

Welcome to issue #95 of PBW.

We come out twice a year, June-July and December January, except during Plague Years, and all rights revert back to our generous (albeit unpaid and, by now, quite tired of waiting) authors.

Our next issue will appear, magically, on your computer, in January - as who wants to stand in line at the post office when anyone around you could be spreading the virus or listening to hip-hop - it was so much easier back when it was only the syph that did in a generation of French poets and novelists.

Poets are permitted to send their work on paper, but my patented two-fingered typing will no longer permit me to attempt anything much longer than a few short poems or three.

All writing and art work can be sent to us via e-mail, at BNI@AOL.COM - traditionalists can still reach us at:

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Feel free to make copies of PBW for family and friends, or even put it out on the net, though that might incur the wrath of the cancelling class.

Anyway, see you again in January.

This issue is belatedly dedicated to Lyn Lifshin.

Table of Contents

Read First	1
Daniel Gallik	4
Dirk van Nouhuys	6
Donald J. Trump	16
James Steeber	27
Joshua Martin	54
Lachlan J McDougall	71
Lyn Lifshin	80
Maura Gage Cavell	94
Nathan Anderson	104
Richard Freeman	112
Richard Kostelanetz	146
Sheryl L. Nelms	153
Tom Ball	160

*Mick Dementiuk

*Vernon Frazer

**Note: see separate folder for PDF*

Wars Aren't That Shitty Anymore In America

By Daniel Gallik

In war I don't think men like
Writing letters. Men fix their
Guns. Men like food. And
They like killing others. Men
Do not like women at all. &
Women don't give a shit for
Their husbands. They know
They can find others to wed
Them if Bobbie dies. All men
In war are ugly. The few good

Looking ones find ways not
To go to wars. Mothers like
Their daughters more than
Their sons. They don't miss
Men when they go to war.
There is no music in battles.



Your sergeant is
not always
An asshole. It took
a long
Time for the U.S. to
get less
men killed in
asinine battles.

Celia

By Dirk van Nouhuys

In 1971 a stolid couple rented in a small, two-bedroom house in a district bordering Japan town in San Jose. They had grown up in a rural village in Wisconsin; his parents were German and hers unknown because she had been an orphan. They moved to San Jose when the shoe factory in their town closed. The sidewalks of their pale street were dusty in the summer and the gutters ran over in the rainy season. A lawn stretched between the sidewalk and the concrete foundations of the house they rented –; there were no foundation plants or flowers. The lawn was neither lush nor dry, a mere testimony of a lawn. A straight concrete path joined the porch to the sidewalk. Beige paint on the stucco peeled here and there to reveal orange paint beneath. The porch was a concrete slab with white square pillars supporting a small gabled roof. On one side a chain-link fence about three feet high extended from behind the house to the street to mark the boundary between it and a house identical

except for color. On the other side of the boundary the grass was greener. Perhaps they had different owners. The living room had a gray sofa, two overstuffed chairs, and a large, wooden television set. There was no ceiling light, but two standing lamps. The walls were glossy grey. The living room occupied the breadth of the house and a door inside center led to the remainder. The hallway was papered with floral entanglements. The first door on the right open to a bedroom with two single beds covered one with a plum and the other with a lime green duvet, a dresser, and a louvered door to an interior closet. On the other side of the hall an identical room was filled with odds and ends. The hall continued with the bathroom on the right. The bedroom closet ate into the space for the bathroom, which was tiled in orange and contained a tub, a curtained-in shower, a toilet, and a single sink. A hook-and-eye latch could secure the door from the inside. Opposite the bathroom was the kitchen, larger because the left-hand "bedroom" had no closet. The kitchen was done in the same orange tile and included a two-burner gas stove, an oven, an array of cabinets, and a round table, which served all meals. An open, wide back porch, another concrete slab, supported a washing machine and dryer. The backyard was overgrown grass.

Tenor Larson was maintenance manager at a midget car racing track, which also served for bicycle racing, moto-polo, and

occasional equestrian events. He and an assistant graded the oval, maintained the grass in the center, which resembled his lawn, cleaned and maintained the stands, which held about 1000 people, etc. Stella Larson took in sewing and cleaning. When she ironed clothes, she did it in the room that was not a bedroom. They failed to prosper. They had about \$300 dollars in their bank account, no health insurance, and quietly feared any possible catastrophe. Tenor was 50 and Stella was 44. Fretful about money, she put a notice for her services as a babysitter in the local advertising paper. She had not thought out where she would put any children she drew. Mostly it was sunny; they could play in the backyard.

A handsome couple was the first to respond. One warm fall afternoon they walked the path from the sidewalk to the front porch. The woman's high heels clicked on the concrete. She was a tall, full-figured blonde in a blue business suit. Her husband was also tall and strode in a black business suit with an intricately patterned silk tie. He carried an infant in swaddling clothes. Stella answered the doorbell in her shabby clothes, which carried the comforting warm smell of ironing. She made a washing motion with her hands as she looked back and forth at her visitors, frightened and stupefied that this had actually happened. They had not phoned.

They introduced themselves as Nick and Nora Fletcher and Nora prompted Stella, "You, you said you were looking for children to care for?"

"Oh, yes, I did."

"We thought we'd come and look your place over and let you meet us." The man seemed to half hold out to her a sleeping infant.

"Yes, oh, come in. I ,...," Stella remembered that she had planned to clean up and put a crib in the unused bedroom but had not gotten to it.

"I'll show you. I plan to put the crib there." She opened the door of the spare bedroom to her ironing and a hodgepodge of meaningless furniture.

They nodded. The man held up the baby and moved her around in the air as if using a movie camera to record the room. The plump child smiled and looked about.

"Let me show you the backyard -I have a lovely backyard for a child." She led them through the house and showed them the backyard. The couple did not speak but exchanged knowing glances.

When she had shown what she had, she stood on the porch with them looking at the backyard and gazed at them helplessly. The baby began to wiggle and murmur.

"This is Celia," said the woman gesturing towards the baby.

"Hello Celia," Stella said and leaned close to her face.

"We were thinking that we might bring her to you for two or three hours at irregular times" the man said. "Sometimes during the day and sometimes in the evening."

"That would be fine," said Stella, looking at the child as if her very brightness confused her.

"Do you have any children of your own?" the woman asked.

"No, we've never been blessed, but I had three younger brothers and sisters. I took care of my younger brothers and sisters since I can remember," she lied. It was Tenor who had young siblings; Stella had been raised in an orphanage, but she wanted the money.

"Are you sure it would be all right if we had an irregular schedule, sometimes in the daytime, sometimes at night?"

"No, that would be alright."

"About 40 hours a week?"

"That would be fine."

Stella asked to hold the baby, who was animated and cheerful while Stella's shoulders and hands were awkward. Stella was not sure if it meant the child liked her or liked everything.

"She's just over a year," her mother explained.

"She's already begun to walk and recognizes words," her father said.

They settled on the amount and planed for arrangements so the parents could come and go by their own schedule. The deal was they would call at least a day before and arrange to come at a certain hour. Celia's mother insisted that Stella would have the right to refuse if they called the same day. Stella returned the child to the woman, who handed it to the man. He wrote their names and a phone number on a slip of paper, but not an address.

Robots might have played their departure. Stiff backs from skull base to hip tops, brisk steps, the woman's heels tapping time to a car Stella did not recognize. She remained between the faux pillars on the narrow concrete porch with her arms at her sides.

{Possible break}

The arrangement worked well for about a year. One or the other of the parents brought Celia three or four times a week, more in the day than the night. One parent always brought her,

well supplied with diapers, changes of clothes, and toys, not fancy but solid. Stella had expected laundering diapers to be part of her job, but the parents supplied disposable diapers. It was always Celia's father or mother; Stella never saw them together again until the last night. They paid in cash.

Celia was bright and energetic. She learned fast. She never crawled but walked and was speaking in pointed but complete sentences before she was two. Tenor was at first bemused by her then had a wondering satisfaction. When her parents picked her up Stella was often exhausted. She knew so little about their lives, but they knew little about the lives of Stella and Tenor. Stella was aware there was little to know. She thought of mentioning that to Tenor, but she did not know how he would respond.

One evening after a little over year later they came together, dropped Celia off about 9:00 pm, and said they would pick her up at midnight. Tenor went to bed and Stella waited up in the living room, where she soon fell asleep. She woke in the night and, confused about the time, went into their bedroom where she had left her watch on the night table. It was around 1:30. She went back to the living room where she sat on the couch restless and nervous. She was worried that something had append to them, scared that she was in an unfamiliar situation, and relieved by

counting the dollars as the hours passed. They had run over time from time to time, and Stella had felt uncertain at first about charging them, but the wife had pressed her to accept money in fairness. They had worked out a system whereby Stella bought things like baby food and diapers and charged the parents. She did not recognize them as the 'Fletchers'; they were just 'the parents.'

Tenor too suffered a variable schedule, till midnight or later on racing nights, mostly weekends, and 8:00 to 4:30 on other days with Monday and Tuesday off. It was a Monday, so he had not set the alarm. Stelle did not dare to wake him. She heard him moving around about 9:00 am and went to their bedroom to tell him. He asked her how much they owed, and she told him. She then looked at him and she understood that he should call them. The number was disconnected. They had given them an address. Tenor woodenly travelled by streetcar and bus to the address. It was a dignified and slightly shabby old hotel. No one recognized the name or his description.

They waited another day. The parents had never introduced them to any friends or co-workers they might have. Nor did Tenor and Stella have any friends they might turn to. Tenor occasionally went for a beer with fellow workers at the track after his shift but was uncomfortable with drinking and tended to take an early bus

home. Stella looked with cautious admiration on the women she did laundry for but did not feel she could call upon them for aid. The numbers they had carefully written on the first page of the telephone book the company sent them were all from the track or Stella's customers.

They waited another day. Celia seemed to Stella a little – not unhappy, but disoriented, as if she recognized something was wrong but not what it was. She was curious. She asked, “Where’s mom?, but with curiosity rather than distress. She remained her bright cheerful self. On some occasion she had been there at every hour of the day, so she had a breakfast routine, a nap routine, toys, and loved to investigate the back yard.

The next day they phoned the police. Their call was shunted to “The Bureau of Missing Persons.” The call began days when they did not know what to do with Celia. The Missing Person’s Bureau found another hotel clerk who said he recognized their description of the parents, but they had checked out months ago and used another name when they were registered. A few other clues percolated up, but they led only to scattered suppositions.

Stella and Tenor talked to the Bureau of Missing Person about what they should do with Celia as the month grew on. The Bureau referred them to Child Protective Services, but they were

afraid Child Protective Services, would take Celia away and keep her parents from getting her back. They sat together considering the number of Child Protective Services, which Tenor had written on a scrap paper.

“We have to keep her until they come back,” Stella said.

Tenor said, “It will begin to cost money in a week or two.”

“It’s the right thing to do,” Stella said.

Tenor nodded. It was a cloudy day. Celia was playing in the back yard. Stella went to her and said, “You can stay here until your parents come back.”

“Where does the sun go at night?” Celia asked.

Her parents never came back.

From The Presidents

By Richard Freeman

Donald Trump

The real Donald Trump,
Quite plainly has me stumped.
His friends all attended his nuptials,
Then derided his golden showers coitus interruptuals.

Paul Anka

Tony Bennett

Tina Brown

Julie Chen

Bill Clinton

Hillary Clinton

Katie Couric

Simon Cowell
P. Diddy
Kathie Lee Gifford
Kathy Hilton
Rick Hilton
Derek Jeter
Billy Joel
Elton John
Star Jones
Don King
Gayle King
Heidi Klum
Matt Lauer
Chris Matthews
Les Moonves
Pat O'Brien
Shaquille O'Neal
George Pataki
Regis Philbin
Kelly Ripa
Russell Simmons
Andre Leon Talley
Usher

Barbara Walters
Harvey Weinstein
Anna Wintour
Steve Wynn
Jeff Zucker
Mort Zuckerman

Once upon a time, these were one and all, in Carson McCullers' phrase, Members of the Wedding. It's curious how few of Trump's friends were Republicans back then, and how not one of his A Listers would ever again volunteer to watch him remarry or send prenuptial gifts, much less perform at the ceremony. Elton? Billy? Diddy? Tony? Paul? I'm afraid The Donald will just have to elope next time, and maybe not even inform the kids.

Suddenly, it's all become worser than the bad-rapping of the Marquis DeSade out there. Suddenly, only last summer, he is not the man he used to be.

Cazart.



HILLARY CLINTON: "Removing Trump from office is essential, and I believe he should be impeached. Members of Congress who joined him in subverting our democracy should resign, and those who conspired with the domestic terrorists should be expelled immediately. But that alone won't remove white supremacy and extremism from America."

THE HUFFINGTON POST: "Donald Trump regularly incites political violence and is a serial liar, rampant xenophobe, racist, misogynist and birther who has repeatedly pledged to ban all Muslims – all 1.6 billion members of an entire religion – from entering the U.S."

NOAH SHACTMAN DAILY BEAST: “If you’re renting a Trump building or playing a round of golf at a Trump resort, you are supporting racism and neo-fascism.”

JIM RUTENBETG THE NEW YORK TIMES: “If you’re a working journalist and you believe that Donald J. Trump is a demagogue playing to the nation’s worst racist and nationalistic tendencies, that he cozies up to anti-American dictators and that he would be dangerous with control of the United States nuclear codes, how the heck are you supposed to cover him?

“Because if you believe all of those things, you have to throw out the textbook American journalism has been using for the better part of the past half-century, if not longer, and approach it in a way that you’ve never approached anything in your career. If you view a Trump presidency as something that’s potentially dangerous, then your reporting is going to reflect that. You would move closer than you’ve ever been to being oppositional. That’s uncomfortable and uncharted territory for every mainstream, non-opinion journalist I’ve ever known, and by normal standards, untenable.”

WASHINGTON POST: “Democracy Dies in Darkness”

JOHN BRENNAN: “Donald Trump’s press conference performance in Helsinki rises to & exceeds the threshold of “high crimes & misdemeanors.” It was nothing short of treasonous. Not only were Trump’s comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin. Republican Patriots: Where are you???

JULIA IOFFE: “Either Trump is fucking his daughter or he’s shirking nepotism laws. Which is worse?”

STEPHANIE CLIFFORD: “The worst 90 seconds of my life.”

DAN RATHER: “I’m not comparing Trump to Hitler, but...”

KEITH OLBERMANN: “Donald Trump has branded himself a traitor to everything this country has stood for. We will remove him.”

STEPHEN COLBERT: “The only thing your mouth is good for is as Putin’s cock holster.”

KATHY GRIFFIN: “A sitting president of the United States and his grown children and the first lady are personally, I feel, personally trying to ruin my life forever.”

REZA ASLAN: “Oh the joy when this conniving scumbag narcissistic piece of shit fake president finally gets what’s coming to him.”

NANCY PELOSI: “We saw cold, hard evidence of the Trump campaign — indeed, the Trump family — eagerly intending to collude.”

DICK BLUMENTHAL: “...colluding with the leader of a hostile power.”

ADAM SCHIFF: I could certainly say with confidence that there is significant evidence of collusion.”

ERIC SWALWELL: “...collusion...”

JERRY NADLER: “...collusion...”

BETO O’ROURKE: “...collusion...”

MAXINE WATERS: “There was collusion! If they just do their work and do their job they will find out it was collusion.”

JIM SCIUTTO: "...the golden shower allegation."

ERIN BURNETT: "...Moscow prostitutes urinating..."

DON LEMON: "He brought up what he called, 'the golden showers thing.'"

CHRIS CILLIZZA: "...the golden showers...."

BOB MENENDEZ: "It seems to me that the walls are closing in on the president."

LAURENCE TRIBE: "He feels the walls closing in!"

NICOLLE WALLACE: "It feels like the walls are closing in."

STEVE SCHMIDT: "He sees the walls closing in."

DAVID AXELROD: "Those walls are closing in on him."

JOHN DEAN: "This is a level that Richard Nixon never went to."

JEFFREY TOOBIN: "...worse than what Nixon did during Watergate."

WOLF BLITZER: "...a slow-motion Saturday Night Massacre."

JAMES CLAPPER: "...slow-motion Saturday Night Massacre."

BRIAN WILLIAMS: "A break-glass scenario in case there's a Nixon-era Saturday Night Massacre."

JAKE TAPPER: "We are all going through a slow-motion, multi-monthed Saturday Night Massacre."

RACHEL MADDOW: "Protests across the country! More than 900 are planned. Question as to whether or not this was the break-glass moment."

PAUL BEGALA: "Boy, this looks like obstruction."

APRIL RYAN: "There's a constitutional crisis."

BROOKE BALDWIN: "this could potentially be an impeachable offense."

TOM STEYER: “The Constitution gives us one solution, which is to impeach.

