablar, leer, escuchar y escribir en inglés.

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

Aprender una lengua es un proceso que a veces va muy bien y a veces no. Un día pensarán "Oh, lo estoy haciendo muy bien!"

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

Al día siguiente talvez piensen "Lo estoy haciendo muy mal, qué me está pasando?"

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad days.

No se preocupen por esto, siempre habrán días buenos y días malos.

It's natural!

Es natural.

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

Cuando no sepan algo, pregunten. (hagan preguntas).

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

Talvez la primera pregunta sea " Qué quiere decir la palabra point?"

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

Es una buena pregunta pero no hay una sola respuesta.

Point has different meanings in different contexts.

"Point" tiene diferentes significado en diferentes situaciones.

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblio) and his dog (Arrow).

El cuento trata de las aventuras de un niño (Oblio) y su perro (Arrow).

We will join Oblio as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

Vamos a reunirnos con Oblio mientras el explora el mundo a su alrededor y su mundo interior (sus sueños, fantasías, etc.)

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

El cuento es obviamente en inglés hablado y a veces no cumple con ciertas reglas gramaticales de la lengua.

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

A lo largo de "El punto" van a descubrir muchos puntos acerca del inglés, incluyendo los diferentes significados de la palabra punto.

Enjoy the story!

Que disfruten del cuento!



GERMAN STUDENT

We are going to study a story called "The Point."

Wir werden jetzt eine Geschichte bearbeiten, die, der Punkt, genannt wird.

It is a musical story which will afford opportunities to improve your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Es ist eine Geschichte mit Musikeinlagen, die Gelegenheiten bereitstellt, Ihr Leseverstehen, Hörverstehen, Ihr Schreib- und Sprechvermögen zu verbessern.

Learning a language is an up and down process. One day you will think, "Wow, I'm doing great!"

Das Erlernen einer Fremdsprache ist ein Prozess mit Höhen und Tiefen. Eines Tages denken Sie "Klasse, es geht grossartig"

The next day you might think, "I'm doing terrible, what's the matter?"

Aber am nächsten Tag könnten Sie sagen: "Es geht furchtbar, was ist bloss los?"

Don't worry because there will always be good days and bad days.

Ärgern Sie sich nicht, es wird immer gute und schlechte Tage geben.

It's natural!

Das ist nur natürlich.

Always ask questions when you don't understand.

Stellen Sie immer nur Fragen, sobald Sie etwas nicht verstehen.

Perhaps your first question might be, "What does the word point mean?"

Vielleicht lautet Ihre erste Frage sogar "Was heisst das Wort "Punkt"?"

That's a good question but there is no single answer.

Das ist eine gute Frage, aber es gibt keine eindeutige Antwort.

Point has different meanings in different contexts.

"Punkt" hat verschiedene Bedeutungen in verschiedenen Zusammenhängen.

The story recounts the adventures of a little boy (Oblio) and his dog (Arrow).

Die Geschichte erzählt das Abenteuer von einem kleinen Jungen (Oblio) und seinem Hund (Arrow).

We will join Oblio as he experiences the world around him and the worlds within him.

Wir werden Oblio begleiten wie er seine Aussenwelt und seine Innenwelt erfährt.

The story transcription represents spoken English and occasionally avoids certain rules of standard written English.

Die Niederschrift der Geschichte enthält umgangssprachliches Englisch und weicht von Zeit zu Zeit von den Regeln des "standard written English" ab.

Throughout The Point you will discover many interesting points about English, including numerous meanings for the word point.

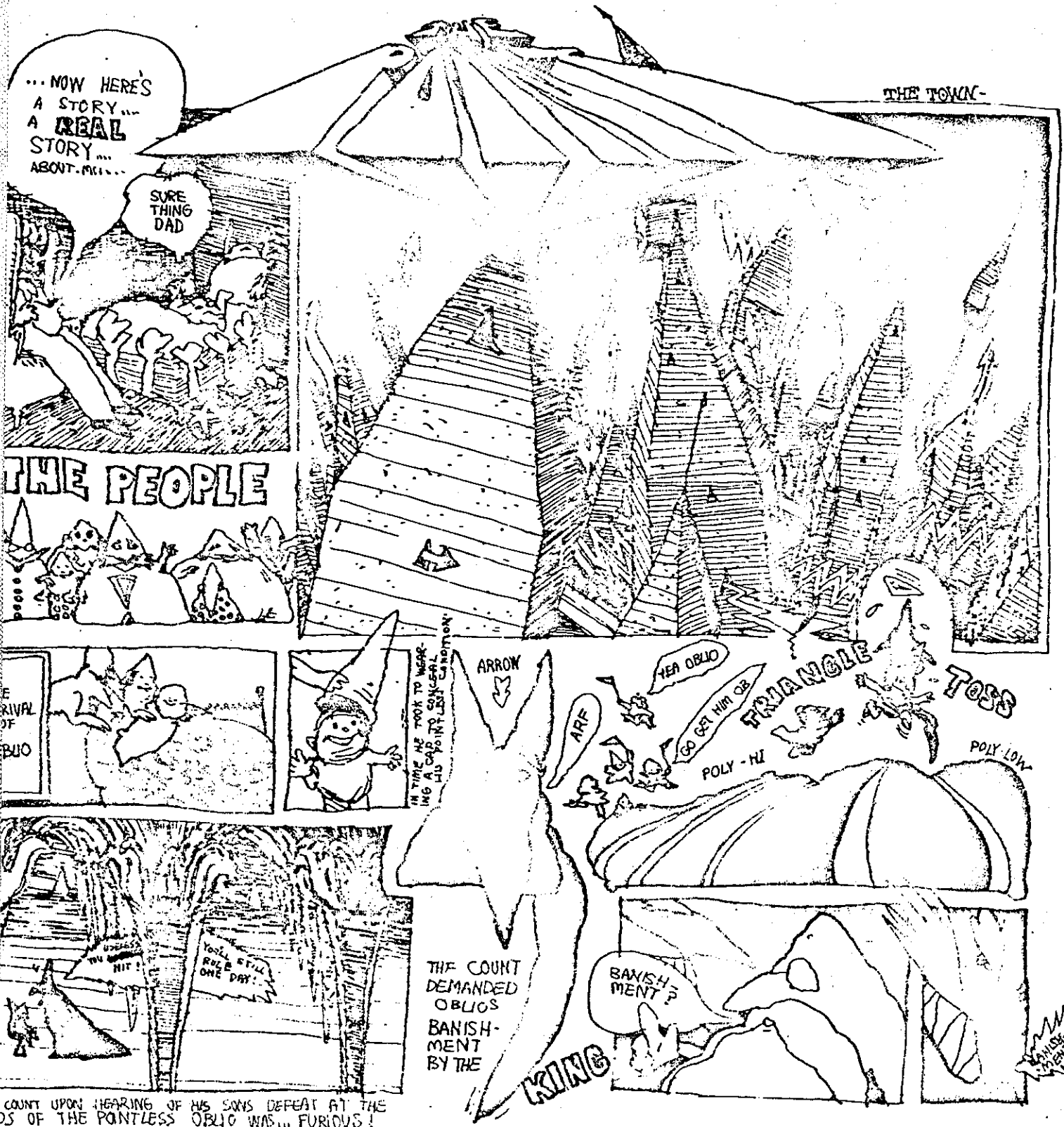
Durch "den Punkt" werden Sie viele interessante Gesichtspunkte der englischen Sprache entdecken; zusätzlich zu den zahlreichen Bedeutungen des Wortes "Punkt".

