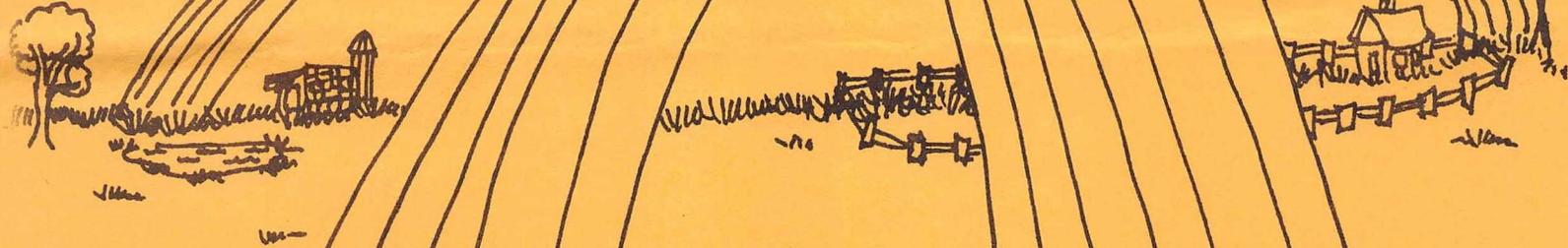
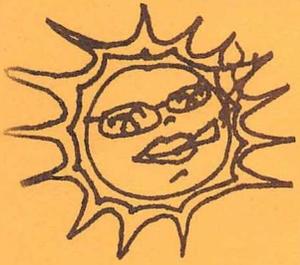


the DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP #18



"Haraty's Rainbow"



"As the fresh guy
said, 'Pinch on. Pinch
on. Pinch on.'"



B&B



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A CALL TO INACTION

This month, I was the Fan Guest of Honor at Empiricon III. In the speech that one is supposed to give in that position, I said something like this:

It is an honor to be here. I have asked myself why I have been honored this way. I am not handsome; I am not strong; I am not famous; I am not successful in the world's terms. I *am* good in bed, but I don't think that's why I was chosen.

I was chosen for this honor because I write; I put words on paper, and people like those words. And even if it weren't me you were honoring, I'd feel that this is a Good Thing.

For we are living in interesting times, as the Chinese say, and I'd like to illustrate one of the most interesting aspects with a little parable.

Imagine, if you will, an energy crisis like the one we've been having on and off at least since 1974. And imagine that the United States chose to deal with it by saying that oil is evil stuff; that people who own oil should be ashamed of it, or at least should not feel that they can use it; that nobody should be allowed to pay very much for oil; that we shouldn't work very hard to find oil or reward those who do. Of course, such an approach would be insane. And yet today many of the institutions around us take precisely that approach to an even more valuable natural resource, a potentially infinite one which has far more ap-

plications than oil. I am speaking about the natural resource each one of you carries around between your ears.

Perhaps the best word for this resource is Intelligence, but there are a couple of things that have to be explained about that term. For one thing, "intelligence" tends to be used for only the sort of thing that tests can measure--strictly mathematical and verbal thinking powers. I would wish to extend it to include all the ways we can use our minds to affect our environment, adding creativity, intuition, understanding of our fellow human beings, etc.

The other thing is that Intelligence is really "intelligence-and-communication." Just as there is no such thing as an organism that exists independent of any environment, so intelligence can exist only in an environment of words & communications media.

Anything that promises to open more channels of communication, whether it is called cable TV, or fanzines, or computer bulletin boards, is thus an aid to intelligence. Anything that narrows the channels is an enemy of intelligence. Anyone--semanticist, psychologist, poet, critic, whatever--who tries to improve & clarify our communications is on the side of intelligence. Anyone--politician, advertiser, bureaucrat--who muddies these channels is the enemy.

TEETH CHATTERING

Hey, man, you hear the story about the two molars and a bicuspid?

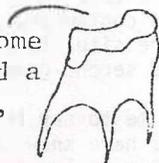


D'ya think the floss issue will be big this election?



Only if the canine vote gets involved.

You take some Pepsodent and a little Crest, mix well...



Real sharp, you incisors.



Cawd, it was heavy ... nuts and candied cherries, all that gooey nougat ...

The sugar alone would kill you. Never hang around with a sweet tooth!

And Intelligence is a great resource. Robert Anton Wilson reminds us that, since Intelligence can be used to help solve all of our problems, anything which helps Intelligence helps everything else. Buckminster Fuller tells us that wealth equals energy times Intelligence. And while energy is conserved, in accordance with the laws of physics, Intelligence is a nonphysical quantity and thus is not conserved. One need not lose any Intelligence for another to gain it.

And yet, there are people who dislike and distrust Intelligence, and powerful forces which try to suppress it. It seems to be that these forces can be divided into *hierarchy* and *equality*.

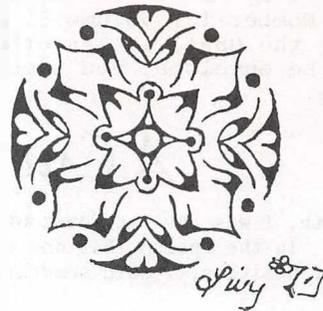
To take the most obvious kind, there is bigotry. I don't have to spend much time on that, as I imagine that there are very few in this crowd ignorant enough to think that a brilliantly functioning mind cannot be contained in a body which happens to be Black, or have tits, or something like that.

But hierarchies in general are opposed to Intelligence. In general, the way to reach the top in any hierarchical structure, whether the government or big business, is to excel in second-circuit territorial and dominance behavior, rather than to think better. To the alpha males who tend to win these struggles, Intelligence and knowledge are random factors, and a good company tries to keep them from having any effect. Add to that the known communications difficulties that hierarchies engender, such as the Snafu Principle ("Communication is impossible in a power relationship"), and you begin to see why hierarchical organizations are all so stupid. To take a single example, consider the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s. This monolith faced a perceived need to "modernize" by abandoning old structures. It had a beautiful, meaningful, and magickal ritual (the Latin Mass) and a set of stupid, oppressive sex laws. We all know which it disposed of. Any organism evolved past the flatworms would have known better.

I suspect, though, that equality may be an even greater enemy of Intelligence than hierarchy, possibly because it seems nicer, and possibly because hierarchies at least realize that intelligence can be useful to them.

One form of equality is a slogan I alluded to a bit earlier, the idea that "intelligence is what IQ tests measure." That's a good line. When we talk about IQ, what we specifically mean is an ability to do well on a particular type of test. But don't stop there.

