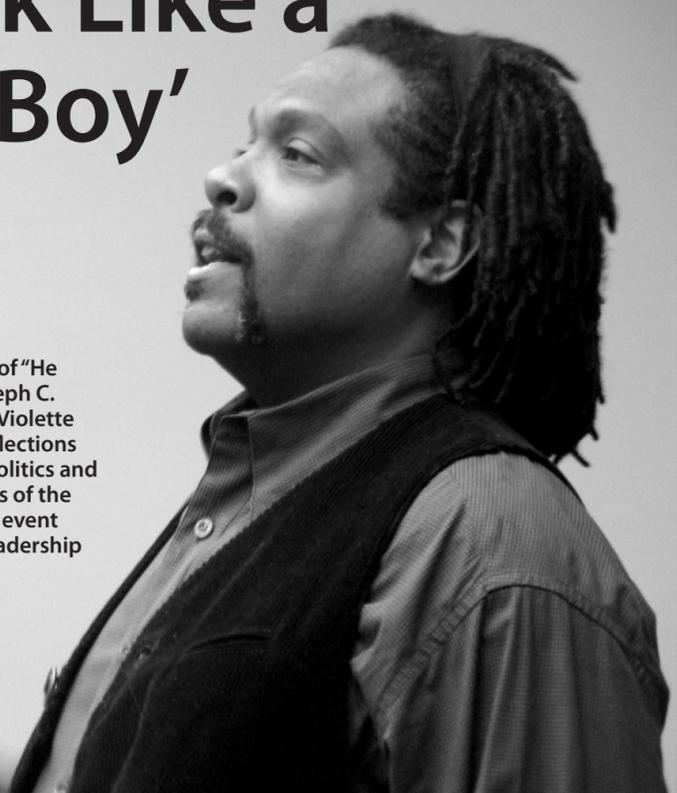




'He Talk Like a White Boy'

Actor, teacher and author of "He Talk Like a White Boy," Joseph C. Phillips, spoke Monday at Violette Hall. Phillips shared his reflections about race, faith, family, politics and authenticity with members of the Truman community at the event sponsored by Truman's Leadership Forum.

Rose Sparks/Index



Books best left off screen

Index reviewer identifies five books that should not be made into films

BY KEN DUSOLD
Assistant Editor

As millions of readers excitedly await the release of the highly anticipated adaptation of Suzanne Collins's "The Hunger Games," only one question is left to be answered: Does the story work on screen?

This question always accompanies film adaptations of popular or beloved novels. For 2012 alone, Hollywood has bombed with "John Carter" and is left hoping for redemption with the upcoming screen versions of "Dark Shadows," "The Hobbit," "The Amazing Spiderman" and a couple of live-action "Snow White" retreads. And I think there's yet another "Twilight" movie on which to waste good money.

Now might be a good time to remember not all books make good feature films. Here are a few books best left off the screen.

"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer":

Mark Twain undoubtedly is America's greatest humorist and one of its greatest novelists. But watching someone attempt to re-enact this story on screen feels like watching paint dry. This story has been

tried in multiple languages, cartoon form, Japanese anime, and there even exists a Soviet version from the 1930s. Tom Sawyer even appears as a character in "The League of Extraordinary Gentleman," for which it is rumored Twain physically exited his grave and scared Sean Connery into never acting again. It doesn't matter what style ... Tom and his gang are less interesting and adventurous when shown on film than when imagined in a reader's mind.

Almost anything by Dr. Seuss:

Theodor Geisel is one of the ultimate children's authors. Likely few people 50 years of age or younger weren't exposed to the rhymes of the imaginary poet. Unfortunately, children probably are better off not watching the stories on screen. Whether live-action or animated, most of the Dr. Seuss adaptations have been either lacking ("Horton Hears a Who!"), downright stupid (2000's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"), slightly raunchy ("The Lorax") or incredibly creepy ("Cat in the Hat"). Only the 1966 made-for-television animated version of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" — with the perfectly suited

narration by Boris Karloff — holds up to the spirit and legacy of Geisel's work. Of course, Geisel was a consultant on that picture. Without the author, Hollywood is better off avoiding twisting the legend's beautifully absurd writing.

"Catch-22":

This book, published during 1961, boasts some of the best dialogue in all of American literature. The antics Captain John Yossarian witnesses unfold in the form of biting satire and culminate in a landmark of the anti-war movement. It doesn't seem surprising that a screen version was made during the Vietnam War.

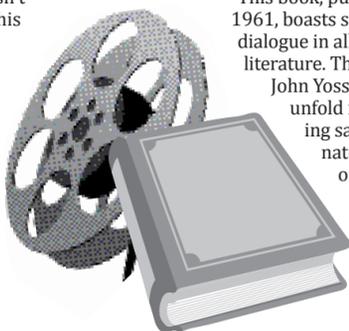
The film released during 1970 boasts an Oscar-winning director (Mike Nichols) and a talented cast of actors (Alan Arkin, Bob Newhart, Martin Sheen, Jon Voight and Orson Welles). But it stinks. Compared to Robert Altman's "MASH" — released the same year — Nichols's film seems too ridiculous to work as both a successful dark comedy and effective anti-war movie. Sadly, it fails at both.

"Dances with Wolves":

The only way to save this film from the doldrums of its own preaching would be to change the plot to include the lead character — an American Civil War veteran — trying to rescue a white woman raised by a Native American tribe at the cost of relations between the tribe and western settlers. Of course, then the film would be called "The Searchers." The book captures an important part of American history — the collapse of the Native American tribal cultures during the late 19th century — through the lens of a fictionalized romance (think "Titanic"). For some inexplicable reason, Kevin Costner decided this so-so romance could work as a three-hour epic. It doesn't.