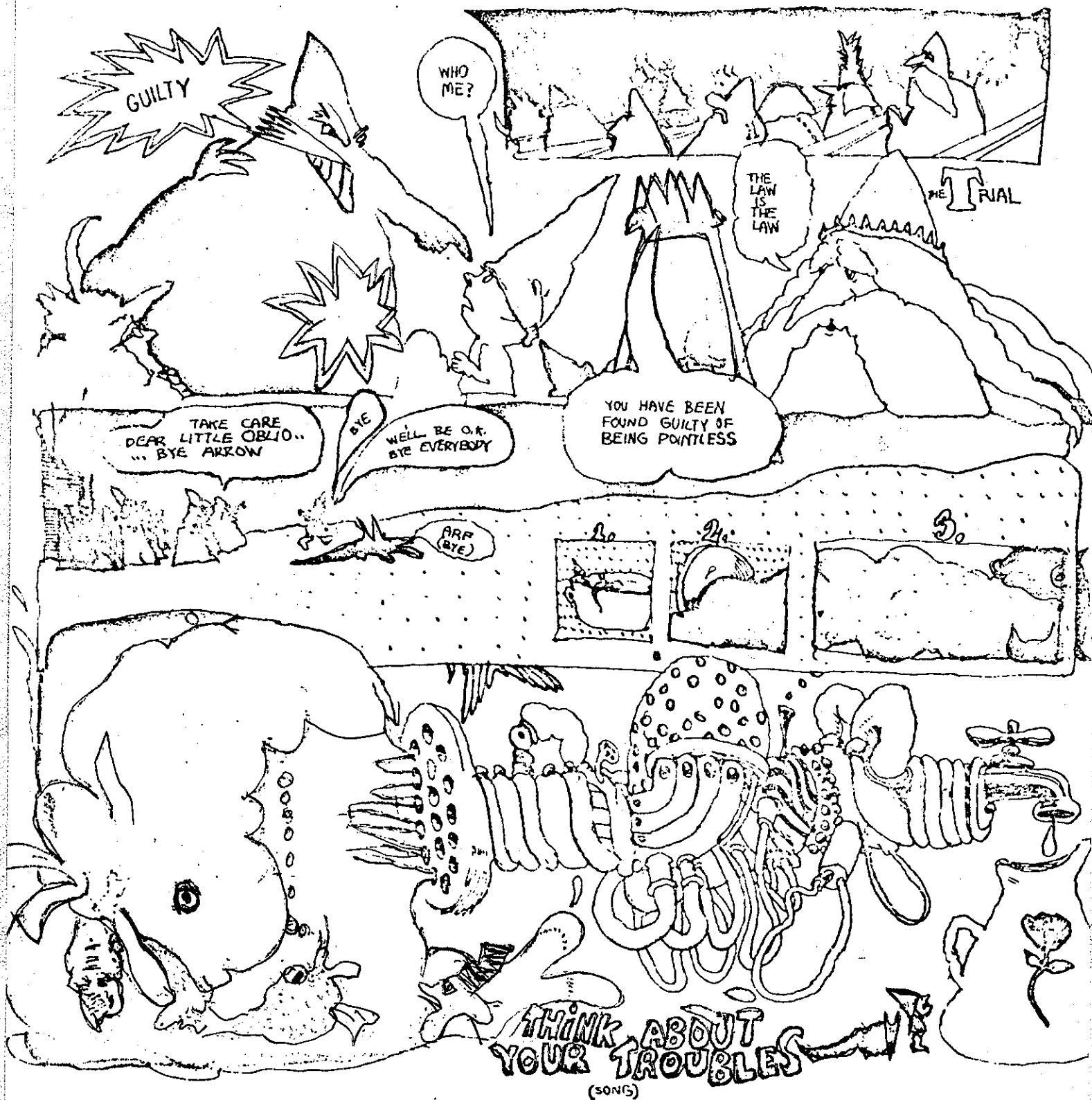
Enjoy the story!

Geniessen Sie die Geschichte!