I hope you all had the good fortune, as I did, to listen to [Pro Guest of Honor] Theodore Sturgeon's speech yesterday. In it he mentioned an idea of his that I think may be an even greater contribution to human well-being than all that wonderful fiction. It is his guiding motto-- Ask the next question. When you think you've got an answer, don't stop there. Look and see if that answer doesn't imply another question, and then ask that question, and the one after that, and the one after that.



OK, intelligence is, in a way, what IQ tests measure. Now ask the next question. What do IQ tests measure? Is it some kind of irrelevant quantity, like how tall you are or what color your skin is, or is it a form of intelligence, a way in which the mind works to change the environment?

For you see, a lot of the people who make that particular wisecrack hate the idea of intelligence because it makes people different from each other, because it's something one person can be better than another. Worse yet, these differences might not be randomly distributed by socioeconomic grouping. It might even mean that some people are born smarter.

There are those who say that the schools are Forces of Oppression because those who come into the school system from more advantaged backgrounds tend to come out of the schools ahead, on a statistical basis. Presumably, the schools will continue to be Forces of Oppression until the relationship between socioeconomic background and success in school is a purely random one.

But that implies that there is *no* genetic component to intelligence. Let me emphasize that; they are not making the reasonable statement that environment, including schooling, is *a* factor in intelligence; they are saying it is the *only* one. Lysenko lives.

Of course, the schools are Forces of Oppression for precisely the opposite reason. They do try to grind everyone down to an equal level of mediocrity, and the only reason they are failing is that they are as incompetent at that as government usually is at achieving its goals.

People who talk about the lack of standards in schools as a contemporary problem are grossly understating the situation. We have reached what might be called second-generation collapse.

It pains me to say this. I am the son of two teachers; I have known and respected teachers all my life. But at least a generation ago, the standards in public schools fell, and by now those who passed the reduced standards are themselves teaching. Teachers are no longer the dedicated types that we once knew. Today they are civil servants, and a recent study showed that on the average, urban public school teachers read and write on what used to be a 7th-grade level.



keeping a low
profile

There are other sorts of opposition to intelligence which come under the heading of equality. There is the guilt many intellectuals are trained to feel at not working with their hands, or not living "real life" (generally defined in terms of violence and squalor). Worse yet, there is the mind-hating Marxist dogma known as the "Labor Theory of Value," which implies that mind is worthless. I do not know how anyone who respects their mind can fall for that one.

This is the point where the speaker usually ends with an impassioned Call to Action, to go out and support the Space Program or ERA or some other worthy goal. Well, I'm not going to do that.

I know that calls to action tend to inspire one of two responses: either "Sez who?" or "Yeah, right. I'll do something Real Soon Now." So I'm going to try something a bit different: a call to inaction.

What I'm suggesting is that you look at things from the point of view of "Does this increase or decrease the amount of intelligence in the world?" This is not a call for self-sacrifice. If you consider yourself intelligent and you are offered a job that pays you well for being intelligent, take it, and feel good that you are doing your part for a worthy cause. Or if you are one of the exceptions to the gross statistical generalization I made about teachers, keep on keeping on. Teach your students information, and better yet, teach them how to learn truth and how to detect and resist bullshit, and feel good that you are doing your part.

But the main part is the call to inaction. When you see something that opposes intelligence, in any of the manners I have discussed, or in any way that you discover for yourself, don't help it; don't be part of it; don't encourage it. As the Taoists say, by not-doing, all is done.

NEW PROVERBS OF HELL

"It would thus be wrong--as wrong as it is vulgarly popular--to...take the dramatic pronouncements in the 'Proverbs of Hell' as expressions of Blake's own philosophy, or that which he thinks the reader should adopt. Rather these are expressions of the excluded 'Other' which Blake saw as suppressed."

--B. L. Bosky, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, XIII.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. A sensible consistency is the hobgoblin of great minds.

Eternal vigilance is the opposite of liberty.

The three best ways to drive your enemies mad are: love them; return good for evil; tell them the whole truth.

Approximately 90% of the people do not wish to be grownups. Many achieve this desire by letting Church, State, or Community tell them what to do. Some are too smart to accept that escape and have to find sneakier ways.

Sometimes the examined life is not worth living.

Socialists know the value of everything and the price of nothing.

If an Objectivist or a Crowleyan or an unprincipled selfish person loves you, it means that you have something to offer. If a liberal loves you, it means that you appear to be a member of the human race. If an environmentalist loves you, it means that you are not inferior to a vegetable.

Socrates was wiser than most because he knew that he didn't know. I am more responsible than most because I know that I am irresponsible.

Martyrdom is terrorist masturbation: the ultimate self-abuse.



THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP welcomes letters of comment and prints as much of as many as possible, consistent with editorial laziness and cheapness. There are 2 ways to guarantee that your letter will not be published. 1) Ask me not to. 2) Handwrite it. I prefer the former.

THE FOUR REVOLUTIONS

Depending on whom you talk to, the "sexual revolution" was a liberation of humanity, or a male-chauvinist shuck, or a plot to destroy the purity of America's essence, or none of the above. One reason for this confusion is that there have been four sexual revolutions in our century.

The first sexual revolution was the product of men [*sic*] like Sigmund Freud, D. H. Lawrence, Wilhelm Reich, and Henry Miller. Today it may look like a mixture of the obvious and the oppressive, but to say that Freud's good ideas are obvious is like saying that Shakespeare's writings are full of old cliches like "to be or not to be."

At the turn of the century, sex was considered simultaneously dirty, secret, fascinating, desirable, and evil. In addition to that, there was a strong polarization of sex roles, to the point where it seemed almost reasonable to think of men and women as two different species. The first sexual revolution dealt with the first of these problems, but not the second.

Everyone pretty much knows what the first sexual revolution was about. Its slogan might well have been "fucking is good," and we should recall that not only was this not obvious at the beginning of the century, but until recently, saying it that way could get one thrown in jail.

The first sexual revolution was waged on a number of fronts, from Freud's demonstrations that even *gasp* children had sexual feelings and interests, to Lawrence and Miller's fictional treatments of sex as desirable and redeeming, to the common-sense prosex statements of writers like H. L. Mencken. All this had its effect.

But the first sexual revolution was not entirely victorious. I said above that its good points are obvious to anyone of human intelligence, but what about the other 90% of the population?

That's exaggerated, of course, but it seems obvious to me that the first sexual revolution is still being fought. The "Moral" "Majority" is largely in opposition of the first revolution, as well as to some later developments. Many of them want to go back to the good old days when everybody knew that sex was dirty and nasty.

And on the other side, there are some people (mostly men) who see the first sexual revolution as the only one. Thus they see any attack on the approaches of Freud & Miller as a puritan effort to bring back Queen Victoria, and this too is a mistake.

