

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette #84

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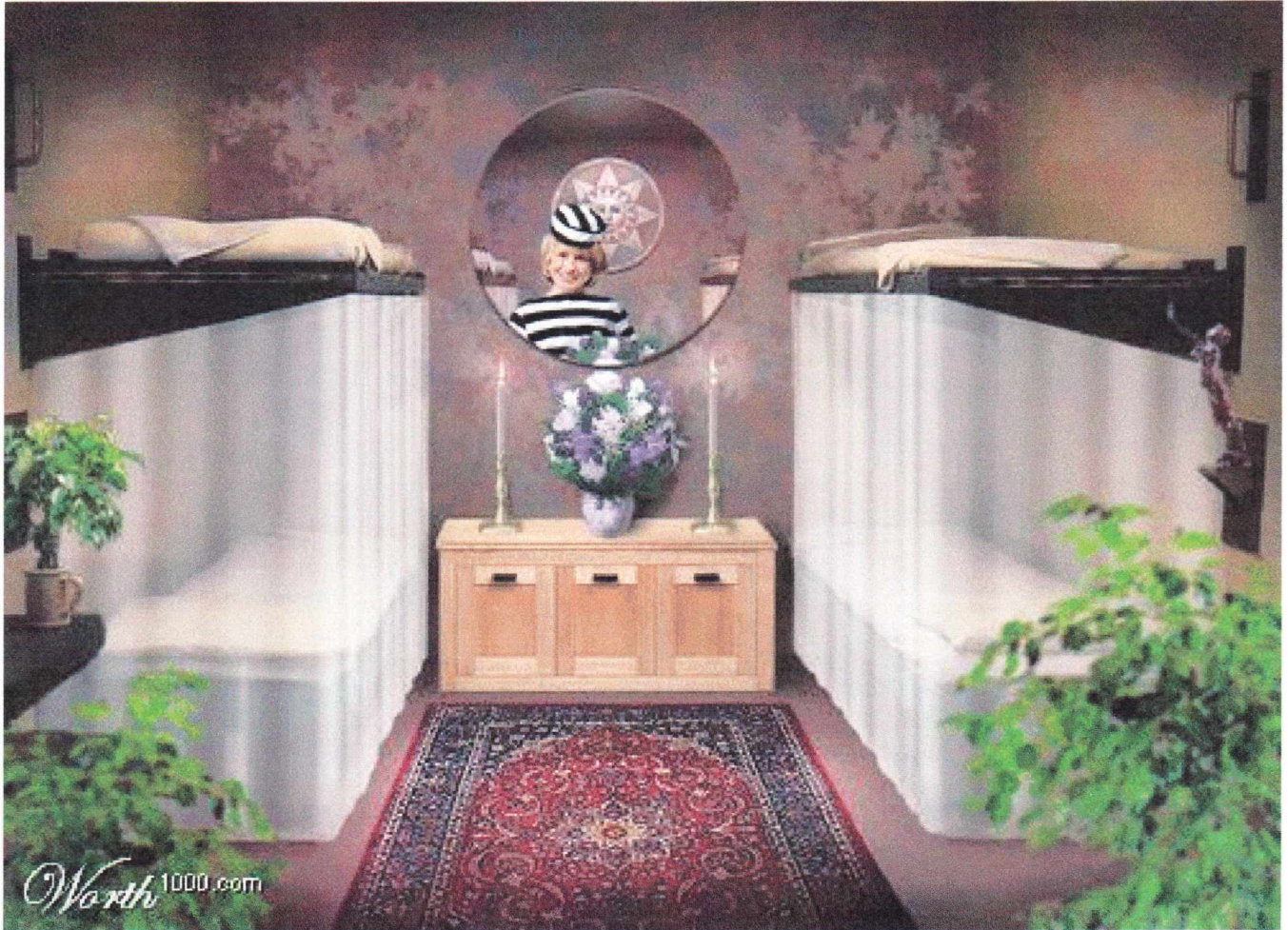


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GHOSTS: MIX AND MATCH

I wrote a similar essay for Guy's *Challenger*, but I want to give another take on it.

We are very familiar with one traditional ghost. It is typified by the Amityville Horror. There a family moved into a house, and the ghosts played tricks on them. Glowing red eyes appeared to stare at them through the window, ooze and slime appeared on the walls. A pit of hell appeared in the basement. Ghostly voices urged them to get out. Ultimately, the family moved.

Later, it was found that another family had been murdered in that house. A serial killing.

Other people's experiences may differ. There may be only one ghost. Articles of furniture may be re-arranged, ghostly figures may appear, objects may be thrown at you. However, the idea is the same – the ghost scares the bejesus out of you. This is the Poltergeist of modern day parapsychologists.