CHUCK TODD: “Let’s go to this issue of impeachment.”

LARRY O’DONNELL: “Donald Trump will be, must be impeached.”

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: “...may be grounds for impeachment.”

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: ...”the prospect of impeachment.”

CARL BERNSTEIN: “This is worse than Watergate.”

A. H.: “The receptive powers of the masses are very restricted, and their understanding is feeble... they quickly forget... all effective propaganda must be confined to a few bare essentials and those must be expressed as far as possible in stereotyped formulas. These slogans should be persistently repeated until the very last individual has come to grasp the idea that has been put forward. If this principle be forgotten and if an attempt be made to

be abstract and general, the propaganda will turn out ineffective; for the public will not be able to digest or retain what is offered to them in this way.”

The Maple Leaf Record

The Cheap Pressing that Changed My Life



James M. Steeber

My mother purchased an LP for me one afternoon. It was one of those checkout lane items – a budget record costing a couple of dollars but whose subject had caught my mother’s attention. Its title was “SCOTT JOPLIN, the Entertainer featuring His Greatest Hits”. Richard Zimmerman was listed as the artist.

I was thrilled to get the record. It was likely the summer before I was to start what is now referred to as middle school. My mother was always on the alert for interesting items that might

catch my interest, assuming they didn't cost too much. This was perfect in both categories.

My mother was aware that I lit up around ragtime, although I had yet to play any of it on the piano which I had been studying without a break for about three years. My first lesson happened when I was five years old. A man who provided dinner music for patrons at the Scandia Room – the Smorgasbord dining room of the Flamboyant Hotel my father managed on Ashford Avenue in San Juan – offered to teach me piano. After experiencing me for a lesson or two he informed my parents that I had the musical acumen of an adult. At least he was impressed with something, though sadly, the lessons were short-lived. He moved on, and we eventually left the island. I still have the big note Thompson book, though as a souvenir.

Now years later in Ohio, I placed the Joplin record on our good stereo in the den, the Braun Schallplattenspieler my father had sought out about six years earlier when we'd lived in Santurce, Puerto Rico. This phonograph had been a link to the cultural world beyond our apartment for all these years, and it was about to take me on yet another journey. Side one of the Olympic Records disc (part of a so-called "Gold Medal Collection" showing a poised discus thrower) began with "The Entertainer" – at the time the most widely-heard Joplin work - mostly due to the recent

film “The Sting”, which had brought the piece out of relative obscurity. The performance of it was crystalline and brilliant. I was determined to learn that rag, someday soon, like a lot of kids who could at least rattle through its primary air at breakneck speed.

As to the rest of that side, the tracks included works that I didn’t recognize. One work was a sentimental waltz called “A Picture of Her Face” – interesting in its period decoration, but otherwise a drab piece of bric-a-brac to my young ears. Could it be that the record contained only the one hit?

I turned the record over and lowered the stylus onto Track 1: “The Maple Leaf Rag”. I was instantly transported by a shockwave I had been seeking. The chromatic chords I had heard on a record player in my last months in elementary school suddenly were there again. This was that dark piece! Zimmerman not only played Joplin’s notes but added a few arpeggiated leaps and ornaments. It was breathtaking – stunningly impressive to me, and altogether impossible to imagine playing.

I presented my ragtime wishes to Mrs. Livingston – my piano teacher at the time. She owned a Steinway D – the same model you would find on the Carnegie Hall stage as well as on most of the concert stages of the world. Her cottage-size house seemed

barely able to accommodate this limo of an instrument, but I was thrilled to play it, even though its lid was never opened. A fluorescent lamp aimed up at the music rest. A plastic shield protected the fallboard and its “Steinway & Sons” logo and insignia.

Mrs. Livingston, kindly teacher, ordered a copy of “The Entertainer” for me, and she surprised me with it one afternoon. I opened the page and found quite a number of notes missing. Not only did it exclude a number of sections of the work, but the famous octaves were missing. She had purchased a dumbed-down copy of the rag – a simplified-for-young-fingers, show-mom-how-well-you-play-it four-page edition that only resembled a synopsis rather than the real work. I was greatly disappointed. “I thought you weren’t ready for it yet,” she said, surprised at my reaction.

Apparently, Mrs. Livingston had been responding more to my inability to sight-read more advanced material, rather than my great need, my passion to fly free into the world of more complex tonality and rhythm. She had missed the signs. Aside from studying and achieving a movement of the Moonlight Sonata (as published) with her, we worked on specialty material for designed for students until I’d had enough. I quit her, amicably, and moved on to two successive teachers.

Some morning in my sophomore year of high school an upper classman named Jeff took to a spinet piano and began reeling through “The Maple Leaf Rag”, roughly but determinedly. It was almost like a repressed memory coming alive in me – The Maple Leaf, of course. I had wanted to learn it four years earlier and had lost the scent. Hearing someone play it with such casual abandon set me off on a course that had to result in me playing that rag, as written. Jeff kindly lent me the sheet music.

The score was like ascending a mountain peak with endless promontories of jagged stone. On the straightaways it was like peddling slightly uphill in first gear. The left hand had to move laterally and vertically while the right hand had to embroider, all while establishing a kind of danceable rhythm and tempo. Learning the leaps in this 1899 rag required hours of repetition through five different themes and transitions. It took me a total of six months before, saddle sores and all, I could ride that rag around the neighborhood without falling off. It had become a bicycle in music form.

I played it for a recital my current teacher Mrs. Katz had arranged for her students. A Bach invention went well until I had a memory lapse and had to wretchedly meander out of the piece on improvised notes. I paused over a single breath and tore into The Maple Leaf Rag. It was a house sensation receiving a great

ovation. My mother dutifully recorded the performance on a cassette recorder, and during the applause, on playback, I heard someone quip to her “He’s gonna be a jazz player.”

It was a nice moment, having finally escaped the surly bonds of a simplified “Entertainer”.

By chance, last week, now decades on from the story, I had a moment of musical intensity come over me (I was blowing off steam) at the same moment that I found a piano in a free studio at my place of work. I also had a video device with me. I decided to play this rag that I had learned and almost started to forget, even after I had learned it again for a Martha Graham Dance Company stage audition in the early 90’s. I wanted to see and hear what would come out if I just struck while the iron was hot and the spirit was beckoning.



I had not recorded this piece in many years and had never video recorded it. The last theme had been in shambles for a long time, and I had recently been restoring it to my hands, happy that it was not lost after all.

The result is here. I'm simply paying tribute to a work that has stayed with me through all the years of corporate and artistic labors. I thank Scott Joplin, I thank Jeff, and I thank Mrs. Katz, my mother, the 16-year-old me, and all of you.

What's in a Negative?

There are Stories in Nearly Everything



James M. Steeber



Before writing something truly profound, I had thought to offer this “quick” appraisal of a still-life image I had taken many years ago. Unfurling the energy in this matter proved to be more involved than I had anticipated, with connections still alive. Therefore, take the ride with me.

Recently, I became intrigued by a photograph in my collection, derived from negatives I had produced in my first years

as a photographer. I took my first decent photo or two when I was about six but had to wait until I was twelve for more in-depth instruction. My father had been trained as a photographer and graphic artist, in Vienna. War and fate compelled him to leave Europe as a refugee, and though he continued to take marvelous photographs, his profession turned to the food and lodging trade, in part compelling us to travel often and to live in a number of places in the world, including the suburban Dayton bedroom in this photograph.

By the time I exposed the image I was regularly using my father's Rolleiflex medium-format camera. It was capable of magnificent imagery, given proper care and conditions, and I would often find it irresistible to capture something that looked good on the camera's beautiful ground-glass screen. I was lucky enough, just out of the 6th Grade, to have had a darkroom across the hall from my room, and that is where this image was developed. Nonetheless, the first darkroom I used regularly was at the Dayton Art Institute where a summer photography course had given me the basics of serious photography from camera exposure to producing glossy prints. It was a lovely time.

My father and I set up a darkroom in my bathroom (which was itself two little rooms which helped keep it light-fast). He lent me all of his equipment, which had last been used in the hotel

suite where I saw my first years of life, in Aruba. The result of all the darkroom work done over roughly seven years (including yet another bathroom at yet another address, this time in the City of Dayton) was an impressive collection of glassine-wrapped negatives. When I moved to New York, I did not take these to the great city only to have them damaged or lost, so I allowed them to remain in a closet back at home.

My father let me know at some point that he had collected everything and put them in “a box”, which survived a water leak and a next-door fire. Back in New York, I’d become concerned that my negatives might at some point have become lost or damaged; I felt foolish for not having secured them earlier, but ever the fatalist, I accepted the possibility of chaos ruling all and every. Interestingly, I could never seem to find “the box” on visits home. I imagined that they’d turn up, or that I’d simply remember to ask for them sometime, always afraid even to travel with them by air, should something happen.

The aforementioned fire caused my father to have to move to an apartment down the hall. Most of our possessions – most dating from the time my mother was still alive, and many finding their origins in the Aruba suite – survived, although a number were hauled away by a rather unscrupulous national company that claimed to treat all belongings for minor smoke damage.

Though they treated the things, a number of them never returned – clothes included. My father, now approaching his late 80's, had limited energy to fight the company over these injustices, and I was 600 miles away maintaining a full-time job. Once again, entropy and chaos interfered. Amazingly, it was on a shelf in a bedroom in this newer apartment that I found the treasured negatives – neatly stacked up to the top of the box – undamaged. Once again, I didn't take them. After all, I now knew they were safe in a bone-dry apartment unit. It took my father's final illness (brought upon by a fall) and death, six weeks later, for the negatives and I to be reunited. I had spent the harrowing weeks with Dad filled with hope and despair, and when he stopped breathing one late morning in Hospice, I gathered valuables for the long drive back to New York. I escorted the box of negatives back to Manhattan.

I purchased the best film scanner I could find and went to work – spending so many uninterrupted hours scanning negatives and slides that I nearly made myself ill. I was diverting myself from reality, but I was also running toward the memories that had made up my life. I started a vast folder of scanned images, learning as I went, about what I had seen and what my parents had seen. They left large quantities of slides and negatives that

told stories of a honeymoon, people they had met, trips around the States and the Caribbean, and the raising of their only child. I recently noticed this still-life picture in the collection and realized that it told a story.

Pictured is a shelf that served as a nightstand for me. My bed was to the right. This was located in an expansive apartment complex of about eleven Tudor castle-like buildings on acreage in a place called Madison Township – a place that no longer exists as it was absorbed into the once village of Trotwood, Ohio. Trotwood has the distinction of being the only so-named town in the United States, and I'd heard that its namesake was Betsy Trotwood from Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

I had preferred to live in cities, once spending a few years in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with a view of tin roofs, electrical transformers, and the Eastern Airlines Building. The suburbs seemed isolated, even unprotected. One drove for everything, though I managed to bike to the nearest mall at least once, through thick traffic. When I needed my fix of city I was known to walk three miles to the end of the nearest Dayton trolleybus line which would take me all the way Downtown.

But to the photograph – here's what I see. A scene from the winter of 1977-78. Two watches: a Girard-Perregaux (years later lost in a taxi in San Francisco) (and my added Twist-o-Flex band)

given to me by my father, and a Timeband LED wristwatch. LED watches were the rage in the late 70s, and the price had just come down on the cheaper ones. They had been very expensive only a few years before, but this one could be had for \$49.95 at Rike's department store where I proudly purchased it. I quickly ran down its first battery, unable to resist frequently checking the time and date and watching the seconds elapse. It was fascinating even to watch the date change at midnight if you were up for that. Below the Timeband is a knob from my Radio Shack Archer shortwave radio kit. I had assembled the radio with a soldering iron and had managed to get it to work for a while before it became static-only. Perhaps I had soldered too much, too hot. Yet it represented one of my many escapes from suburban stasis.

There's a Waterpik wand next to the knob. I used the appliance for years, although it resided in my parents' bathroom. Perhaps this was my personal item, then. I loved the idea of a tank of water vanishing as its contents shot out under pressure in a fine stream.

The cloth napkin likely represented a meal had in the bedroom. The cough syrup (possibly from J.C. Penny or Gold Circle), the thermometer and the Hall's cough drops strongly suggest that I had been ill – particularly with a cough. This, then,

had to be the same year (1977) as a terrible deep freeze (-21°F) or even around the time of the infamous blizzard of February 1978 where we were apartment bound for days.

The house keys bear my name and a 1976 date, instead of an advertiser's logo. Keys were vitally important at the time. I'd come home from school often alone. On rare occasions I'd have forgotten my keys and would have to walk to the office in the center of the apartment complex and beg for the house key. I think a manager had to do the honors and come back with me. The clock radio is a SONY model from the late 60s. It had been my parents' bedroom radio when we'd lived in Puerto Rico. When new it had appeared very modern and sleek – up on little legs that allowed the speaker to be on the bottom. I used its sleep timer and alarm for years. After the apartment building fire in 2005, I agreed to let it go in a decluttering push. Later, out of regret, I found another one on eBay which was exactly the same, and I still keep it. For a time it was on my desk at work.

Sitting atop the radio is likely a pad of paper (always in evidence) and a copy of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* which I was tackling for a class at school. The hairbrush's provenance is also late 60's – these items not just representing time shifted but of latitude and longitude.

The ring is sterling silver (since lost) made for me by my Aunt Jo (Joan, pronounced Jo-Ann) who was enjoying a silversmithing class after work. It said “Dayton” on it, but due to the difficulty of working a wax mold of that size, it appeared to say “Davton”. I was thoroughly immersed in the cities where I lived, but I never really had a home base that was better-defined than Dayton, as my mother’s side of the family had been there since the end of the Nineteenth Century. I was learning its history. It anchored me. To that end, the Craig MacIntosh book is called *The Dayton Sketchbook* and features many pages of fine pen and ink drawings of Dayton buildings – some no longer in existence. I can’t identify the magazine.

An envelope bears my name and current address of the time.

The car is a Hubley kit model made of metal. It’s a Duzy (a Duesenberg) with superchargers made of fine springs. You had to file down the edges of the parts. I’d even painted it, after my father showed me how to prime a surface, sand it, then paint it again with Testors model paints (or sometimes spray paint). I never got around to painting the trunk. The tires’ white sidewalls were only paper decals, to my slight disappointment.

There's a marble sill (unexpected for an early 70's suburban apartment), a bit of the landlord-issued drapery (and single-pane windows, out of frame) which frosted over in the depths of Winter. Then to the bookshelf. These are old friends which remain to this day. Even the bookshelf remains – standing only a few feet from where I am writing. That was originally part of my parents' newlywed furniture in 1958, in a suite at the Hotel Albert Pick Miami in Downtown Dayton where my father was catering manager. He had even done the honors with his own wedding. One volume on the shelf in particular was a bar mitzvah gift from a Danish couple my parents knew. *Is America All Used Up?* Is the title – a kind of rough and cynical message for a 13-year-old, but I suspect they gave it to me because of its great vintage photographs, they knowing that photography and I would be continuing on for a while.

There's a Gluyas Willams book of satirical cartoons tying into my love of drawing. I had drawn since practically infancy. These days I have to coax myself back into it, whenever a greeting card is needed, but the need is still there. I can communicate with it.

There's a large beige volume on the right entitled *Modern Coin Magic* by J.B. Bobo – a famous book on closeup magic given to me by my Uncle Martin who was a professional magician

(as well as a chemical engineer). What's astounding is that Uncle Martin had Xeroxed (I believe on an actual Xerox at work) the entire volume, having been unable to locate a copy of his own. Every other page, then, is glued to an image of its reverse side (double-sided copying probably not existing then), and the whole thing is properly bound in library-grade buckram.

Just to the lower left, in shadow, is an LP cover, I think to a Fats Waller Biograph record of piano rolls, purchased not long before at Peach's Records and Tapes in Dayton. I was still becoming acquainted with classic jazz, still learning that I might just play it sometime.

I'm past 2100 words here, but I will make one more identification. Just ahead of the clock is a small object that I was unable to figure out initially. Sunglasses? No. Part of a tie? – not so. And then it was solved: my retainer. If there were ever a more period indicator, that might be it – that painful contraption that pushed molars back into my head for some reason through slow torture – that bridle on which I could change the elastic decorative band – that symbol of parental appropriateness that, amazingly, most kids had learned to ignore or simply endure as worn by others – was at my bedside in this picture. I had learned to love the pain, for whatever reason I had to have it.

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Postscript:

In late May of 2019, an unusual weather pattern starting in Chicago sent an EF 4 tornado through the apartment complex, damaging a corner of our former building and utterly destroying others. Though no one was killed, complex never recovered. As of this month, it is due for total demolition. Much as I had feared tornadoes in Ohio, our apartment was unscathed.