By the late 1940s, the first sexual revolution was still something of an underground phenomenon. The ideas of Freud and his followers were taking over in psychology, but were doing so quietly. Henry Miller was banned in the United States, but writers who had been influenced by him were not. Yet there was a great barrier to these ideas, and it was known as decency.

There are, according to this approach, Things Which Are Not Talked About. To some, of course, this is simple fear and aversion. Sex is dirty, and that's it. To others, more sophisticated, it's a matter of sex being private, perhaps even holy, and thus not for the profane eyes of outsiders.

Then there were the Words. People who believe that words can be dirty are using what Frazer called the Law of Contagion, the magical belief that a symbol shares the reality of the thing symbolized. To them, the word "fuck" in some manner *is* a fuck, and thus dirty, or scary, or even (to some) holy, in the same manner that the bread and the wine of Communion become the body and blood of Jesus, or the wax doll becomes the victim of the *vodun* curse. (Indeed it could be said that any confusion of map with territory is magick, and 99% of it is ineffective because it is being done unconsciously, without direction or intelligence.) Even today, there are media in which sex cannot be intelligently discussed because the Authorities fear that Terrible Things will be summoned up if they are called by their right names.

In the late 1940s, something happened that taught a great lesson about decency. As Robert Anton Wilson has pointed out (in these pages and elsewhere), "decency" is not a scientific concept. It cannot be weighed, measured, or otherwise objectively determined. Thus the true scientist cannot include it in his calculations, any more than s/he can include "beauty" or "subversiveness." And so, a scientist named Alfred Kinsey made a study which outraged many people's idea of decency. He asked people about their sex lives.

I realize that this all sounds like ancient history, but it did happen, less than 40 years ago. It was believed at this time that there were two kinds of people with dirty disgusting evil sex lives: sexual psychopaths and erotomaniacs.

The sexual psychopaths (Krafft-Ebing wrote a book in which he called them all sorts of nasty names) had a variety of perverted tastes, such as oral copulation. The erotomaniacs didn't do anything that vile, but they engaged in the conjugal act with frightening and excessive frequency--some as often as three times a week.

And so, Kinsey asked his indecent questions and discovered, as you might have guessed, that the country was full of sexual psychopaths and erotomaniacs.

It sounds funny now, but Kinsey discovered the case of a man who had been locked up in a nuthouse for wanting sex three times a week. (Way back in the Dark Ages--1920 or so.) And all over the country, there were people worrying that they were Dangerous Perverts or Lunatics, when in fact they were in the majority.

The feeling of relief that "I'm not the only one" is a wonderful thing. (Years later people would have it about opposing the Vietnam war, or questioning the wisdom of Church, State, or husband.) It is the great argument against decency, because finally decency means lies and enforced ignorance, unless it is something that people choose voluntarily and knowingly.

Kinsey fired the first shot in the second sexual revolution. If I had to use a single word to describe that revolution, it would be "Liberal," in all the positive and negative senses of the term.

Primarily, it was based on niceness. Liberals, like the Buddha, start from the assumption that there is suffering in the world, and that this is a Bad Thing. Specifically, Kinsey's studies indicated that many people were unhappy about their sex lives, for a variety of reason, and that much of this suffering was needless, was based on ignorance and hence curable. This part seems self-evident.

Typically Liberal, too, was the insistence on free inquiry, open discussion, and communication as a necessary part of any solution. Ideas, they would insist, are not dirty, and thus must not be censored.

That sort of approach indicated one basic limitation of the second sexual revolution. There was a definite ambivalence about what might be called erotica, or pornography, or somesuch. At about that time, the Supreme Court stated that explicitly sexual material could be legally published and sold as long as it had "redeeming social value," and so people went around demonstrating such value in the works of the first revolutionaries. What the second revolution did not do was to question whether there was anything to redeem, and certainly they would not go as far as Paul Krassner, who said, "Getting people horny *is* redeeming social value."

This was a sign that the second sexual revolution was liberal, rather than radical, based on the assumption that the system needed to be fine-tuned, rather than overthrown.

Another limitation of the second sexual revolution was that it accepted the "mental health" model. Now, at first glance, this doesn't sound too bad. Certainly most of us would agree that it is better to think of sex as a positive, enjoyable way of sharing than as a dirty, nasty business that we should be ashamed of. So why not refer to the former attitude as "healthy" and the latter as "sick"?

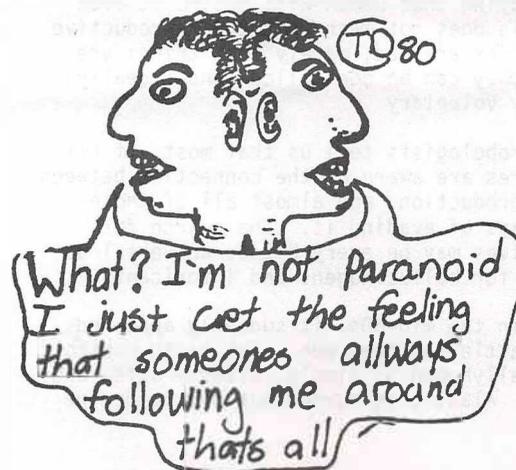
Thomas Szasz has explained some of the reasons. We can define physically "healthy" and "sick" in terms of the survival of the organism, and thus say, unambiguously and noncontroversially, that a human body temperature of 98.6°F is healthier than one of

102°. When we try to make similar judgments about attitudes, we run into problems. Specifically, it turns out that a judgment of sexual attitudes as "healthy" or "sick" will be a moral evaluation disguised as a nonevaluative scientific statement. I will cheerfully admit that many of the second revolution's moral evaluations coincide with my own, but I can understand the traditional moralist who points out that these beliefs, cherish them as I may, are not scientific facts, and should not be taught as such.

Another problem this attitude causes is one of condescension. To the second revolution, homosexuals and others who did not settle down to a properly fertile monogamous heterosexual relationship were not, as before, sinners or criminals, but they (we) were poor things, to be pitied, rather than censured.

While the Liberals of the second sexual revolution propounded heresies like female orgasm, premarital sex, and well-written erotica, there were also a few radicals like Albert Ellis, who said scary things like:

1. There is no such thing as a distinctively vaginal orgasm.
2. "Too much" masturbation has no operational definition.
3. Sex is a good thing even if the participants are not married, not even engaged, not even thinking of getting married, in fact not even in love.
4. Homosexual acts, per se, are not signs of mental illness.
5. There's nothing wrong with adultery, if it isn't sneaky and dishonest, and in fact
6. *Any* kind of sex is OK if all the participants give free, informed consent.



