

- 1 -

CONFEDERATION:

GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH

RAY BRADBURY

RAY BRADBURY:

I think I'd rather go along with the (WORD) thing because I was an outcast, or at least we think we are when we're a certain age in high school.

¶I won't go on in great length, but my life was saved when I got a letter from (NAME) in October of '37, inviting me down to the Science Fantasy Society, which met every Thursday evening at the Clifton(?)

Cafeteria. And I was very shy, and I almost didn't go down. I finally got my courage and went down and walked into the little brown room up on the second floor, and I looked in through the door, and there were all these strange people in that room, looking back out at me. And I got up my nerve and walked in, and, of course, my life was ~~changed~~ changed forever -- because we need each other, don't we? I still believe to this day that the world outside is insane, and we're the sane ones in here tonight. (APPLAUSE)

¶Now here, tonight, with us are two people -- one of whom was almost my agent and another who became my agent, Fred Pohl. I sent my stories to him when I was

BRADBURY:

20. He's very kind about the incident; he claims he was leaving the profession of being an agent at the time, but I don't believe that's quite true. My story was just lousy, that's all. (LAUGHTER) And he sent it back with a very nice note and about a year later, I got Julie Schwartz as my agent; and of course, Julie has gone on to become one of the greatest editors in the comic field, as you well know. My first publisher is here tonight -- Forrest Ackerman -- and he was putting out *Imagination*, and he encouraged me in my last year in high school and published all my early things, of course, which were just as dreadful as-- as most of those things are. When I wanted to go the World Science Fantasy Convention -- the first one -- in July of 1939, I had no money. I was selling newspapers on a street corner, making eight or nine dollars a week. It was Forrie Ackerman who gave me \$70, which enabled me to buy a ticket, round trip, on the Greyhound Bus to go to New York and there meet all of my heroes: Jack Williamson, Edmund Hamilton, and John W. Campbell. The list was endless. It was a fantastic time for me, and a chance for me to idolise the people I wanted to be part of. I carried with me a portfolio of Hans Bachs(?) paintings and drawings; I was his agent, and I very much loved his work and took it around to all the editors. Of course, no one wanted Hans' (?) works, except *Weird Tales* -- thank God -- and Farnsworth(?) Wright immediately said "Yes," and I got on the bus and went all the way to

BRADBURY:

Seattle to Hans Bach about his good fortune, and he left for New York shortly thereafter. So my background is very little different than your own. We're all poor; we all have been poor together; and whenever I needed money, I would go to Forrest Ackerman and sell him books he didn't want. (LAUGHTER APPLAUSE) Years later, some of those books I sold to him, he-- he mails back to me (LAUGHTER) and-- with a little note. But I was courting my-- the woman who was to be my wife, and I needed money, and Forrie was it. So \$5 here and \$10 there, and it took me a whole year to pay him back the money that sent me to the first World Science Fantasy Convention. A lot of the money--'

'The wonderful thing about our family -- and it is a family, with all of the conniption fits we go through -- nevertheless, we are very helpful with one another; we are very loving of one another, and I made friends within the science fantasy society in L.A. with Henry Kuttner and Leigh Brackett and Edmund Hamilton, and, lo and behold, on certain evenings in my life, when I 19 and 20, Jack Williamson would drop by and take me to a movie. And I'd go to a movie with Jack Williamson! My God, of all people! Here I was-- I couldn't believe I was in a car with this famous man, eh!, 'cause I'd never sold anything at the time, and I so much wanted to be a writer. And I showed all of my dreadful fiction to Jack, who put up with it. And I checked it out with him last year. I said, "Jack, was

BRADBURY:

it as awful as I thought it-- as I remembered?" He says, "Yes, yes, it was awful (INDISTINCT)."

(LAUGHTER) But, nevertheless, he put up with me, and we all put up with one another.

¶And as time went by, I went to sell to the pulp magazines, and then finally the quality and the slicks. I wouldn't give up any of that past for anything. It's-- you are my home people; you are my family still. And along the way, later in my life, I was able to encourage Charles Beaumont, who-- I met him when I was 16 and we were both collecting comic strips together. So we traded Jerry and the Pirates, Prince Valiant, that sort of thing, and I was very proud to see his career burgeon over a number of years; Bill Nolan, and a lot of other people like that. So we passed the gift on, (INDISTINCT), or we try to. And that's why we're here for this convention.

