

The Philosopher Bunny

Bunny tales, truths and just plain silliness



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Created: July 2001 | Updated: December 2002

The Philosopher Bunny

Bunnies in Literature

Rabbits or "bunnies" have popped up in literature for ages. I, for one have enjoyed reading stories with rabbits as the heroes or comic relief. Here are just a few titles I have encountered over the years.

If not linked, use the convenient Google bar at the bottom to search the WWW.

Reading nibbles

- *Sophie's World*, a Novel about the history of philosophy by [Jostein Gaarder](#), 1994.

"We are the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat"



- "Rabbitville" by Theresa Bernstein. According to a profile on [Gallery 911](#), she wrote this book over a period of 70 years. The article states, "...beautifully illustrated with her sketches and is the charming story of rabbits who learn the lessons of enthusiasm, generosity, and love. This story was actually in the making for over 70 years. It began when Ms. Bernstein would tell stories to amuse the young children who posed for her." Wow! I just gotta pick this one up! Sounds a bit like *Ramar*.

The dear lady and American artist was 112 when she passed away on February 12, 2002. (The [National Post story from February 15, 2002](#) claims she was 111 years old. So, what's a year or two?

Hop on over...

- "Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter

Celebrating 100 years this summer (2002) [Beatrix Potter Society Web site](#)

- "The Wars" by Timothy Findlay, a Canadian writer. One of the bitter-sweet memories of this gripping story staged during the First World War, was the pet rabbits that the protagonist and his invalid younger sister would play with on a big blanket out in the yard. After his sister's accidental death, their cold-hearted mother arranged for them to be disposed of...
- "Watership Down" by Richard Adams. A wonderful adventure and touching story of finding a new place called "home". The story was made into an animated movie (one of the first full-length) with a beautiful theme song by Art Garfunkel called "Sad Eyes". Sigh...
- "Ramar, the Rabbit with the Rainbow Wings" by Darrell T. Hare (seriously, that's his last name). It's a [delightful little book about friendship, love and spirituality](#).



- [King Lion and Clever Rabbit](#) - From *Lions in Literature* (Like, there's this clever rabbit who outsmarts a big, hungry lion!)



Would you like to make a suggestion worthy of listing? [I'm all ears.](#)

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The Philosopher Bunny

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About the Philosopher Bunny

The Philosopher Bunny is an alter-ego for the Webmistress of the jobateh.ca domain. She likes to philos philoso- philosoffff ☹ - think

about life and existence. Welcome to her little world of Awe (awww!) [Wanna see a picture?](#)

She was born in the [Chinese Year of the Rabbit](#) (Guess? 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987...). Her other Zodiac sign is [Leo, the lion](#). Now there's an interesting combination: herbivore and carnivore all wound up in one emotional and overly-creative person.

She has always had a fondness for rabbits and other [small furry animals](#). Her older siblings often brought home all kinds of injured animals from the forest so they could nurture them back to health. Unfortunately, one of them, a rabbit, died - on [Easter morning](#) or so the story goes.

She set up these Web pages as an outlet to satisfy her creative and overly-orderly tendencies. She sees innn-teresting connections between many things in [our world around us](#). She takes delight in studying mythology and the explanations it provides to us humans. At the same time she respects the credibility of facts.

This site is an outlet for her to expound upon topics of interest. It has useful information. It also has some [plain silliness](#), all relative to bunnies, of course. Enjoy.



This lovely picture (top right) is from a scan of a ball-point pen drawing I did in 1985. I copied the image from a photograph my sister took of a rabbit in the forest up behind our home in Parry Sound, on the shores of Georgian Bay.

Come see some more of my drawings in the [Jobateh Gallery](#). Remember please that all images are copyright. Thank you for respecting that and for not linking directly to images on this site.

- In December 2001/January 2002, I performed a "virtual" interview with Graham Falk, animation artist and creator of "Untalkative Bunny". Would you like to [read it?](#) (in PDF format)
- Otherwise, my creativity has been revived, focusing on the beauty and wonders of spinning and linking within the Web, writing bad poetry and doodling with my kids.



Borg Bunnies, [Weeeesistence is Futile](#). You will be assimilated into the Warren.

- *Sophie's World*, a Novel about the history of philosophy by [Jostein Gaarder](#), 1994. "We are the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat"
-

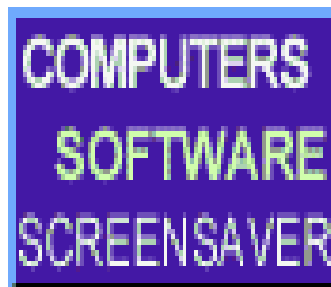
Whatever's "Lion" Around:

- [King Lion and Clever Rabbit](#) - From Lions in Literature (Yes, there's a clever rabbit in it!)
- [The lioness and the oryx](#) - BBC News, January 7, 2002. If you hadn't already heard this amazing story of a nurturing Lioness putting aside her carnivorous instincts for motherly instincts. Awwwww!

Apparently, as of April 5, 2002, she has moved onto her third adoption! See this story at [Animal Planet](#). Awesome!



[Do you like Ladybugs too?](#)



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T. Jobateh, November 2002.

weltschmerz, as delivered by John Scott Babylon Zero - Bunnies and bombs

Artists. I have respect for artists that can devote their lives to their work and pour out their souls into their creations. I used to admire artists who led tortured lives such as Vincent Van Gogh and W.A. Mozart. I also admire those who led enlightened lives such as J.S. Bach and Leonardo da Vinci.

I went to the opening of "Babylon Zero" because I wanted to see how this artist was depicting one of my favourite animals, the bunny rabbit. I was also touched by the word "weltschmerz" meaning sadness over the evils of the world.

The paintings were intentionally crude and foreboding. They looked like the renditions of a sad, angry child. The bunny figure did not even look as innocent and helpless as I had envisioned it should. To me the bunny figure looked like a dark angel, a messenger of destruction and not a helpless victim. In some paintings, it and others were the perpetrators of the violent and evil deeds. It did NOT appeal to MY maternal instincts.

My heart goes out to artists who depict the suffering of the world in their works and who choose to carry the burden on their own shoulders. I respect them for having the courage to bare their souls and risk criticism from others.

If this collection was meant to disturb the senses, then the artist has achieved his goal. One can acknowledge there are evils in this world of ours but I could not wallow in a pool of weltschmerz. When I looked up the definition for "weltschmerz" on the site for [the American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language](#), there was a reference to "Weltanschauung" which means: observation, mystical contemplation. [Innn-terr-esting!](#)

To be fair to this artist, I must see more of his work and understand more of his life before I draw any more conclusions...

March 5, 2002

weltschmerz - German. Sadness over the evils of the world, especially as an expression of romantic pessimism.

John Scott

See his works on display at the [Carleton University Art Gallery](#) until April 2002.

Read more about him and his work in an interview with the Ottawa XPress: [APOCALYPSE NOW: JOHN SCOTT'S DEPICTIONS OF A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION](#).

Weltanschauung German : observation, mystical contemplation

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Weltanschauung - Observations and mystical contemplations

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes closed."

Albert Einstein, 1879 to 1955, as quoted in a book from the Living Philosophies series, published by Creative Education.

Weltanschauung

I came across this German word in March of 2002 while looking up a word as part of a review of an art exhibit I attended. The artist used what I feel to be a word of opposite meaning: "[weltschmerz](#)". He also used the "bunny" image in some of his paintings, but to me, in a grotesque manner. While searching the on-line dictionary, I clicked on a word next to weltschmerz. It was... Weltanschauung. Innnteresting.