In the 1950s, when Ellis was writing these words, they seemed bizarre indeed, but something was happening that would make them sound reasonable. It was in the field of science again, and we will have to step back a bit to see what was going on.

It is obvious, or should be, that sex can serve three different functions. The first, of course, is reproduction. The second is dominance, and the sociobiologists and ethologists have documented this element in *Homo sapiens* and other mammal species. The third is communication, and to the best of my knowledge, that element is found only in human sexual intercourse, though I do not know enough to rule out the dolphins.

There is an interesting relationship among these three functions. In the state of nature, any act of copulation can cause pregnancy, or at least the act is perceived that way. Thus, sex is a fundamentally different experience for men and for women. While there's no reason why it can't feel good to both, to the woman it is likely to have consequences, in the form of 9 months of pregnancy and then a baby, while the man can simply walk away.

All sexual codes have been built upon this paradigm, on the attempt to make men responsible for the reproductive consequences of their sexual actions; but sex remains something that the man wants under any circumstances, while the woman wants it only if the social protections are in place. As long as this asymmetry remains, any elements of male dominance in the culture will tend to be used by men to "get away with" sex at the expense of women, thus reinforcing the sex-dominance connection.

But insofar as sex can be separated from its reproductive consequences, this asymmetry vanishes. Sex becomes something desired equally by men and by women. (Indeed there is a tradition running from Tiresias to Dr. Mary Jane Sherfey, saying that women will desire it even more.) This does not mean that the reproductive aspects of sex are bad, merely that things are better if they can be controlled and (ideally) made purely voluntary.

Anthropologists tell us that most, if not all, cultures are aware of the connection between sex and reproduction, and almost all of those seek out ways of evading it. The search for contraceptives may be every bit as universal as the search for hallucinogens and intoxicants.

And in the mid-60s, it suddenly appeared that the battle had been won. The birth control pill was ballyhooed as simple, utterly safe, and 100% sure. Alas, this turned out not to be the case.

But it was a useful illusion, for with remarkable suddenness, a paradigm shift took place. To large segments of the population, unwanted pregnancy went from "a natural con-

sequence of sex" to "contraceptive failure." The suddenness of this change may be illustrated by the fact that in 1968, the New York State legislature narrowly defeated a bill that would have legalized abortions in a few carefully limited circumstances. In 1969, the same legislature legalized all abortions performed by licensed MDs.

The third sexual revolution was based on this new paradigm, treating sex as something that could be separated from reproduction, and thus something equally desirable to both men and women, something to be shared widely, rather than something rigidly controlled by social rules or a commodity that men purchase or take from women. It also meant the breakdown of the idea that men and women were supposed to be utterly different from one another. Thus the notorious androgyny of the hippies. Women were programed (genetically and/or culturally) to seek out strong masculine men who'd be good fathers and protectors. But if sex did not have to lead to pregnancy, then such considerations were irrelevant.

Some will say that I am idealizing the third revolution. Perhaps. As I said last time, there is a fairly common tendency to divide the world up into US and THEM. One consequence of this approach is to judge THEM by what they say, and US by what we mean.

Consider the following summaries of popular worldviews:

- FEMINIST: Men are the enemy; all heterosexual intercourse is rape.
- LIBERTARIAN: Let's kill and eat the poor.
- ENVIRONMENTALIST: The environment is good; people are bad,
- CHRISTIAN: Anything people enjoy is sinful, and they should be prevented.
- DISCORDIAN: Chaos is good. If you see any order in anyone's life, destroy it.

I would guess that your agreement with each characterization of a group was inversely proportional to your sympathy for that group.



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If you really want to find evidence that one of these slogans really is the basic belief of the group in question, you can do so, and the harder you look, the more evidence you will find. Conversely, if you are sympathetic to the group, you can explain away all of the evidence on the ground that (1) this sort of thing is natural rhetorical excess; (2) the evidence is ambiguous, and one cannot expect people (particularly the oppressed) to bend over backwards every time they say something to make absolutely sure that it cannot be interpreted badly; (3) every movement attracts a few crazies and bullshit artists.

To me, the third sexual revolution was one group of US. I am aware that some people, particularly feminists, would summarize its approach as "Men should be able to get all the sex they want." These critics are by no means entirely mistaken. Some spokesmen did not make themselves clear on all this, or took too much for granted. And I will admit that a lot of men saw the third revolution, pretended to adopt it without getting over the prerevolutionary programming which told them that sex is something a man takes from a woman, and thus used the revolutionary rhetoric as a new and better way of taking sex. I would insist though, that these people were doing it wrong, and the real sexual freedom was one that offered the possibility of shared sex, with the communication aspects taking over from the dominance aspects.

The fourth sexual revolution was feminism, and one could say that it grew out of the third. Partly it was inspired by the excesses and misinterpretations I referred to above, as well as by male Leftists whose attitude was "Don't let the oppressed peoples of the Third World do the shitwork. Let *our* chicks do it."

But there was a more profound sense in which the third sexual revolution led to the fourth. The reproductive model of sex generated a total system. It attempted to restrict sexual intercourse to marriage, but it also presupposed a system in which the woman, because of her reproductive function, would stay at home. Thus the man was supposed to be the breadwinner for the entire family. Employers thus would feel virtuous about giving a job to a man (defined as actual or potential supporter of a family), rather than to a woman (defined as someone who was likely to quit at any time to devote herself to her natural function of wife and mother).

The tradeoff women got for this disqualification from the job market was the assumption that some man would marry and support them. This was, to say the least, not the ideal solution for a great many women, but at least it seemed plausible for a while.

The third sexual revolution, however, hopelessly destabilized this approach. The men, unsurprisingly, had tended to see their advantages in the market place as the natural state of affairs, rather than as part of a complex system. To them, the grim fact of life was that women had what men wanted (pussy), and for some unfathomable reason would not give it up unless they found a man who'd be willing to

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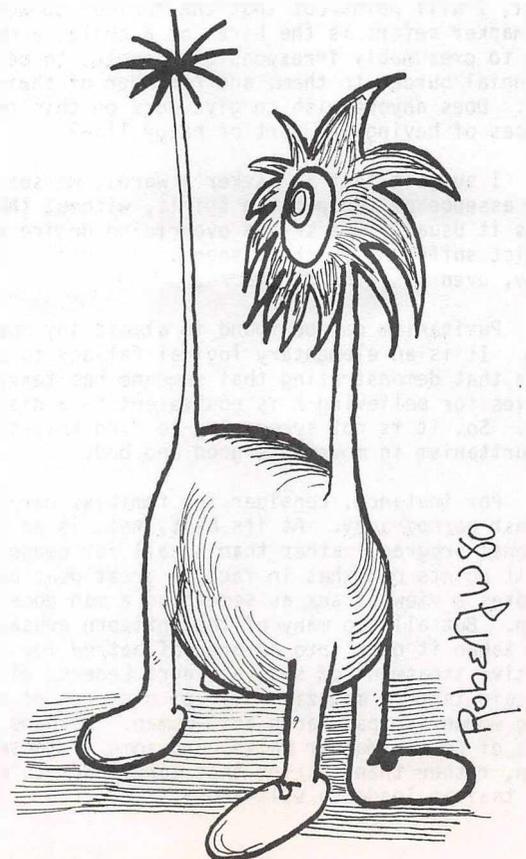
support them. Thus it was quite natural, if wrong, for men to see any increase in female sexual availability as a proper correction of an originally antimale situation.