¶Now, let me give you a few other ideas about my life, because I think if my life proves anything, it's the series of loves that I stayed in love with and never gave up on them. Began to love dinosaurs when I was five; saw them at the Natural History Museum in Chicago. I was in love with movies, starting when I was three, Hunchback of Notre Dame; all the Lon Chaney films were simply incredibly fine to me. And I never gave up on these things. When Buck Rogers came into my life, I be-- I learned my first lesson about quality and loving when I was nine years old. I collected those things every day of my life, in my

BRADBURY:

ninth year, and the kids at school made fun of me. And like a-- like an idiot, I tore up my Buck Rogers comic strips (GROANS). And two weeks later, I burst into tears, and I said to myself, "Why am I weeping? Who died?" And the answer was, "Me." I had killed myself by tearing up those scripts. And I had a dialogue with myself, and I said, "Wait a minute. I need Buck Roger;, I need the future. I care about it. I'm going to go back and collect this, and to hell with those-- all those people." And I went back and collected Buck Rogers. It made my life full, and, from that day to this, I've never listened to another damned fool. (APPLAUSE)

¶One of the great things: ten years ago, the Buck Rogers family, Mr. Dilliard(?) -- Bob Dilliard, the son of John Dilliard, who created Buck Rogers -- contacted me and gave me the job of writing the introduction to the Collected Works of Buck Rogers. Ah! So you had this wonderful cycling around of love. And one by one, each of these crazy loves in my life has paid off, aesthetically and in all kinds of splendid ways.

¶My love of dinosaurs was constant, and when King Kong fell off the top of the Empire State Building, in 1933, he landed right on me -- just as he landed on all of you. What-- My God, what a concussion, huh? (LAUGHTER) And then when I got up, I-- I got into this fantastic love affair with a 50-foot ape. Not easy to do. Not easy to do. (LAUGHTER) But I stayed

BRADBURY:

in love. And then, through the Science Fantasy Society, again, my life changed. Because I met a young man who was building dinosaurs in his garage, huh. God, what a friend to have. And he was animating these on 8mm film, and the dinosaurs would run around his backyard and eat up his father.

(LAUGHTER APPLAUSE) I was always hoping to take some of those dinosaurs home. (LAUGHTER) But anyway, of course you know who it was: Ray Harryhausen (APPLAUSE), and we became friends in our last year in high school, and we stayed friends. We pledged our love to one another and to the dinosaurs(?). We promised to grow old together and to say in love with dinosaurs forever, and because we didn't give up on them -- you know what his career is -- all around the world are these wonderful Ray Harryhausen festivals. I'm so immensely proud of him and our loving friendship, which lasts right up to today.

¶But be-- because of my love of dinosaurs, when I was-- when I was 29(?), I was living in Venice, California with my wife and walking along the shore one day, saw the (WORD) at the Venice pier, and wondered what-- what that dinosaur was doing lying there on the beach. I told this story earlier today at the film meeting, but I'll do it quickly, and from looking at the roller coaster spinal cord lying there in the sand, got the idea for the **Beast from 20,000 Fathoms..** I wrot that short story, also called "The Foghorn"; it appeared in the **Saturday Evening Post**

BRADBURY:

that year, and two years later, the film, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* was made, with Ray Harryhausen doing the animation. Again, God was being careful here, in watching us. (APPLAUSE) So it pays off our loves. So it pays off, our loves. Not a very good film; in fact, pretty bad, I suppose (LAUGHTER), but, nonetheless, it was a beginning, and that same year I got a chance to work at Universal on *It Came from Outer Space*, a little bit better film; still not a great one, but a very nice one. And then, along came John Huston into my life. And if the people who heard me at the film meeting earlier today will put up with this, I'd like to tell that story one my time, because it changed my life forever. All because I was in love with dinosaurs. Because the phone rang. I'd met John Huston many years before, and I'd given him all my books, and it says, very simple, "I love your films, I love you. Someday, please hire me. (LAUGHTER) I would love to do a film with you."