At times, I feel like - and see the world as if from the eyes of - a child. This feeling has grown even more since I helped create three of the most beautiful beings I have ever known. I believe that children need and deserve the love and nurturing above all else we can provide them in this world. If you sit still and listen to a child, you will hear some very interesting observations and questions they pose about the world around them. They possess that natural sense of wonder that we seem to lose when we "grow up". I would like to attempt a quote of Marvin Gaye Jr. from a song called "Piece of Clay": "*If we were all like children, the world would be a better place*"

Some day, when I have graduated from my parental responsibilities, I would like to [read more](#), travel to other lands, listen to many different types of music and meet more innnteresting people. At least some of that can be achieved via public libraries, the World Wide Web and the interesting people that I presently meet. I have the opportunity to achieve most of those goals *a bit at a time* while toiling away to satisfy my family's needs in this material world.

Recently, something reinforced my own assumptions as to how interconnected we are with our world and celestial surroundings. It also revived my desire to explore my talents as a [poet](#) and writer. "What was it?" you may ask. "Well," I will respond, "It was an encounter with "The Elixir and the Stone - Unlocking the Ancient Mysteries of the Occult", a 1998 Penguin paperback book by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh."

I learned about "Hermetic thinking" as believed to be created by an ancient Egyptian god called Djhuty or Djhowtey. He was sometimes known as Thoth, a [moon god](#), god of writing and languages - plus a few other roles... The Greeks, who eventually conquered Egypt and founded Alexandria, blended this figure with their own god Hermes, to be named Thoth-Hermes. Over the years and as they moved throughout the Mediterranean and Europe, the Hermetic followers had to contend with various dogmatic rulers and *their* followers. Hence the beginnings of secret societies.

Are we intrigued yet? Come along and read the [review in PDF format](#) (6 pages). No, I'm not trying to lead you into some *cult-like thang* but trying to present the opportunity to open your mind a bit more. Gosh, darnit! If you read this far, you must be open-minded - or very, very bored. Well, if you're bored and you like word search puzzles, [I created one](#) with names and words conjured up from the references I used during this encounter. Enjoy!

"I love to live. Maybe that's why I write."
[Jostein Gaarder](#), author, teacher, philosopher.

Definitions

Weltanschauung - German. observation, mystical contemplation. See also, worldview.

I found the definition at [the American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language](#). *Now, why they are listing German words is a mystery to me! You can also hear sound files with pronunciations of words.*

worldview - 1. The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world. 2. A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.

Welt - German. the world

Mystical : spiritually symbolic.

Contemplation : the act of 1. gazing at intently; 2. to think about or study intently; v.i. meditate; muse

Keep on asking questions.

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The Philosopher Bunny

Bunnies in the Myths

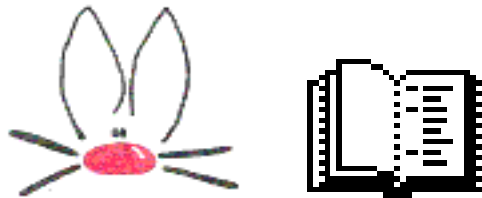
Myth (*mith*), *N.* [*<Gr.mythos*], 1. a traditional story serving to explain some phenomenon, custom, etc. and usually involving the exploits of gods and heroes.

Updated: December 2002

[More nibbles](#)



Have you ever wondered about the origins of and connections between the Bunny, the Egg and Easter? Do you ponder this subject as you bite the ear off a chocolate bunny or decorate a hard-cooked egg with vegetable based paints? Do you stutter and sputter when your own children ask you where the Easter Bunny comes from? And what about when you bite off that little chocolate foot? Do you wonder why people would keep the real thing because of the *supposed* [luck it would bring](#)?



I wanted to know the origins and connections too so I hopped on down to my [Public Library](#) to do some research from books that would provide fodder for my quest. Below are listed some questions and answers pulled from the books I used. Nibble and learn. I'll be adding to it as more **innnteresting** connections are made.

Question #1: How did Easter get its name?

"Many historians believe Easter came from ancient Norsemen. Their words Eostur, Eastar and Ostar meant 'season of growing sun' and 'season of new birth', thus giving the celebration its connection with the sun." (or the East star, which is the sun). During pre-Christian times the Anglo-Saxons worshipped a Teutonic Goddess of dawn and springtime named Eostre or Eastre, whose symbol was the hare. (ah-ha!)
(*Teutonic: North European people, especially German*)

Question #2: Where do rabbits come in?

Ancient people made the association made between rabbits and fertility. In ancient Egypt, the rabbits represented birth and new life. "To some ancient peoples, the rabbit was considered a symbol of the moon." (ah-ha!) "Some historians think the bunny became a symbol of Easter because the exact date of the holy day depends on the movement of the moon".

Question #3: What's with the egg at Easter?

Although this essay does not eggs-tend as far as focusing on the history of the Easter egg, I will quote some views on its eggsistence and how it relates.

"The egg has universally symbolized the return of life to the world in spring time".

"The meaning of the Easter egg goes back far beyond any one religion and belongs to *all humankind* (italics mine). According to religious scholars ..., the ancient Egyptians, Persians, Phoenicians, Hindus and others believed that the world was created from an enormous egg. Then, says the Hindu myth, the World Egg broke into two, from which all else was created."

Question #4: Why the rabbit and not the chicken?

One book asks this question but doesn't clearly answer why we don't see the chicken as a symbolic animal for Easter. You know, since the chicken is the egg-layer here. Personally, I think that if you put a chicken and a rabbit in front of a child (at heart) and asked which one they found more endearing, the majority would pick the rabbit. Just look at the chicken with that pointy beak, sharp claws and those beady little eyes. Now look at the bunny with the soft fur, long ears and the wiggly little nose. Awwww! Isn't that cute?! But please don't think you should give one as a [pet at Easter!](#)

I hope you learned something from my little research project. So what did I gain from all this? I feel satisfied now that I have found some answers - whether they be facts or other people's conjectures. I also found out that my Chinese Zodiac sign, the Rabbit, has also been associated with fertility and the moon by other cultures. 1999 was the most recent Year of the Rabbit. Just before that New Year, I had a fascination with the moon. So fascinated was I that I wrote a [poem about it](#).

This year, 2002, Easter Monday falls on April 1st, the same day as April Fool's day. Ahh, but to find out the origin of that holiday, you'll have to do some research of your own!

Bibliography:

1. Holiday Folklore, Phobias and Fun Mythical Origins, Scientific Treatments and Superstitious "Cures". Donald E. Dossey, Ph.D. 1992 Outcome Unlimited Press, Inc.
2. Easter and Other Spring Holidays, a First Book. Gilda Berger 1983 Franklin Watts
3. Lilies, Rabbits and Painted Eggs: The Story of Easter Symbols. Edna Barth. 1970, Clarion Books.
4. The Planets and Human Behavior, Jeff Mayo, 1985 CRCS Publications.
5. Webster's New World Dictionary, Modern Desk Edition, c 1963



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What's with the "lucky rabbit's foot" anyway?

It definitely wasn't lucky for the rabbit! According to the sources above, the rabbit's reproductive ability has made it an obvious symbol of fertility. Therefore, some people believed that carrying a part of the body would bring them luck - in reproducing, I guess. *Or getting "lucky"?* Apparently, Sigmund Freud saw the foot as a symbol of sexuality. But then again, didn't he associate a lot of things with sexuality?