Women were able to see more, and realize that in fact the third revolution was a great leap for man and a fairly small step for women, as they were still losing the game in many ways.

For it was also quite reasonable for women to point out that reproductive control changed their role in the world, as well as in the bedroom. Rather than people who were liable to have children at any time, they were at worst people who would have children if and only if they felt like it, and wished to be treated on that basis, and I certainly can see no reason why they shouldn't be.

Four revolutions, and among them they seem to me to offer the hope of much better things for all of us. Certainly they are not won by any means. Birth control should be improved, ideally by finding something that really is what the pill promised to be. The other step is the ability of women to have children without bearing them, either through machinery, or through transplant technology and paying host mothers. Then there would be no excuse for most forms of sexual discrimination.

But even without that, the sexual revolutions bring us a little bit closer to the promise of true humanity.



PURITANISM

H. L. Mencken defined *puritanism* as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere is happy." By that definition, there is an awful lot of it going around.

The best known form of puritanism is, of course, sexual puritanism, and today it is alive and well in the anti-abortion movement. I will stipulate that there are anti-abortion people who really do see it as a question of "right to life" --who genuinely believe, as I do not, that a fetus is an actual human being, with a soul, whose right to survive outweighs the right of a woman to control her own body, and whose main motivation is care for human life.

I would take Sturgeon's approximation here, and say that perhaps 10% of the movement is made up of such people. As many have pointed out, some of the loudest "right-to-lifers" support capital punishment, war, etc. When the Senate votes in one day, as it did recently, to deny government funding for abortions for rape and incest victims, and to set up a program for producing nerve gas, one can hardly call that a victory for life.

But there is another factor. In the Sunday Times Book Review, Andrew Hacker speaks proudly of his fellow anti-abortionists: "They believe that sex has responsibilities, and that people who treat it lightly should be made to pay a price." That's more like it! None of that namby-pamby bleeding-heart "right-to-life" stuff! These people have dirty sex lives; *punish* the fuckers!

At the risk of being something of a spoilsport, I will point out that the "price" to which Mr. Hacker refers is the birth of a child, a child born to presumably irresponsible people, to be a perennial burden to them, and reminder of their sins. Does anyone wish to give odds on this child's chances of having any sort of happy life?

I suggest that in Hacker's words, we see the very essence of the puritan spirit, without the masks it usually wears--the overriding desire to inflict suffering on those seen as illegitimately happy, even if it hurts others.

Puritanism can be found in almost any movement. It is an elementary logical fallacy to believe that demonstrating that someone has terrible motives for believing X is equivalent to a disproof of X. So, it is not surprising to find this sort of puritanism in movements good and bad.

For instance, consider the feminist campaign against pornography. At its best, this is an educational program, rather than a call for censorship, and it points out that in fact, a great deal of porn promotes a view of sex as something a man does to a woman. But all too many of the anti-porn crusaders have taken it over into an area of hatred for any positive treatment of sex, as Laura Lederer did when she said that a magazine full of pictures of naked young women is ipso facto anti-woman. Perhaps the ghost of Cotton Mather walks, and some of these women, rather than fearing that porn leads to rape, fear that it leads to self-abuse.

Puritanism is everywhere. There are the reality puritans, who love to find a group--whether drug users, science fiction fans, or just those who seem unduly comfortable--charge them with "escaping reality," and drag the miscreants kicking & screaming into the alleged real world where, it is devoutly hoped, they will be properly miserable. There are the pro-emotional puritans who favor programs (their distorted version of encounter groups) where everyone will be required to display the proper emotions (usually aggression, though an occasional display of lust is acceptable). There are anti-emotional puritans, who are not merely squeamish (as I am) about showing their emotions, but believe that the indecent exposure of such things in any circumstances should be a crime. There are the ecopuritans who think that the environment is more important than the people in it, and so on.

Look at the nuclear-power issue. I do not know about the safety of nuclear reactors. But I do know that some of their strongest opponents would continue to be against them even if they worked perfectly and were safe. They don't provide enough jobs; they give power to the *FNORD* scientists; and, mostly, they'll enable people to have it too easy. To return to sex, if I were a "pro-life" person, I would welcome a 100%-safe, 100%-effective form of contraception as the ideal way to minimize the crime of abortion. How many alleged "pro-lifers" feel that way?

There are places where puritanism seems reasonable. For instance, is it not reasonable to be opposed to the idea of criminals gaining happiness from the things they have done which have harmed others? And yet, I wonder. I don't accept revenge as a proper goal of the criminal justice system. Imagine a form of therapy which would cure people of the desire to initiate force or fraud against others, but would otherwise leave them unchanged. Would you support such a program as a replacement for the present system, which punishes, but clearly does little to cure? And would you favor it (even if it was painless) for those who done harm to you or yours?

I don't know. But in my best moments, I feel that I should overcome the desire to get pleasure from the unhappiness of others, whenever it appears.

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FROM SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE

Adrienne Fein While I know very little about
 26 Oakwood Ave. Tarot as such, in reading your
 White Plains, NY interpretations, I noticed a
 10605 few points of interest, especi-
 ally as regards possible connec-
 tions between the concepts of judgment and rebirth.

A lot of people seem to feel that when a wrong has been done them, confirmation of the rightness of their position and condemnation of the offender will enable them to forget the wrong and go on to new things.

In the criminal justice system, and in revenge, there is an attempt to wipe the slate clean, balance the books, so that justice has been done, and the victim is no longer a victim. The criminal justice system provides a judgement: "Yes, an objective authority says you are right, and the other is wrong and a criminal."

Getting even does not work. People often do not admit--even to themselves--that they have done wrong and deserve punishment or owe restitution; thus they see attempts at getting even as attacks.

Furthermore, people like to get even, with interest. And the "interest" can be seen as an attack--excessive revenge can be sincerely perceived by the original wrongdoer as negating the original wrongdoing. The original wrongdoer feels entitled to get even for excessive revenge, and on and on the process goes....