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The Voices in Our Heads (II)

Why Imagination is Necessary and Also Under Attack

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JAMES M. STEEBER

MAY
23





Photo credit: James M. Steeber, 2021

I learned this month that the illustrator and author Bruce McCall had died. His *New Yorker Magazine* covers and other drawings used to be highlights of any given week. McCall's work was largely satirical with a kind of wistful longing for things that may never have been but would have been nice, like a highly cultured Times Square or a library car on the subway. Often he depicted diners in fine restaurants, seated at giant circular tables, set comfortably and crazily apart, situated atop enormous airplanes, buses, or ships the size of city blocks. His realm was indeed, as Rod Serling used to intone "that of imagination". I write about it now as a pretext not only to complain about too many cell phones, as an example, but about the disturbing way the corporate world increasingly seems to want a world without much imagination.

Writing about imagination is ridiculous. It's a bit of a grand topic. Nevertheless, I wanted to write something about it because I recently began to observe, again relating to the general topic of smartphones, that the addiction to traveling telephonic microwave-linked pocket computers was poised to take over, and that the inner life — that peal of thoughts in our head — had all but given up the fight to exist in too many cases. This was added to a general corporate distrust I've been perceiving of the imaginary world, not unlike the way suspected communist sympathizers were herded out of the film and television industries for about ten years beginning in the late Forties, paving the way for exceptional predictability and blandness, and above all safety.

The addiction to mobile phones comes into play because it is the most visible, as in a horror film where everyone in sight has been absorbed by an invading alien force or in a fantasy novel — the kind Eugène Ionesco was thinking of when he wrote *Rhinoceros*.

In the late 90s the corporate retail world had begun convincing people that they needed a wireless phone and then progressively needed to interact with it well before its commingling with the Internet. Copper “land lines” are still being phased out, supplanted by VoIP (voice over internet protocol) connections. The high-tech Unisphere is becoming one

homogenous grid of micro communication. Should any of it fail, chaos can ensue. Most need never think about it most times. Its enormous complexity and fragility are generally invisible. What remains is a comforting dreamworld of commentary, virtual friendship, and easy recognition. Post a picture and watch the little red numbers. Offer a comment and see the tiny balloons and smiling bears. Everyone speaks in glorious enthusiasm. All is either “awesome”, or all is “sad”. No more is required.

I remember objecting to this migration, partly based on what I noticed was the lax quality of mobile phone calls. There were latencies in digital wireless connections that caused halting overlaps and interruptions in conversations. This often led to arguments. The fidelity was simply poor. Music couldn't be played over these virtual connections. I became aware of telephone contretemps in doorways and street corners, as people seemed to feel misunderstood or resisted during calls. Angry shouting was its result. The medium encouraged irritation. During the age of public telephones there had been sound-absorbing blinders or entire booths to isolate and protect callers. Clarity and privacy were paramount. Some booths, as the ones I recall at Grand Central Terminal, even offered seats. A call was often an important moment in one's life, and you could sit. The solemnity of conversation had meaning.

Now it is a world of dedicated and addicted phone walkers who famously don't often look up when they zigzag around, trudging up stairways at half-throttle, staring at the screen acting like a fascinating paperweight which has captured their souls as they cheat death by holding the radioactive device away from their heads as they converse and converse and converse, even in the earliest light. The conversations are no longer private or discrete. They are displayed like aural badges of honor for those who have joined the cyber herd. The inner life, fundamental to imagination, has been filled up by diversions, ads, and alarms. The Internet itself is addictive. Putting it into a tiny device via wireless high-speed data adds immense, even tragic addiction, to a fully functional telephone that can call anywhere. Add to this the fact that phones are roving cameras capable of taking cinema quality video and the phone becomes the next Saturnian obelisk demanding devotion.

Who needs imagination if, from waking to slumber one machine guards our wayward attention? For imagination to succeed it needs time and quietude. It is that culling of our deepest thoughts and the transformation of them into things that can be read, heard, or viewed that is the hallmark of our greatest achievements. It is the admittance of our own complexity, our

contradictions, and our follies. It is our depth and our beauty even within the most terrible visions. It is life itself.

I tried to think of some examples of how my awareness of imagination and its importance came to me.

One example is here, in a memory of a classroom at Ohio University – my junior year. My professor is a teacher of world literature and has been peppering us with questions about a Chekhov story. He is combating empathetic students who have taken pity on a character after a miscarriage near the end of the story. They want to be assured she will recover and be happy again. The professor strongly counters (offering “teacher’s opinion”, as he calls it) that this character, in this story, will not feel better. Therein begins the existentialist crisis. Though someone in the room claims that people in the modern world do recover from such things, he sternly responds, “I’m primarily concerned with the world of fiction” and douses any blithe hope of spiritual relief.

I remember being struck by the phrase “the world of fiction”. Where exactly was it, and why did it matter? I could have quickly comforted myself by asserting that it was a place within me called the imagination within a larger sphere called the mind, yet I still felt that I was looking for yet another dimension where characters in books really did exist. What I needed to conclude, for my

mental health, was that Anton Chekhov had experienced something and was placing it before me so that I could think about it in just the way any artist might respond to life. The amount of reality in that sharing is key to great art – the idea that what we feel can be acknowledged for the remarkable and intense thing that it is. It becomes a real thing.

Sadly, the world of fiction finds little to celebrate amongst those who watch the bottom line. The need for profit, in so many cases, guides mad decisions of destruction, leading to all-encompassing wars and to the loss of things that in another time and place would be unthinkable to lose. New York lost Pennsylvania Station about 58 years ago – at least the magnificent part above ground – because a railroad company felt it needed the money that would come from developing the block. The result was decades of mourning for a lost architectural masterwork. Part of the reason this was feasible was the idea that imagination (and aesthetic - a subsection of the same store), once again, was of no importance. I also felt that it represented a bit of resentment – even jealousy – that someone sometime ago had created something that magnificent and that this did not represent the current captains of that particular industry. They wanted to build something too – although with almost no imagination or certainly any appreciation of it.

The effect of seeing the great terminal in its grandest form seemed to belong to sentimentality, which was easy to write off, but the truth was far more profound, as there was an emotional connection among the population to the grand order of the place, something we could not manage now, connecting to the internal landscape of the mind. Denying this dimension was achieved to the peril of New Yorkers for decades, who knew that the idea of the station and its design were more important by far than simply being able to catch a train there. Imagination in many ways is a grand classical colossus replete with order but filled with chaos. If the structure itself is destroyed and the perception of order is disturbed, what's left is the chaos – hence the misery of the post-destruction Penn Station. Plans have ensued to replace what was lost ever since and may continue for a very long time. That grand order of what was there remains elusive.

My point is this: Imagination is real, whether it is found in literature, music, architecture, applied arts, the performing arts, and science. It is that final vision of what is possible and a commitment to an end, and it is greater than what can be found in a world without it. The danger we face from relegating our imaginative lives to prosthetic devices like smartphones (certainly remarkable in their power and convenience) is that we let others

insert their marketing directly into our brains which no longer have the time to think.

Occasionally, I have forgotten my phone upon setting off on a local journey. I'm often too far away to return home once the mistake has been discovered. I resolve to continue on without the phone. It's a shock of loss for about fifteen minutes when a sudden relief begins to overtake me. I no longer have to worry about missing a text or an e-mail. Nothing in "social media" needs to garner my attention. I don't have to look, and look. I'm free. Oftentimes I will return later only to find that the phone has received no updates, no alerts, and no texts. The self-generated illusion of continual urgency is part of that addiction that can't survive without the screen's beckoning. The secret is that much of the time we simply don't need this.

Imagination will probably continue to be in the crosshairs of commercial marketing, but there are signs that, as always, not everyone is buying in. There's a movement back to paper books, as people discover that the calmness of a book is a greatly civilized thing. The world "civilized" is for me an important description of order at its best where each person has the freedom to enjoy moments of life, whether it is sitting on a great stone bench under an enormous vault or simply knowing that there is time enough. Like that moment in Chekhov, this moment

could instead be the moment of realization that might also live in eternity.

I often hear “mindfulness” being recommended on the Internet. People speak of it as a panacea – a miraculous technique for offsetting stress and anxiety. Too often, though, it is practiced as “mindlessness”, where emptiness of thought is replaced by nothing but mantras of calm and soothing sounds. Meditation has existed for a long time, but its point in part is to once again achieve a sense of order. Mindfulness is simply the affirmation that the moment in which one is breathing is enough – that the anticipated and the past need not enter in. Unfortunately, it doesn’t create much either.

Here and now is a wonderful place to be – a point of beginning where the world can be created and recreated. The imagination is the realm where what we wish to see can become real, given the work, the failure, and the triumph which makes us human and appreciative of a living world. Put down the phone, turn it off, and see what happens.

Big out Festival creep

By Joshua Martin

whimsical

rope

ladder

stress test

: HeArT aTTacK for SnOw PlOWS :

enlightened soda pump

drizzling cinematic glue

priming simplifications

wire

tired

global

verses

curses

hearse

before

nightly grown hoisted pigeon

/ come down comfy stool \

I overflow smart aleck irritantl

buzzes pandered ear hair

plugged shawl permafrost

If sullen much as abide

Gallop festers the way a lemming cries

FoR SHoCk

, handspun ridicule

numbered

17 through billions of

misjudged whale bones

, placement

(at least outlaw bulbs)

fuming before snail

embankments

, dripping

snooty public

speculations

Recorded Hospital Revelations

Rope swing leaped vertigo
gerrymandered liposuction
keys to the road rage skirts
 dawning pea shoot equestrian
 spoiling crusted nude collectibles

wish bramble fulfilled
spritely belfry dollmaker
potato opera fellowship
gusty potassium wrench

whipping comes
abound if fever

lantern junction barrier
driving worthy jaundice
fort having shaken

angry as a vault

balding

pinnacle

turning dime into stork

simpering facemask

golden zebra spittle

knuckle sandwich

within umpire basement

tomb candy tonal scale

lip grease

trapped

e

a chair

s flared

y double

talk

clock strikes zillion
stormed mischief cadaver
earring boisterous sunchoke

heart cooling
memento
slurp
first base

regalia

Captured marking landscape comma

swoop iconoclast deformation tissue
Missed Paperwork Compass;;;;; negation
 , identity , earlier
 otherwise , an
 error ; ; ; ; ;
bounded
concessions
text ::::: found habit trivia :::::
awake

! , ! , ! , ! , !

constructive opening dynamics

little plus

leaving transcendental forms

typified sense of editorial horizon

Under Liquidations

Creditors of slush triple crown slaughter
less a museum of envy splashing flinch
before bullet banging one surly shallow voyage.

Assumed linoleum,
blessed BE thy costume crutch

or:

“hand jittery &
swooping tiny frowns,
best produced as a DrEsS shirt
without tactics left briefly bare.”

/

[Awful strumming] /

, ill shining
MaDcAp thin
red lines.

Getting kids to foremost negative splinters
where corkscrew dispatches indulge beyond marshmallow
though having covered all the chewing marbles,

RUNAWAY hat of liposuction

, steeply

hit! HiT! HIT!

&

nice wax hothouse

broken, blasted, flown

roundly sing-song

chorus roaches.

Bombed Residue Grift

infant in a
pressure cooker

s
o mass
l channel
i surface
d pauses
) regardless (, , , ,

nearer burning
flesh spoon
of slipping
treehouse - - -

All TeROr
rejected
in
favorable
fried kettle
b score
a one
l for the
m
sponge

Reason to Slurp

PaPeRcLiP weave

,

faulty bRaNcH :

s

T

o

P : company entrant

, enfant , aggressive

poetic

rOUnd

/ launch FiNgEr \

(defensive

scenario) - - -

forecast defunct

pLaN - - -

champion spending

, 150% fUnD ,

threat

option

whoops

[!]

Chances Smudged

analogy of an uncontrollable Wall HaNgInG

\ printed kitchen hole \ - - - tIsSuE grit - - -

wrapping paper reject

clothed burial mousepad slipper. Helpless,
sPuN. Chattering mink loses cooler codex.

washing tube scurry LoWeR

greasy BoMbAsTiC [case By Case] slumping
glove.

Resourceful Messaging Appliance

wEIT yOuR tOrCh

lasso SuCceSs

No OnE sToRy bLiNd

Saw ::

limited dressing gowns: :

wElCoMeD > > > EnGaGeD > > >

fifteen FlEaS makeUP a memento

. SouNd CuE

[escape]. Wall-to-Wall

grandstanding / apartment ShleLd /

bench

press

your way to

hollowed out

invitations.

wEt WhIsTIE cRaShEd

crEEp / crEEp / steeper scholarly

YELLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL

primary wince

art speech
chaos evaporating
showering golem
of sleeping course
quartet
alternate volume
serene [scene]
camp lemon
needling fist
first thirst
valued sheep
) groom (paste
dragon armed
forceful protest
profane leg
chronicle stint
area taxi
gaze force gaze
reset primary
voter dearth
dust rusty
develop depth
pathfinder

wired obscure
bong song tong
sleepover lust
slurp burp dump
reality razor
from mirror
storyboard fake
nameplate capacity
preference steam
glory inversions
hermetic tones
wiping projection
atheist vehicle
detritus vocation
ultra phonetics
passage sprung
hanging translation
SPLAT.

reeling POND evacuations

census tracker

belly sweat

sweetener

filled

mood

bridge

doghouse

hOsE

, gone

formidable

pAddeD

oyster

brined

afternoon

wiggle

shaded

head

COUNT

capsules

indulge

suited

mUd

shoddy

devil carefree

mating

RiTuaI

designation

functional

reverb

partition

storming

mountain

feast

Sundry Tomato Stew

sneeze guard

umbilical

stigmata

Latitudes

s

h

u

t

t

e

r pinwheel

grape=vine

miniature wino stems

soupy

cursive

argh!

entrail hump

habit riddle

comet bOmB

practice combover

right-right-right

display case

match point

infected

search

additional

local value patron

zone LESS zap

relegated cluster

pitter patter pitter patter

bigger fields

record

shield

medical

schema

viewfinder

The Symbolists

By Lachlan J McDougall

The symbolists perhaps found time to track
Their creations through the winds of final
Chance. I am not so organized as that
And my words perform themselves like puppets
Jerked on strings, made to walk a lonely line,
Left to be unravelled by the course of
Human history, the span of nature.
Where will the light shine on this miasma?

Unravel this book, if you have the time,
Or leave it opaque, left to fester in
The derelict train cars of a quiet mind.
The curse shall be upon the writer to

Lift the storm of dead hullabaloo, to
Open the dictionary to heaven.

An Unread Book

The book sits

on the shelf

gathering a modicum of dust

shed skin cells

shredded to fine motes

gathering in the air

and soiling the furniture

The book sits

unread and untied

from its position

in space and a useful

fervour, the words

abused and scorned

in their obsolescence

Self Portrait #2

The death stare is a blank expression,
the little death a blank page.

There is a dread of wild spirits
that gather in the peripheries
spinning webs of alabaster
that are my skin.

These eyes do not see
without their glasses
and the books go unread.

I must remember
to be someone
with my last and dying breath.

Across the Barricade of Time

The childish cry to make something of art
is heard through the halls of the gallery.

The final chafe of growing up is lost
to the folds of a deep undying whim.

A season of space is made possible
through this art of total dereliction.

Abandon all hope—abandon your frail
bodies and shed your inconvenience.

The child will inherit space sooner than
you think. There is nothing that will stand in
their way except the strictures of flesh and
the deadly microbes of time based living.

The gallery will block the flow of young
laughter as long as it stands. Destroy it.

On a Dim and Painful Memory

The willowed wind whispered across a sea of bedlam;

long trenchant pull, the oars glide back across the shallow
water

and into the bay of deception where the fish snapped
like plants of a certain ilk.

“Do you remember?” you said to me, a mouthful

of rotting fruit sweet on your breath, the breath
of decomposition—the old Irish airs of your whiskey
soaked gramophone.

I did not remember. I don’t even think I remembered to forget.

It was simply something that happened
when the moon rose across the bay and the plants bent
down

over the water like the fronds of a small child’s hand.

Perhaps the night is still there.

Perhaps the night has forgotten me too.

Perhaps the emulsion of my negatives will eat up the air of
forgetfulness

and bring about a new static
age of remembrance.

“Do you remember?” you said to me, a mouthful
of Nagasaki, the pale-yellow mushroom cloud of your breath
wafting out over the breaches of the water.

“I don’t recall...” came the answer from another mouth that
was not mine, but
spoke with my voice from a distant eddy of wind.

The Ermines have spoken;
there is nothing left of this reverie
but a dark and brooding quality which I refuse to accept or
tolerate in its rank stagnation.

This water is rotten as is
your memory,

the slight rustle of your breath on the leaves,
the old hickory smoke of a time that once was.

Perhaps this memory is too painful to bear.