¶Well, I didn't see him again for three years. And the phone rang. It was John Huston, inviting me up to his hotel. Put a drink in my hand. He said, (IMITATING HUSTON) "Well, Ray (LAUGHTER), what are you doing for the next year?" And I said, "Not much, Mr. Huston." He said, "Well, kid, how would you like to come, live in Ireland, and-- and write the screen play of *Moby Dick*?" I said, "Gee, Mr. Huston, I've never been able to read the damn thing." (LAUGHTER) There was a long pause (LAUGHTER) -- I don't know how(?)

BRADBURY:

he(?) could have said that. (INDISTINCT) "Well, kid, why don't you go home and read as much as you can. Come back at lunch tomorrow, and tell me if you'll help me kill a white whale." So I went home that night and I said to my wife, "Pray for me."

(LAUGHTER) And she said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I gotta read a book tonight and do a book report tomorrow." (LAUGHTER APPLAUSE)

¶Well, luckily, I have terrible habits in libraries. I think-- don't you use libraries the way I do? I don't use them with any system. I just rush in and grab a book, open it in the middle, and fall in love -- or I don't fall in love. It's that simple. I don't intellectualise it. A book either grabs me and-- or it doesn't grab me, and it goes back on the shelf. So I dove into the middle of the book here, there, somewhere else -- three places -- and by God, by sheer accident came across wonderful sections; the section where they describe the whiteness of midnight, or panics of nightmares of (INDISTINCT); all the colours of-- of the deliriums at three in the morning; all the whitenesses of the whale. A beautiful piece of writing-- writing by Melville. And then I moved to a section where he describes the great spirit spout of Moby Dick, like a fountain at Versailles somehow put to sea and sprinkling the deeps of the soul's midnights. And then toward the end of the book, I came upon a section where Ahab stands at the rail and looks out and says, "It's a mild, mild day, and a

BRADBURY:

mild-looking sky. And the wind smells as if it blew from the shadow of the Andes, where the Moors(?) have lain down with their scythes(?)." And I turned back to the beginning, and I read, "Call me Ishmael," and I was in love. And then I went to Huston the next day. Said, "Yep, I'm old enough to finish reading the book." (LAUGHTER) And I got the job, and I went to Ireland with my family -- first time we'd ever travelled.

"My God, it was wonderful because, just six months before I'd sat in a Cinerama, looking at far places -- Rome and Paris and London and Egypt -- with tears streaming down my cheeks. I turned to my wife and said, "My God, when will we ever have enough money to travel [to] all these far, wonderful places?" So, all of a sudden, we're on our way to Ireland. And when I got there and I-- for a while there, I worked on the script, and Huston allowed me to do the first 50 pages without reading them -- which was very wise. You get into the thing; get it started. And on Thanksgiving Day, about a month later, I turned in the first 50 pages. And John says, "Well, kid, you go upstairs and take a nap, and I'll call you down in about an hour; tell you what I think." And around 5 o'clock that afternoon -- and I was upstairs waiting; I couldn't sleep of course -- at the bottom of the stairs, I heard his voice calling up to me the most beautiful sentence I've ever heard in my life. He called up, he says, "Ray, come down and finish the script."

BRADBURY:

(LAUGHTER APPLAUSE)

"Now, that changed my life forever, because it got me deeply back into Shakespeare, it got me back into the Bible, because they're equal parts to the Bible and Shakespeare in that wonderful book, and I finally said to-- to Huston one night; I said, "John, why did you hire me? You know, here I am a science fiction writer. The world is making fun of you for hiring me; they're all laughing, saying, 'It can't possibly be.' How come?" He says, "Well, it was that-- that story of yours about the dinosaur in love with (INDISTINCT). Beast from 20,000 Fathoms." And of course, that was it. What he thought he found in that story was Melville. Not true. What he found in there was Shakespeare and the Bible; big influences on me. And then, when I did research on Melville, I discovered that Melville had never read Shakespeare until he was 30 years old, because books were in small type in those days. So Melville goes off to Boston, finds a copy of-- of Shakespeare with large type, and falls in love with Othello and Richard III and Hamlet and all the rest, and runs amuck. He throws everything out the window -- he's been doing a book on whaling -- and all of a sudden Moby Dick is born, because Shakespeare comes under his window one night and yells up at him, "Oh, Herman Melville, truly show me a force(?), but come me a force dressed as whale." And he breached the damned(?) whale out of Melville's brow(?).