"Oliver Twist":

One of Charles Dickens's most beloved stories, "Oliver Twist," just doesn't work well on screen — big or small. They rarely can manage to capture the infamously gloomy worldview of the story's author. The most famous version is a musical, which seems completely inappropriate for Dickens (picture "David Copperfield: The Musical"). Countless film and television versions later and Roman Polanski's 2005 adaptation comes closest to the atmosphere created in the novel. But, even a remarkable filmmaker like Polanski can't escape the rinky-dink dialogue and characters that results from live actors trying to tackle the material.



Finding fun with Truman's quirks



BLAISE HART-SCHMIDT
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Oh Truman, my Truman. What a weird place you are.

I'm sure you all agree. Our school, no matter how much we love it, is undeniably strange. The quirks are endearing, and I wouldn't change most of them, but as graduation nears, I can't help but notice all these wacky characteristics I'll miss. I've compiled a list (with the help of some friends and Index editors) to share with you.

The Student Recreation Center weight room:

In an attempt to become more physically active, I've begun working out several times a week, often at the rec center, and I've noticed the weight room is like a world of its own. It's an unspoken rule women are not allowed, only buff men, but a few brave female souls enter quietly in hopes of going unnoticed. With mirrors lining the perimeter of the room, people are forced to look at

themselves while running rather slowly on the treadmill, cheeks jiggling with every step.

The weight room also provides music for lifters, a strange juxtaposition of Lady Gaga and Taylor Swift inspiring the bulky men as they yell in pain from lifting a 3,000 pound barbell. I'll stick to the elliptical machines upstairs, thanks.

Barnett Hall smells like waffles and syrup:

Often. Has anyone else noticed this? During the evening, this smell turns smoky, and we Indexers often are concerned about the building burning down. It hasn't yet, of course, but I think someone in the building constantly craves waffles and doesn't know the correct cooking time.

Poorly executed graffiti:

Word on the street says two gangs rule Kirksville — the Elefunks and Aristocrats. These lean, mean, probably 13-year-old punks show us, the fearful and meek citizens, who really is boss by tagging (spray painting the gang name) blank surfaces throughout town. But their efforts are half-hearted. A tag on the north side of China Palace is boring and uninspired. Come on, guys, let's put a little more effort into these tags. I want to see bright colors, 3-D letters and maybe some spirals or stars. Be creative with it!

Insect nests as decor:

If you leave campus, I'm sure you'll begin noticing an interior design trend that hasn't yet spread to the rest of the country (for good reason). Several bars and barber shops throughout town seem to

think hanging an old, empty wasp nest from a cut-down branch in the corner of the room suggests woodsy-ness or danger. I don't understand.

Run-walkers:

I coined this phrase to describe the weird phenomena of someone who suddenly starts running across campus. These students are dressed normally and appear to be simply going about their day, but suddenly something in their mind tells them they need to sprint away. This odd event is made even funnier when the student is wearing a backpack, which weighs them down and makes their trot bumpy and lopsided. Keep your eyes open and you'll realize campus is full of these crazy people.

Obsession with "Tru":

TruView. TruPositions. TrueMen. It's getting a little ridiculous, guys. I'm sure the University administrators thank their lucky stars every time they launch a new program, because thinking of a name is easy — just pick a noun and add "Tru" to the front. Admittedly, the Index is guilty of this too. (This is the TruLife section, after all.) I say we as a University wipe the slate clean and try to spice things up with a little creativity when naming things.

Of course, all these quirks are lovable and ridiculous. If you know about something I didn't include, I'd love to hear it. And if there are any Elefunks or Aristocrats reading this, give me a call. I think with a little hard work we can really improve your tagging skills.

Imagination is key to future



BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA
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During Midterm Break, I spent a week at my childhood home, sleeping in the room of my youth surrounded by memorabilia from years long ago.

I was transported to a time in my life where nothing was as it seemed, and imagination was the lens through which I viewed the world.

In my world, a simple hallway could be transported to a fashion runway, a dinner table chair was a throne and every plastic bowl was a helmet that transformed me into a mad scientist.

During the week, I started to wonder when I stopped using my imagination, and more importantly, how I could get it back.

I think I lost it sometime during middle school, when the awkward transitions of life pushed me to think rationally and put childish things aside. When I think about it, imagination isn't something best left in the playground. It is the key to everything.

Imagination is responsible for creative solutions to problems about everything from government to schools.

As we face a statewide budget cri-

sis and national political turmoil during a new election cycle, we shouldn't default to the old and trite answers of the past. The best solutions will come from those of us willing to use some imagination and pretend a plastic bowl on our heads will make us mad scientists for a day.

Imagination isn't just the answer to our national problems, but also our personal ones. As college students, one of our biggest dilemmas is deciding our career. Instead of picking from a checklist of job options we could inherit from a generation about to retire, we should use our imaginations to innovate a job that doesn't yet exist.

Take a moment to allow our minds to wander. Daydream a wild fantasy of faraway lands and what-if scenarios. For many of us, we don't even remember how to dream.

Imagination is like a muscle of the mind, and like my great aunt always says, "If you don't use it, you lose it."

Years of parents, teachers and authority figures have insisted we grow up and leave imagination to the playground. We've ditched the pretend time and by taking the conventional road to success, we've lost the ability to pretend and imagine a future that's not already cut out for us. Granted, creating our own future out of daydreams is scary, terrifying really. The uncertainty can drive lesser people mad and have them running back to the safety of tradition, but nothing is gained by hiding behind blindly accepted customs.

Maybe it is time to rebel and reject the old notions of a traditional life and a right way of doing things. Instead, let's imagine something else, something different, something better for ourselves.

For the good of the future of our nation and ourselves, it is time we dust off our old plastic bowls used for pretend and stretch our imagination muscle to see what we come up with.