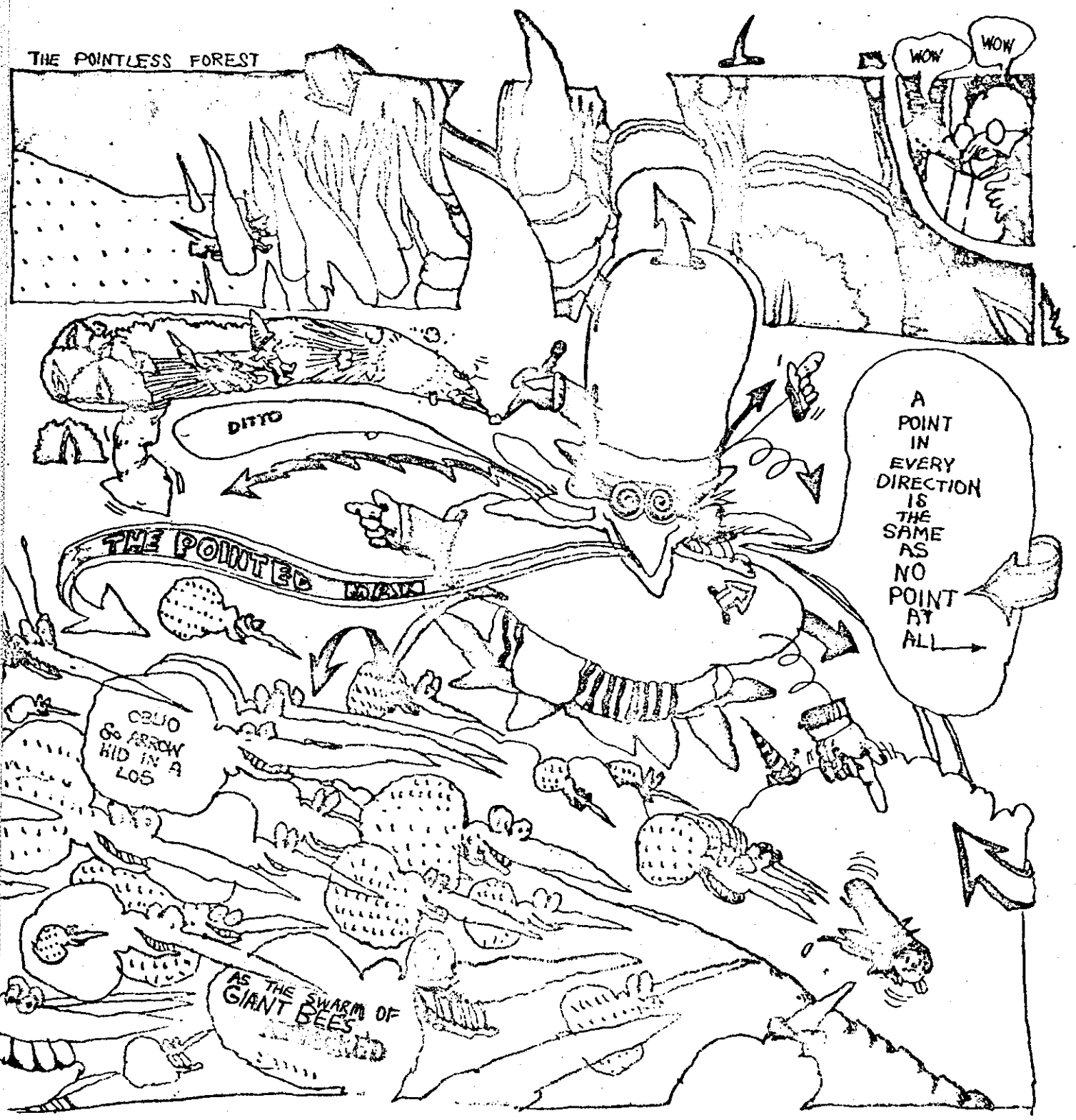
## Appendix B: COMIC BOOK

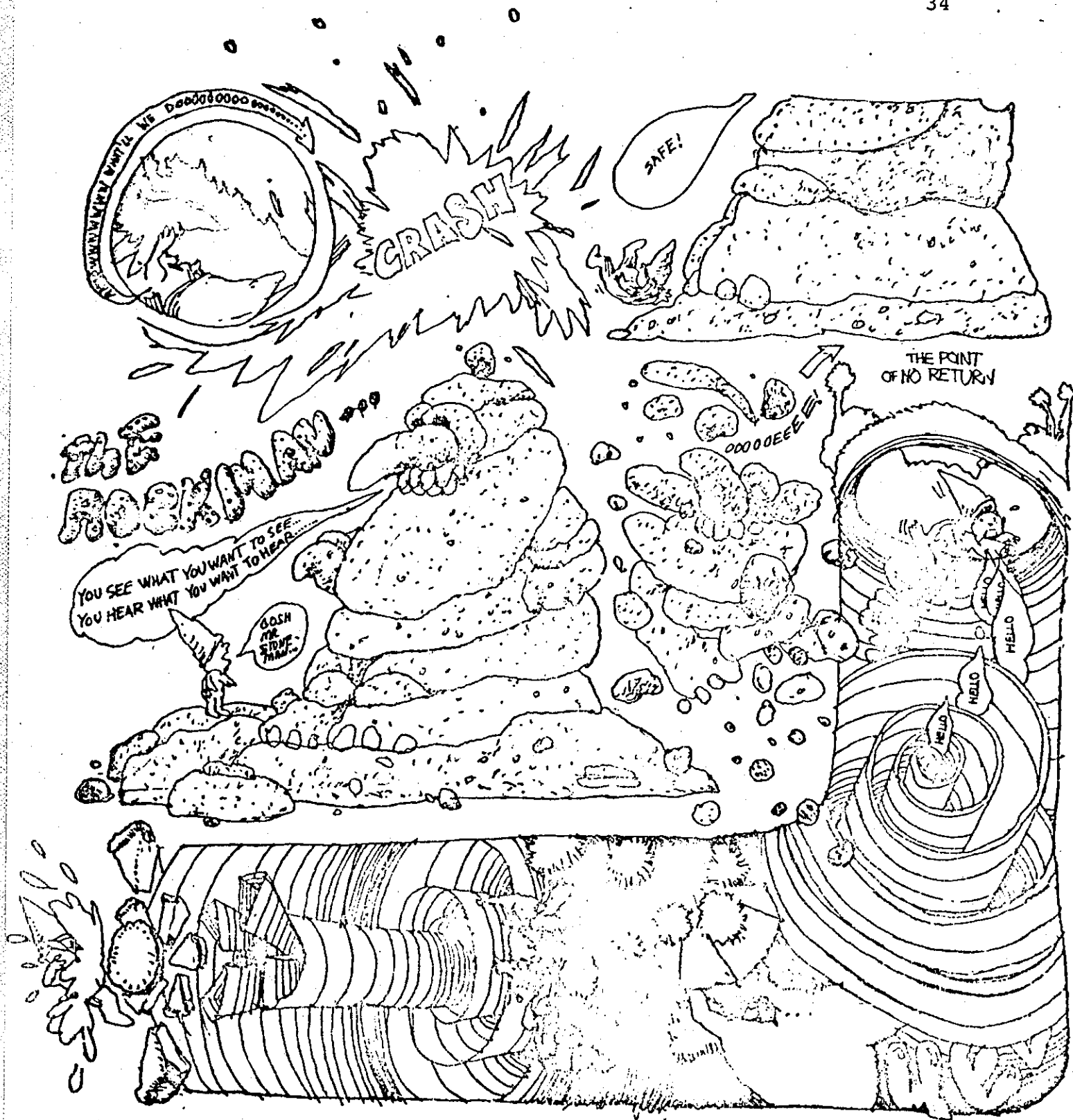
The Comic Book contains many slang expressions, incomplete sentences and abstract pictures. It is suggested that teachers familiarize themselves with the comic and formulate a plan as to how or if they wish to use it. Previewing the comic book would best be done while listening to the recording.