(INDISTINCT) (APPLAUSE)

BRADBURY:

¶So the same influences on Melville was the influence on me during my youth and in later years; I carried Shakespeare with me everywhere. And as a result of working on Moby Dick, then I had another piece of luck; a piece of intuition which changed my life (WORD) in another direction.

¶Now, let me go back in time for a second. One of the reasons why we all love science fiction is it's architectural. It's architectural. The vistas of the impossible streets of our childhood. We open the-- the (WORD)-- the magazine *Amazing Stories* or-- or *Wonder Stories* in the '20s, in the '30s. You have these wonderful long avenues going out among these towering skyscrapers, and what you want to do is walk right into that vista, don't you; walk down those avenues and never come out. Hmm? So there's the glorious architectural sense that we get from being involved in science fiction. And of course now, in the last 17 years, what do we have-- it goes back of course to *Things to Come*: architecture itself. And being in this building! My God, this is a great place for the conference to be held, isn't it? It's-- it's H.G. Wells country. (APPLAUSE) (INDISTINCT)

¶Starting with 2001, what have we had? Architectures in-- in space. Not-- not ships, but architectures. Cities. Whole cities floating out there. And they-- they pull our souls with them, don't they? We want to go with those cities -- not ships -- with those cities, into space. And then in *Close Encounters of*

BRADBURY:

a [sic] Third Kind, what do we have? The mother ship comes down. But it's not a ship. It's-- it's a population encased in this great, wondrous shell, with all the lights. And it's like-- it's a moment in-- in the-- on the Sistene Chapel ceiling, where God's hand comes down this way, and Adam's finger reaches up this way, and the spark meets the gap, across the universe. So, we have architecture in front of us there, and we want to get on board and go away and never come back. Huh? So this constant reference to architecture in all of our lives is one of the great pulls for our-- one of the great reasons for our loving what we do.

¶All right. So suddenly, now, I'm-- I make a discovery that leads to architecture in my life. And, oh, I love-- when I went to the World's Fairs in Chicago in 1933, I fell in love with the future there. The future buildings. Wondrous to walk amongst them and go home on the train at night, weeping to be leaving the future behind. And then the day comes when they tear the future down. It'll be a long time coming after that. So then, when I finished Moby Dick, I wrote an analysis of Jules Verne and-- and-- and Herman Melville. No one had ever done this; no one's done it since. I don't know why it wasn't done a long time ago. Because we have two mad captains, and I noticed the resemblance between the two madnesses and Moby Dick and the Nautilus, huh. No one has noticed in the last hundred years -- until I stumbled over it -- that in the first chapter of

BRADBURY:

20,000 Leagues under the Sea, when the Nautilus appears in the seas of the world, it is described as "Moby Dick, the white whale". Huh. The evidence has been there all that while. We need-- that-- which means what? That Jules Verne read Melville. So we have two mad captains, one mad captain who says, "I will strike the sun if it insults me," and the other mad captain says, "No, no. Don't strike the sun. Plug into the sun, borrow the energy, and create a new world of inventions." Huh? Do not kill the whale; invent a whale and live inside of it. Build the whale and scour the seas of the earth, preaching peace and brotherhood to mankind. So the two mad captains, the two whales -- one living flesh and one metal. Wrote this essay, called "The Ardent Blasphemers," which was the introduction to a new edition of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, and the United States-- (INDISTINCT) people came to (INDISTINCT), to the New York World's Fair, to this fabulous architecture. They had a building which cost \$50-million. The whole top floor, as big as a football field inside, was the American Pavilion. And they said, "Can you write a 17-minute history of the United States. In 17 minutes flat, with a full symphony orchestra?" And I said, "Yes." (LAUGHTER) Because I'd been studying my Melville and my Whitman and my Poe, and all of the other fabulous early American writers who were writers of ideas. Writers of ideas. (NAME) was one of the first fantasy/science fiction writers in the last 200