Perhaps I have cocooned it in a protective element.

Perhaps the tide of memory is not so strong as to force upon me

the dying embers of something
that prefers to be forgotten.

RETURN TO NEIGHBORHOODS THAT AREN'T

By Lyn Lifshin

East of Violet River in the
area no one is allowed to enter,
a green truck towing a small
metal trailer. 3 riders emerge,
the youngest, a Confederate
flag tattooed on his arm
dressed in camouflage
waders and a t-shirt with
a picture of a fish, the men
set out from a kind stranger's
home in Auburndale Florida
and drove through the night
to get here. There was no
where to sleep in New Orleans.
“Anyway,” one off the men
with him said, “I got a lot of

bills, a lot of work.” “Dump Her” on his t-shirt. The men were gathering possessions for friends and family members across the country. “Watch out for snakes,” one said entering one house to look for rings. Dogs lumbered in the front yard, panting, staring, then turned and ran off. The men waded into the house, into the living room, and the bedroom. One pushed a mattress aside and raised an upended dresser then opened a drawer. “There it is, this is what I came for, a couple of rings.” Then the men walked back over the wooden pilings and downed branches in the yard and got into the truck and drove toward Violet

EVERYONE STILL HEARS

the rattle of street cars
past sagging balconies

One man says *I left 24
years ago. I will never be*

from anywhere else. Cracked
streets, the low smooth

branches of oaks along the
park. *I remember the old*

*lady making the sign of
the cross near the*

*Catholic Church. We were giddy
when the hurricanes came*

*the wind howled, the windows
burst. Then we played in*

*the water. I remember it
unchanged and yet something*

*was always under the surface
falling apart. The thick beat,*

*the mud, the bursting magnolias,
I will, he says, never be from*

anywhere else

So Many Write of Roses

By Maura Gage Cavell

So many write of roses, yet
even more write about stars or
dancers with lithe bodies—feathers:
limbering about the stage, flocks
of ballerinas, gaggles of
acrobats, dandelion hair
in buns above long, swan-like necks.
Side-stage, they are preening, placing
makeup on cheeks, lips, and eyes so
boldly decorated to be
seen from afar or from a bird's
eye view for those perched sky high
in balconies as if they were
in trees or atop a mountain.

Already Five

for Oliver on his fifth birthday

I.

Dear Oliver, Just recently,
you and your classmates sang and signed
with such exuberance along
with a few classes at Saint Ann's
pre-K 4 celebration of
your graduation, making us
all so proud. Thank you for the cute
mug bearing your mug with your tongue
sticking out to the side. It makes
me laugh every time I see
it as it shows your spunky out-
look and personality: so
precious and fun, so charming
and adorable, so quick and bright

II.

in all you do. You were Houston
and Galveston-bound with your mom
and dad when we gave you your first
baseball mitt red like your hair or
your father's fire truck to get
you fired up for a first—an
Astro's game. You've grown so much this
past year. You have gone to movies
in the theater, eating pop-
corn and drinking cherry Icees,
to wearing pretzel designed sets
of pajamas. Your legs got so
long as we compared your first to
last day snapshots as you were on

III.

your way to school. You've tried oysters,
your bright eyes always gleaming when
you smile. You carried around

Curious George at times, sipped
colorful iced beverages
sat high in dad's fire truck, held
the wheel, the door displaying in
yellow print on a bold red door:
"Harahan Fire Dept." You donned
the hat, smiled sweetly. Oh how
you adore playing with and car-
ing for your cousin, Anna C.
Your school pictures this year are so
cute and show your spirit.

IV.

in your school activities, you
move more than others, are taller
and stronger. You had the most grand-
parents on Grandparents' Day! Six!
That makes you extra-special!
A bit later, you made a sweet
reindeer with red painted on your
nose. You were not so sure about
Santa, the way you sized him up

with a sidelong glance. You loved your teacher though and all of your friends. All through the year, art trumped karate and all else. You may be a true artiste. You might be creating

V.

a hat, coloring, painting with watercolors—whatever it is, you love to create with a hands-on approach. You also might be found underneath multi-colored parachutes holding a large green ball, watching bands march at LSU, bowing violins, cuddling up to watch something with Anna, blowing out candles with Pops, hanging out in your Batman tent, playing with cars in Gigi's hot rod, or eating ice cream. You are always well-dressed, wearing caps,

Vi. (One to grow on)

concentrating hard on something
for school or play, riding around—
at times with your cousins while
in Thibodaux and dressed in
a Mardi Gras costume from Sew
What? Purple, Green, and Gold cover-
ing you and everyone. Beads fly
from floats or the sky. You like so
many colorful items such
as green sunglasses; bananas
are still a hit as well as pan-
cakes. You like the peace sign, scooter-
ing around, hanging out with Chuck
E. Cheese, your pal, Otis, and more....

Happy Fifth Birthday! (I can't capture it all!)

Love you!

Love, Pops and Gigi

Walking Across the Field

Walking across the field at dawn,
she thought of her childhood horse,
Gypsy, midnight minus the white
diamond perfectly centered
on her face. As the sun drops down,
shimmering stars show up, dotting
the sky, the pinks and oranges
fade, a mottled moon drifts with ghost-
like clouds of mist shift, change shapes, go
by. Distant church bells clang and clash.
Candles are lit behind stained glass
windows, their reds, greens, and blues stream
intermingling with oranges
and yellows as she leaves the field.

City Man, Country Woman

He's all newspapers, magazines,
skyscrapers, fancy cars, and pubs.
She's all beauty shop gossip, word-
of-mouth, winding roads, Autumn trees,
cover-alls. He's suits, shiny dress
shoes or casual suede jackets
and loafers. She's likes small towns with
their formal wear shops and pretty
bakeries. He's cafes, bagels,
hot pretzel stands and hotdog stands.
She's all trains and local diners.
She's pickup trucks mechanic shops,
and high school football. He enjoys
plays and loves this country woman.

By the Creek

By the creek a white gazebo
stands empty, waiting for them to
toast to the future, the champagne
on ice, the sun streaming softly—
pale yellow rays cutting through
thin clouds. A gentle rain glistens
and blends with creek water, hits stones.
His proposal is a surprise,
the velvet-boxed ring glistening
before her leaves her unable
to speak, but her smile gleams so
brightly that he knows when she can
that it'll be favorable.
Suddenly a rainbow appears.

Small Town Day

Some places just seem to have doors

that pull and push in opposite
from what's customary or at
least expected. Small town days—with
sun so intense and relentless,
she walks from store to store: iced tea
here, shoes and accessories there.
She saunters down the street this way,
shopping randomly just to stay
cool. She recalls her Florida
days, the breeze across the water,
and colorful sailboats shifting
around the crystal marina—
rain rushes through an open door.

So Many Write of Roses

By Maura Gage Cavell

So many write of roses, yet
even more write about stars or
dancers with lithe bodies—feathers:
limbering about the stage, flocks
of ballerinas, gaggles of
acrobats, dandelion hair
in buns above long, swan-like necks.
Side-stage, they are preening, placing
makeup on cheeks, lips, and eyes so
boldly decorated to be
seen from afar or from a bird's
eye view for those perched sky high
in balconies as if they were
in trees or atop a mountain.

Already Five

for Oliver on his fifth birthday

I.

Dear Oliver, Just recently,
you and your classmates sang and signed
with such exuberance along
with a few classes at Saint Ann's
pre-K 4 celebration of
your graduation, making us
all so proud. Thank you for the cute
mug bearing your mug with your tongue
sticking out to the side. It makes
me laugh every time I see
it as it shows your spunky out-
look and personality: so
precious and fun, so charming
and adorable, so quick and bright

II.

in all you do. You were Houston
and Galveston-bound with your mom
and dad when we gave you your first
baseball mitt red like your hair or
your father's fire truck to get
you fired up for a first—an
Astro's game. You've grown so much this
past year. You have gone to movies
in the theater, eating pop-
corn and drinking cherry Icees,
to wearing pretzel designed sets
of pajamas. Your legs got so
long as we compared your first to
last day snapshots as you were on

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shopping randomly just to stay
cool. She recalls her Florida
days, the breeze across the water,
and colorful sailboats shifting
around the crystal marina—
rain rushes through an open door.

Continuity [over] Soundscape

By Nathan Anderson

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 n

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Notebooks 9

Richard Freeman

It is taking me an astonishingly long time to grow up - to become even somewhat mature (I don't know if this time has been spent as profitably as Einstein's thinking of what would happen to time & space if there were no matter in the universe...).

The past year has forced me out of my retirement, as it were... no longer quietly vegetating, I am back in the saddle again... trying to find a way of teaching - teaching myself, first, that I can teach - and learning from this to help others help themselves through my meditation techniques.

More likely, though, it's events that are in the saddle, riding me.

I am experimenting on myself - trying to talk to and find a way of listening to my higher selves and centers. It would be preposterous to do this if I hadn't spent several days in some self that certainly seemed higher. Without such impossible to quantify evidence, this search through meditation would assuredly be profitless, as there would be nothing to believe in...

Even after having been in such a state for several days, I find it, at times, difficult to believe.

Whether I can grow without a living teacher, without a group, with only a hidden presence - and whether I can use this growth (provided there is some) to help others is, as to be or not to be once was, the question.

I am working on the advanced meditation course - the esoteric implications of my meditation techniques... using meditation to hear one's higher centers...

I am using my meditation as a form of self analysis to see if this is workable... of course Freud did the same, and was defrauded by what he seemed to find...

Not that this delusion was any hindrance to his career as a holy man...

Freud & Jung both created intellectually closed systems, which interested neurotic intellectuals everywhere their message traveled.

These systems allowed lit crit & soft science types to become philosopher kings...

Even though their systems didn't (and don't) heal, they are a cornerstone of our culture & civilization... or were until the '60s arrived with their hundred blooming sects... emotionally centered psychotherapies.

A virtual protestant reformation of psychobabble... each therapist writing her own gospel...

These therapies didn't work on intellectuals, of course, but the zeitgeist isn't pumping out very many of them anymore... just enough to keep the machines running...

So here I am... therapist as guru... living in a village without chelas... as I don't want to have to move to the coast...

Besides, the main point of my "therapy" is that there is no necessity for a therapist...

I want to give out a method... without having to create a system (I don't have enough intellect to create, let alone understand, a system... I can't even put together legos... or a novel)...

And, if I teach my method as meditation, I should be able to do so without having to obtain a license of permission from the psycho/medical establishment (I would gladly become a member of this establishment if it didn't entail getting a PhD or some other advanced credential)...

I believe in everyman in his own therapy (no matter what their humour)... just as I fellow Carl Becker's Everyman His Own Historian.

I need some people to experiment on, of course... to "teach", so that I can "learn"...

PsychoA offers two fun games - blame the parents and read the dreams... both can engage a paying intellect for years.

I am not going to grow very much by spending time with my sub conscious... nor will I gain much through discussing my unconscious... It's all I can manage just to recall what I had for dinner last night. It would be nice, though, to remember who the women were that joined me in my dreams.

If we are to try to do anything internally, it would be better to try and discover our higher consciousness... try to listen to our conscience... and let these try to grow our atrophied essence...

It isn't truly important what wrongs were done to us... it is only important to forgive all wrongs... so that our wrongs will be forgiven us, as it says somewhere. Or is that debts and debtors? I probably owe a lot, but who owes me?

We have a 3 or 4 trillion dollar debt... yet no one, it would seem, knows who, exactly, it is we owe this money to...

No one even wants to ask who we owe the money to...

Just asking such a question seems to be a proof of one's simple mindedness...

I don't know if we can pay this debt off... or even, eventually, the interest on the debt... or what this truly implies...

I don't think that the government owns me any of the money... so it must be someone else.

Were I to apply myself, I think I could begin to understand the juju of money - even if I don't understand how to make it, myself...

But more likely, I will never understand money & how it gets that way... proof that such knowledge & ability is not inherited by all Jews...

Though considering their politics, it might be some sort of proof that Jews are getting dumber & dumber, generation after generation - just like everyone else...

I know there is a flim flam going on - and accept it - it's just one more part of the universe that I have no control over - or at least have an interest in gaining control over...

In other words, I'm content to be a shlepper... just like you.

I think that my meditation techniques can help in more than just a day to day sense... for one thing, I believe it can help our very essence to grow by connecting it to our higher centers.

We can talk with our essence in a meditation state (though whether it will listen is impossible for me to say)...

Anyway, I intend to experiment upon myself in preparation for my trip to Philly - to see if I can act, rather than just react.

I expect my parents to be very worried about me - my lack of a job & need for one - and they will go on & on about this out of their own concern & anxiety.

I can already hear what they will say - and I am attempting to use the post-hypnotic effects of meditation to set up ways of

dealing with situations I will be getting into... not only to help myself, but to help them with their anxieties.

There must be a better way of dealing with other people... a positive way of accepting their concerns... of changing their negative emotions by the way I act... by the way I listen to them...

But I'll know more in a week or so, as this is just intellectual center thinking - and meditation is used on emotional center...

I am more interested in this than I can say, as here is a way of field testing some of my theories... if I really want to be able to help others to help themselves, I first must know if I can help myself...

Have learned two things about my meditation techniques from my trip to Philly...

1. They work! In fact, they cut stress to the absolute minimum... allowing me to agree to drive to New Jersey with my dad to look for clothing... which, if you knew me... (of course he didn't tell me that's where we were going, because he knew me)

...

2. None of my friends want to learn how to do it... not even for free.

What remains to be learned is whether the meditation can act as therapy... as daily bread connecting us with higher centers (which either exist, in and of themselves, or which I create within myself through meditation.

That some sort of higher self exists seems quite possible, considering my experience with some sort of alternate state that most assuredly seemed higher than my ordinary consciousness.

We might not get out of this life alive, but there is at least a Chinaman's chance that we can remain sane, not only in the face of death, but, more important, in the face of life itself... Whatever sanity might mean in a world such as this....

There used to be (and still might be) an anthropological saying that a higher culture will disintegrate a lower culture upon contact. (I know that they didn't state it this baldly, but I am a misanthropologist, & can say what I please)...

Anyway, Anthropologists had to be extremely careful when studying their tribe of savages that they didn't infect them with hygiene products, or whatever... (being a misanthropologist, I don't use such products... why bother?)...

This is often the reason given in the UFO community for why these astronauts have not made contact with us (that is to say, among those members of the UFO community that still doesn't believe such contact has already been made... that people are not being whisked aboard saucers, impregnated, & then , months later, have their embryos harvested... by creatures as implacable as a divorce court judge talking to Woody Allen...)

But it seems more likely to me that cultures obey Gresham's Law - so that pop cultures drive out high cultures - and that the Aliens are more scared of rock-n-roll than we are of their disintegrator guns (for there is nothing quite as violent as rock-n-roll on a superior culture)...

Virus' killed H.G. Wells' Martians, and pop culture is a virus, like A.I.D.S. in that once it infects you, you can't get it out of your system.

Amuricans & Ruskies, we all have been victimized by our belief in the accepted ideas we were taught to accept as our history.

America started as a Republic (but not a Democracy) - poor Barry Goldwater remembered this in 1964, which is why he never became President while Reagan - who was willing to read a speech [who knows what he actually believed, if anything] was willing to say that this was a great democracy in the springtime of its youth - he could have been President for life if the Republicans hadn't passed that silly Amendment to keep us safe from the Roosevelts....

If you were a white male with property, your vote actually counted, once upon a time, and you could almost feel like you owned the government...

Russia was given a dictatorship of the proletariat - unhappily, there were few proles in 1917... at least among the leaders, who were thus forced to proclaim themselves "The Vanguard of the Proles" to make everything hunky dory...

Most of the proles (not to mention the peasants) and those members of the lumpen intelligentsia unlucky enough not to be

invited into the party felt left out of what good life there was (when the party wasn't turning drunk & ugly & upon itself... as it would every 10 or so years...)

Luckily for the party, there were always new candidate members ready & willing to sit at the mad tea table... just as there are always Americanos who are willing to run for Congress, even though they might win...

When large numbers of people can vote, the value of each individual vote is reduced to beans in a hill of beans... valuable only if you owned a bean factory.

In Russia, now that everyone can vote, the proles appear to be looking for a dictator... how long they will continue their strange search for democracy remains to be seen...

Perhaps until they discover that what they think is capitalism doesn't work.

Socialism is unworkable, it seems, if what one is looking for is liberty (whatever that word might mean)...

Democracy is unworkable if what one is looking for is equality, for liberty and equality (like fraternities & sororities) are opposites... coming together only for parties booze and sex.

Some 3 a.m. thoughts (which undoubtedly means I won't get to sleep until 5...)

Money as negative entropy -

Whenever money leaves a system, entropy sets in (money= power; energy...)

In a ghetto, as money leaves (through loss of jobs, federal funds, etc.) randomness & disorder inevitably follow...