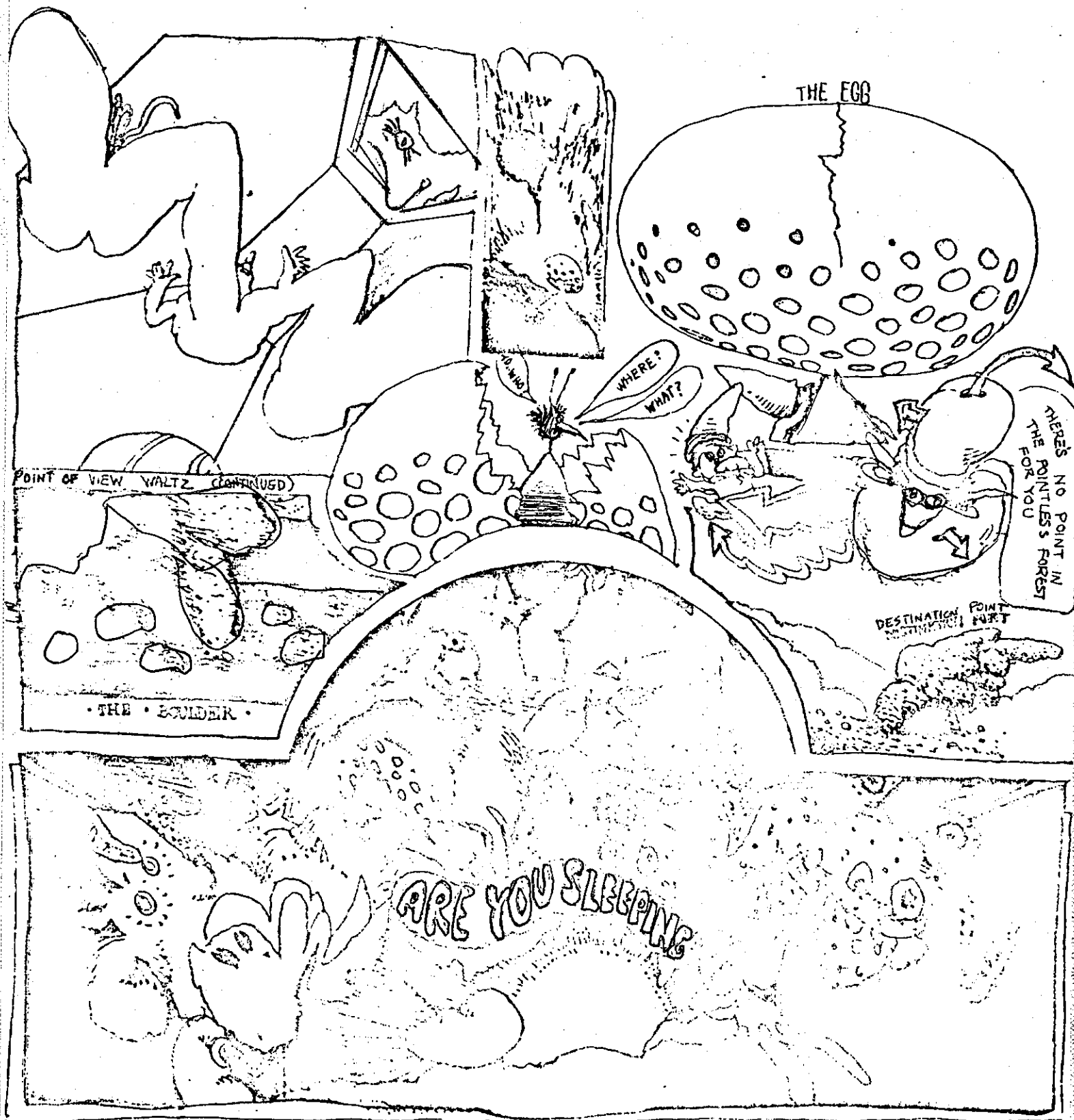
THE POINTLESS FOREST



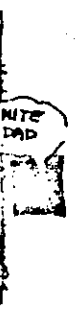
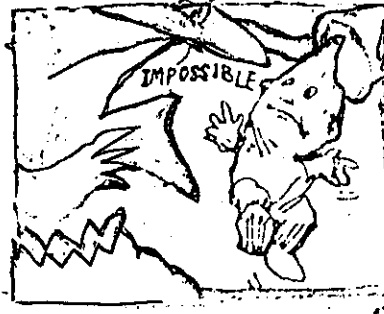
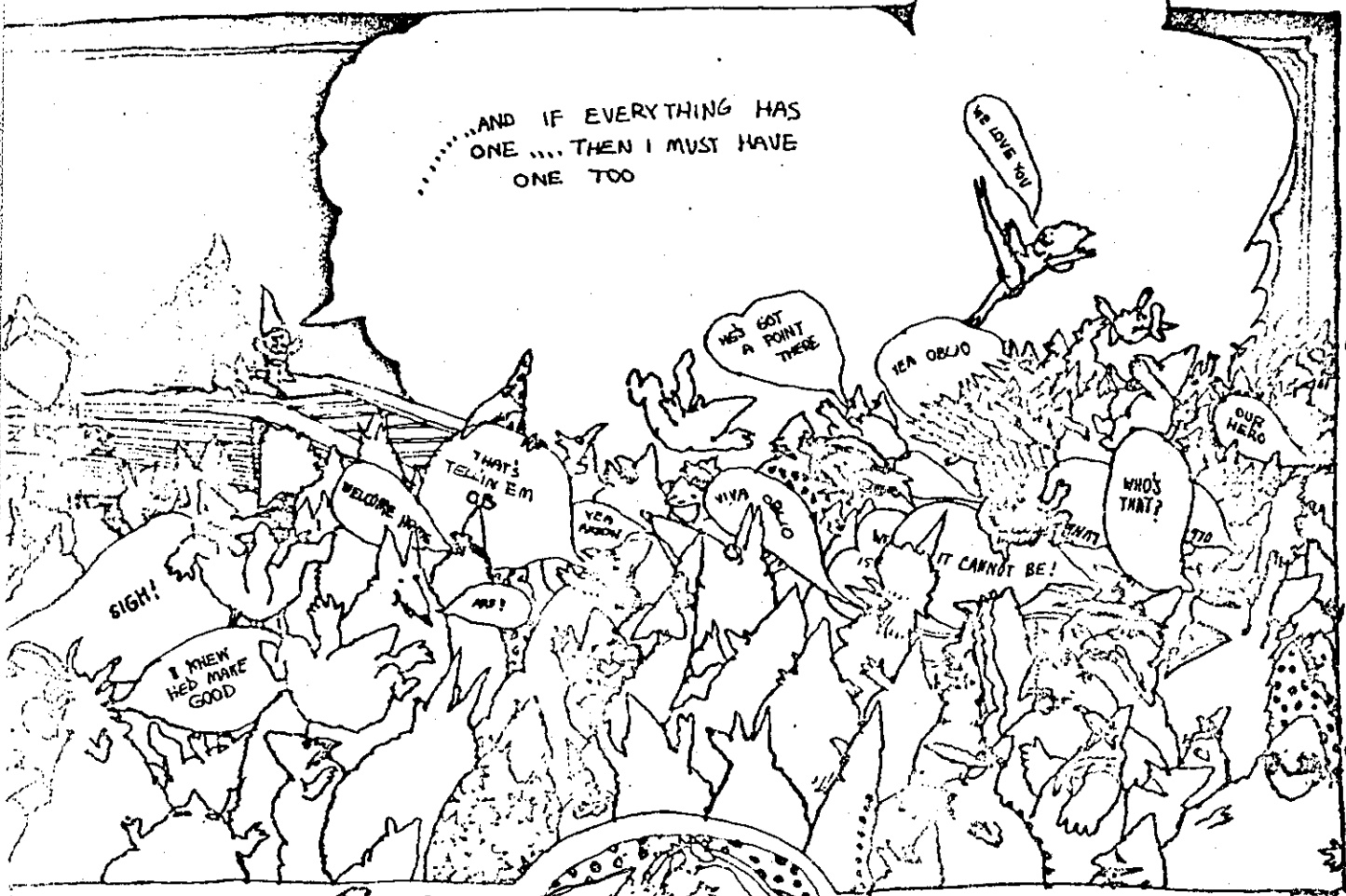
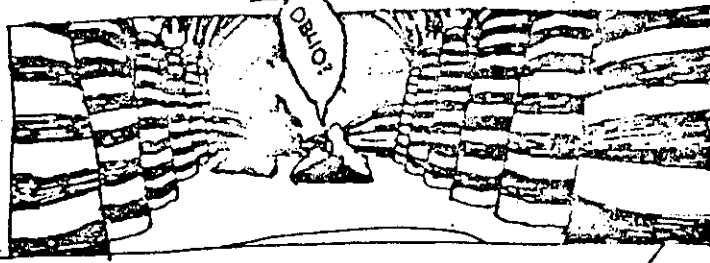








LIOS RETURN-



WHEREUPON THE POINTS OF THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO MELT...

Appendix C: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE POINT

Spaces are provided to indicate where each selection starts and finishes on your cassette.

TITLE: 'EVERYTHING'S GOT 'EM

TIME: 2:25

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

This is the town and these are the people,  
This is the town where the people all stay.  
This is the town and these are the people.  
That's the way they wanted it,  
That's the way it's going to stay.

This is the town and these are the people,  
This is the town where the people all stay.  
That's the way they wanted it,  
That's the way it's going to stay.

Everything's got 'em  
Everything needs one  
Couldn't be without one  
Everything has one.

This is the town and these are the people,  
This is the town where the people all stay.  
This is the town where the people all have one.  
That's the way they wanted it,  
That's the way it's going to stay.  
That's the way they wanted it,  
That's the way it's going to stay.

TITLE: THE TOWN

TIME: 1:31

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Years ago there was a place called the Land of Point, and that was because everything in the Land of Point had one. The barns, the houses, the carts, everything, even the people; everyone in the Land of Point had a point on the top of his head. Everyone that is, with the exception of Oblio.