If one is going to try to right wrongs, there needs to be a judgment process, and it needs to be public. It is fairer to the executioner or prison guards, fairer to the judge, and the victim--and to the wrongdoer--it provides a cutoff point. It may even make the original wrongdoer understand what was wrong in hiser actions....

Robert Anton Wilson In answer to Roy Tac-
 Institute for the Study of kett's question, "How
 the Human Future, Inc. many of these professed
 Suite 1362, 2000 Center St. believers in the ancient
 Berkeley, CA 94704 gods have even the slig-
 htest knowledge of the

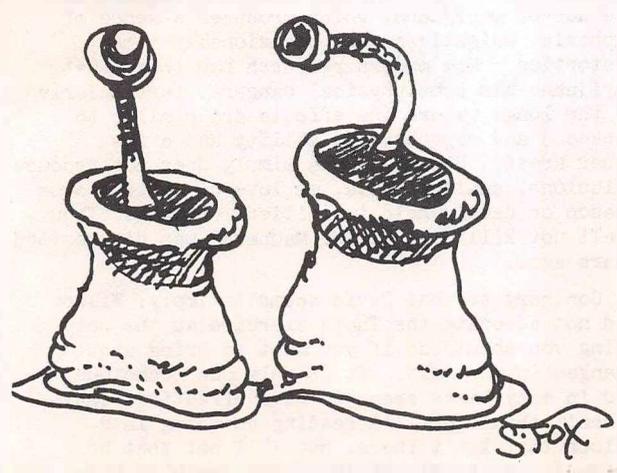
ancient gods?" I would say: Having met with hundreds of neopagans in all parts of the country, I have been astonished at the abundant erudition they generally possess and their extensive and sometimes scholarly or pedantic knowledge of minute details about the old religions. If Mr. Tackett's question was rhetorical and he assumed the answer would be that most neopagans know little about their historical origins, then either he has met a different sampling than I have, or he has met few or none and formed his opinions without data. In any case, Margot Adler's DRAWING DOWN THE MOON is the most complete sociological study of neopaganism thus far, and it confirms my won impression of the generally high level of erudition among neopagans.

I assume that Tackett's sentence, "A superstition is a superstition is a superstition is a superstition," is some kind of incantation. Certainly, he could not intend it as argument, since it is only a tautology. Perhaps there is a missing first term and we are to understand it as meaning "paganism is a superstition" etc. In that case, it is not a tautology, but a mere assertion, and still does not qualify as an argument. It is not clear to me whether Mr. Tackett *will* not argue his position or does not *know how* to argue it. Or perhaps his letter was a clever piece of satire, intended to illustrate the axiom that ignorance is the origin of intolerance....

It also obeys the Law of Fives.

As a lover of the past as well as the present and the future, I was delighted with David Palter's letter, in which he frankly stipulated that he did not try the Thoth exercise before passing judgment on it. I think all archaic ideas should be revived periodically, so that we may look at them anew and reevaluate them; and it is refreshing to have the classical antiexperimentalist dogma reasserted in our time. I had thought that position vanished around the time the Inquisition refused to look through Galileo's telescope before condemning what he saw through it. I hope Mr. Palter will continue to enlighten us about experiments he hasn't tried and Mr. Tackett to inform us about groups he scarcely knows.

Surely there are some experiments we needn't try for ourselves. If someone tells me that True Enlightenment comes from consuming large quantities of horseshit or potassium cyanide, I am not going to try the experiment before condemning it. I do not, of course, consider the Thoth Experiment to be in that category.



Ed Zdrojewski
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I suspect that sorcery will not remake the world today for the same reason that alchemy did not remake medieval Europe, leaving aside the question of whether it works. Sorcery is much too individualized and damn near ever sorcerer has hir own techniques. There have been attempts within various parts of the Occult community to standardize ritual practices and such, but such efforts will most likely be as effective as the Soviet Union's or the WPA's efforts to standardize artistic style earlier in this century. An individual's relationship with "the Force" is about as amenable to industry-wide standards as hir relationship with the Muse; it's much too personal to be subjected to outside standards.

And I think that ultimately that's a good thing, despite the unscientific thought and confusion of assertion with proof that abounds in the occult community. I don't go so far as the Maoists in asserting that every individual could be a brain surgeon if only the white male pig Establishment didn't mystify the subject. But I strongly believe that people are perfectly capable of discovering Truth for themselves if they apply the proper self-discipline, and I'd rather allow the few who are capable of it to find it on their own than subject the entire field to the hidebound rule of an Occult AMA [American Magick Association?], which would be as likely to codify errors into regulations as the medical AMA. At the very least, the Pagan community is anarchistic enough that this is unlikely to ever happen.

Free Will is not a universal doctrine in Christianity. Ask any Calvinist, or read St. Augustine.

If Colin Wilson's and Bernadette Bosky's assertion that consciousness is a hierarchy or "ladder of selves" is correct, then according to Hagbard's Law, individuals are fragmented into components that are incapable of relating to each other. Everyone is suffering from acute schizophrenia. However, I've met enough self-integrated people to realize that this is at best a partial truth. It explains why most people are capable of an incredible amount of self-deception (Heinlein calls man a rationalizing animal, as opposed to a rational animal), but little else.

I suspect that the kind of hierarchy in which communication is impossible is a power hierarchy. The ladder of selves, on the other hand, would appear to be a logical hierarchy, like Koestler's hierarchies or Bateson's levels of learning, in which questions of power are meaningless.

I respectfully disagree with David Palter's arguments against Robert Anton Wilson's Thoth exercise for three reasons:

1. The recognition of your own godhood is to be encouraged, not discouraged. In another culture, this might not be a good idea, but in our culture we are taught by the Establishment from early childhood that individuals are ineffective, that they can do nothing about reality or for themselves unless they subordinate their individual wills to collective authority. To me, this a source of many of our nation's problems today (without that evil philosophy, the Moral Majority wouldn't get anywhere), and also a source of much of today's

WE CALL THEM
"CHAPS", FRÄULEIN,
NOT "LEDERPANTYHOSEN!"



mental illness. Recognition of one's own divinity is the surest way to counter that. I would rather live in a world where everyone thought they were God than in a world where people have such low self-esteem that they willingly submit to the first demagogue who comes along.

2. David's argument about the danger of mixing drugs with mental exercises might have some validity if Mr. Wilson had recommended using LSD, peyote, or some other powerful metaprogramming substance. He does not. He recommends the use of marijuana, which produces a sense of euphoria, weightlessness, occasionally time distortion. Now modern research has shown that marijuana has some physical dangers, particularly to the lungs (where the effects are similar to tobacco) and reproductive ability and a few other areas. But marijuana simply does not produce delusions, schizophrenia, or loss of control over reason or deeply-held inhibitions (such as "Thou shalt not kill"). "Reefer Madness" was discredited years ago.