So that conservatives, by saying that money won't solve the problems of our inner cities, show that they are unaware of what money actually is... a source of negentropy... or do know & are just terribly greedy...

War is entropic - where the fighting is, there is disorder & randomness (though war without fighting, as was practiced by the Italians during the Renaissance, can produce negentropy)...

But there is little as entropic to land as war (though it can fuel an economy if it is fought somewhere else, as it did for the North in our Civil War, or the U.S. as a whole in World War 2)...

Had we not sent money to Europe, via the Marshall Plan, Europe would have gone entropic.

Russia, lacking money, is slowly going entropic...

Of course it takes more than just pumping money (as energy) into a system to create negentropy...

A system with a whole in it is like a balloon with a pinhole - money, like air, can escape into a red hole.

But without money, a social system will collapse...

Question is, are we a closed or an open system... and how much money (as energy) do we actually have... how long will it last?

It is likely that there are more people than there is energy... than there is money to support them...

Only in a few select enclaves is there enough money to produce negentropy... everywhere else, entropy is setting in... randomness will soon seep in... if it hasn't already...

Unless we can discover incredible amounts of cheap energy (or an immense decrease in population) there will be no sustained negentropy.

Which is to say, we are on a downward spiral.

Entropy is easy... it takes no work... no thought... just erratic random violence... cities are becoming thermodynamic equations...

Decline should be mathematically calculable... predictable... the equations are there, I am sure, but I wouldn't understand them...

All I have is this inkling - this intuition - this apercu...

Other ways to spend money entropically are for sex, drugs & rock n roll.

Of course, there is negentropy in the creative use of people... for people are, in the crudest sense, a form of energy...

Even uncreative uses of people (say, slavery) can be negentropic, at least for a short period of time... in the long run, however, slavery creates an entropic society, as only slaves do the work, & they have no interest in the work, so the work begins to run down...

People, when they become themselves entropic, are difficult to use... it is hard to get any sort of work out of psychopaths or sociopaths... (dealing with these sorts of people is known to have entropic results on social workers as they invariably burn out)...

Real education is negentropic - but what passes for education in our education system is really a disordering of minds... they become filled with garbage...

If we knew how to educate... how to fill our minds with ordered information... we could create a negentropic society where thought = energy...

Money itself can become entropic - as it does in hyper inflation... trillions of marks worth less than the paper it was printed on...

To a large extent, early American history was a battle between inflation & deflation of a small amount of money - boom & bust cycles... but not enough money to cause great inequality of fortunes...

Money is symbolic, magical - but as long as the audience doesn't work out how the trick is done (by showing up at the same time at a bank)... as long as people pay to see the trick performed, money works... as if it were real... as solid as tables made of quarks...

We are suffering from an iatrogenic malaise... one of those slumps that Capitalism crawls into... when it either must find a cheaper source of energy... or people willing to work for less pay.

It will be interesting to learn how moving industry to Mexico will enable us to create new high paying jobs for our displaced workers...

I will be equally interested in finding out what Mexico will be trading us for free...

I get my only insight into geopolitics from WLW in Cincinnati... where even the station liberal talk show host believes in the death penalty for anyone who uses a gun for any crime (which, I suppose, is the liberal approach to gun control...)

Conservatives believe that 6 months of welfare should be long enough for anyone to find a job (at least I presume this is the conservative position... I assume nothing when it comes to conservatism...)

Now while I, as a misanthropologist, have nothing against executing, oh, say 1/2 a million? More? people/year for their criminal acts, still, there are some logistical difficulties at work here...

Crime, after all, is the tax the poor collect themselves when the rich decide they have paid quite enough in taxes, thank you... usually, the poor collect these taxes from others just as poor as themselves... robbing Peter to pay Paul...

It grows more & more likely that the poor are eventually going to start taxing those in higher brackets.

Conservatives view welfare as a damned liberal Democratic plot to gather votes from their constituency... like me, conservatives were raised to never trust a liberal...

But really, welfare is just conscience money... the extortion we pay the poor so that we can pretend that Capitalism still works

-

capitalism always needed a large underclass of unemployed workers to keep wages down... but now that there are fewer & fewer industrial jobs in our cities, because the third world offers an even poorer underclass to exploit, we need welfare more than ever before.

Conservatives don't need to live in our thermonuclear cities, where the poor have reached critical mass & are ready to explode, as soon as the damper of welfare is removed...

The poor are like so much nuclear waste... entropic... we got all the cheap work we could from them (like old nuclear plants) & now we just want to forget that they're there... don't even want to pay for cleaning them up...

But badly stored nuclear waste can explode (as the Ruskies once found out, to their surprise...).

But what can we do with our poor? It costs even more to jail them than to pay protection... and it's easier to give a bit of welfare than it is to change the system so as to have jobs for all... (good jobs, of course... right... the kind the government has that cost \$80,000 for every \$15,000 a year job once administrative costs are factored in... or so H. Ross would have us believe...and why not believe?)...

Well, we are not about to bring in socialism...that's a given.

The poor are dangerous slag... the detritus of a failed (or is it changing?) economic system (though, as a system, it's worked quite well for the conservatives... which is why they want to conserve it...)

But the poor just will not go away - and we can't kill them off (they can't even kill each other off fast enough)... so we buy them off as cheaply as possible, making them pay through the sneers, jeers, rules, regs... from conservatives, liberals, everyone who has a job in the welfare industry that supports a large segment of the middle class...

The Welfare Establishment would quite likely suffer unemployment as well if we ever did away with Welfare... who would hire them? They are even more worthless than our defense types who are being forced out of the Military-Industrial Complex...

Anyway, the number of poor will grow... as will the concomitant unwillingness to pay for them...

All the more reason not to live in a city...

But if we refuse to take care of the human wastes of capitalism, they too will contaminate the environment...

As if we cared about the environment.

Thought experiments:

My brain could (though it doesn't) create many odd & interesting states... out of body experiences, hallucinations, mirages...

My brain creates what I perceive as the real world...

Now, if I took a drug that enabled me to hear frequencies over 30,000 cycles & see ultra violet - would I really be seeing & hearing these? Or would I only "think" I was?

If, under drugs, I meet entities that are, apparently, from another dimension - is my brain creating them - or are they really there & my brain, altered by the drug, is only now enabled to perceive them?

How can one test the reality that their brain gives them?

Can the brain also “perceive” unreality?

What, then, of those who, through hypnosis, believe that they were molested as children by parents... or by aliens in their past lives?

Surely, then, the brain can take in mistaken information and reason from it to false conclusions, as Freud did by mistranslating the birds that appeared to Michelangelo (or was it Leonardo... my brain is, perhaps, reasoning to a true conclusion from misleading information)...

If I took a drug that seemed to enable me to see atoms... or had my brain programmed to allow me to think I saw them... as I think I see the color red... (and, if I were color blind, could I be hypnotized into thinking that I could, indeed, see the color red... and what color would that be then?)...

I suppose these are the sorts of questions that English analytic philosophers used to ask their students...

Then what of that state I was in for several days when I most assuredly was not as I am now, but seemed to be in some sort of

higher state of consciousness... whatever that term might mean, & it is not a good description of the state I was in... but I don't know how else to describe it, as I am not now in it, & I don't have any vivid memory of what it was like...

Mathematicians talk of more than 3 or 4 dimensions... what if someone thought that, because of certain drugs, they were able to perceive these extra dimensions - how would we know that they weren't perceiving them?

These are the sorts of thought problems I can easily set up... yet not know how to answer...

I do know that I was in another state for several days, but I don't know what it was... or how to get back into it... yet it was as real, if not more so, than the state I am in now as I write this...

The difficulty of doing therapy with intellectuals - they demand that you create a system for them to believe in... and that the therapist must seemingly be an intellectual as well...

But what has gone awry is not the intellect, but the emotions...

Lack of intellect = stupidity, perhaps, but not insanity...

Even G. was forced to create a system to satisfy O.... though G. preferred to work through emotional, or even moving centers... it is no wonder that he eventually made it impossible for O. to stay with him...

I am not an intellectual... can no more read Philosophy than I can understand philosophical systems... much less invent one...

All that I can do is try to use the Work on myself, through my meditation techniques, to be able to let my emotions understand what my intellect reads...

And, I hope to be able to turn this meditation into a form of self-directed therapy - so that people can help themselves - can listen to that part within that is their own Doctor...

But emotional centered people are also difficult to treat... they assert their negative emotions, as if they were real... as if these motions had a reason to live... and they believe that they should be allowed to be negative... to scream or primal or attack

others as a form of therapy... it's no wonder than such analysis is interminable... given their head, negative emotions will take over everything...

The most difficult part of therapy for emotionally centered people is being forced to give up their sufferings... being allowed to....

The only way to handle intellectuals is to take a Zen like approach to therapy... where intellect has no place whatsoever... where every answer is wrong and formatory questions are answered rudely with noanswers...

Zen is an attempt to cause a breakthrough into another, higher state of mind - but to get there, intellect must be squelched... for a person can ask more questions, faster, than there can be answers for...

Using intellect to solve emotional problems is as useless as using emotions to solve differential equations...

What is most astonishing is that PsychoA works at all...

My difficulty is to find a way to ask for even \$25-\$50 / hour for teaching meditation... where in this cheapoliberal town can I find people willing to fork up such money?

I know what to do, but I don't know how to go about charging for it.

First result is in from testing out Roger Callahan's 5 Minute Phobia Cure - which seemed preposterous, but was easily testable - I sent 10 pages of his book to Shannon Frach in AR - she has extreme agoraphobia. Apparently, she did the cure and ended up sitting outdoors in her garden...

Hmmmmm.....

Now if this works on others as well, as Callahan says, then I can add it to my meditation techniques - get rid of both stress and anxiety & fear... just the combo necessary for self-therapy.

Using the meditation to identify & talk with various negative anxiety states - nodes - then the Callahan technique...

In order to hear from higher centers - to listen to them - for, ultimately, that is the purpose of my meditation, it is first necessary to spring clean one's inner home...

One can't invite in such a guest to a filthy home... and our inner rooms are filled with so much dogshit... negative emotions, etc.

One must clean one's inner stables - an esoteric task fit for a Hercules.

San Francisco outdoes NYC. People in NYC once might have watched Kitty Genovese die and done nothing about it - but in S.F., a crowd yelled, "Kill, kill," at a woman crackhead who was being stabbed to death. The cops are trying to figure out just who to charge...

And then there were the murderers of Michael Jordan's dad who were caught because they used the car phone to call dial-a-porn.

If we could really not only see, but take in, all the crime & weirdness that goes on in an average day in America, what would

we make of it? And what, if we could do something about it, would we do?

Is the death penalty necessary to keep such morons from reproducing? And if so, is it possible to use it enough - or is the problem, as I suspect, already over critical mass, so that no amount of state sponsored death will have any noticeable effect...

Generation after generation of sociopathic youth going to jail for higher training and prison for grad school... coming out filled with tender mercy...

Perhaps if we were to sterilize everyone in jail and on welfare... then subsidize them so that they have no necessity to do towards others as has been done towards them...

But there are no real solutions... just problems caused by previous solutions, and nonsolutions...

To recapitulate:

We are trapped in and by life.... and identify life with ourselves...

At some point in time, however, we will be invaded by life - existentially invaded...

Instead of being buoyed up by life, floating comfy on its waters, life will turn into an acid that strips away what it has given us.... so that all we know, or think we know, seems to dissolve...

I call such occurrences Existential Breakdowns...

There are various ways the mind can react to such an incursion...

We can become prematurely adult by accepting everything that has been given to us, and rejecting any change from what we believe...

We can armor ourselves against life by cutting off from it emotionally... such armor, when worn, say, by inner city children can provide the safety necessary for sociopathic behavior.

Such kids kill or are killed by life.

There are various other forms of armoring available to those who breakdown in their twenties... these take the forms of addictions... to religion, beliefs, jobs... a person will grab hold of any piece of flotsam available and will become one with it in order not to sink into the sea of unknowing...

One can also give up completely and enter protective states of psychosis... and, if someone will pay, we can enter institutes for life...

Less severe forms of reaction would be to stay in life, but to become addicted to drugs, alcohol, food, or one's own neuroses...

Going to a shrink for an existential breakdown can become a way of hiding from the breakdown - of trying to become "well" so that the breakdown will stop...

Usually, getting well equates to adjusting to society the way society believes such adjustments should be made... conforming to its norms, etc...

One becomes what society considers to be an "adult..."

The three options one has when going to most therapists are 1) to get better (to crystallize into adulthood) 2) to stay the same (remain neurotic) or 3) get worse (become institutionalized)...

There is, however, a fourth option... a fourth way... to use the breakdown as a way of breakthrough... to use it to dissolve everything you have thought & believed (to put it in suspension) so as to be able to rethink... to think anew... what life might mean to you... and what you might mean to life...

But doing this is difficult & scary. There are few guides and little written instruction for going through with a breakdown... at least not here in the West...

Eastern traditions have dealt with this for thousands of years... breakdowns of Jesus or Buddha or...

The teachings coming from such breakdowns read as esoteric teaching... not comprehensible until one is in the state itself... all too often, they are read by those who don't understand... and are turned into religions...

I have been trying to find ways of helping friends through such breakdowns... allowing them to allow such change... without having to accept the alternates that outer life offers...

To choose an alternative to life itself, seemingly...

Part of my method comes from the teachings of G & N... the knowledge that there are I's, that there are centers, that we live in negative states, that we can work on ourselves, and that life in & of itself is not enough... that there is an inner life that is more important, if we can learn to listen to it & talk to it...

Part comes from Deep Meditation - which allows us to talk to our inner selves and centers while we are being recreated...

As well as allowing us to talk with our higher centers... our inner teachers...

To break through the fear of life (of which suicide is the most extreme example - the "answer" too often tried for existential breakdowns) - to treat life itself as a trip... to use life as a drug that allows us to explore inner states... to come up with techniques to

safely explore such states... that is what an existential breakdown can offer us...

Here is our chance to become truly human... to care for more than just ourselves... to become compassionate.

I don't want to change others... just to be able to help those who are under change...

For if we can safely get through an Existential Breakdown, the next time it occurs, years later, after one's inner life has been rebuilt, we do not collapse, but rather enter a higher state of being for awhile. And during this brief period, much is understood... and we are given a way so that when out of that state, much can still be worked out. We have the knowledge now to work on problems that were, before this, still confusing.

We gain the understanding to read anew ancient esoteric texts.

I have been working on this now for over 25 years... a way of achieving rebirth...

APHORISMS & INSIGHTS

By Richard Kostelanetz

Dedicated to Joan Hartman

No truth about oneself will become more apparent to others than a predisposition to making stuff up.

Money can buy freedom from the need to earn money.

Cursed are the powerful, because they are enslaved to discharging a lot of responsibilities with the awareness that, once their power is gone, past decisions will be regarded more critically.

For me aphorisms can be witty, if not funny, as well as severe: whoever wrote Groucho's "Time wounds all heels" belongs in my pantheon of aphorists.

Judgments of posterity are invariably cruel to cruel people, who suffer from the dilemma, once their leverages of power fade, of not finding anyone upon which they can take revenge.

There are no rewards for powerful people who are politically inastute, just as no one has sympathy

for a rich person who makes bad investments,
both being voluntary fools.

Whenever I have reason to judge someone to be
devoid of humor he or she rarely proves me
wrong.

Everything culturally opportunistic quickly
becomes dated.

Some fools look like smart people until they start
speaking.

People and institutions revealing a lack of respect
for themselves, pompous claims to the contrary
notwithstanding, shouldn't be surprised if nobody
disputes them.

As a public beach eliminates nearly every
possibility for displaying excessive personal
wealth, no wonder rich people avoid it.

Strong sun cures many ills both physical and
psychological.

People who lie about their ages, no matter male or
female, are likely to fib about more important facts;
those who insist upon keeping their age secret are
likely to be unnecessarily secretive about more
important details.

Ocean waves and human beings have for me a
compelling attraction unavailable in lakes or

forests, say; I can look at any ocean or any crowd of people for hours.

Most so-called aptitude tests measure only your ability to take an aptitude test; for if your score on such an exam can be improved with so-called tutoring, then it must be measuring qualities other than innate intelligence.

One of the risks incurred by slighting those below you while flattering those above you is that in the course of time some of the former ascend to positions among the latter.

People whose survival depends upon lying are always surprised at the respect and, incidentally, rewards bestowed upon those who tell the truth.

The final measure of a cultural benefactor, whether commercial or eleemosynary, is the value of what he supported. Pity him and her about whom nothing other than facts about themselves can be mentioned in their extended obituary.

Those who depend upon personal contact, if not leverage, to get themselves published and even recognized cannot understand how anything written could be published and even remembered by people its author has never met.