Now although Oblio was born to a set of normally pointed parents, and although he was born physically perfect in every other respect, he was born without a point. He was round headed. And as time passed, Oblio became increasingly aware of his uniqueness. And so did everyone else, which made life in the Land of Point rather uncomfortable for him and his parents. You see, Oblio became sort of an involuntary celebrity. And he was subject to the sometimes cruel and unusual harassment from his schoolmates.

It wasn't easy being the only pointless person in the whole Land of Point, and in an effort to make life easier, his mother knitted a pointed cap for him to wear. It was to conceal his pointless condition but it didn't do much good, because everyone knew he didn't have a point. So it only managed to make Oblio a little lonelier. In fact the only real friend he had, was his dog, Arrow.

TITLE: ME AND MY ARROW

TIME: 2:04

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Me and My Arrow, straighter than narrow  
Wherever we go, everyone knows it's me and my Arrow.  
Me and My Arrow taking the highroad,  
Wherever we go, everyone knows it's me and my Arrow.

And in the morning when I wake up, she may be gone,  
I don't know.  
And if we make up just to break up, I'll carry on.  
Oh yes I will.

Me and my Arrow, straighter than narrow,  
Wherever we go, everyone knows it's me and my Arrow.  
Me and my Arrow, me and my Arrow, me  
and my Arrow, me and my Arrow,  
me and my Arrow,  
Me and my Arrow...straighter than narrow,  
Wherever we go, everyone knows it's me and my Arrow.