3. Contrary to what David seems to imply, Wilson did not advocate the Thoth exercise as the only thing you should do if you want to bring about changes in yourself. It is only one technique, and in many cases seems to have effective results. I don't think that I'm reading anything into Wilson that isn't there, but I'll bet that he doesn't rely solely on the Thoth exercise himself. I do not think the Thoth exercise makes the problem worse; I suspect that its value lies in convincing the practitioner that s/he can do something on hir own to solve problems.

Mary Frey
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You mentioned archetypes, anima/animus, and possible paths for women to follow. As I understand from my readings about Jung and female archetypes, a man will have mental images of four kinds of women: two good, two bad; two sexual, two asexual. The bad-sexual woman robs him of himself by seducing him and trapping him in a web of jealousy, possessiveness, and physical desires. The bad-asexual woman is the selfish, possessive mother who destroys his confidence in himself, fills him with guilt, and never lets him grow up and become his own person. The good-sexual woman also seduces the man, but the experiences allows him to be set free, to build his self-confidence, to become the best he possibly can. The good-asexual woman is the intellectual nourisher, constantly opening new ideas to him, but she remains chaste.

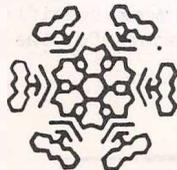
Interesting, but it doesn't seem to correspond to the people in my mind.

If anyone asked, I would say that there is a little bit of each of these women in every woman. From the people who matter to us, we learn which roles get us rewards and which only lead to sorrow, and so we become skewed toward one of the four.

I haven't read it anywhere, but I imagine there would be corresponding male images for the woman: the bad-sexual, typified by the housewife-porn handsome rapists who make women their slaves through sexual desire; the bad-asexual, who tries to keep her "Daddy's little girl." The good ones don't need much explanation. And, as with women, a man learns to act more like one kind than the other three, based on what he thinks will get him the most rewards and good feelings about himself.

So many people are put off by the anima/animus notion. I think they are making the mistake of assuming it is a physical thing--"there's a man inside me, fighting to get out, and if I'm not careful to always be 'feminine,' this man will win the fight, and I will turn into a man." The conclusion I got from reading Jung is that the anima/animus is a psychological concept of the Other. For a woman, it is the notion of what a man "should be," based on her idea of what she is as a woman. It is not just a case of opposites attracting--strong/weak, smart/foolish, emotional/rational, or even blue/pink. The Other is not just someone who can match up a bunch of positives to your negatives, or vice versa, thus making a balanced whole whose sum is zero. The concept of the Other is the belief that there is another one out there somewhere who will know, understand, accept, and love all of what you are, and the two of you together will create a whole that is greater than the sum of two parts.

There is a school district in Texas where the parents have demanded that teachers stop asking children for their opinions. The rationale is that if you allow a child to have an opinion, you destroy his ability to tell right from wrong.



David Palter
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I am not advocating punishment as the best solution to crime. I merely indicate that under some circumstances it may be necessary. The very best solution to crime is true rehabilitation (extremely little of which is presently being done). As you yourself have pointed out, crime is its own punishment; when we hurt others, we also hurt ourselves. Crime is, therefore, an unwise strategy, and it is never the best solution for the various problems with which it is intended by criminals to deal. (Examples: If you need money, you can steal it, but there are better ways to get it, through the production of valuable goods and/or services. If you are angry with someone, you can assault or murder them, but there are better ways to deal with interpersonal friction, through either avoidance of the offensive person or peaceful resolution of the conflict. Etc.) It follows then that if people could be enlightened so that they would understand how to deal with life more effectively and sanely, they would not want to commit crimes. This is the only true solution to crime; all others are relatively ineffective. However, rehabilitation is not so easily or quickly accomplished, especially with uncooperative people, which criminals tend to be. Since we have a great many dangerous criminals in our environment who threaten the well being of all of us, other forms of protection must be called up. Any rationale which can be used to make it easier for criminals to injure me with impunity is contrary to my own vital interests. That is why I, like Dr. Szasz, do not buy the insanity defense in criminal proceedings, particularly as all crime is by its very nature insane. If insanity excuses crime, then all criminals can be excused.



Maia

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Your story about Bum Phillips illustrates a sad-but-true psychological fact: Too often, when people try something that doesn't work, they try it again--a little harder. *Anything* is easier than admitting that they're wrong.

I share RAW's attitude towards people who think they're geniuses (assuming there's some evidence they may be right). It bothers me not in the least if someone tells me one of my Bright New Ideas has already been thought of by someone else. What matters is that I thought of it without needing to be told. And I, too, would rather deal with someone who's original and creative, if arrogant, than with someone who's properly self-effacing but dull, dull, dull.

Harry Warner makes an excellent point about the Welfare system. I've practically decided that government regulations exist to create further need for the government and its regulations (so what else is new?). I nearly went into shock recently when I finally completely realized that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, I can do in which the government is not somehow involved. Think about it. (Or better still, don't. It's depressing.)

Brad Linaweaver
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In DR 17, Janice Gelb wrote regarding Judaism: "Its only emphasis is on the conduct of life in the

here-and-now." What a remarkable idea! With one glib comment, she has dismissed the supernatural elements of a religion that pays obeisance to the God of Abraham, the same as Christianity and Islam. I know Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews who would wonder at that statement of Gelb's. She has defined secular humanism in that sentence.

I am told that Gelb is a religious Jew, so I find her attitude all the more perplexing. I am tempted to ask just what universe she is living in. As a secular humanist (and ex-Christian), I cannot believe that anyone who knows anything about any religion whatsoever could confuse humanistic philosophy with a ritual-bound religious tradition.

Of course the word "only" is incorrect. But Janice is not far from the truth. I know from my own background (Reform) that while Judaism does affirm the existence of God, there is little discussion of theological questions, and primary emphasis is placed on ethical behavior.



Avedon Carol
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Coming from where I'm coming from, I can't decide whether David Palter is right or not. I think I became a

much happier person, myself, at that point where my brain suddenly stopped being able to hold as much information at the same time. As long as I can see the whole picture, I get depressed. If I filter out the rest of the picture and just concentrate on some interesting detail, I can feel good and get lots of things done.