Those who have earned their own success are usually more conceited than those whose good fortune has been bestowed upon them, to the

surprise only to those failing to understand any difference..

Self-conscious stupidity is always costly—if you can't afford the price, don't consider it.

Even for the successful veteran, cultural life is more insecure than other professional domains because you're competing not only with colleagues who have survived but against gangs of ambitious younger people who haven't yet quit.

The truest measure of professional success is not positions attained or even prizes won, as both of those criteria are easily compromised and thus dubious, but respectful acknowledgment from colleagues and independent authorities, such as critics and historians one doesn't know, to whom no favor is owed.

A writer totally respectful of editors is not likely to publish much that will be admired by many strangers. Rarely will their names enter books of literary or cultural history.

People who are self-employed can't afford to make costly mistakes for which they, no one else, must pay.

The truest measure of "job security" is conscious stupidity that costs someone absolutely nothing.

Don't ever insult gratuitously people whose favor you might need someday.

Major artists develop their own visions; minor artists perpetuate visions preceding them, in part because they couldn't develop a unique vision if they tried and tried.

People who resist learning how to use a computer resemble gypsies whose culture discourages them from learning how to read, both groups earning approval for their incapacity only from those similarly disadvantaged.

Professionals who feel compelled to confront the world with an entourage have little in common with those who customarily travel alone or with only their mates.

Few people are more pathetic than those professionally committed to predict what cannot be accurately predicted, beginning with stock touts, the sales chiefs of big corporations, cultural merchandisers, and tv weathermen.

The bodies of most women eager to expose their nakedness pretty much resemble other women voluntarily naked; nudity is a sort of clothing that only some dare wear publicly.

Most people publicly engaged in predicting the future resemble two-bit fortune tellers in forecasting what they think their audiences want to hear—their ingratiating optimism is embedded in their professional territory.

It is just as hard to make a winner of a loser as it is to make a mediocrity interesting, even a well-connected mediocrity, even as a negative example.

Some people who ascend socially take earlier friends with them; others, not, that difference becoming a convenient measure of their true friendliness.

Aphorisms should be so obviously true, even if original, that further explanations would be unnecessary and parentheses never.

I want to write aphorisms that would be identified as mine much as I've written fiction and poetry that readers attach to my name, perhaps because of enhanced elegance, special wit, or multiple resonances, even if my name doesn't appear next to my work.

INSIGHTS

If "aphorisms" are short pithy thoughts, what would be the most appropriate name for slightly longer statements that are certainly shorter than essays? *Aperçu* works better in French than in English, while "considerations" is too long for texts so short. I'll stick with "insights" until something better shows up.

Even when Nelson Algren's novels are forgotten, he'll be remembered for this classic formulation

that couldn't be said better: "Never sleep with a woman whose troubles are worse than your own."

As many writers completed their major work by ages younger than I am now and failed to do as well again, some from too much drink, others from a loss of purpose or the failure to equal earlier success, I know in my late sixties that I've benefited from a lack of transient success and a distaste for drink and, thus, that I'm not yet done with writing and art that only I can do--that I am doing here and now.

Though one acknowledged masterpiece is enough for most ambitious writers, I want to realize more than one, of more than one kind, in more than one genre and yet more than one medium. Every time I investigate unfamiliar territory, now brief essays, my aim is going deeper, perhaps making another classic.

Why are colleagues so disrespectful of elite recognitions they would want for themselves but will never get?

The practical reason for eating food is obtaining energy; the esthetic reason is the pleasure of good taste all at the risk of misfortunes both social and physical that result from getting fat.

Crows at Sunset

By Sheryl L. Nelms

like B-52

dive

bombers

they plunge

straight

down

twist and turn

skim the tops

of the cottonwood trees

then vere

up

over the dilapidated drive-in theater streets

black

silhouettes

following the sun

on smooth

set

wings

Into Tomatoes

the Big Boy seedling

has tendril roots that string out

feather the fluff of vermiculate

and black potting soil

one green leaf bent

and smashed

smells like

tomato

popped from the peat pot
dropped into
a dug hole

compost humped
around the tiny plant

dirt mashed
down

the snared
bottom

holds
tight

covered
with a wire cage

it is transplanted

Under Rocks

waiting

under

rocks

are ants

night crawlers

and doodle bugs

“They Call Me the Fireman!”

he plays

country western music

in a band

Saturday nights

at the Pizza House

body bent

by age

Stetson rocking

his boots

keep

time

as his three

stub fingers

formed by a doctor

after a dynamite blast

ruined his right hand

pick their way

around

violin

notes

and guitar
strings

at a high
rate of

speed

Texas Tarantula

like a slow moving
eight legged ballerina

delicate
and precise
and dignified

she dares anyone
to stop
her

from crossing the highway

If agitated

she may kick off

some prickly black bristles

as she stalks across the bumpy asphalt

hair covers each plump leg

like an ebony velvet body stocking

then up and over

her round

abdomen

that holds

her stash

of spinning tubes

CLONED GENIUSES SPEAK

BY: TOM BALL, 2005 A.D.

CONTENTS

Introduction, p. 5

Ben Franklin, p. 7

Alexander Bell, p. 10

Casanova, p. 12

Plato, p. 14

Genghis Khan, p. 16

Helen Keller, p. 18

Gandhi, p. 20

Galileo, p. 22

Socrates, p. 24

Joan of Arc, p.26
Columbus, p. 28
Adolf Hitler, p. 30
Jesus Christ, p. 33
John Locke, p. 35
Cleopatra, p. 37
Phil Farnsworth, p. 39
George Orwell, p. 41
Edward Jenner, p.43
Lao Tse, p. 45
Thomas Edison, p. 47
Mary Leaky, p. 49
John Lennon, p. 51
King Tut, p. 53
Karl Marx, p. 55
Winston Churchill, 57
Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 59
Chin, first Emperor of China, p.62
Adam Smith, p. 64
Arthur Rimbaud, p.66
Henry Ford, p. 68
Wu Zetian, Empress of Tang China, p.70
Augustus Caesar, p.72

Frank L. Wright, p.74

Humphrey Bogart, p.76

Aristophanes, p. 78

Alan Turing, p. 80

Marie Curie, p. 82

Bertrand Russell, p. 84

Edgar Allen Poe, p. 86

Martin Luther King, p. 88

Joseph Conrad, p. 90

Charles Darwin, p. 92

Jean Jacques Rousseau, p. 94

Napoleon, p. 96

Isaac Newton, p. 98

J.S. Bach, p. 100

James Watt, p. 102

Sigmund Freud, p.105

Mother Teresa, p. 107

Leonardo Da Vinci, p. 109

Epicurus, p. 111

Montezuma, last king of the Aztecs, p. 113

Aldous Huxley, p. 115

Marilyn Monroe, p. 117

Josef Stalin, p. 119
Albert Einstein, p. 121
H.G. Wells, p. 123
Mohammed, p. 125
Oscar Wilde, p. 127
Wernher Von Braun, p. 129
Fyodor Dostoevsky, p. 131
Alexander Fleming, p. 133
Pablo Picasso, p. 136
Mark Twain, p. 138
Jules Verne, p. 140
An African Queen from Ancient Ghana, p. 142
Cai Lun, p. 144
Alfred Wegener, p. 146
Shakespeare, p. 148
Vincent Van Gogh, p. 150
Lady Murasaki, p. 152
Abraham Lincoln, p. 154
Bruno. P. 156
Franz Kafka, p. 158
Mao Tse Tung, p. 160
Jack London, p. 162

A Queen of Ancient Ur, 3500 B.C., p. 164
Thomas More, p. 166
Buddha, p. 168
Copernicus, p. 170
Ivan Turgenev, p. 172
Hero of Alexandria, p. 174
Hans Christian Andersen, p. 176
Niccolò Machiavelli, p. 178
An Ancient Australian Aboriginal Woman, p. 180
Jimi Hendrix, p. 182
Thomas Jefferson, p. 184
J.R.R. Tolkien, p. 186
James Harvey, p. 188
A Female Witch from Ancient Europe, p. 190
Cervantes, p. 192
Hermann Hesse, p. 194
Salvador Dali, p. 196
Alfred Nobel, p. 198
Mary Shelley, p. 200
Rasputin, p. 202
An Ancient Inca Chieftan, p. 204
F.G. Banting and C. Best, p. 206
Henry Thoreau, p. 208

Michelangelo, p. 210

F. Crick and J. Watson, p. 212

J.P. Sartre, p. 215

Caligula, p. 217

Voltaire, p. 219

Pierre Boule, p. 221

John F. Kennedy, p. 223

A Medicine Woman from 50 000 B.C., p. 225

Conclusion, p. 227

INTRODUCTION

This book is top secret. It describes a secret CIA program to clone historical geniuses. It is not known when the cloning program began, but all the cloned geniuses in the book are 20 years old. This book details only a hundred and two of the many geniuses cloned. And all of the geniuses here are copies of dead people. Of course the CIA has cloned people who are alive today as well, but that program is even more top secret than this book.

The geniuses have been given a different face from the original and none know who they are. However they do know their country of origin. They also know that they are an experiment and that they live in isolation. They all have private tutors and are allowed to mingle with each other. However they don't see anyone else and spend most of their time reading, or in the lab if they are scientists.

The reader will be surprised to see many geniuses who died long ago and whose graves are in what most assume were unknown locations. The CIA will not divulge how they got hold of the remains of many of the geniuses. They just mention that there were a lot of museums, cults, churches, scientific institutions and the CIA themselves which preserved bones or hair etc. of great people in history and that they have a number of brilliant archaeologists who have conducted secret excavations to extract the DNA of many great geniuses of the past.

Some of the few who have read this highly classified book have remarked that it would be impossible to get the DNA of some of the geniuses described in this book. Some of the readers of this book have also suggested that the geniuses are not who they are

said to be but rather are other people who the CIA has brainwashed to think as they do. I, as the writer of this book have no idea what the truth is about that.

In addition some readers have pointed out that the geniuses in this book say many of the same kinds of things. They say this is clear evidence of brainwashing, but I think it could also be that great minds think alike. However the geniuses do share many of the same tutors.

Also some say that not all the people in this book are geniuses, but I have reserved judgment on this.

Furthermore, one should not assume that this book a comprehensive representation of past genius. Many geniuses' DNA could not be acquired (according to the CIA) and some of them were not made available for interviews with me (I am Tom Ball, a "journalist").

Each genius was interviewed briefly by me and the highlights of each interview have been given in the book.

Most of the interviews in the book focused on the modern world and its problems rather than the past. Although many scientists are in this book, no details of their secret work for the CIA will be divulged in these pages. In any case all the geniuses in this book are only 20 years old, so one must not expect too much from them.

Anyways most of the world's problems need to be solved by political, economic, social and educational changes, and so the interviews concentrated on these.

BEN FRANKLIN

(Editor's note: "I" stands for the interviewer and the other initials for the interviewee)

I: Ben Franklin was a great thinker and inventor, perhaps best known for his experiments with electricity. If he were here today, what would he be saying?

F: Ben Franklin was a very ethical man. I think he would say that in many ways our world is morally bankrupt. Our society teaches people to be greedy and not how to be good. The government tells us to go to school and there we learn that one should obey the government by paying taxes, marching to war, obeying the laws and so on. And society itself has not been planned, but rather has sort of happened haphazardly; and therefore people are not as good as they could be.

I think what should be done is firstly to regulate people's behavior through taxation. Therefore people should get big tax breaks for studying part time or full time. Or if they can prove they are becoming more knowledgeable from their own reading, they would also be eligible. In addition, if they can prove (through digital cameras and the like) that they have helped others, then they would also receive tax breaks. Or if they can simply show what other good things they have done they could be rewarded relative to how good it is. If they can show that they've traveled, gone to the gym, fallen in love, followed important news and so

on, they should get tax breaks also. And monitors could be put into people's TVs to determine what kinds of shows they've been watching. If they watch approved shows which can help make them more knowledgeable and a better person, then they should also receive tax breaks. You get the idea.

Secondly education needs to be changed to emphasize creativity and thinking more and memorization less. Most people forget most of the knowledge they acquire in school anyway. School should be made more fun,

and help to show people how to live good, creative, just lives; you know like teach them the art of conversation, the art of romance, how to run good businesses and so on. And they should learn to think about everything they do, and not just do what others are doing.

I: But don't you think telling people what to do and what to think is anathema to most people?

F: But government is always telling people what to do. My plan is no different, and besides they have the option not to do as they

should. For example they could still watch some mindless show on TV, but they'd have to pay for it...

And I have another good idea; I think all bosses should be judged by their employees; if the boss gets a good rating, the company would also get tax breaks.

I: Don't you think though that by making people good, you will be making the world a dull place?

F: Nonsense. By emphasizing creativity and goodness we will make people more interesting. By good I don't mean go to church and act like an angel, I mean use the mind that you have to be interesting.

Some people think that a lot of creativity comes from the so-called dark side of humanity, but this is rubbish. All that evil ever accomplishes is destruction and woe, whereas good creativity stimulates everyone.

I: How do you feel about the USA today?

F: Unfortunately the US had slavery and racism years ago and this has caused modern day slums, crime and other problems. Even today many illegal and legal immigrants live in slums. Democracy has failed to produce leaders who care about the people, and make sure they all receive shelter, good food, health care and an education. Instead the government incurs huge debts for building up the military and waging pointless wars, like in Iraq. If the debt continues to grow the Nation's standard of living will

plummet. Already a huge amount of money, almost one-third of tax dollars I think, goes to interest on the debt. Revolution, war, chaos and the like will be the result of long-term economic depression. Of course many other nations are also building their debts, so there will be great depressions and chaos everywhere.

There are many other problems with the US government as well. Clearly great people have to try to get involved in politics, by forming new parties or joining existing ones to keep the USA prosperous and free.

I: How do you feel about the future of science?

F: I think science is coming along nicely, but I am worried about it too, particularly about genetic engineering. I think many people suspect that secret research is being done on things like Einstein's brain for example in order to improve human intelligence.

However the world is not ready for such "super humans" and I worry that science is moving too quickly.

Also many governments are devising deadly new weapons which ultimately will one day be used. In 50 years time there may be many ways to destroy the world: nuclear weapons, biological weapons, nanobots and who knows what else?

Simply building up the US military is not going to help. Look at how much trouble the US army has had in tiny Iraq.

The only solution to the problem is the whole world getting together as one. Since the US is the world superpower they need to take the lead in convincing other countries to join together. Just one UN military should be allowed.

Perhaps we could also have a much more powerful UN government that would have the power to address all issues of world concern.

ALEXANDER BELL

I: Bell was the inventor of the telephone. What do you think about him and the marvelous communications devices that we see in the world today?

B: It seems like magic to me that such things are possible. However I think it's just the beginning. For example I think that brain waves in people can one day be interpreted and hence people will be able to read each other's minds. After all a brain wave is just a wave, like a radio wave is. This would be a great thing for a number of reasons.

For one people would not be able to tell lies. For example if they were contemplating being the President or a police officer they could be screened to make sure they were good. Ex cons could also be screened to make sure they haven't committed any other crimes, and hence crime would be drastically reduced overnight. Lovers would not be able to tell lies and so everyone would have to be honest in love. Parents could know what their child is thinking and so could guide them better. So many things could be done; it just boggles the mind.

I: But, assuming it's possible, wouldn't that drive a lot of people crazy?

B: I think people could get used to it if they took it step by step. Anyway no one would force ordinary people to use it anyhow, provided they weren't a policeman or a criminal.

I: What other ideas then do you have about the future of communications?

B: I think we can also use our minds to control computers. One day everyone could have a tiny computer implanted in their head with a screen

on glasses or something. Robots could be given human brains and hence would become androids. Such androids could do a lot of our work for us.

I: But wouldn't that be like slavery?

B: Perhaps the androids would only be of low intelligence and we could give them many things to satisfy them.

I: But if androids did most of the work, what would people do?

B: I think nearly everyone could get used to the idea of not working. The androids would produce every kind of material good that one could want, so everyone could live like a king. Even the androids might live like kings...

I: But surely such indolence would not be good for people?

B: Well there are a lot of people today who do very little work, and it doesn't seem to be a problem. Everyone dreams of retiring at as young an age as possible; and they'd retire now if they won the lottery or something.

Humans could spend their time dabbling in the arts or learning how to really have an enjoyable life instead of worrying about a meaningless career.

I: OK. What about the modern world then? Do you feel that it is progressing?

B: The world is changing so fast I think many people are beleaguered. I think we need more thinkers to consider where the world is headed and plan what happens in the future. No one today seems to think about what kind of society we should construct, yet science goes forward at a furious pace. One of the problems is that governments are elected for the short term and so are short-sighted. Another problem is it is extremely difficult to

make it as a writer or political leader who really has some ideas, and so many people with good ideas go unnoticed.