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More nibbles



- "In folklore belief, the rabbit and the hare had a magical connection with witchcraft. Among their many attributed powers, witches were known for their ability to change themselves into rabbits." *Do you remember that **Bugs Bunny** episode with the crazy witch of a thousand bobby pins and he uses the emergency potion on her and she turns into a girl bunny? He says, "Deep inside, they're all witches" Coincidence? I wonder...*
- One of the many names given to the moon by cultures is "**Aah**", an **Egyptian Moon-god**. *Just put yourself in the place of our early ancestors when they first started gazing at the skies for answers to their puzzling but wonderful existence. Imagine watching the full moon rise from the south-east. Imagine the sense of awe as it towers over them, shining down it's silvery glow. "Aaah!" they would exclaim. Aah. Awe. . I may be stretching it a bit... but it is possible!*
- [Rabbit on the Moon - A Short History of Easter](#)
- [Easter Bunnies From Hell](#) - Humour Today at About.com.
- These guys believe there was a conspiracy between candy makers and the dental association in the US to start pushing chocolate as treats at Easter. Visit the [capn wacky conspiracy page](#). Oddly enough, there may be some truth in what they say...
- [King Lion and Clever Rabbit](#) - From Lions in Literature (but there's a clever rabbit!)
- This place provides a [Brief History of Eggs](#). While you're there, visit their "[Playground](#)" for egg decorating ideas and much, much more. Let the child in you come out to play!
- Aesop Fables - The Tortoise and the Hare. See this [on-line collection of Aesop Fables](#) with more than one Hare lesson.

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The Philosopher Bunny

Bunnies as Pets

A lot of children (including my own) would love to have a cuddly, furry rabbit as a pet.

The truth is rabbits need a lot of attention and care. Before you acquire a rabbit as a pet, do some research at your local library, pet shop or follow some of these helpful links.

And for Pete's sake, don't buy one as a pet for a kid [at Easter](#) unless you know he or she is really ready!



Hop on over...

- www.rabbit.org - An all-volunteer, non-profit organization that rescues rabbits and educates the public on rabbit care and behaviour.

[See article: Bunnies and Easter Don't Mix](#)

- RabbitWeb.net - The information you need to raise and care for your rabbits and bunnies.
- www.petrabbits.co.uk - This site in the UK has all you need to know about rabbits from rabbit grooming to rabbit lovers.
- [Information for Bunny Caregivers - Caring for your pet](#) at The Rabbit Charity.

You can also search the Web using keywords such as "pet rabbits", "rabbits as pets"

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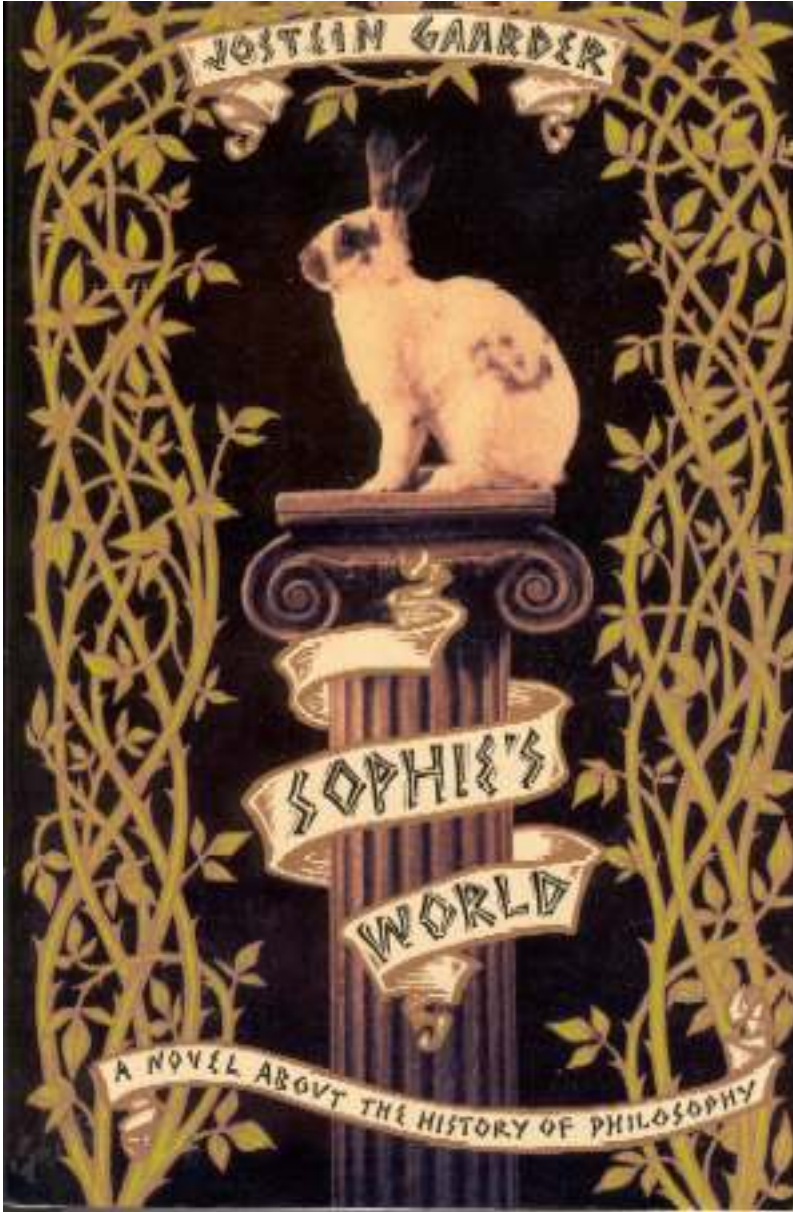
Sophie's World, A Novel About the History of Philosophy by Jostein Gaarder

"A lot of people experience the world with the same incredulity as when a magician suddenly pulls a rabbit out of a hat which has just been shown to them empty.

In the case of the rabbit, we know the magician has tricked us. What we would like to know is just how he did it." ...

"Actually, we are the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat. The only difference between us and the white rabbit is that the rabbit does not realize it is taking part in a magic trick. Unlike us. We feel we are part of something mysterious and we would like to know how it all works."

This novel is an excellent example of the story within the story, eventually leaving the reader slightly confused but pondering the interpretations of the subject about which Gaarder is writing: our existence (and how us who-mins have tried figuring it out). To me, this book is an excellent novel and lesson in Philosophy. I plan to read it again and again over the years as well as pass it down to my children. As Jostein Gaarder states in the news clipping below, it's not just for kids; it's for people of all ages.



Saaaay... would you like to see a pen and ink drawing I did around 1983, waaay before I had even heard of Jostein Gaarder or "Sophie's World"? It's a whimsical piece called "[Revenge of the Bunny](#)". *The bunny managed to do away with the magician and seems to be basking in adoration and applause until...*

Keep on asking questions and don't lose that [sense of wonder](#)!

This appeared in a local newspaper shortly after I started reading the book...

you are
the great outdoors.

Author finds world of awe

TORONTO (CP) — Looking into Jostein Gaarder's twinkling brown eyes, it's easy to believe the best-selling Norwegian author when he says he greets each morning with wonder.

“Every day every day every day ev-er-y day I feel amazed by existence, by life,” says the former professor in heavily accented English.

His delight, however, is tempered by the knowledge that life is short, and as he greets the world he also says goodbye to it.

“I'll never ever come back here,” he says, “and I feel sorry about that. I feel grief, yes, really, because I love to live. Maybe that's why I write.”