There is another tradition we are familiar with, though less so. This is typified by Casper the Friendly Ghost. The same thing can be said, I hear, whether I am speaking about the cartoons from the '40s and '50s, or the recent movie. Let us forget about Casper's fellow ghosts whose job is to scare you, and concentrate on Casper: he wants to help people.

This is not just a whim of Loony Tunes; it is a familiar enough ghost, which helps to varying degrees. The ghost may even save people from death.

I admit, however, usually help is of lesser sort. The ghosts may only wish to help themselves: often to find rest. I even count as this kind a ghost who is not even

trying to help. It may just be attracted to the things of this world and stumble into our reality. To a lover or a friend. At least, it is not trying to scare you.

Neither of these ghosts is an all or nothing situation. Frequently the helpful ghost is mixed with the ghost that scares people.

These are the familiar enough ghosts. But I bet you would be hard pressed if I asked a question you probably haven't asked before: What were their origins?

Their history starts with the helpful ghosts. Who later evolved into the Casper like ghost. They originated in Classical times, Ancient Rome. The idea was that these spirits of the dead could not rest until some wrong against them was corrected. In fact, the Roman playwright Seneca had ghosts encourage people to take deadly revenge for wrongs.

This resembles the Helpful ghost, like Casper, although I doubt Casper would take terrible revenge. In fact, while other helpful ghosts have not been as humane as Casper, terrible revenge is still not common today.

Among Christians much later, this ghost acquired a patina of theology. They were souls in Purgatory sent back for a purpose, to be helpful. A 15th Century author comes out and says it:

"Sometimes for to have help;
sometimes to show that the souls live
after the body, to confirm them that be
feeble in faith."

Faith, in effect, is to be helpful too.

On the other hand, the scary ghost of the *Amityville Horror* was created by theologians from Saint Augustine in the Fourth Century onward. For them, there was no telling whether a ghost was a demon or an actual spirit of the dead. The Devil sent his

demons in all sorts of disguises, and one disguised as a ghost could end up damning your soul. So, to be on the safe side, all ghosts should be treated as if they were demons.

Despite this theology, the Catholic Church tolerated the helpful ghost. The general attitude was that those who were good could not be damned by their ignorance. For this toleration, there were precedents from the New Testament.

In fact, helpful ghosts acquired Catholic trappings. In the Middle Ages, sometimes a ghost could not rest until it had confessed to a priest. Or until the person haunted confessed to a priest. A ghost plagued a Canon of Newburgh until he confessed he had stolen his Prior's silver spoons.

Also, ghosts haunted inheritors who neglected to pay the Church's tithes. A ghost might even avenge those who took oaths on the ghost's graves falsely.

Such helpful ghosts even invaded the arts. Ghosts in plays in Catholic countries would beg candles and prayers.

While the Catholic Church tolerated the helpful ghost, Reformation Protestants did not. They believed that ghosts could indeed damn an ignorant person's soul. Being a demon, this Protestant ghost was perforce scarier than the Catholic ghost. This is why their descendants today practice mischief and drive people out of their houses, like the Amityville Horror.

However, ours have long since stopped practicing the main job of a Protestant demon/ghost: to sew dissension among humans.

Like Hamlet's ghost. Other people disagree with me. They wonder how a man so enlightened as Shakespeare could have

believed in demons. Spirits of the dead being OK these days.

However, enlightenment is a relative thing. In the 16th Century, it was enlightened to believe ghosts were demons. Also, there was another factor when it came to plays: it was against the law not to treat ghosts as demons. You could get into trouble with the censor.

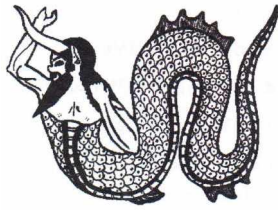
Certainly Hamlet's ghost does indeed spread dissension and bring people to a bad end. It insists on revenge against the king. Because of the ghost's machinations, Ophelia, Hamlet's girl friend, commits suicide. Hamlet kills the king's advisor, Polonius. Eventually, he kills the king. And dies himself.

Also, modern ghosts differ in another way from Hamlet's ghost: ours today are without the trappings of Reformation demons. Hamlet's seems to have had nearly every one. It speaks from under the stage. It appears at midnight in a deserted place. It fears the cock crowing. It refuses to speak by heaven's name. Even the way Hamlet's ghost speaks, I hear, is a giveaway.

Where most other Elizabethan playwrights mention ghosts, they are demons. While they often urge revenge like the ancient Classical ghosts, it is not for a happy ending but a tragic one.

In everyday life, many Protestants considered ghosts devils too. When houses were haunted, it was often presumed to be witchcraft. And the work of the Devil. People who were haunted were considered "hag ridden."