BRADBURY:

years. And people forget to call him by that man, but he was an idea man. An idea man. Fascinating person. So I had all this background, American history, but I had to find the metaphor, didn't I? Before you can do anything in this world, you have to find the metaphor, whether it's for a haiku, whether it's for a small poem, whether it's for a screenplay or an essay, whether-- You have to have a handle (INDISTINCT) get the whole thing up with, and galvanise the people so they'll pay attention and know what you're talking about. So I came up with the idea of the Triple Wilderness: Americans as a triple wilderness people. The wilderness of-- of water, grass, and stars. We crossed a wilderness of grass [sic?] to reach this place; we lingered for a little while on the wilderness of grass; and we now look(?) toward the wilderness of stars to live forever. Water, grass, and stars. Once you get the triple metaphor, you can write the history of the United States in 17 minutes flat. Hmmm? You've the metaphor to do it with. I did the metaphor, I wrote the prose. They brought in the symphony orchestra, and inside of the building, we dramatised the history of Am-- our country. As a result of that, the Disney people next door came over and saw what we'd been doing, and when they went to work on Epcot, eight or nine years ago, they called me in again. And they said, "This time, can you do a history of ideas and communication, covering 2,000 years, in 15 minutes

BRADBURY:

flat?" (LAUGHTER) (INDISTINCT) the idea, and this time it was harder to find the metaphor, 'cause you're all-- you're all over the place, and you're talking about discoveries back in Egyptian times and things up ahead. But I'd been re-reading the wonderful book, *Gods, Graves, and Scholars*, by C.W. (NAME). And it's still one of the best archaeological books ever written, and in there I came across the story of Schlieman again-- once again. Which is a remarkable story and an example of every child and every grown person in the history of our(?) country. But what was Schlieman's story? He fell in love with Troy with ten. He talked about Troy when he was 12. He wanted to go find Troy when he was 14. All of his friends said, "No. Troy never existed. It was a myth. It was a fairytale. Don't bother. Don't try. Why do you want to do this? Who tells you to do this?" And his answer was, "Blind Homer's speech to me. Blind Homer tells me where to dig." And they said, "You're going to listen to a blind man instead of to us?" (LAUGHTER) And he says, "Yes. Out of the way. Out of the way." And he was in his forties before he finally went and bought a spade, and he dug where blind Homer told him to dig-- or almost where Homer told him to dig. And what did he find? Not one Troy; not four Troys, but nine Troys -- at various levels of sophistication, going down into the dust. Huh. And when he left, other archaeologists coming found 30 more Troys, or what they took to be Troys. So 39

BRADBURY:

Troys, where none were supposed to exist. So I said to the Disney people, "There's our symbol; there's our metaphor. Let's use Schlieman as-- as an example. Let's bury the past and then dig it up again. Let's triangulate history. Go back in time to the beginning of time, and come forward through the caves, through the drawings on the walls of the caves; through Egyptian-- the Egyptian period; through the Renaissance. And as we pass through the Renaissance, I want a robo-animatronic mannikin up on the Sistene ceiling, painting the ceiling, as Michaelangelo. Huh? And by God, we built it and put it up there.

(LAUGHTER)

¶And so, finally, as a result of these series of encounters, I wound up working on the main building at Epcot, which opened four years ago: Spaceship Earth. If you go down, my metaphors are in the building.

¶Now, what's the point of all this? The point of this is that the series of my loves propelled me into all of these things. I didn't stop to think. I was just madly in love with architecture, with world's fairs, with college fairs, with (WORD), with movies. All of them mad loves. (WORDe, huh? But when you digest enough of them, tens of thousands of movies, huh; tens of thousands of pictures, learn screenwriting through your comic collection, then the jobs begin to appear, and suddenly people are saying, "Will you do this?" So, I fell in love-- wound up working for the Air and Space Museum, and now they've got a-- a 2,000 year

BRADBURY:

history of astronomy there in 12 minutes flat.

(LAUGHTER) Which opened two years ago.

¶Now, all of this is fascinating(?) because-- and most of us don't stop to think why we love science fiction so intensely. I-- I never really questioned it, and I found the answer to myself and to all of you in the poetry of William (NAME) Yeats only three years ago, and that's awfully late in time to have to discover why you love science fiction so madly. Okay. What-- well, what's the reason? It's in the last line of a poem by William (NAME) Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium." In that last line is the destiny of mankind to the past, to the present, to the future -- and all of your lives. The last line reads as follows: "Of what is past or passing or to come." Of what is past or passing or to come. All the ideas of mankind, from the caves to here. Everything that surrounds us right now; all of the-- the technological marvels, (INDISTINCT) that are right here, and then everything in the future for the next million years. The total history of ideas, that's why they're important. Huh. Science fiction is the most important fiction ever written in the history of the world! And we are responsible for it. (APPLAUSE)