CASANOVA

I: Casanova was one of the most famous lovers in history. If he was here today would he say that there more to life than love?

C: I think many people are unaware of just how good love can be. But they are tired from their jobs etc. and have had a few bad experiences so they decide there's nothing in it.

Men and women today are also too picky. Any loving is good, but they set their standards so high. They talk about a soul mate, and really what they mean is they want a perfect lover. But even if they feel they find their soul mĖate, they will still try to think of reasons why they are not happy.

Also many men and women today live alone and if it were not for sex many would have no use for the opposite sex. Maybe one day they'll invent sex machines and then many women and especially men will have nothing to do with romance.

But romance is beautiful. Each girl is like a poem for you to savor and gain inspiration from...

There's no doubt in my mind, that love is the best thing in life. When you are in love, it's the best feeling... I feel sorry for people who have never known love.

I: So you believe love has a future?

C: There will always be many who believe in love, but I am afraid that in the future our society will be largely loveless. People are becoming so selfish and greedy for money, and not only is romance being neglected but

even so-called brotherly love. Look at government leaders; do they love the people? Or do they just love power? And

intellectuals; do they love the people or do they just love success? And people don't want to have children because they don't love people; they just love themselves.

I: What role will dating services play in the future?

C: Many people think they know what kind of lover is best for them, but you really never know until you've been with someone for a while. I think to coldly say what kind of lover you want on the internet is not very romantic, but I suppose it works sometimes. But people are not a statistic and classifying what type of person you want seems to me to be heartless.

Really people should get active and be in a situation where they meet many people; it's the natural way to meet potential lovers.

I: But isn't there anything we can do about all the lonely people in this world?

C: Someone told me one time that prostitutes and gigolos should be provided by the state to make sure everyone has a lover. And although I don't agree with it, there are many lonely people out there who have no love and part of the problem is the way society is designed; that is to say that it is not designed to make meeting people very easy. It takes a lot of work to meet people and some people feel they don't have the time. Our society has convinced them that watching TV is better than looking for love. I don't understand it, quite frankly.

I: But why are you so successful in love? What's your strategy?

C: Like many Italians I am passionate and I really care about girls. Girls can tell I care about them from the way I speak. Many people wish they could be great lovers like the Italians, and who knows, maybe one day they'll invent a drug that will make everyone passionate. To be passionate is to love life, and that is attractive evolutionarily speaking!

PLATO

I: Plato was an ancient Greek philosopher who theorized we need “Philosopher Kings” to rule us. How do you feel about that?

P: In order to make government better we certainly do need better leaders and therefore a better system. Plato neglected to say exactly how we should pick better leaders and this has led to a lot of confusion.

However I think the answer is simple. What is needed is for a wise leader of any country to start an experiment. What should be done is the leader simply picks the wisest businesspeople, writers, scientists etc. and these people would then form a “College of Geniuses”. This group would then pick a President, say every 5 years, to lead the nation.

If the people in the College of Geniuses were truly wise and the leader they pick a good one, then that country would prosper more than others, and then other countries might follow suit.

Of course the position of President would also have to be made desirable to clever people. So a huge salary would be in order, say USD\$2 million per year. And the President would just make decisions, he wouldn't need to sit in the legislature or visit foreign leaders or talk to the media. Just make decisions. And if this wouldn't be enough to attract clever people then other inducements could be offered. In fact you could simply ask such a potential leader what they want, and give it to them if the College of Geniuses approved it.

I: But do you really think the people would go for such an elitist system?

P: People will love it, if it works.

People say that one should keep the democratic system for better or worse. But it simply doesn't make sense to not have your best people as leaders. You wouldn't want a CEO to be mediocre would you? If the CEO is mediocre then the company would not thrive. It's the same with government. Why isn't it obvious to everyone?

I: What other improvements to society could be made?

P: I think that education is another important area where we can make real improvements. I think there should be a worldwide drive to make sure everyone in the world has at least a university or technical school diploma. And we don't want to train people just in business and science. Every student should take a lot of liberal arts courses so that they can improve their thinking. If the developing world's people were better educated in particular, many of their problems would soon disappear.

Also the College of Geniuses could appoint great thinkers to come up with new texts and new ways to educate people. Experimentation is what has led to such great progress in science, why not apply it to learning?

We should also have experiments in other aspects of life; indeed every person should be taught to try new ways of living all the time. People's lives today are too routine and boring. Like watching about 4 hours of TV a day, as most people around the world do.

I: Are you optimistic about the future?

P: Well this is hard to predict. But I feel if humanity uses its best people to try to solve the world's problems, then at least we would have nothing to be ashamed of. But it is obvious today that many world leaders are very mediocre; and with things like nuclear weapons proliferating so quickly, we really need visionaries.

If we have great leaders everything will improve in our society, yet in history we have so seldom seen great leaders. It's time we all smartened up, I think.

GENGHIS KHAN

I: Genghis Khan was perhaps the greatest conqueror ever and he set up his grandson Kublai to rule over the largest empire ever. How do you feel about this great leader?

GK: In this day and age we lack strong leaders. What is needed is to unite the world as one and then devise a system whereby only very strong rulers could rule. Such leaders must be physically in top condition and have undergone tough training and education. Deprivation, adversity and such would be part of the training. On the other hand such a leader must be a genius and be very knowledgeable about people and the world.

In essence therefore we need a sort of “New Barbarian” combining vigor and genius to lead us.

I: Do you think such a vigorous education would benefit everyone?

GK: Certainly. Today’s schools emphasize pointless memorization when they should be trying to mold people’s character. As a result many people only want a luxury life. They

only want things that come easy. Such luxury living has resulted in nothing but downfall in history.

I: So you think modern culture is weak?

GK: Today many men live like women. They are obsequious to everyone. They have been emasculated.

Our culture should be based on being brave, not being afraid to go it alone; to do what one thinks is right and change our world for the better. Art and

culture should glorify this kind of thinking and those who make our world stronger should be in the highest positions.

I: How do you feel about war?

GK: If your cause is noble, then war is good, but if you fight for no good reason then it is idiotic.

One of the problems with modern society is people don't stand for anything; they are so wishy-washy and concerned about being safe. Being safe is boring. It is not life. Real people take bold risks and live life to the fullest. They don't lead a vicarious life in front of the TV. Ancient people knew this well, and we can learn a lot from the ancients.

I: How do you feel about love?

GK: Love is silly nonsense. Sex is good and having a tough woman as your mate can give you and your offspring inspiration. However I feel modern women are too spoiled. Men spoil them.

But there's more to life than mating. Men need to do noble deeds and fight for what they believe in. The current political and economic system is against great men. Many great men are denounced as radicals and mad men, when in fact these great men know what is best for society.

The mainstream view these days is always insipid and foolish. People need to be taught to be more independent, to run their

own businesses and control their own lives and not be someone else's slave.

I: But how can we set up a system that will put great men in power?

GK: Perhaps it would be best to improve people by education first, and then they might elect great leaders. People have to be taught to be strong and love strength.

HELEN KELLER

I: (using brail) Helen Keller though blind and deaf learned to speak and was a great inspiration for millions. How do you feel about her?

HK: I think it's a great advantage to be different from others. Many people in history such as the gays or Jews or indeed anyone who felt they didn't fit in, did well because they were outsiders; they were different.

However every child is born unique and education therefore should help them to find that uniqueness and teach them to think for themselves, rather than fit in with the crowd. People should not act like sheep.

I: How do you feel about modern women?

HK: I think today is a transition period for women. In the past their role was clear, but now there are no footsteps in the sand for them to follow. I think therefore many women and men too are a bit confused about what kind of person they should be. After all women are different than men, and we shouldn't expect modern women to simply emulate men.

I think women are more kind, peaceful and more sympathetic to the less fortunate than men and our world really needs leaders

who have such qualities. After all men created a world in which there are wars, mass poverty and not much love from our leaders. Women as leaders might make a much kinder world.

I: Do you feel that men and to a lesser extent women are too dependent on physical appearances?

HK: Of course. I can't see, but I can tell that beautiful appearances are largely worthless. However, people, especially men, have an instinct to go for what appears beautiful though and it's difficult to see how this instinct could be altered. It's just the way it is. So I think all women should try to look beautiful. Maybe one day they'll have a make-up machine that can make every woman look beautiful instantaneously.

I: But do you feel it's a beautiful world?

HK: Yes, but it could be more beautiful. Almost every time I communicate with someone I think how that person could be better. Most people don't think enough and just accept things the way they are and do what everyone else seems to be doing.

One of my friends once told me that “You shouldn’t try to understand people, just love them”, and I feel this is a tragedy that people would think this way. Most people don’t even know themselves because they haven’t spent enough time thinking about things and experimenting with life.

It’s easy to live a life of illusion, but people need to be more honest with themselves and face the reality if they want to be wise. Education needs to teach them this and get them to open their minds and see the truth that is all around them.

I: But don’t you think people need illusions?

HK: I think deep down people don’t want to hide from reality and they know what their illusions are. If they get rid of them they will be more happy I’m sure. But again everybody seems to be doing it so they think it’s OK.

I: But to be honest, don’t you think everyone has illusions?

HK: Well perhaps. But I think as society progresses people will gradually lose them. We are no longer lambs of God, that's for sure.

GANDHI

I: Gandhi was a great leader of India and helped bring about their independence. How do you feel about him?

G: I feel he was a great man who really understood Indians. However now a half-century after his death I feel that modern India is without strong leadership and now Indians just want to get rich like the Americans. In the process India is losing its unique culture and becoming just like everywhere else. Indians don't

need TVs, motorcars, computers etc., but that's what they want nowadays.

I: Many Indians are vegetarians. How do you feel about that?

G: It's all about respect for animals. Some people say that if Western people didn't eat meat there would be very few animals. But look at India – most people are vegetarian, but there are plenty of animals. In any case Western people will soon be eating synthetic foods. So I guess this will be an improvement.

I: But don't you think that the Indian Hindu religion with its anthropomorphic Gods is backwards?

G: Indians like it just fine. It keeps them happy and humble. I don't think Westerners have proved anything by saying God does not exist. How can they be so sure? Anyway Einstein was perhaps the man Westerners think was the smartest of all time, and he believed in God.

I think Western people are foolish to abandon their traditions so quickly. It will all lead to chaos and tragedy one day I'm sure.

I: So you don't feel upbeat regarding this modern world?

G: People these days are becoming selfish, greedy, cold-hearted, proud and so on. It's not a pretty sight. I think people are simply not designed to live in such a crazy woErld. It's certainly not making people happy. I'm sure people all over the world used to be happier.

Wise people have always said that a simple, humble life is best, but modern youths laugh at such wisdom. They just want more and more of everything material.

I: What then could be done about the modern world?

G: I don't think it can be stopped until they finally blow up the world. Then finally people might learn their lesson.

Scientists today are even trying to play God. Surely doom can be the only result of this.

However wise people like Gandhi could attract many followers in every country; this would help. But I'm afraid most wise people feel the situation is hopeless, so they seldom get involved.

I: But do you think wise people can still lead a happy life today?

G: Sure. A simple job, a kind spouse. Simple pleasures. Many people still live this way, but their numbers are dwindling.

I: But I'm sure many people who live in cities would say that a simple life is boring, and few city dwellers want to live a simple life. What's right for some wise people is not necessarily right for others.

G: Well everyone is falling under the spell of greed. What can I say? Evil is showing its face everywhere. People are becoming evil without even thinking about it. It's a disaster.

GALILEO

I: Galileo was a scientist who lived half a millennium ago, but his ideas were far ahead of his time. He helped prove Copernicus' theories which held that the church was wrong about many things (and the church thought it had a virtual monopoly on wisdom). How could it be that Galileo and a handful of others were right and everyone else was wrong?

G: Western society is to blame. Even today people are taught to obey and consume, but not to think. People are all too accepting of a world which is hardly perfect, especially for the more than half of the people worldwide who live in abject poverty.

When Galileo asked leading church representatives to look into his telescope, they refused! And many people today refuse to

believe what should be obvious to everyone: the world needs to be improved.

Unlike in Galileo's time we don't need more scientists. What we need is leaders who care and think and a populace who are not mere followers. And we need people who have guts. Galileo was clever, but his best quality was that he was not afraid to stand alone and assert his beliefs.

I: What would happen if a great genius like Galileo or Einstein was to appear today?

G: Great geniuses always prove many intelligent people to be wrong, and such intelligent people often can't accept such things. Of course geniuses are tolerated much more in the sciences than they are in other fields.

There are many people who have solutions to the world's problems, but more often than not they are regarded as radicals and idiots. They are not part of the mainstream so nobody cares to listen.

I: What philosophy do you subscribe to?

G: I think the idea of just having one narrow philosophy is no longer tenable. It's too narrow-minded and the world is large. What people need to be is open-minded. Education should emphasize this point, and make people to be open-minded so they can tolerate others, and experience new things. When people close their minds they become boring and stupid; we need to make people more interesting.

I: What do you think about genetic engineering?

G: I think that we could improve the species by getting the sperm and eggs of super intelligent people and put them together to make super babies. When injected with hormones a woman might produce 20 eggs in a month and a man can produce millions of sperm every time he comes.

So I propose that such babies be raised in large numbers. I'm sure many childless couples would be happy to adopt such a baby, so we might be able to produce tens of millions of them in a

very short time. And perhaps millions more could be raised at state expense. When they are grown they could pay back the government.

Such babies could make up for the falling birth rates and keep society vigorous.

I: What other futuristic ideas do you have?

G: I think nuclear power should be controlled by the UN. Power plants should be built everywhere, especially in poor countries and the UN will run them and make sure no nuclear weapons are produced. One of the obvious uses for virtually unlimited power is desalinating sea water and then pumping into deserts like the Sahara. This would make huge tracts of land available to farmers and residents and would result in economic prosperity in these areas.

SOCRATES

I: Socrates was a great ancient Greek philosopher who helped mold Western thought, especially philosophy. What can we learn from him and the ancient Greeks?

S: Well one thing I think that is obvious today to us is that the ancient Greeks achieved so much because they lived in city states; there was no single Greek nation in classical Greek times.

In a small city state, like the Greeks had, people know everyone else and can live on a human scale. Such people are free and creative.

Today there are not really any such small city states with a few exceptions like in Monaco. The residents of Monaco are fairly rich due to gambling and the large number of rich people who are attracted to the city.

But there are also a few larger ones, like Singapore. Singapore is a beautiful happy city where people are so happy with their government it looks like they'll never vote the ruling party out.

However what I have in mind is a new type of city state which would be based on a philosophy or theme. In a philosophical city, people of like minds could gather at such cities and there would be a resultant flowering of thought. On the other hand, with a thematic city, tourists would flock to it and the economy would prosper.

I: What sorts of philosophies or themes did you have in mind?

S: The sky is the limit. For philosophical cities you might have a city of optimists or a large musician's colony or a city of people who think that life

is a joke. For thematic cities you might have a city based on sports or video games to name just a couple.

I: What would be the ideal size of such cities?

S: Experimentation would be in order. Some of these cities might work best with 10 000 people, other cities might be considerably larger.

I: But how would such cities be founded? How could they get freedom from the large countries that control all the land everywhere?

S: I think they could simply buy the land at an expensive price and get the country in question to give them independence. I don't think this would be hard in a small country such as Fiji or Tonga.

However if they couldn't get full independence they could probably at least get a lot of autonomy from some nations.

If the idea catches on maybe the whole world will follow. In my view this would lead to a worldwide cultural extravaganza. Perhaps then a world government could oversee the military and ensure peace.

I: What about government for such cities?

S: I think they should simply elect their wisest, most clever person to head the government. Maybe they could have a tough screening process whereby potential candidates would be tested for their vision and their understanding of the city's people.

I: Socrates was once quoted as saying he was the wisest man in Greece because he at least could admit that he knew nothing. What do you think?

S: We humans often assume we know a lot, but in the cosmic scheme of things we are totally ignorant. Socrates just wanted people to be humble I think.

JOAN OF ARC

I: Why didn't Joan of Arc back down before her inquisitors and admit her guilt?

J: So many people these days have no guts to stand alone when they think they are right. People will go to war and make incredible sacrifices for their family, but they won't stand up for what they believe in most of the time.

I: How might Joan have fitted into modern society?

J: I would think she would have to be an artist. But even in the arts, if you are really different you are often cast out. In Joan's time you did your farm work and worked hard and that was that. But a lot of men like a tough woman, a woman who can inspire them...

I: So few women are known to history, why is that?

J: I think the thing many women, just like men, follow their culture. Most great men had a great woman backing them up anyway. But women simply didn't have the education...now in many developed countries young women are educated better than men.

Almost everyone gets only a partial education. If we could use the best tutors and have them write easy to understand lessons, the education system might change overnight.