Like the author who creates them, the characters in Gaarder's books — *The Solitaire Mystery*, *Sophie's World* and *The Christmas Mystery* — come to be amazed at the fantastic and enigmatic world they live in.

Most of Gaarder's books are about and for teenagers, although he broke the mould with *Sophie's World*, a book about the history of philosophy, which he was afraid would “fall between the stools,” that is, not fit in anywhere.

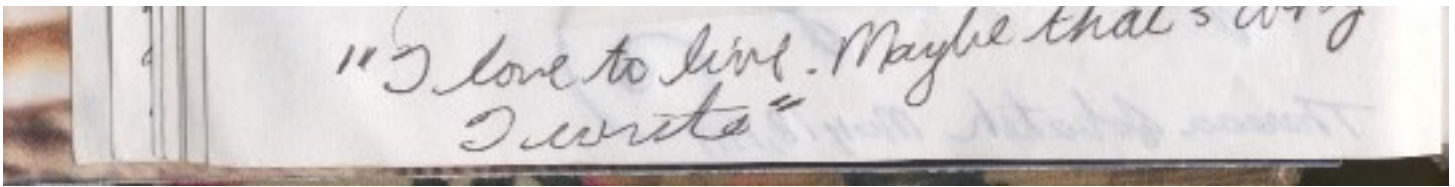
“It's neither a book for young adults, nor a book for adults. It's neither a real fiction book nor a textbook. But it didn't fall between the stools, but all over different stools, in a way.”

Sophie's World became a phenomenon.

It has now been translated into 43 languages, and was the best-selling book in the world in 1995.

Opening Sun July 6, 1997





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Borg Bunnies

Yellow alert! Yellow alert!

Borgies

WESISTENCE IS FUTILE



**First Encounter
by Cwew of
Hare Twek Forwager**

Concept: T. Jobateh, 2001
www.jobateh.ca/bunny

There is evidence that the Borg Bunnies have been in existence for about five years!

I found another one while searching for "borg bunny" in the Beta carotene quadrant of Google galaxy the other day. The creator has complied to my link request.

Collect and assimilate data on "[The borgbunny who's not afraid to paint the woods green](#)"

T. Jobateh
October 2001

Stay tuned for more silliness as my Bunnies go planet hopping in the Science Fiction

genre. Space age Hazel and Fiver avoid being assimilated into the Borg Warren. The dialogue may be difficult to understand with the hare lip problem...

This here is a concept my kids and I came up with. They have put up with my Star Trek Voyager shows (good excuse to stay up late). We all had a lesson in sketching, cutting, pasting, scanning, saving, scanning again... (and patience). It was an excellent activity in which to learn and collaborate.

T. Jobateh, July 2001



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The Philosopher Bunny

Bunnies in the News, Arts and Entertainment

Rabbits or "bunnies" have been represented in the arts and entertainment industry over many years. What is the fascination with these cute, furry creatures? For one, they're fun and relatively easy to draw with those big ears and wiggly noses. They have a soft innocence about them that *usually* puts them in roles of good character.

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Breaking Bunny News

- Yahoo news links- [Bunnies](#) | [Rabbits](#)
- The French are Cloning Rabbits? Mon Dieu! - March 31, 2002. See a [cartoonish commentary](#). [PB commentary]
- Heroic PETA Commandos Kill 49, Save Rabbit [Summer 2001? \(It's a satire at The Onion and not to be taken for truth!\)](#)
- [Bunny carcasses as art?](#) Summer 2001 Winnipeg artist gets Canada Council grant of \$15,000 for this disturbing piece of "art" [PB commentary]
- Glowing controversy: Mutant Rabbit Raises Controversy Over Genetic Manipulation - [at ABCNews, September 19, 2000](#).
- Capital City, September 1998 "Bunnies are People too" ([PDF 4.4 MB](#) It's huge but worth the wait if you are an "Untalkative Bunny" fan)

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Bunnies in the Arts and Entertainment

- March 2002 - Greg the Bunny. He's the cutest bunny puppet I've seen in a looonng time. Now showing on the [Fox Network](#) Wednesdays at 9:30 PM (Rated 14 so you shouldn't watch it with the kiddies). If you want a taste of rare and pre-Fox content, try [Greg the Bunny's Unofficial Home Page](#). Apparently, Greg's origins span waaaay back to 1997. It stars Eugene Levy, one of the original Second City Television stars (you know, from way back in the 1970's) Geez, I'm old. Did you see Greg's appearance on MAD TV on April 6th, 2002?
- March 2002 - Bunnies and bombs - Toronto artist John Scott and his signature "bunny" figure, a symbol of vulnerability and suffering. See his works on display at the [Carleton University Art Gallery](#).

Here is a snippet from the interview: "At the same time, this individual becomes a kind of Chaplinesque figure, its hopes, its desires - everything becomes available to it. It raises issues of humour and pathos and struggling on a small level. The bunny has a personality, he appeals to the maternal instinct. "

Well, since Bunnies appeal to me, [I went to the opening night for "Babylon Zero" March 4, 2002](#). [PB commentary]

- Perpetual evolution - More second-hand scoops on that newcomer hopping onto the scene, ["Untalkative Bunny"](#).

- Perpetual evolution - [Bugs Bunny](#). Yeah, yeah. He gets enough coverage. I used to love watching the show every Saturday afternoon. My favourite cartoon with Bugs and Daffy is the one with the abomnibidal snowman. "My very own pet bunny. I'll hug him and pet him and call him George" (or similar).

For those who are not aware, George was one of the characters in the John Steinbeck novel "Of Mice and Men". He was the small, smart wandering ranch hand who promised a bunny rabbit to his big, slow ward Lenny if he could stay out of trouble long enough and they earned enough money to buy their own ranch. Just this June 2002, CBC Radio Two broadcast an opera made from this story. It did not sound very pretty.



- July 2001 - - Borg Bunnies, [Weeesistence is Futile](#). You will be assimilated into the Warren. [PB creation]

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Bunnies in the movies

- **Harvey**, the movie with James Stewart. This is an entertaining tale of a sweet man from a well-to-do family who hits the bottle once too often. He has an imaginary friend - a pooka - whom he calls Harvey. Harvey is a six foot plus tall rabbit who goes everywhere with him. Read on...

www.geocities.com/harveytpooka/harvey.htm

Be warned though, it has an annoying cursor trail..

www.tigersweat.com/movies/harvey

A movie review and sounds!

- **Phenomenon**, starring John Travolta, released: July 1996 by Buena Vista. Remember that little rabbit trapped in George Malley's garden? George's first encounter with his higher intelligence was determining why he could not keep the clever little creature out. (like, duh).
- Monty Python and "[The Quest for the Holy Grail](#)". Remember the killer rabbit scene?