¶I do not say that because I have participated in it; I say it because I discovered (INDISTINCT) at the time what-- what the hell I was doing. Huh. (LAUGHTER) Now, I was in the south of France a year ago, and I went through the caves there. And, again, I said to

BRADBURY:

myself, "My God, this is science fiction." The first science fiction was drawn on the walls of caves 50,000, 100,000 years ago. They're still there! Now, why do I call it science fiction? Well, what is science fiction? It's the history of ideas, the blue-printing of ideas, and the building of ideas, and then moving on to the next set. Huh. The drawings on the walls were problems faced by people 100,000 years ago. Living in the caves, cold, seeing a saber-toothed tiger outside, how do you solve him? That's a science fiction problem, isn't it, huh? How do you solve a saber-toothed tiger? How do you solve the mammoth that you want to eat? How do you solve the problem of fire that you want to bring into the cave? When it dies, how do you make it over again, eh? All real, scientific problems. Okay. Let's start with the first one. You draw a picture of a saber-toothed on the wall. Still there, all these years later. How do you solve the problem of the saber-toothed tiger? You invent dentistry. (LAUGHTER) And then you just gum(?) the hell out of here(?). (LAUGHTER) That takes care of one dangerous creature(?). (LAUGHTER) How do you solve the problem of-- of the mammoth? You can't run out and kick him to death, can we? He's gonna pick you up and bash you around. So what do you do? You take off your arm and you throw it at him. And that's what a spear is. All the inventions of mankind are the extensions of our senses and our body. So you-- we start out with a simple dagger;

BRADBURY:

then it becomes a club with a stone on the end, and then it becomes a spear, which is an arm with a sharp end on it. And you take your arm and you throw it at the mammoth, and you kill him, and you eat him. And then it becomes the problem of cooking him, huh, and getting that fire into the caves. So, one by one -- you see my point here -- those first science fictions, our honourable heritage, are on the walls of the caves all over the world. The history of ide-- primitive ideas, primitive sciences, which we then solved and moved on to the next set. Huh. My God, what an exciting thing. We are the idea beasts. We are the idea beasts. No other animal is like us. With all of our problems, but my God, we're magnificent, eh.

There are all these ideas teaming in our minds for new ways to survive, and we all participate in the same process. We're all up to the same work, regardless of whether we're doctors or writers or artists or dancers or anything else in the world; we're all trying to find ways of surviving. And we're still drawing on walls, aren't we? Huh. We draw on walls in museums; we draw on walls in our offices -- we call them computers, the little walls with all the figures on it; we draw on walls in our living rooms -- called television. Huh. And now we're drawing our history on space, and we're sending our sphinxes our with the Viking lander to reach Mars. And every time people say to me, "Aren't you afraid of computers?" I say, "Hell, no. You might as well say I'm afraid of the

BRADBURY:

human race. I'm not. I'm afraid of some parts of it, on some occasions, but every computer is the total history of all mankind compacted into one machine."

Huh. So ever time you total one more sum on a computer, you've got to add up the 100,000-year history of mankind. That all goes into the machine. The machine doesn't exist; mankind exists, and the machine only represents us. Remember that, constantly. It is not inhuman, because we are not inhuman most of the time, and the machine represents us.

¶So, I've got to go on writing this sort of thing for the rest of my life. I cannot resist all these ideas that surround us to be solved, and with the production of any new machine, the laws that must come with it, the morality that must come with it. The advent of the videocassette machine in the last eight years is going to change history forever. It's going to be exciting in the next 20 years, making it into the 21st century with all the changes in education, all of the production, theatres, our private lives-- There's no way of predicting right now how immense this revolution that's just beginning will be. It's the greatest time in the world to be alive. We are a great generation and we are a great people. We are the best. Huh. Isn't it nice to hear something positive for a change? (APPLAUSE)

¶I was-- I was over in London the night we landed on the moon. My God, what a night. Huh. And a proud

