Column/Joseph J. Romm

What do all these have in common?

Isn't it strange that Extra-

storms Tylenol — which was

marketed as an adult — and Edward Tell-

er — an adult who believes nu-

clear war isn't so bad — both

have the same initials as "E.T., the Extragener-

al"

— a movie banned in Sweden for children

under age 12 because it "portrays death in a

childish way"?

Isn't it odd that E.T. was re-

leased shortly after we found out

that in the late 1950s we were

going to school at MIT?

And speaking of Coke, if they can

put a machine in Building 16

that takes empty soda cans and

returns a nickel, why can't they

put a man on the moon? And

why can't that man be James Watt?

And speaking of MIT, isn't it

at least slightly peculiar that a

circular permutation of MIT gives "TM" — the initials of the ill-fated Three Mile

Ike nuclear power plant!

And what about Harvard? Isn't it

weird that the name of Har-

vard's president, Derek Bok, is

Kvard's president, Derek Bok, is

similar to Bo's middle initial?

And speaking of aliens again, why

does a vacuum cleaner clean

"K," and why

"K"

answered: Is Bo's middle initial

frighteningly similar to Bo)

vard's president, Derek Bok, is

it weird that the name of

as people,

clear war isn't so bad - both

crazed adult- and Edward Tell-

r - the not-so-distant future.

MIT consumes time; it should

be rewarded by a good

quiz may at

for-

MIT envelopes we who study

Boston, not in our living groups.

matters — was there anything I

could have done? Probably not, but the question persists in my

mind, especially since I have of-

ten felt deeply dispersed and lost

at MIT and have badly needed

someone to talk to. Fortunately, I

have always had somewhere to

turn in those moments.

On the whole, students at MIT

are doing fine. I regretted not

in Course 6 or 16 or some other number

between 1 and 24. Buried in

heavy coats and hidden beneath

hats and hoods, MIT students

don't see much of what passes

by during these cold winter months.

Buried beneath problem sets and

hundreds of pages to read and

labs to do and classes to attend,

we don't see much of what is

happening in the world around

us — not in the country, not in

Boston, not in our living groups.

MIT envelopes we who study

here so fully that we tend to for-

get that tomorrow's 0.003 prob-

lem set or next week's Unified

quiz may at times take a back

seat in importance when com-

pared to such things as people,

friendship, and life itself.

MIT is time-consuming; yet, al-

of this work, this drudgery, this

pain is to be rewarded by a good

job with a high salary at some

point in the not-so-distant future.

That is important, but it is not

the only important thing in

life.

MIT contains the time; it does

not consume so much thought

and effort that people are forgot-

ten of war never having to be

fight.

The week before finals of last

term, I received a Christmas card

in my mailbox from the boy who
died Tuesday. With all the tur-

moil of studying for four finals

and packing to go home, I never
got the chance to thank him.

Sara Thornton '84

反馈

Death prompts reflection on life at the Institute

To the Editor:

Tuesday afternoon, someone in

my dormitory committed suicide

— someone I knew. My first re-

sponse was shock combined with

some sense of nausea and fear.

The feeling of helplessness

— was there anything I could have done? Probably not, but the question persisted in my

mind, especially since I have of-

ten felt deeply dispersed and lost

at MIT and have badly needed

someone to talk to. Fortunately, I

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Sara Thornton '84

Opinion

SHE DIDN'T START GLOWING LIKE THAT UNTIL WE FLEW OVER A TOXIC WASTE DUMP...

Column/Bob Lubarsky

Morale, morals in El Salvador

The military situation of the El

Salvadoran government is indi-

cative of the morass that the Rea-

gan administration is perpetu-

ating.

Some recent New York Times

articles have described a morale

problem in the El Salvadoran

army. Recruits are often drafted

randomly, they say, and even

many of the volunteers are hav-

ing trouble of a job. Extreme

dependence on the United States

shows itself by a lack of confi-

dence among the Salvadoran

commanders. The guerrillas, by

contrast, are highly motivated.

As an example of how damaging

this discrepancy is to the Salva-

doran government, 1000 troops

recently met in a provincial capi-

tal while the rebels took a city

twenty

miles away.

The Times's description, which

seems plausible, implies that the

government has little popular

support. Almost no one is willing
to fight for it. Increasing commit-

ments to the guerrillas have not

reverberated, and serve to

militate against government of-

eration that cannot stop a rebellion

is not a good investment, morally

or practically.

The same morale problems

functioned in Vietnam. The US

commitment there grew in the

late 1950s and early 1960s be-

cause the communist regime could

not handle the rebellion within its

own borders. The massive com-

mitment of the strongest military

in the world in the middle 1960s

could not defeat the peasants of

the north and south. Later Viet-

namization policy could not work,

because the southerners would

not fight on the American side in

the first place. The end result was

a demolished country and a deci-

dive military victory for the oppo-

nent.

The Reagan administration

seems to be headed toward a

similar solution. It does not

want elections to include the rebels

freely, which would contribute to

a peaceful settlement. Previous

decisions are not necessarily in-

dicative of the public's attitude.

When the white government of

Rhodesia made some conces-

sions, its voters turned out in

large numbers. The guerrillas

pushed the fight, and when the

whites settled with them, the

guerrillas won a clear electoral

victory. Since it seems to be the

Salvadoran guerrillas, and not

the government, that motivates

people, they might do well in a

fair election.

The US claims to be fighting

Soviet-Cuban expansion. Cuban

arms do not make the guerrillas

subservient to Castro. Furthermore,

the Soviet-Cuban link is portrayed

as too automatic. Cuba has always been fairly inde-

pendent of the Soviet Union, and
greater maneuverability in its

area would make it more so.

If the US really wanted to limit

a perceived Cuban influence, it

would accept the rebels' offer of

a negotiated settlement, including

free elections. This would both

bolster the moderates among the

rebels and preserve the present

powers. Since even that is "going
too far," it seems Reagan's real

concern is the preservation of US

influence.

Reagan wants to win the war.

If he can, he will brutalize the

opposition, and give the extrem-

ists their military victory in a

decimated land. The destruction

will ensure a post-revolutionary

El Salvador will not be an attrac-

tive model to other US-dominat-

ed states. A repressive govern-

ment will provide justification

and domestic support for further

hostility.

That the El Salvadoran opposi-

tion has the morale does not by

itself make its side right, but it is

a sign.

Oruc's View