However, there were exceptions. There were two plays where ghosts were spirits of the dead and good guys: Cyril Tourneur's *Atheist's Tragedy* and George Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*. These were both first performed in the year 1607. Their ghosts warn people of their evil ways, but do



not urge revenge. In Chapman's play, in fact, the ghost urges reconciliation.

Of course, I am sure the two plays had to have a sympathetic censor to get through the legal restrictions.

Where no censor existed, in people's private lives, ghosts righting wrongs – even with a vengeance – were certainly not unknown. Ghosts rebuked dishonest executors and widows who neglected their children. More important, they forced murderers to confess. To avoid ghosts, for whatever his crimes, the Earl of Shrewsbury willed that alms be distributed at his 1591 funeral to eight thousand poor men.

Even among Puritans, the people most likely to consider ghosts demons, this attitude was not unknown. One claimed the ghost of a disreputable friend convinced him to become a Puritan.

Then, sixty years later, by 1660, official belief changed 180 degrees: the helpful ghost was on top and the demonic ghost a lesser entity. It is difficult for me to explain this to people. No one would expect our official beliefs to be the same as in 1940. But people presume ghost belief had to remain the same throughout the 17th Century.

However, they changed quite a lot. After 1660, even a book devoted to the dangers of witchcraft – and demons – Henry More's and Joseph Glanville's *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, (1700) presented some testimony for the helpful ghost.

In one testimonial, a ghost forces

executors to give his son leases the ghost's will entitles the son to. In another, a ghostly woman has a person helpful to her in life told of a treasure. And her no good husband told to correct his ways.

Still, Glanville and More have a demonic ghost. In one testimonial, because of one man's evil ways in life, he is forced to travel with a demonic band afterward. Their job seems to be mean spirited mischief, like a modern ghost's.

We have finally come to our ghost. While, in Reformation Europe the Devil was part of our most intimate being, now the Devil has nothing to do with us. Just like evil can have nothing to do with us. So a demon disguised as a ghost cannot. In fact, whether ghosts can even be demons is a question we moderns have answered in the negative.

Still, aspects of both the helpful ghost and the demonic ghost has survived. Often mixed because we have forgotten their origins.

In Dickens' *Christmas Carol* (1843), Marley's ghost seems the epitome of the helpful ghost: warning Ebenezer Scrooge to give up his greedy, miserly ways. But then Marley's ghost wears chains – like the Devil was supposed to.

Oscar Wilde's "Canterville Ghost" (1887) is a secularized form of the demonic ghost, just ineffectual. His job is to scare. The problem is he is not very scary at all. Especially not to Americans, who have stronger nerves than the British. So strong that they even resist believing in the ghost.

Still, the movie made of that short story, the *Canterville Ghost* with Charles Laughton, 1944, was mixed. The ghost at first aims to scare people. But later he decides to end his career as a ghost by encouraging a distant American relative to be brave. In short, being helpful – especially amid the

backdrop of World War II.

I do not have to consult high literature to find these two ghosts either. The Amityville Horror may be a modern secularized, sanitized demonic ghost, but it came into being because there were murders in that house. Thus, it was motivated by events during its life to haunt, just like the helpful ghost. In addition, I have found the two types and their mixture in the tales of ordinary people on the web.

So the two ghosts have continued Centuries after their rationale had given up the ghost.

MAILING COMMENTS SFPA #243

JEFFREY COPELAND the southerner Mailing # 234

🍷▲🍷 Sheila Strickland the new OE?
Poor Sheila.

🍷▲🍷 So your masthead means that there is a Great Wall of China separating us from the Mundanes. Which is why the wall gets breached all the time.

STEVE HUGHES last minute stuff 2

🍷▲🍷 HOME AGAIN. Well, you can always do what the father of my ex-ex-girl friend Lily used to do. There wasn't much tradition of mowing your law in Czechoslovakia, where he came from; and he found the practice funny. So funny he had a grass growing contest with his Eastern European neighbor. To the dismay of all the non-ethnic neighbors.

🍷▲🍷 SHEEP. Actually, your account of New Zealand sheep wasn't boring – to me. Each farmer breeding their own sheep. Sheep wearing out their teeth from eating

grass.

Given my experience in Toastmasters, and with all the subjects speakers have brought to life, I have reached the conclusion there are no boring topics. Just boring speakers. However, I have to admit there are lots of challenging topics. I do not know whether New Zealand sheep are among them.

🍷▲🍷 JADE. I know the Chinese, though they had metal, made their daggers out of jade. Like the Maoris, I bet they could make them very sharp.

🍷▲🍷 New Zealand highways ending in one lane bridges. That does not sound so bad. I remember when I went to Belleview, Florida for an interview. The highway was just one lane. To the side of that one lane were ravines. Which, I was told, cars often fell into it.

🍷▲🍷 MATRIX 2. The fight scenes are very explicable in *Matrix 2*. Apparently fight scenes are an easy way to attract the brainless viewers producers hope will watch their drek. And, in many movies, we're talking brainless. A lot of fight scenes I have watched have no art, no suspense and defy the law of gravity.