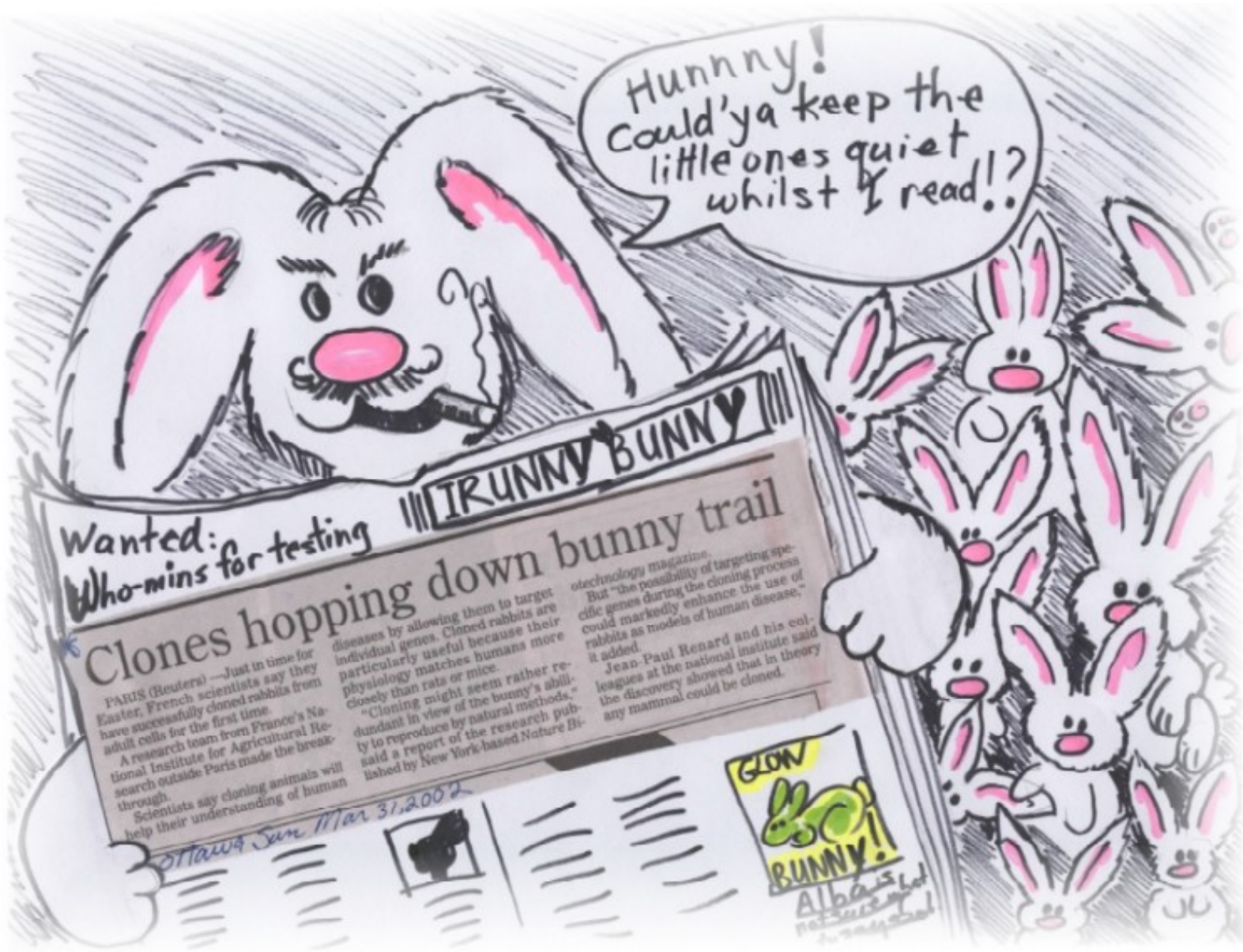
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Bunny tales, truths and just plain silliness

Return to [Bunnies in News, Arts and Entertainment](#).

Bunny Carcasses as Art?

I first found out about this story while listening to the Arts Report on CBC Radio 2 in August, 2001. Apparently, since 1999 or so this Winnipeg artist has been displaying works of "art" using dead rabbit carcasses, some dressed up with stuffed bunny heads and other accessories. It is supposed to arouse emotions in the viewer to understand about life, death and the eventual decay of our bodies.

I am not too disgusted as the carcasses she used were apparently from butcher shops or just dead rabbits. Hopefully, no bunnies were harmed in the process. It's just that it is a shocker for the people walking through the park - with their young children.

What disgusts me is the fact that our tax dollars are going towards this type of art and the public display of such.

You can read about others' responses just by putting the keywords "rabbits art winnipeg" in your Google search. [Try it.](#)

Here are a couple of links:

- <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gauntlet/eg/ed-op/stories/19990923/voice1.html>
- <http://www.cfm.jaydee.org/editorials/rabbits.html>

T. Jobateh, September 2001



ENTERTAINMENT

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Bunnies are people too



COVER Hot indie toon *Untalkative Bunny* wears human heart on sleeve

By TRALEE PEARCE

Without uttering a peep, a wide-eyed little cartoon bunny is about to stir up some noise with animation buffs.

He's the *Untalkative Bunny* and his specialty is sheer naïveté.

The impish, furry fellow stars in a charming animated short hitting the screen during the Ottawa International Animation

Animation Festival Highlights — page 26

Festival's (September 29 to October 4) Canadian showcase.

Created and produced by a team at Ottawa's six-year-old *Dynomight Studios* — animator