BRADBURY:

night for-- for the American people, for the world-- for the world; we shared with the world. But I was on the David Frost show, and I was supposed to go on around 9 o'clock; I think we landed on the moon 8.30 London time that night, that glorious week 17 years ago now. And I waited to go on because I wanted to tell people my own exciting ideas about space travel, because I have such strong feelings about them(?), and they've lasted me from childhood, through *Things to Come* -- that magnificent ending at the end of *Things to Come*, when Cabell and Passworthy look to the stars and said, you know, "Will there be no end?" And of course the answer is, "No. We'll always be moving on. We must choose: the stars or the dust. Which shall it be?" is the last words of the film. "Which shall it be? Which shall it be?" And I opted for the stars at the age of 15. So, here I am on the *David Frost Show*, on Telstar around the world, and I'm going to be asked at any moment to comment on the landing on the moon which happened 15 minutes, a half an hour before. Okay? Well, the first broadcasts are over; we're waiting for more images to come in from the moon, and David Frost puts on his first guest, Sammy Davis, Jr. Huh. (LAUGHTER) And then he puts on his second guest, a rock singer of some sort; I forgot his name. Well, steam started coming out of my ears. And I walked off the show. I walked out in the parking lot. They'd already announced I was going to be on. The producer ran out after me. Says, "Where

BRADBURY:

are you going?" I said, "I'm leaving. I'm leaving."
He says, "You can't do that." I said, "Watch my
dust. Watch my dust." (LAUGHTER) He put his hand(?)
(INDISTINCT) says, "Well, that's not very nice of
you." I said-- I says, "You're not nice. You're a
bunch of bastards." Eh. He had ruined the greatest
night in the history of the world. This is it. Eh.
"No night greater than this will ever be remembered a
million years from tonight; this night is the night we
broke free of gravity and made it out toward the
stars, and you've managed to ruin the whole thing
with-- oh, Englebert Humperdink" -- that's who it
was. (LAUGHTER) Kill. Kill. So I said, "Let go, or
I'll strike you, sir." (APPLAUSE) And I left. And a
great thing happened the next morning in a London
newspaper. It said, "Neil Armstrong walks at 5.30 AM;
Bradbury walks at midnight." (APPLAUSE)

And I got over, I did a night(?) show with Mike
Wallace, and I did one with, God, that dreadful old
woman -- that little Irish girl who's such a barber(?)
mouth at the time, Bernadette Devlin. God, she was on
the show with a minister, priest from-- from
Switzerland, and a great scientific writer -- I can't
remember his name -- from London. And they're already
opponing and lamenting space travel. Opponing and
lamenting space travel. And I listened to all these
negative people, and I finally said, "Okay, everyone
shut up. Shut up." I said, "How long've we been on
the moon, huh? Hour and 15 minutes? Two hours and

BRADBURY:

five minutes, huh? How long did it take us to get there? Five billion years! And you refuse to celebrate? To hell with you! Huh. To hell with you!" So I wouldn't let them talk the rest of the day. (APPLAUSE)

¶We are surrounded by negative people, and we must beware of them. It's all right to be critical, if in the moment of criticism we must all offer solutions. I try never to criticise whether it's a writer or on political things, or economics -- which is impossible -- without trying to give some advice. You know, "Maybe this is the way we should go," but not just the negative thing. So, from tonight on, none of you ever has to look at the five o'clock news ever again. Right? Ever again. Or the 5.30 news or the 6 o'clock news. You can watch McNeil-Lehrer; they're wonderful. They're informative, they're non-political, and they are really terrific. Now-- You can watch them, but the rest is crap. (LAUGHTER APPLAUSE)

¶Give you an example. I was there ten years ago, and we'll(?)-- the Viking lander landed on Mars, and I was up all night with Carl Sagan and Bruce Murray and Walter Sullivan and Arthur Clarke -- all of my friends there. And all the dancing around, all the joy, all the laughter, it was gorgeous. And around seven in the morning, the first images came back from Mars. Huh. Nine o'clock, Roy Neil(?) from ABC puts me on the air and asks the dumb question of all time, eh.

BRADBURY:

He said, "Mr. Bradbury, how does it feel-- You've been writing about Mars all of your life, and people have found Mars civilisation building. And now we've landed on Mars -- ha ha -- this morning, and there's no life there. How do you feel?" I said, "Fool. Fool. There is life on Mars, and it is us! It is us!" (APPLAUSE) So you got to watch out for these people. Okay. They don't know; we know. They don't know; we know.