I don't know if it makes any sense or not. Recently, some psychiatrists did one of those remarkable things where they announce a "discovery" --for years they have been saying that depression is the result of a distorted view of reality, and now they are saying that depression is the result of not being able to distort reality, because reality really *is* depressing. Now I guess I believe that on a lot of levels...but you see, if you screen some of reality out, you can find all these wonderful nondepressing aspects of it, and my, isn't life wonderful? So maybe the world is fucked up and Reagan is trying to ruin my life and I don't have any money, but hey, the book I'm reading is really neat, and there were some great cartoons in last week's Washington Post, and I'm really proud of this essay I just wrote, and my car got fixed really fast and it looks great, and --gee, life really is great, you know? Well, it helps to perceive the republican administration in terms of a comedy show...."Hey, I saw this movie where they elect this B-actor as president of the US and he appoints some of the weirdest yahoos in the country to his cabinet....It's playing downtown at the White House theater."



Janice Gelb
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Regarding your elaboration of the Tarot deck, I envy you your choice of the Chariot

as the card you identify with most. Most of the time I see myself as being pulled by a black sphinx (fandom and fannish morals and standards) and a white sphinx (religion); the problem is that I have not been able to reconcile them and thus harness their combined energy. I tend to identify more with Temperance. I see this as a card of contemplation and study, as opposed to the Chariot, which is action and motion. Temperance is moderation; the Chariot, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead." I hope one day to move from compartmentalizing my conflicting beliefs and values to harnessing them and having them lead me where they will.

I've never bought into astrology much since I have a twin brother born only four minutes after me, and our personalities are very dissimilar. I realize that a true astrologer would tell me that even a minute makes a difference in the positions of the stars and planets, but my reply to that is: "C'mon, now!" ~~We know the positions are different!~~

The beginning of Adrienne's letter reminded me of the levels of charity listed by the Rabbis in "Ethics of the Fathers." The highest form of charity is to teach a person a trade, because then they will no longer need to beg, as Adrienne says. The four levels of actual charity, in ascending order, are (1) the recipient knows who the donor is and the donor knows who the recipient is; (2) the recipient knows who the donor is, but the donor doesn't know who the recipient is; (3) the donor knows who the recipient is, but the recipient doesn't know who the donor is; and (4) neither the donor nor the recipient knows who the other is.

I think that the sort of double-blind charity you describe works only if the charity is purely voluntary. One problem with the Welfare system is that neither givers nor receivers see the other side as real people.



Lee Ann Goldstein
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Van Nuys, CA 91405

I would like to address a comment to David Palter. I perceive the Thoth exercise (which I haven't

tried, either) as a confidence builder, sort of on the order of "The Little Engine That Could," i.e., convincing oneself that one *can* accomplish whatever it is one wants to accomplish. One must then go out and *do* that thing. I suspect that the more specific one is about one's goal, the more successful the exercise is likely to be.

The first secret of getting what you want is knowing what you want. That sounds obvious, but isn't. The guy who says that all he really wants is to get laid usually hasn't even stopped to ask himself whether he wants as many women as possible, as many women likes as possible, etc. Also, knowing what you want includes distinguishing it from what you're supposed to want, what you've been told you want, etc.

How do we succor need without being suckered by it?

For me, giving up the illusion that I am an isolated ego in a bag of skin is like what Mark Twain said about giving up smoking: It's easy. I've done it hundreds of times.

Working definition of an intellectual:
One who has to use logic to discover what his feelings are. [Yes, I'm one.]

Blake's Devil said, "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." I suspect that this works only if one realizes that excess is a road, rather than a palace. The road of discipline also leads to the palace of wisdom, but that too is only a road.

The other day Mark David Chapman finally did something right, pleading guilty to the murder of John Lennon. In so doing, he deprived a lot of people of the sort of geek show they love the best, saved us a couple of weeks of sensationalistic NEW YORK PIST articles, saved the psychiatric profession one more public display of its utter whoredom in the matter of "not guilty by reason of insanity" pleas, and otherwise acted as spoilsport to a number of people who richly deserve to have their sports spoiled. Thank you, shithead.

"The denying of reality is the asserting of it."--TAO TE CHING

I gave a new friend a copy of DR 17. She read about two paragraphs and said, "Hey, you can write! Not many people can do that any more." She can judge talent. Not many people can do that any more. (She's certainly right about the second part. According to PLAYBOY's pro football preview, "Phillips' first order of business is to rebuild a running game that was mordant last fall." And a reviewer in the Sunday TIMES Book Review said that a certain book needed "credulity.")

You Don't Have To. Not even if it's supposed to be fun.

I wonder how many Moron Majority members are against "secular humanism" because they think the adjective has something to do with sex. Yeah, I'm a secular humanist. I don't fuck animals.

A couple of cables recently fell off the Brooklyn Bridge because of [really!] accumulations of pigeon shit. ~~Good thing I couldn't raise the money to buy it from that fellow in the silk suit!~~

REVIEWS

Shike: Time of the Dragons and *Shike: Last of the Zinja*, by Robert Shea (Jove pb \$2.95 each)

This is Shea's long-awaited first book since ILLUMINATUS! and is almost completely different. (I for one would have been disappointed if there hadn't been one or two sinister little hints.) In any event, this is a large, sweeping novel set in medieval Japan and telling the story of the warrior monk Jebu and his beloved Taniko, in her own way a warrior. It contains sex, violence, war, betrayal, politics, invading Mongol hordes, and all sorts of other juicy stuff like that, but it transcends its genre with its depiction of the true warrior spirit, and of the love between its two main characters. I recommend it very highly.

How to Start and Run Your Own Motorcycle Gang and Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles: How to Start Your Own White Nationalist Party, by Duke McCoy (Loompanics pb, \$8.95 each)

Loompanics is a publisher which prides itself on publishing books no other publisher would touch. In the past, I have recommended two of their books, the original PRINCIPIA DISCORDIA and Alexis Gilliland's delightful THE IRON LAW OF BUREAUCRACY.

But what Loompanics mainly publishes is much viler stuff--gun porn, techniques of crime, and much panering to America's favorite non-sexual jackoff fantasy--living out in the woods after the collapse.

They sent me review copies of the two books above. The things are, as I expected, blood-thirsty, racist, sexist, antisexual, and generally nasty. Perhaps the best indicator of McCoy's attitudes is that he refers to men who'd rather fuck than fight as "castrated." I am far from competent to tell whether they are good advice for setting up either type of organization, so you're on your own as far as that's concerned.

I'm a libertarian, and I really do not believe that books like the ones Loompanics sells should be banned. But I'd love to see them go out of business because there's no market for their stuff.

God's Other Son, by Don Imus (Simon and Schuster pb, \$5.95)

This is an offensive and thoroughly delightful book about an evangelist who takes himself a bit too seriously. Along with all the belly laughs, it says some important things about why people need messiahs & gurus.

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AND VINEGAR, ROQUEFORT AND THOUSAND PLANETS DRESSING!

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