TITLE: THE GAME

TIME: 1:49

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

The national pastime in the Land of Point was a game called Triangle Toss. And Triangle Toss was a game for people with pointed heads. The object of the game was to toss a triangle as far as you could and then run to the opposite end of a field and catch it on the point of your head.

But since Oblio had no point, he would throw a triangle and Arrow would jump up on his shoulders, and the two of them would run to the opposite end of the field. Arrow, making the catch using the point on the top of his head.

Now most of the kids in the town thought it was alright to allow Oblio and Arrow to compete as a team. But there was this one kid, who was the son of the evil count (who was the aide to the King), and the count's kid insisted that since Triangle Toss was for people with pointed heads, and Oblio obviously did not fall into that category, he should not be allowed to play. Well to settle the dispute it was decided to have a contest: best two out of three tosses and catches. If Oblio won, he'd get to play but if the count's kid won, Oblio wouldn't be allowed to play. And that brings us to the game....

TITLE: POLI HIGH

TIME: 2:41

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Poli High, Poli-Technic, Poli Technical High,  
Poli High, Poli Technical High.

Valley Low, Valley Lowa, Valley so low,  
Valley Low, Valley Low, Valley High

Had a game, had a game, had a technical game,  
By the name, by the name, called a technical game,  
Valley High, Valley High, Valley High,  
Poli, Low

Then de whistle blow  
Then do whistle blow

Second half, second half, Poli come from behind,  
Hold that line, hold that line, hold that line,  
Far to go, going, slow, Poli come from behind.  
Running out of time.

Number Two, dressed in blue,  
Make a run with the ball,  
Hurry up Poli, pass Valley by  
Then the rain start to fall,



Making fools of them all

And so it end in a technical tie.

TITLE: THE TRIAL AND BANISHMENT

TIME: 2:11

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

At the end of the game, Oblio had beaten the count's kid two out of three. And when the count heard of his son's disgraceful defeat at the hands of this pointless Oblio he was outraged. So he went to the King and reminded him of the law of the land which was that all things and all people in the Land of Point must have one. And since Oblio didn't have one, he was in violation of that law which called for his banishment.

Now the King, who was a good king, was painfully aware of his duty which was to convene the tribunal. And upon the count's insistence, that's what he did. And when the tribunal reviewed the case, they could only arrive at one conclusion: Oblio had no point and was therefore guilty of being in violation of the law. And so it was that he and Arrow, for Arrow was found guilty of compliciting, were banished from the Land of Point to the Pointless Forest.

The next day Oblio's mother and father and all the townspeople gathered to bid a sad farewell to Oblio and Arrow. Now everyone thought that banishment to the Pointless Forest was a bit excessive but the law was the law. And the people were good, law-abiding citizens. Well, it was the first time anything like this had ever happened and no one knew quite what to do. So Oblio and Arrow set off for the Pointless Forest where all things are pointless and nothing is pointed.

And, by the way, the distance between the Land of Point and the Pointless Forest is directly proportionate to the amount of time it takes to sing a song.

TITLE: THINK ABOUT YOUR TROUBLES

TIME: 2:49

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Sit beside the breakfast table  
Think about your troubles  
Pour yourself a cup of tea  
Then think about the bubbles  
You can take your teardrops  
And drop 'em in a teacup  
Take 'em down - to the riverside  
And throw 'em over the side  
To be swept up by a current,  
Then taken to the ocean,  
To be eaten by some fishes,  
Who were eaten by some fishes,  
And swallowed by a whale,  
Who grew so old,  
He decomposed  
He died, and left his body  
To the bottom of the ocean.  
Now everyboyd knows  
That when a body decomposes  
The basic elements  
Are given back to the ocean,  
And the sea does what it ough'ta

And soon there's salty water,  
Which is not too good for drinkin',  
'Cause it tastes just like a teardrop  
So we run it through a filter  
And it comes out from a faucet,  
Where it pours into teapot.  
Which is just about to bubble,  
Now!  
Think about your troubles.

TITLE: THE POINTED MAN

TIME: 2:42

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Finally the two travellers reached what appeared to be the entrance to the Pointless Forest. It was a huge thorny barrier with a small sign at its base which read, "This Way."

Once on the other side of the barrier, Oblio and Arrow had their first encounter with the Pointless Man, or the Pointed Man depending upon your point of view. You see, the Pointless Man did have a point. In fact, he had hundreds of them, all pointing in different directions. But as he so quickly pointed out, "A point in every direction is the same as no point at all."

And speaking of points, I don't know if you've ever been to a pointless forest. But a forest is a forest, and one of the first things Oblio and Arrow noticed about the Pointless Forest was that all the leaves on all the trees had points, and all the trees had points. In fact, even the branches of all the trees pointed in different directions, which seemed a little strange for a pointless forest.

And when the Pointed Man disappeared, Oblio and Arrow were left standing alone wondering what to do next. When suddenly they were aware of a strange sound coming in from the north. And when they looked up, there was a giant swarm of bees headed straight for them. So to seek cover they jumped inside a hollow log. But when the bees attacked, the log was jarred loose. And

it tumbled down a steep hill and careened and crashed finally into the base of a most unusual rock pile. In fact, the Rock Man.

And the Rock Man said, "Say, what's happening with you boys? You look like you're pretty shook up. You been goofin' with the bees?"

And Oblio told the Rock Man that they were banished and asked him whether or not this was the Pointless Forest.

And the Rock Man said, "Say, baby, there isn't nothing pointless about this gig. The thing is, you see what you wanna (want to) see and you hear what you wanna (want to) hear. Dig? Did you ever see Paris?"

"No."

"Did you ever see New Delhi?"

"No."

"Well, that's it. You see what you want to see and you hear what you want to hear."

And with that the Rock Man fell soundly asleep, leaving Oblio and Arrow once again all alone. So they continued on through the Pointless Forest until suddenly Arrow, who had been running a few yards ahead of Oblio, disappeared into a hole -

"The Point of No Return."

TITLE: LIFE LINE

TIME: 2:21

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Down to the bottom.

Hello, is there anybody else here?

It's cold and I'm so lonely.

Hello, is there anybody else here?

Lord won't you throw me down a lifeline.

I'm so afraid of darkness,

And down here it's just like nighttime.