But there is no doubt that our society is becoming more sophisticated and graceful due to women playing important roles, even just at home in the family. We need to stop vicious competition that some males want us to live in. We need a more caring society...

My personal opinion is the global economy is a little too much for many people. Companies are so large, only other large companies can compete with them.

I think that people don't think enough about the future and where we are headed. People write about space wars or novels that have little bearing on the future...

I: But in the life of Joan of Arc, Joan was the leader of armies and behaved much like a tough guy. She believed in violence...

J: Well some wars are just. Anyway back in those days the most exciting thing was war. People on the farms were so bored.

Life was not worth so much back then, when almost everyone was a poor farmer. There were no brilliant academics then.

Joan of Arc was not very good looking, but she had charisma. Men always look for beauties, but a great personality is far more rare.

Ultimately she was betrayed. I guess she was Énot Machiavellian enough to remain powerful.

But anyway in the future I think women will make our society far more balanced than it is today.

In fact some have gone so far as to suggest that in the future women will be tougher than men. Although what that would lead to I have no idea,

COLUMBUS

I: In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Do you think that Columbus was great?

C: Columbus was mostly the right man in the right spot at the right time. In his day exploration had already begun such as the circumnavigation of Africa by the Portuguese. Ships had been recently improved and cities were again beginning to thrive due to the revival of trade. It was inevitable that sooner or later expeditions would be launched westwards. However Columbus was a virtual genius in getting his crew to follow him and remain loyal throughout his first voyage. But due to bad luck and his lack of skill as a governor they didn't even name the New World after him. He died in poverty and disgrace I understand.

I: How do you feel about the modern global village that is developing?

C: I think its just beginning. In a world global village I think development will come to all regions, as people are our number one resource.

I: What about the exploration of space?

C: I think putting colonies in space will be expensive but it will have a lot of benefits for science. Since many planets and moons are different from earth, scientists will be challenged to understand these bodies and will make new scientific discoveries in the process.

I: What about the exploration of the ocean bottoms?

C: We might be surprised by what we find there. Obviously the oceans have a big effect on climate and so we need far more research in this important area.

I: Do you think our era is lacking in adventure? After all exploration of space and the oceans is a lonely business.

C: Well the nature of adventure has changed, but there is still plenty of adventure to be found. I think going to exotic countries and being able to speak English in most cases offers a lot of

adventurous opportunities, not the least of which is romantic opportunity. Of course knowing other languages would enhance the experience.

In Columbus' time for example you couldn't communicate at all with many peoples throughout the globe, but now you can. There are still a lot of cultural differences despite the advent of the global village.

In fact I would say there has never been more opportunity for adventure. But maybe in 50 years time there will be much less cultural diversity and chances for real adventures.

I: Should everyone try to have adventures in their life?

C: Yes, but most people are too conservative and too closed-minded to really try and have an adventure. If they go to a foreign country they often just see the sights which they could have read about in a book. Often they don't really meet any local people at all. It seems a shame.

Many people think that experiencing life vicariously on TV makes for a satisfying life, but they have never known true adventure. People are simply not educated well and no one really tells them about how to truly have exciting holidays.

ADOLF HITLER

I: How do you feel about Adolf Hitler?

H: Had Hitler not killed all those Jews he would have gone down in history as a great military genius, just like Napoleon or Alexander the Great for instance.

Anyway WW II was really interesting whereas modern life is dull and insipid. What could be more interesting than a world war?

Today men are not men, but rather are weak shadows of men, and they live ridiculously long and empty lives. What they need is war. In ancient times when men were all hunters, they had to be ready to fight at all times. Men are designed for war.

I: Well how do you feel about the Jews?

H: They are not a kind people. Look at how they treat the Palestinians, keeping them in fear and poverty while all the Jews prosper. It's no wonder they are hated by many. The whole Middle East dislikes them.

I: What about gays?

H: The thing these days is so many men refuse to act strong and tough as men should. I think it's a crisis for many men as modern society reduces them to being effeminate.

I: Do you feel whites are superior to others?

H: I'm not saying that all whites are superior. But white people are trying to make this world progress whilst in some countries people just sit around idly doing nothing. Maybe one day we can convince the rest of the world to get going and join us, but I doubt it.

I: How do you feel about modern day politics?

H: The US has shown that they are the strongest so they enforce their will on others. However I don't see why Europeans have to lick their boots. Europe as a whole is at least as strong as the US; they just have to get their act together.

I: What are your feelings about love?

H: I think this idea of love is a joke. How many people in the world can say that they have truly known lasting true love? A few would, but they are lying.

What is needed is more high class prostitutes who have been given AIDS tests (i.e. legalize prostitution), to serve men so that they don't waste all their time and money chasing something that doesn't exist.

I: Hitler was an artist in his youth. What do you think of art?

H: Art doesn't change the world, politics does. There's no point spending your life making pretty pictures when our world is changing so fast.

I: But don't you think many modern day leaders are evil?

H: Different people have different ideas about evil. For instance humans live off animals and rich people live off poor people. Isn't that evil?

I think weakness is evil and our modern world is full of weak people leading luxury lives. It won't last, just like Rome and its luxury civilization didn't last.

I: So you don't think democracy is the way of the future?

H: Great men, such as Hitler² have been elected in democracies. I think great men of power can find a way to rule regardless of the system.

Modern democracies are living on borrowed time with their crazy levels of debt, and as the economies start to fail as they are doing now, you'll see great men seize power all over the world.

I: What would you do if you were in power?

H: If I was in power of say a united Europe, I would seek to conquer as many places as possible. With European leadership many countries would be better off. For example, look at Africa. It was more prosperous when it was colonized, now it's in shambles.

Europeans, especially Germans know how to work and know how to live and they could use this knowledge to better the world.

If other countries didn't like this idea we could make war on them and have a real exciting war.

JESUS CHRIST

I: Plato described a concept which he called the “royal lie” whereby some lies have to be told to the people for their own benefit. Do you think Jesus was the same?

JC: Of course Jesus lived after Plato and he probably appreciated the reasoning. Back in those days people needed to believe in God and believe that God wanted them to behave justly. Also many people like the idea of brotherly love that was advocated by Jesus.

Jesus knew that he didn't do those miracles, but it was necessary to tell the people that he was divine. Obviously if a real God had sent someone to earth this God would visit everyone, not just a few, and would be so awesome that everyone would believe immediately.

So Jesus didn't believe in God, but he really cared about people and wanted the best for them.

I: So how do you feel about modern religions then?

JC: You can see that at least, in the developed world, people are abandoning religion en masse. People don't need it any more, especially if they are highly educated. Most educated people can see that religion was not made up by Gods or God but rather by humans. And it seems to them that there is no God.

But I don't think this has made people any more evil or bad. In fact people are becoming more liberal and open-minded which is an improvement.

But the message of Jesus lives on. Love everyone. In the 1960s they almost changed the world and one day reformers will probably succeed. If only we could get rid of AIDS the whole love revolution will come back and it'll be a great day for humanity.

In the future automation will allow people to have much more free time, and they will not be so stressed out and will have time to love everyone they know.

I: But in the 60s it was a relatively small group who wanted change. How can the masses be convinced?

JC: Perhaps we need to change our governmental system. We need a system that will produce leaders who are not only intelligent but also kind and caring. Perhaps a group of caring people could be elected and they could determine which candidates are kind enough by studying their pasts. Or some other such system. It could all start with someone like one of the saints running for office and then changing the political system.

I: Do you think that a Jesus type person is what is needed?

JC: I think in a world of over 6 billion people there must be a lot of Jesuses. It's just a matter of getting them involved in politics. Like I say a saintly or Jesus type person could win power and

then search the world over for other good people to join the government.

Many people have big hearts and have great potential to do good work. We need to find such kind people at an early age and send them to elite schools which will train them for taking political power. I think many good people would be willing to donate money towards establishing such a school. The school need not be Christian, as this would turn a lot of people off, but rather should be open to any kind person.

Many people think that kind people are stupid, but I think there are people out there— who have many brilliantly kind and caring ideas. They are veritable geniuses. And we need to use them.

JOHN LOCKE

I: John Locke was a great British philosopher who argued, among other things, that the power of the state, especially that of kings, should be limited. His ideas were to influence the development of the British parliament, the first modern democracy. How do you feel about him?

JL: Well I feel that our modern times are changing fast and that our governmental system should change too, to suit the times. Here's what I propose:

Direct democracy: all major issues should be voted on in referendums by the public, say 3 times per year. These days we no longer need representatives as we have computers and other communication technology.

No absolute leader or president. Instead some clever people could be elected and they would put forth ideas to the public to vote on.

No political parties. Political parties just serve special interests and don't allow people of real vision to join.

A much stronger UN with one world army. Plenty of checks and balances should be established to ensure the army is not used for nefarious purposes. Thus there would be nuclear disarmament worldwide. Henceforth all nuclear power would be controlled by the UN. If the US and its allies agreed to this, most other countries would soon follow suit.

Put strong checks and balances on world intelligence organizations so that they will not harass individuals who have unpopular views, as long as those individuals are peaceful.

Aim for universal health care, education, shelter and food.

I: Are you sure this is realistic?

JL: In this world of super science anything is possible. I think even in countries that do not have democracies today, they will be able to see the benefits of improving the system.

I: But why change a system that seems to be doing fine?

JL: A little experimentation wouldn't hurt. In fact there are many possible types of government that could be tried also. The key is to follow the scientific method (i.e. trial and error) to see if we can improve government.

I: You mentioned universal education. How much education do people need?

JL: I think everyone these days needs at least a college or university degree to survive. So we need to educate millions of teachers and professors of poor countries in rich countries (their education would be conditional upon returning home to help their nation) and perhaps send millions more to these areas. Perhaps all teachers and profs from rich nations could spend a couple of years in poor countries educating the poor.

I: But won't the cost of providing food, shelter, education and health care be prohibitive?

JL: Again I think we could do it with volunteers from wealthy nations helping to build houses and providing volunteer doctors from rich nations to provide health care. And there's plenty of food in the world; it's just a matter of getting it to the poor. Anyway once the people are educated they could look after themselves. It is also important that rich countries get together and make sure the highly educated people of these countries stay in the poor countries where they are needed. Don't allow them to emigrate.

CLEOPATRA

I: What do you think of Queen Cleopatra who had romances with both Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony?

C: Well of course statues of the Queen show she was not great looking, partly due to incest in the royal line....but she had brains. Even in those days a clever man of power could appreciate a clever woman. In those days there was often a number of great women behind a great man.

I: When faced with defeat by the Romans she committed suicide. Do you think this was noble?

C: In ancient times people had a different kind of honor than today. These days the captain wouldn't go down with the ship, and men would jump into lifeboats and take the place of women...

But anyway she would have been captured and humiliated by the Romans...

I: But a man like Caesar could have any woman he wanted.

C: A lot of men and women don't realize that there's more to romance than a pretty face. People go with their simple instincts not their brains. Love is never considered to be a smart thing, but rather a foolish thing.

If I was going to have a baby I would go to the sperm bank and get the sperm of some man who was really smart.

People who are intelligent and rich and famous love to meet others who are rich and famous. So often with the cameras watching them they are expected to date other celebrities.

Power is addictive, like everything else.

Anyway these days women can wear great make up everyday. If they know how to put it on, any woman can be good looking. Also they can get some plastic surgery done. Every woman should appear good looking. So women don't need to worry about looks and can spend their time building a career.

I: If Cleopatra was alive today what would she be?

C: Well she would have no doubt been born rich and perhaps tried to be a politician. I think royalty is in some people's veins. Or at least if your parents or parent is successful you will be too.

But who knows what people will decide to do? A lot of it is also cultural I think.

People used to say women couldn't do things. But now it looks as if they can do anything. Perhaps one day we will get rid of our instincts completely and so men and women will be intellectual equals.

Maybe women will become more like men and men will become more like women? Do you think that's possible?

Personally I think life is too easy for some women...they can just sit back and men will come to them...I think women should know what they want and go for it.

PHIL FARNSWORTH

I: How do you feel about Phil Farnsworth and the TV he invented?

PF: If I recall correctly he regretted his invention, believing TV programs to be largely a waste of time.

However in our day TV has more and more variety and I think soon people will be able to pay for any program at any time. This would be good.

But like Farnsworth said, TV is largely a waste of time. There are so many programs which do not make people better in any way and are just mindless ways to kill time. So I think government should censor TV by not allowing foolish action

movies, soap operas and such and instead only allow programs which stimulate the mind and improve people.

I: But do you really think the government should tell people what they can or cannot watch?

PF: Why not. The government is always telling people what to do. After all the government educates us, and they have so many rules for us to follow. And censorship is nothing new. Even today most governments ban dirty movies for example.

I: TV though was meant to be entertainment. Do you really think people will accept TV as educational only?

PF: Our society is progressing. People all over the world are seeking more education if they can get it. Educational TV is simply the next step in the evolution of entertainment.

I: But do you believe that people in the future will watch even more TV than they do today?

PF: I think they will as people have more free time. However I think people will spend a great deal of time on the net chatting and I think that this would be better.

I: What inventions do you foresee in the future?

PF: Well it seems clear that one day virtually everything will be automated and so people will not have much to do. I think this will make most people feel that they are useless and that together with the fact that the world doesn't appear to have any meaning might make life a bitter pill for many.

But who knows? Maybe people will take drugs to make them happy and they will enjoy having nothing to do.

I: Well what is your opinion of modern people? Are they happy?

PF: Well I think that the common man is underestimated. I think we could educate people better and get them to think more for themselves.

But there is no doubt that people in modern, developed nations are better off in many ways than the past, even though they still complain a lot. I think the world is truly progressing in every way.

Modern day people are turning their backs on tradition which shows to me that they are thinking more for themselves which is great.

I: But surely progress is going too fast for some. Many people today are under a lot of pressure. A lot of people have mental problems.

PF: Humans have always been under a lot of pressure. In primitive times the pressure was greater, now it's less. But as the experience with communism proves, when there is no pressure, people won't do anything. And life has always been crazy; there will always be many with mental problems. Only now doctors can prescribe medicine for it.

GEORGE ORWELL

I: George Orwell wrote the famous book “1984”. What do you think about Orwell and modern science fiction?

GO: Stalin and Mao gave us a taste of tyranny as depicted in “1984”. Now would-be tyrants can use technology that will allow them to totally control the populace.

Everyone is largely apathetic to the dangers of tyranny but it could easily come again. No one stopped Hitler, no one stopped Mao. It is likely no one will be able to stop the next big tyrant either. Especially if world economies experience difficulty, the atmosphere will be ripe for tyranny to return.

Some people say that back in primitive times there was no privacy, no secrets. The whole tribe knew everything about everyone. And they say that loss of privacy is only natural.

However the thing about tyrants is they kill people who oppose them and if they are watching millions and dislike millions, then they will kill all of them. Look what happened in Cambodia. They killed ALL the intelligent people and now the country is a virtual basket case. Kings of the past killed opponents too, but at least then you could keep your mouth shut in public. Now they could watch you and find out that you hated the government and therefore orchestrate your disappearance.

But back on the subject of sci-fi, I think that it had a golden age in the 50s and 60s. Then in the late 60s, everyone was disappointed in the moon which was shown to be empty and dull. I think they should have sent artists and poets to the moon instead of scientists and made the moon look more promising and interesting.

Anyway there are very few sci-fi books dealing with genetic engineering (i.e. cloning, creating super humans, changing human form etc.) and other important subjects like love in the future, the economy in the future, jobs in the future and so on. In fact most sci-fi uses tired old action plots in which one guy plays

the hero, saves the girl etc. For the most part its little better than those ubiquitous mindless action movies that we see on TV.

I: There are rumors that Western intelligence agencies can shoot a tiny device into people's heads and read their minds. How do you feel about this?

GO: Well one day I'm sure they'll be able to do just that. But it could be a good thing if it's used to watch scientists who appear to be dangerous or criminals who could strike again or potential terrorists. On the other hand it could be used by tyrants to destroy all intelligent opposition and basically destroy the human race.

I: What about secret CIA experiments to develop super humans and other secret programs?

GO: Well knowing the CIA, it would not be surprising. However the CIA is serving a democracy so one would hope that at least it would not endanger humanity. If they create super humans they

must create super humans who are kind and good, and not killing machines or conquerors.

Personally I think if you tried numerous experiments altering the brain of sperm or eggs or embryos or whatever, you would eventually find out how to make people smarter. It would be verËy scary though if this was all done in secret by the CIA or other secret governmental organizations. After all we all want to see what the future will be and wish to be able to vote on this kind of thing, rather than to have super humans suddenly foisted on us.

I: How do you feel about education and its role in the future?

GO: Education needs to make people more active. Active in politics, active in volunteer work etc. People today are too apathetic. We need to train people to resist tyranny and fight for democracy. To fight for the future.