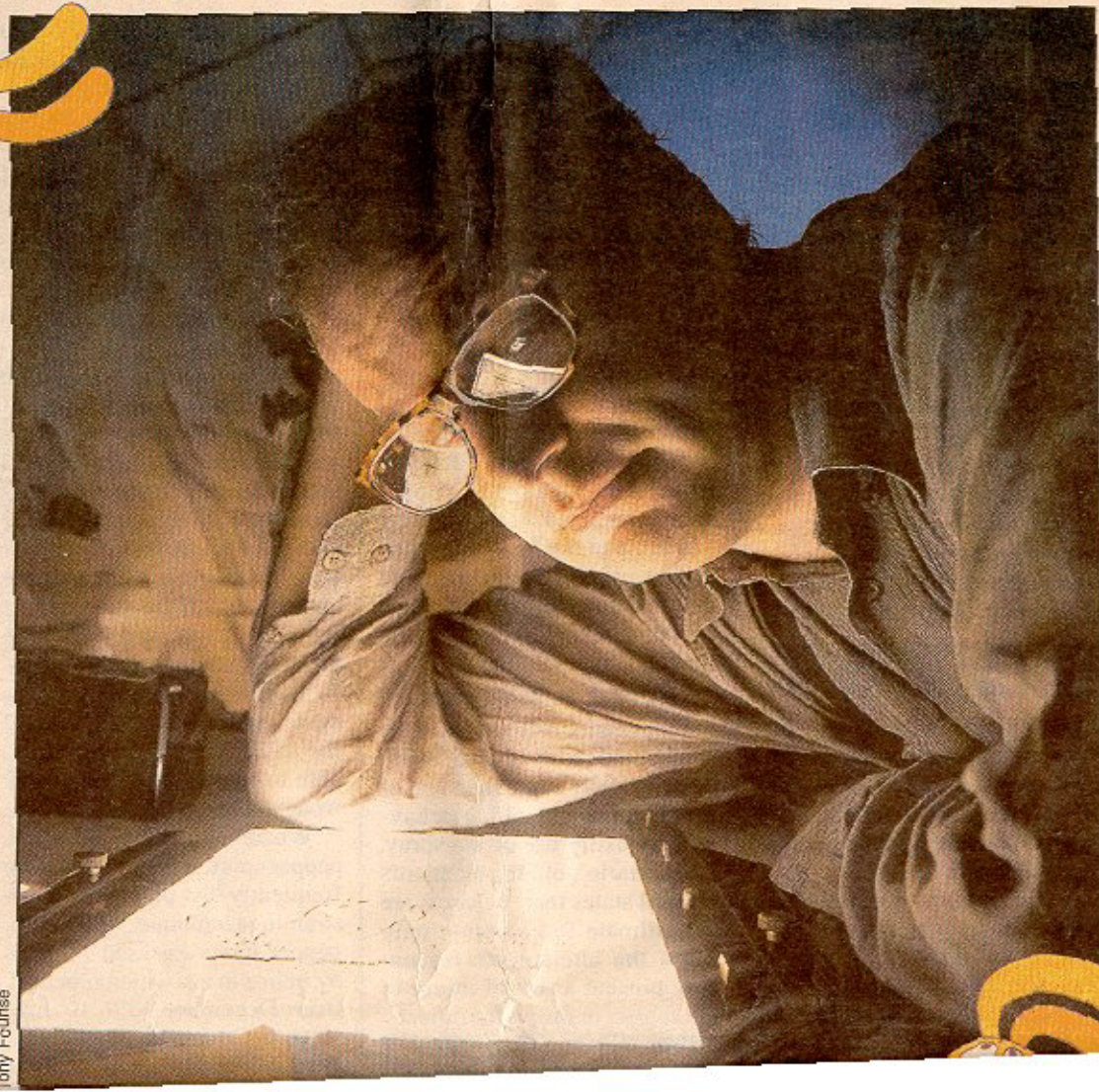
FILM when • where

UNTALKATIVE BUNNY, by Graham Falk, at the New Canadian Panorama at the NAC, (53 Elgin), Thursday (October 1) at 3 pm. \$10. 232-8769.

flat. The ears flop over, the eyes go wrinkly and droopy and he's about to faint — until his next emotion bursts out.

The colourful clip ends with the bunny pondering the series' myriad other languages to learn — and dumping the still-playing recorder into the dumpster.

MTV's *Cartoon Sushi* has been airing the original cartoon since last fall. And *Dynomight* — who have done animation for Fox's *Anastasia*, design work for Toronto's *Nelvana* on *Franklin The Turtle* and *Pippi Longstocking* and whose recent



Tony Frounse

Created and produced by a team at Ottawa's six-year-old Dynamight Studios – animator Graham Falk, and studio partners Dan Craig and his sister-in-law Diane Craig – the toon is entirely personality-driven.

And yes, there is an audio track – only the bunny is mute. Everything and everyone else – from ringing phones to nosy neighbours – makes a hellish racket.

Untalkative Bunny is a deceptively simple little dude with long droopy ears, big googly eyes and a stout yellow bod – with a loose, just-sketched look that suggests the pen just left the page.

The laughs lie in the Ren & Stimpy-esque rodent's extreme reactions to every stimulus he encounters.

Gleeful hero

In the short being screened at the fest – actually the second Untalkative Bunny flick – our gleeful hero snaps a learn-to-speak-English tape into a tapedeck and slowly starts to get annoyed at the ensuing silence – until he realizes he's got to press play.

Every lesson elicits a pure, visceral response. A "Hello" draws an energetic wave. "Nice to meet you" stirs a rosy red blush on the bunny's yellow cheeks.

Avidly listening to a range of "How are you?" comebacks, from "I'm fine" to "I feel sick" the Bunny boy then deflates from perky to woozy in seconds

Franklin The Turtle and Pippi Longstocking and whose recent coup is a background painting gig for mega-studio DreamWorks' next feature cartoon – is pitching the Bunny as a 13-part series.

Bunny move

In future episodes, the bunny moves to a decrepit apartment dwelling looking for bunny friends – it's called the Warren Arms, get it? – and encounters a host of odd non-rabbit neighbours, from a stern, powerful loofah sponge and a threatening house plant to a man stuck in a bottle and a corpse who doesn't know he's dead.

This Hour Has 22 Minutes' Cathy Jones has signed on to write and do the voices for a number of the zany characters.

For his part, the shy talent – Falk's been known to surreptitiously pull his name from promotional material he's so low key – behind Untalkative Bunny compares dreaming up short storylines for his creation to another art.

"The whole point of cartooning is to present things in such a simple way that they can be universally understood," he says sitting down for a chat amid the buzzing, bustling two-floor studio. Boiling his thoughts down into simple cartoon themes, Falk says, results in images that can be funny both visually and intellectually.

"It is a lot like poetry. It's always changing. Sometimes

Tony F.

RABBIT RUN: Animator Graham Falk puts character before circumstance when conceiving the antics of his visceral Untalkative Bunny.

I think of him graphically – and he's cute – other times it's more of a lampoon, something that's intentionally stupid.

"He's naive and innocent, but not really deadpan. He never speaks, but you can see what he's thinking," he says.

By eliminating the words, didn't Falk erect enormous creative hurdles for himself, since all the humour has to come from the visual, not the aural?

No way, says Falk. All he sees is the plus-side.

Human nature

"Technically it's simpler because you don't have to worry about his little mouth moving. If you want to change the timing around, it doesn't become technically as complicated," he explains.

Producer Diane Craig sees the bunny as a part of human nature we'd all do well to revisit.

"He's very touching," she says.

"He's so innocent. He reaches that part of us that's brazenly out there and vulnerable. Untalkative Bunny mostly deals with influences that are coming at him. We all have those coming at us, continually, and we're so used to putting up this wall. Well, let's say we take

down that wall.

"We've learned to shut out huge amounts of this crushing volume of information that's slammed on us on a daily basis. And he's open to it. He welcomes it."

Dan Craig, studio director and animator – who studied with Falk at Toronto's Sheridan College – says much of Untalkative Bunny's appeal stems from Falk's creative style.


"Untalkative Bunny started with 600 drawings of bunnies," says Craig.

"So, it starts from a place

where all cartoons – and all films – should start.

You have the character and then a situation, where you build upon a character. You don't impose anything on the character ahead of time.

"It has to come from the storyboard," he continues. "Eventually, Graham comes out of his office with something hilarious – like an episode with the bunny meeting a bible salesman.

"That's the way it happens." 



Animation Fest picks

For just over a week, Ottawa becomes the toon capital of the world, with animation offerings from Hollywood's big-budget **Antz** flick – Tuesday (September 29, 8 pm) at the NAC (53 Elgin) – to the little seen gems of Estonia. Yes, Estonia.

Actually, the little Baltic state is a world leader in the cartoon arts – despite years of censorship and political upheaval. And the festival is presenting a four-part showcase **Before And After Independence: 40 Years of Estonian Animation** (September 30 (7 pm), October 1 (1 pm), October 3 (5 pm), and October 4 (3 pm) at the NAC.

Other highlights worth a peek: **Absolut** – Animation fest director Chris Robinson tops his Director's Choice program Wednesday (September 30, 11 am) at the NAC with some wacky toons done for Absolut vodka. Robinson's

fave? A man sits at a table, stroking a knocked-over bottle of Absolut – until it's, er, erect. Guess how fast that one got the boot.

Big Bad Wolf – Also in the category of ads-you'll-never-see, Ren & Stimpy creator John Kricfalusi's Little Red Riding Hood parody was created as a commercial to flog runners for Nike. But it seems his dark take on the tale – complete with a horny wolf – just didn't sit right with the company. It never aired. It's part of fest competition October 2 at 9 pm, at the NAC.

Linear Dreams – B.C.'s Richard Reeves' 1997 short is a spacey animated trip. Think of it as an experimental painter trying out film as a canvas. The cameraless animation relies on experiments with hand-made shapes drawn directly onto film. It's on screen Wednesday (September 30) at 9 pm as part of official competition at the NAC.

"Untalkative Bunny"

About "Untalkative Bunny"

It has been a long time since we encountered such an innocent animated character who is easy to embrace and love.