Blues are all around me.

Hello, will you please send out a lifeline.

Down and there isn't any hope for me,

Unless this dream which seems so real is just a fantasy.



TITLE: THE BIRDS

TIME: 1:58

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_

After the incident with the bottomless pit, the two adventurers continued along the winding path which led them through the Pointless Forest. And along the way they met the three Fat Sisters who giggled and laughed and danced and whose point was fun and merriment.

And they also met the Leaf Man, who told them to plant their roots in the Pointless Forest, and by springtime reap the harvest of green and gold leaves which the forest had to offer. Well, needless to say, Oblio and Arrow were not interested in planting roots in the Pointless Forest. In fact, they had no roots to plant. So they thanked the Leaf Man and continued on their way.

Little by little Oblio was learning a great deal about the Pointless Forest and its inhabitants. But unfortunately for him and Arrow his knowledge couldn't possibly help them anticipate what was hovering directly above them. Until suddenly, the whole area in which they were standing, grew dark from the shadow of a giant prehistoric pterodactyl which swooped down and lifted Oblio and Arrow high above the Pointless Forest.

TITLE: P.O.V. WALTZ

TIME: 2:12

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

And suddenly the stranges things are happening.

I hope it's not the last time, last time!

I had a drink or two an hour or so ago.

It made me think you,

And now I know it's not the last time, last time.

Flying high up in the sky,

I wonder why I think I'm going to fall,

I think I'm going to fall.

But there I go again; I'm up again.

And there I go again; I hope this isn't all.

Hey, but as long as we're up here.

We might as well stay in sweet harmony.

Flying high up in the sky,

I wonder why I have to have another point of view

To see me through.

But now I think I'm going to fall.

I hope this isn't all

And on top of that, I hope it's not the last time.

TITLE: THE CLEARING IN THE WOODS

TIME: 1:53

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

The giant bird flew Oblio and Arrow high above the floor of the forest and on towards its final destination: a huge dome shaped object which rested high on a plateau overlooking the Pointless Forest. And as the bird landed, it released Oblio and Arrow and the two of them slid down the side of the dome. Which in reality, turned out to be a giant egg.

Well at last it appeared as though they had finally found something in the Pointless Forest which was obviously quite pointless - an egg. But at that moment the egg began to crack. And from inside the egg came the strangest noise, followed by the appearance of a large point, attached to the head of the strangest bird (with the exception of the giant pterodactyl) either had seen. And after the exchange of a few astonished glances, the bird flew away, off in pursuit of the larger bird who apparently was his parent. Once again leaving Oblio and Arrow quite alone and as lost as ever.

So the two travellers set off again hoping to find a place to rest before nightfall. Finally, they came to a clearing in the woods where they paused to rest beneath a tremendous boulder. And no sooner had they sat down, when both weary travellers fell fast and deeply into sleep.

TITLE: ARE YOU SLEEPING?

TIME: 2:17

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you sleeping, can you hear me?

Do you know if I am by your side?

Does it matter if you hear me?

When the morning comes I'll be there by your side.

And in the morning when I wake up,

She may be telling me good-bye.

And in the evening if we break up...

I'm wondering why, I'm wondering why.

There was a time, we had a time.

There was a time, we had a time.

There was a time, there was a time.

When you were mine.

We had a time, we had a time.

We had a time, oh what a time!

There was a time, there was a time,

When you were mine.

And in the evening if we go out,  
Night time will find us at the show  
Or we may decide to stay inside  
You never know (repeat)

Are you sleeping, can you hear me?  
Do you know if I am by your side?  
Does it matter if you hear me?  
When the morning comes I'll be there by your side.

TITLE: OBLIO'S RETURN

TIME: 3:08

START: \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH: \_\_\_\_\_

The next morning, Oblio noticed that the rock under which they had slept was in the shape of a giant pointing hand. And there was an inscription on its side which read, "Destination Point."

So they set off in the direction indicated by the hand. And before long they found themselves on a road which led them out of the Pointless Forest and on and on through the pointed hills and valleys until finally they paused. And in the distance they could see the spires and the steeples of the Land of Point.

Now when the townspeople heard that Oblio and Arrow had returned, they ran out to the edge of town to give them a heroes welcome. For you see, not only were the people glad to see them; Oblio and Arrow were the first to have ever been to the Pointless Forest.

And when the word of Oblio's return reached the count, he was so mad he ran to the courtyard and he grabbed Oblio and he said, "What are you doing here? You were banished to the Pointless Forest."

And Oblio said, "But we went to the Pointless Forest and, and not only that but it's not pointless at all."

"What?" There was a huge gasp from the crowd.

"Nonsense," said the count, "you're in trouble."

And just then, the King arrived and he said, "Not so fast, Count. What do you mean, not pointless, Oblio?"

And Oblio said, "Well, it's just that we did go to the Pointless Forest and it's not pointless at all. In fact the trees pointed."

"No!" from the crowd.

"And, and the leaves on all the branches pointed."

"No!" from the crowd.

"In fact, even the branches pointed. And not only that, but everyone we met in the entire Pointless Forest had a point. And it's just that, well, it's just like here. And we figured that since everything has a point, then I must have one too."

And just then someone in the crowd yelled out, "He's got a point there!"

And at that point, the bell sounded in the pointed steeple. And all the points on the tops of all the buildings in the whole Land of Point began to melt. And at that point, the points on the tops of the heads of all the people in the whole Land of Point began to melt. All that is except the count's. His just sort of flopped over on its side, and he split, presumably to the Pointless Forest. But before he did, he reached over and he grabbed Oblio and he pulled off his cap. And you know what? There on the top of Oblio's head was a point!

Well, that's about it. That's the end of the story and it's also the end of the album. So, thank you and good night.