¶And then, of course, this year's a special sad year, a tragic year, because of the Challenger disaster. And I-- Ted Koppel called me, and I went on his show that night. I didn't know what I was going to say. I had been crying most of the day. I didn't know any of those people; I'd never met any of them. But it was just too much, because we'd been so lucky for so many years. And so I tried to think of what I wanted to say, and finally around 12.30 that night, Koppel put me on and asked me, and I said, "Look, it-- it reminds me, somehow, of a scene from Carl Sagan's lovely Cosmos series. I remember one night he did a thing where he had a mockup of a DNA molecule on one hand and a-- a giant enzyme model-- in his other hand. And he had these two models that he displayed to the audience, and describing the process whereby the enzyme calls(?) out to the DNA molecule, and then, from that, all of the building blocks for all of the creatures of the world are created. Hmmm." I said, "Tonight I-- if you will allow me, I look upon the

BRADBURY:

universe as a giant enzyme calling upon Earth, and we, the DNA molecules of Earth, must respond to the call. That's what this is all about. It is a larger thing. If you want to call God an enzyme, he's an enzyme."

(LAUGHTER) Call it what you will, but the enzymes of the universe call; we rouse out, and we must move.

Eh. We must go and we must discover, but never like the-- that quote of Sir Edmund Hillary's, when they asked him about climbing the mountains, he said, "I go because it's there." No, that's not good enough.

Huh. We go because we are inheritors of the gift.

Eh? That's much better. We have a responsibility.

We only live once, each of us, and we must give back something for this gift. So space travel is the gift

we give to ourselves, to ensure our children's

children's children immortality. That's what it's all about. If it isn't that, it's not worth doing. It's

not worth doing on any other level. It has to do with the immortality of our children. So, this is the way

I'm going to talk from now to the end of my life; it's the way I've been talking since I've had my own fan

magazine, when I was 19. I had a poem in there about this very subject. It's remained constant.

¶Now, it's getting late. Let me end with one final story, and-- because I'm surrounded by the same

negativity you are and I try to combat it. As you know, I've written for Playboy magazine and helped

get it started, more than 30 years ago. They bought

(INDISTINCT) one in the second, third, and fourth

BRADBURY:

issues, when they had no money, and I think they paid me \$500 for the-- the use of my novel at that time. It was a brave thing to do, because it was in the middle of the McCarthy period. But anyway, they've given me a chance to write about many things, and two years ago I wrote a story for them called, "The Toynbee(?) Convector," and, if you will permit me, I will describe the story to you in case you missed it in Playboy. It's a good way to end our talk in this evening. It's a story of a young man in the air in 1986, who invents a time machine. And he goes into the future, the far fut-- a hundred years from now. And he comes back from that journey with glorious news: we've done everything right for a change: we've cleaned the oceans; we-- we've cleaned the streams; we've cleaned the rivers; we've saved the whales; we have saved the dolphins. We put solar energy beam collectors in outer space; we've colonised the moon. We've cured cancer. We're putting colonies on Mars, and we're headed for Alpha Centaura. Glory hallulajah; wonderful future. As a result of his going on this journey and coming back with this news, the world runs wild to create that future. So, a hundred years later, my story begins where we all go to celebrate the time traveller who lives in La Joya with his time machine put up on props(?), eh; hasn't travelled since. And the whole world has gathered there: all the politicians of the world, all the royalty of the world, and all the reporters of the

BRADBURY:

world -- and at four o'clock in the afternoon we open the champagne to celebrate this man who changed history with one journey. Hmm. And a thing is going to happen now, at 4 o'clock by-- There will be two time travellers in the world; paradox, huh. The young time traveller, circling the world over Bombay, Tokyo, San Francisco, and New York, and around for a few minutes at four in the afternoon; and the old time traveller, standing beside me now, 125 years old, whose life we are celebrating. We all watch the sky and we drink a toast to the old man and to the young man who will soon arrive. Four o'clock in the afternoon, nothing much up in the sky; five minutes after four, nothing up there at all; ten minutes after four, the sky is still empty; four-twenty, nothing up there among all of those clouds. I finally look at the time traveller, and he looks back at me, and he says, "I lied!" (APPLAUSE)

(END)