Sure, we had *Peter Rabbit*, Rabbit from the *Pooh* stories and *Bugs Bunny*, but this bunny is universal in that he appeals to the heart, does not talk (thus the name "Untalkative Bunny") and is just so... cute! He and his companions get pulled into some whimsical little adventures!

I consider myself one of his long-time, biggest fans. Untalkative Bunny appeals to me because of the simplicity of his form, the variety of his friends and the realism of his surroundings. Also, you don't hear a lot of excess noise and voices as with other cartoons. Just jazzy background music (reminiscent of *Charlie Brown*), a few sound effects and the occasional "humin" with whom Bunny interacts.

What?! You haven't seen him yet? Watch the show on [Teletoon](#) (That's in Canada, eh?)

Bunny FAQ's

Way back in 2001 I was wondering a few things about *Bunny*. I was sure that other FANS wanted more information too.

I am intrigued as to the inspiration behind the character, as well as the artists. An interview would provide more substance for nibbling on. Since Bunny doesn't say much, I thought it would be most helpful to have contact with his creator, Graham Falk.

Here you go, UB and animation fans:
[An interview with Graham Falk](#) in PDF format.



Posted: January 2002
Converted to PDF November 2002

There is also an "Untalkative Bunny" [Fan club](#) at *Yahoo!*. Fans have been asking various questions and Dynamight Studios' insiders have been feeding them tidbits of information. Why don't you [visit and read the messages posted so far](#). Being a member gives you the opportunity to gaze upon more images of Bunny and Friends.



[Click to subscribe to theuntalkativebunnyclub](#)

Hop on over...

- [Dynamight Cartoons](#), the creative animators behind "Untalkative Bunny" cartoons.
- **Capital City**, September 1998 "Bunnies are People too" ([PDF 4.4 MB](#)) rather *HUGE* file but worth the nostalgia *Can you believe it? Theresa saved this clipping since 1998. She surely was smitten by the cute little guy.*
- **Ottawa Citizen**, April 2001 "Surreal cartoon bunny brings Ottawa to world" - sorry, as of September, 2001, the [original article](#) no longer exists on their site.
- [An interview with Graham Falk](#)
Posted: January 2002. Converted to PDF November 2002
- [Teletoon](#) It's unreal!
- [Visit a UB Fan club at Yahoo Clubs.](#)

November, 2002 - Presently, fans are discussing the new episodes. In the files section, you'll find sound files, TV schedules around the world and episode guides with synopses of each story - without revealing the ending, of course!

If you're looking for pictures of Bunny and friends, look in the Photos section at the fan club. I have had to remove images from my fan page due to some in-duh-viduals on various blogs and web diaries who have been linking directly to images on this site. First of all: it's not good web etiquette; second: it screws up my site statistics!

[Come join the club](#). We're are over 200 members - young and "old", far and wide.

December 2002: Copied over my clever, whimsical poem called "[Show me the bunny](#)".



So... You want to see more of
Untalkative Bunny?

Join the club! At Yahoo, that is!

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The
Philosopher
Bunny





An Interview with Graham Falk



The following is an interview with Graham Falk, animation artist and creator of "Untalkative Bunny". The interview was achieved via email messages between Canada and China, between the months of December 2001 and January 2002. And now, my long anticipated encounter...

PB: Hello, Graham. Thank you for joining me in this virtual interview room and taking time away from your busy schedule. Please have a seat in front of your keyboard and get comfortable. Take as much time as you want to answer the questions and save in-between sessions. I'm a slow reader anyway.

GF: I'm sitting in a chair....

PB: How did you get the inspiration for Untalkative Bunny?

GF: I wanted to make a really simple cartoon and see what it looked like in colour.

PB: Many fans have asked if UB is a boy or a girl. What explanation can you provide to them?

GF: I don't think the bunny has a clue. The bunny just likes to act out different things. In publicity material for the cartoons, the bunny is sometimes called a "he", but you can ignore that.

PB: Fans have asked questions such as "What is UB's relationship with Squirrel?" and "What does UB do for a living?"; Do you feel that at some point we should just sit back, stop trying to make sense of the story and just enjoy it for it's whimsical beauty?

GF: Yes! That's what I keep telling people!

PB: What are the future plans and adventures for UB? Will you be involved in new developments?



Images provided with permission from Dynamight Studios

Hop on over:

- [Dynamight Cartoons](#)
- [An Untalkative Bunny Fan page](#)
- [Bunnies in the News, Arts and Entertainment.](#)
- [Bunnies in the Myths.](#)

GF: They've started working on more of the cartoons. I'm in China right now, doing a job for a different studio. I think that quite a few of the people who worked on the first season of Untalkative Bunny are involved in creating new episodes. Karolina Craig came up with the funniest story ideas for the first season, as well as being in charge of colour design, and I think she's still going to be working in both of those departments. I heard that Nick Cross is going to work on a group of the new episodes, so I'm sure those will be good ones. Nick did really good writing and storyboard work on the first season, and he also makes short cartoons of his own, which are excellent.

Troy Little worked on some of the first storyboards, and this year he's back at the studio. He's also started publishing a series of his own comics, called Chiaroscuro, which you can see samples of on his website

www.meanwhilestudios.com. Suzanne Marsden worked on storyboards last year, and she's back at the studio again. Suzanne also publishes a small comic called Abraxia's Dream, which you can read more about on her website www.abraxias.dream.tripod.com. In the first issue of her comic, there's work by still more people who worked on the first season of bunny cartoons, namely Ron Huse, Troy Little (again), Jose Pou, Tavis Silbernagel, and Michael Casey.

One person I liked working with last year was Rick Stewart, who was in charge of the final timing of the storyboards. I think Rick will be doing the timing again this year. I've mentioned just a few people who worked on the first season, but there were many more!

PB: *When you create an animated character, do you transfer some of your own personality traits onto it or your own experiences into the story?*

GF: Yes, for me, I usually transfer something onto the character. Otherwise it's just a design.

PB: *At what age did you realize you liked to draw and create animated characters? Was it a distraction from your schoolwork? Do you have any experiences to share with us?*

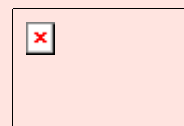
GF: I started drawing cartoons when I was about eight years old, probably as an indirect way of getting attention. I became a fat boy cartoonist. I still like cartoons, but I've never had a wealth of ideas.

PB: *You attended Sheridan College in Toronto. What are the benefits and drawbacks to attending a formal arts*

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program? (i.e. Do you find attending a formal arts program provides too much structure or are students able to have freedom to create and express themselves? Are you exposed to many new and different resources and ideas, as well as contacts and potential friends?)

GF: The campus I went to was in Oakville, west of Toronto. The animation program wasn't really very artistic, it was more like a preparation for getting a job in animation. I learned some things, but for years after that I thought the only good drawings were like Walt Disney animation drawings. I guess I was very impressionable. Some really good animation artists have come out of that college, but some of them took the illustration course there, not the animation course.

***PB:** Who were some of your influences or mentors?*

GF: There are so many influences and mentors. When I was a child I liked the gag cartoons in magazines. Right now I'm sick of animation, but I still like looking at old gag cartoons and comic strips. Most animation now makes me feel queasy. I guess I like cartoons that have a look and feel like they were created by one person.

***PB:** You previously did some work for public service announcements (i.e. safe sex). Do you feel that artists (and people in general) should at one time or more volunteer their talents or skills in bringing awareness to a social issue?*

GF: Sure!