**Appendix D: DO-IT-YOURSELF DICTIONARY**

**Alphabetical listing of transcription  
vocabulary. To be completed by students.  
(See Section V, p. 14 re: suggested uses)**



A

a/an

about

above

adventurer

afraid

after

again

ago

ahead

aide

album

all

allow

alone

along

alright

also

although

amount

and

another

anticipate

any

anybody

anything

apparently

appear

appearance

area

around

arrive

as

asleep

astonished

at

attach

attack

aware

## B

baby

banish

banishment

barn

barrier

base

basic

be

beat

became

because

bee

before

begin

beneath

beside

best

between

bid

bird

bit

blues

body

born

bottom

bottomless

boulder

boy

branch

breakfast

break up

bring

bubble

c

call

can

cap

careen

cart

carry

carry on

case

category

catch

celebrity

citizen

clearing

come

compete

complicity

cold

conceal

conclusion

condition

contest

continue

convene

could

count

courtyard

crack

crash

crowd

cruel

cup



current

D

dark

darkness

day

deal

decide

decompose

deep

defeat

depend

destination

die

different

dig (slang)

direction

directly

disappear

disgraceful

dispute

distance

do

dog

dome

down

dream

drink

drop

duty

E

easy

eat

edge

effort

egg

either

element

else

encounter

end

entire

entrance

even

evening

ever

every

everybody

everyone

everything

evil

except

exception

excessive

exchange

F

fall

fantasy

far

farewell

fast

fat

father

faucet

few

field

figure

final

first

fish

floor

fly

for

forest

friend

fun

IG

game

gasp

gather

get

giant

gig (slang)

giggle

give

glad

glance

go

gold

good

good-bye

goof

grab

great

green

guilty

H

hand

happen

harass

harmony

harvest

have

he

head

hear



hello

help

here

hero

hey

high

hill

him

his

hole

hollow

hope

hour

house

hover

huge

I

I

if

in

incident

increasingly

indicate

inhabitant

inscription

inside

into

involuntary

it

J

jar

jump

just

K

kid

king

knit

know

knowledge

## L

land

last

laugh

law

law-abiding

lead

leaf

leave

life

life line

lift

like

log

lonely

long

look

loose

Lord

lose

M

mad

make

make up

manage

may

me

mean

meet

melt

merriment

might

moment

morning

most

mother

much

must

narrow

national

need

needless

New Delhi

next

nightfall

nighttime

no

noise

nonsense

normal

not

nothing

notice

now

o

object

obvious

ocean

of

off

offer

old

on

once



one

only

opposite

other

ought

out

outrage

over

overlook

P

painful

parent

Paris

pass

pastime

path

pause

people

perfect

physical

pit

place

plant

plateau

play

please

point

pointless

point of no return

point of view

pour

prehistoric

presumably

pretty

proportionate

ptero-dactyl

pull

pursuit

quick

quite

R

rather

reach

read

real

reap

release

reality

remind

respect

rest

return

review

riverside

road.

rock

root

round

run

S

sad

salty

schoolmate

sea

see

seek

seem

send

set

set off

settle

shadow

shape

shake up

should

shoulder

show

side

sign

since

sing

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small

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song

soon

sort of

sound

soundly

speak

split

springtime

spire

stand

stay

steep

story



straight

strange

subject

sudden

swallow

swarm

sweep

sweet

swoop

T

table

take

tea

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team

teardrop

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themselves

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triangle

tribunal

trouble

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Y

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yourself



**APPENDIX E: ANIMATED FILM**

E. Animated Film

If you enjoy working with The Point, there is an animated film available.

Further information on this can be obtained by writing RCA Records, New York, N.Y. or contact your regular film distributor.

**Appendix F: OLIVIER'S ARTICLE**

The following is an article written by Olivier which appeared in Kipling's Folly\*

THE WEAPONS FREEZE - A WAY OUT?

Comments from the Putney Peace Rally by Oliver Kirmser (FLO) and Kevin O'Brien (MAT)

Would it be possible for the USSR and the USA to fight a non-nuclear war? California Senator Alan Cranston posed this question to Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Nikoli Ogarkov during his visit to the USSR last year. Marshal Ogarkov answered: "It would of course become nuclear." "Would the war be all-out?" asked Senator Cranston. Ogarkov replied it would. Cranston continued, "Would either of us win?" Ogarkov simply said, "No. Mutual Suicide."

Speaking at the Putney School Peace Rally on June 12th, Senator Cranston contrasted President Reagan's answer to the question: "Could there be a battlefield exchange of nuclear weapons without buttons being pushed all the way up the line?" Reagan replied, and we quote verbatim: "Well, I would if they realized that we, if we let them back to that stalemate, only because that our retaliatory power, our seconds, or our strike of them after their first strike, would be so destructive, that they couldn't afford it, that could hold them."

If that sounds confusing, Arms and Control and Disarmament Director Eugene Rostow shows total disregard for the devastation of nuclear war. He said, "Japan not only survived but flourished after the bombs fell."

How many people might die on both sides if the USSR and the USA had a nuclear war? Said Rostow, "From ten million to a hundred million, but that is not the whole of the population."

\*The newsletter of The Experiment in International Living and the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

What would really happen? Would the USA and the USSR destroy each other, or would the USA win a nuclear war with a "small" loss of one hundred million people? It's clear that although neither side would win, world nuclear powers will continue producing new nuclear weapons in order to keep parity.

While the United States and the Soviet Union search for ever-deadlier weapons, growing groups of people worldwide demand a freeze on the development, testing, and production of nuclear weapons. This movement may be the only hope to stop the arms race before it stops the human race.

Appendix G: PHOTO

## A CASE IN POINT

The case study's contribution to pointilism (the practice in art of applying small dots to a surface so that from a distance they blend together)!!



(Olivier, Nori and Author Rob)

Can you find the 3 hidden points in the above photo?\*

\*The album cover is done in needle point, the author's Captain Crunch watch has pointing hands and Nori's finger is pointing up behind the author's head.

Appendix H: CASSETTE RECORDING

(inserted in back cover)



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Rifkin, Jeremy, Entropy: A New World View, Bantam Books, New York, N.Y., 1981, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Nilsson, The Point, RCA Records, New York, N.Y. 1971.

<sup>3</sup>Kind, Uwe, Tune In To English: Learning English Through Familiar Melodies, Regents Publishing Company, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1980, p. xi.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert, Charles H., Making Language Come Alive! Concepts, Games and Activities for Language Development, CHECpoint Systems, Inc., San Bernardino, CA, 1980, p. backcover.

<sup>5</sup>Stevick, Earl W., Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways, Newbury House Publishers, Inc., Rowley, Mass., 1980, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup>Herbert, Charles H., op. cit. p. i