***PB:** Do you get more fulfillment if you know your work helps deliver a positive message?*

GF: Maybe, possibly.

***PB:** Are there certain assignments you refuse to accept either due to artistic integrity or your personal code of ethics?*

GF: No, not so far. Generally I take any job I can get. The only job I took all that seriously was Untalkative Bunny, because it was my creation.

***PB:** Do you find the graphic arts or animation field to be competitive? Is one's work measured by output speed, quality or originality?*

privacy

GF: Animation is competitive, and it's usually about speed and technical quality. I don't know much about the graphic arts field, but it's probably more artistic than animation is. At least I hope so!

PB: *What advice can you give to budding young artists? (Such as 13 year-olds, who love to doodle, draw and write but not fully complete mathematics assignments or science projects?)*

GF: Keep drawing and painting different things, and read things. Oh, and learn to play a musical instrument, too!

PB: *You mentioned you are presently in China. Are you able to reveal information on your current projects? Can you provide fans with any samples of new drawings or animated clips? Do you miss Canada? What do you do for fun and relaxation while there? Any plans for celebrations to bring in the "Year of the Horse"?*

GF: I'm over here working for a Canadian animation company. I'm not doing any drawings of my own. I miss my friends in Canada and I miss the convenience of everyone speaking English. Also I miss the anonymity. I'm very tall, and maybe kind of funny-looking, so in China people are usually staring at me and laughing! Really! I've always wished I could be the center of attention and make people laugh, but not in quite this way. For fun, I'm trying to take some photos of things. For relaxation I just go back to the hotel and sit in a chair. For the New Year I'm planning to dress up in a horse costume - all year long! People here think I'm a goof anyways, so why fight it?

PB: *Are you related in any way to Peter Falk? You know, Columbo?*

GF: No, that would be interesting. I like the trench coat and the Peugeot. But my real relatives are interesting too.

PB: *Graham, thank you very much for your time. It has been a pleasure to talk with you and an encounter from which one can "draw" some experience.*

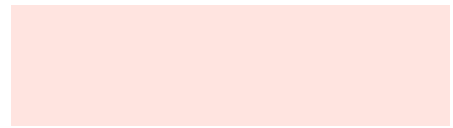
GF: Thanks. I hope my answers weren't too "sketchy".



The end

Posted: January 29, 2002

Updated: February 26, 2002 (added images)
Updated: March 18, 2002 (added Yahoo group image
and link)



animation artists and bunnies

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The Philosopher Bunny

A Poem: Show me the Bunny!

I've gotten to know this cute little fellow
who is short, pudgy and bright, bright yellow.
He is quiet, kind and whimsically funny
He has been given the name "[Untalkative Bunny](#)".

I'm not the only one who wants to know
more about this bunny who has his own show.
People on [Google](#) have been flocking like birds
to Web pages holding these phrases and words:

"Untalkative Bunny", "Untalkative Rabbit", and not to forget
the one in French: "Le lapinet discret"
You'll find links to [pages and Weblog posts](#)
that contain loving mention by the hosts.

There are so many questions a fan could pose
to the [guy who created him](#) and only knows
the answers to our ridiculous queries
but I'll list them in quasi-coherent series:

Is Bunny neither a boy nor girl?
What is his relationship with that squirrel?
Does he live in Ottawa, Ontario?
When winter comes where does he go?

Is there a sister or a brother?
Why is one ear darker than the other?
Why DOES he never say a word?
What's with that nasty, big blue bird?

For Bunny gear, where do I go?
You know, some episodes on video.
And also you know, it wouldn't hurt
if a fan could buy a UB T shirt!

[A UB fan.](#)

December 2001

December 2002, I'm still waiting for a T-shirt...

Visit the [Dynomight Cartoons Web site.](#)

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The Philosopher Bunny

An Interview with Graham Falk

Please follow this link to a [PDF version of the Interview](#) performed between December 2001 and January 2002. Performed in the realm of cyberspace. I just had to know a little more about the creator of [Untalkative Bunny](#). It was a slow process but I'm a very patient fan. Enjoy!

December 2002



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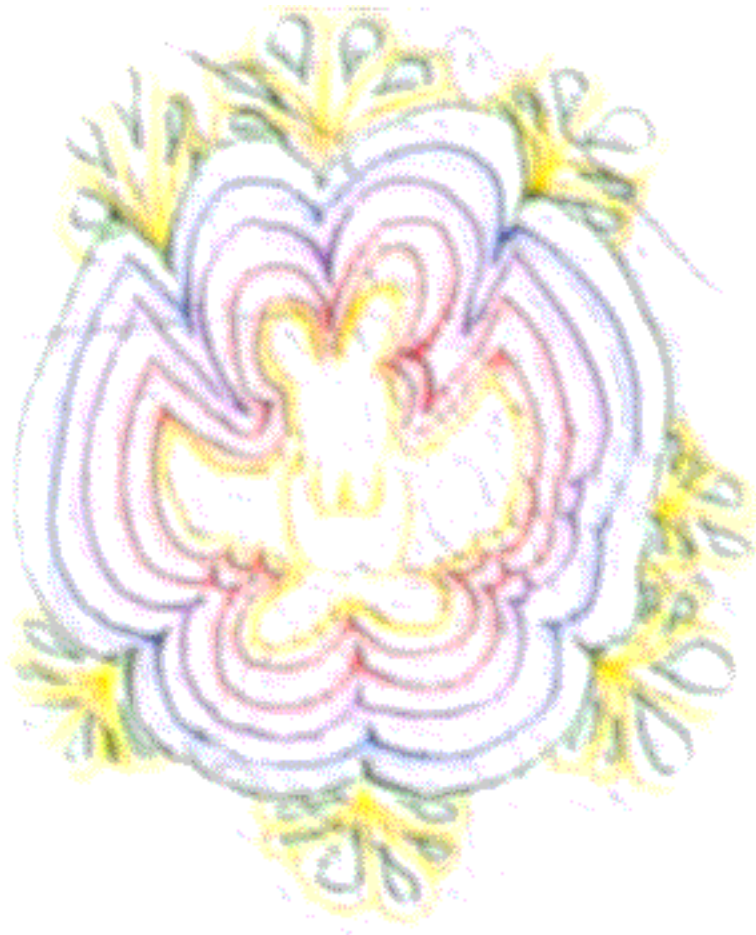
Ramar, the Rabbit with the Rainbow Wings

I first encountered this story by Darrell T. Hare while riding on the OC Transpo bus one morning *waaaay* back in 1996. A lady sat down beside me and started reading this lovely, colourful book - with a bunny in it. Of course, it caught my interest right away. It looked delightful! I excused myself and asked her what she was reading. She willingly showed me the cover and explained that it was a book for young adults about *spirituality*.

Oooh, I thought. That's deep yet enlightening. A story about a bunny AND spirituality. A few days later, I made my way to the Ottawa Public Library and picked up a copy of the book. I spent the next couple of days reading it and admiring the lovely illustrations. It has been such a long time since I've read it. I can't remember if the author made any correlation between bunnies and [Easter](#). Time to pick it up again...

If you are looking for some gentle reading on friendship, love and spirituality, you will enjoy this book. I also found it touched upon the mysteries of birth and destiny. After this, you may want to read the James Redfield trilogy, starting with the "Celestine Prophecies". It's a little more intense but has more adventure and "real life" characters. No bunnies though.

Hop back to the [Literature page](#). | [More Book Reviews](#)



The Philosopher Bunny

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