NED BROOKS the new port news 210

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. Keep checking Amazon or someone like that. The OED people hope to get six hundred dollars for the CD version of the Oxford English Dictionary, but at certain times of year they are willing to sell it for less than two hundred.

🍷▲🍷 With password protected sites, see what you need to register. It may include no money. On the other hand, it may put you on the list for spam.

🍷▲🍷 I was awed by Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* when I read it. But I read it at eighteen, and I was a very pretentious kid. So pretentious I got through books like *Temps Perdu* and *Finnegan's Wake* with my enthusiasm intact. I did not have to understand what I read as long as a famous name wrote it.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Sheila. Heavy-handedness by the U.S. caused Castro to begin with. After he nationalized the farms because of 'racial discrimination,' we put an embargo on Cuba. Which enabled Castro to go completely Communist. With some similar policy, we may have a Communist regime in Cuba for the next hundred years.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Yngvi. Can you expect any leader to say that their behavior was less than exemplary? I bet even a regime as foul as Saddam's reported it was pure as the driven snow. How fairly it fought wars and administered justice. I would not expect it to breath a word about the pits where, I hear, people were shot and dumped.

So why would you expect the Bush Administration to admit anything bad about its treatment of prisoners of war? Hey, we are pure as the driven snow too. ...No slush here.

Are we actually mistreating them? I imagine they have enough to eat and conditions are not too crowded. However, I gather that we are doing a lot of things to get them to talk. They are in lockdown for an inordinate part of the day, for instance. And international inspectors would frown on that.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Guy. If Dolly's problem, and all our aging problems, are cells remembering how old they are, is there any way to make them forget? Such things are

regarded as natural and immutable. But a lot of things natural and immutable have been changed. Is war our natural state? I have avoided it.

So maybe there is a way to make cells forget old age.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Janice. News articles being inaccurate. My expectations are lower for news articles than most people's. I said my Dad's obituary was for the most part true. That was in spirit. And letting pass bad spelling and misinterpretations.

A major reason I am so liberal is the fact I have known from actually trying to relate facts. Namely, they lose something once they are processed through our ever porous memory. And they lose more once they are put down on paper.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Robe. About filters, about antiviruses. ...Sort of about. ... I was going through the download files and I found an executable which looked like a come on for a porno outfit. Its icon was a naked lady. I deleted it. And next thing I know, I found a link to it on my Desktop. I deleted that. And next thing I know, I found a link in my Start Menu. I deleted that too.

Recently, I found out it was one version of the SoBig worm. Apparently, 60% of AOL received it. Fortunately, I didn't click it. It would have been easy, accidentally, on my Start Menu.

🍷▲🍷 About being able to see what you are typing on your Oliver, and about other typewriters being "blind" writers. I remember looking at early typewriters in the Smithsonian and finding that they were all blind writers. I wondered what good they could be when I make so many typos seeing.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

nice distinctions 2

🍷▲🍷 *I have never been comforted by how lucky I was not to be as miserable as others.* In other words, you say that you saw a man with no hands. And then you saw a man with three penises.

🍷▲🍷 Faith-based research? What's the purpose of research when you already know the answer?

🍷▲🍷 REALITY SHOWS. I know those questionnaires very well. To find out whether you have psi powers. To find out if you were a king in your past life. To find out if you ran a robot factory in your future life. The fashion magazines can be pathetic.

🍷▲🍷 *You get the truth in the next world; in this world you get science.* But we have one foot in both worlds.

🍷▲🍷 IFCA 2003. You get convoluted plots like in *Enders Game* where the hero wonders if he did the right thing. And then you have Arnold Schwarzenegger who rips out people's arms. At least in the movies.

🍷▲🍷 RECENT READING. Robert Bryce says that adultery in Enron was what caused its downfall. In short, Bill Clinton was to blame – by his example. On the other hand, Rich Kinder says that smoking pot caused Enron's downfall. Ah, the '60s were to blame.

This certainly is a Conservative time.

🍷▲🍷 The Smothers Brother not funny? I think I remember hearing them as a kid of five or ten. They were funny to a kid of five or ten. "Mom always liked you best" goes over better in that crowd. And, at the time, I am sure, we were the crowd they were aiming at.

🍷▲🍷 CODGER'S CORNER. What songs I am nostalgic for: "He's so fine" by the Chiffons and "Hello, Stranger" by Barbara Lewis. They were the first songs I heard when I got a car and a car radio; that's why. Before that, I wasn't listening too much to radio. Of course, that both songs had OK melodies, I bet, helped.

KIP WILLIAMS

fox troop

🍷▲🍷 As President George W. Bush says: 'I cannot tell a lie – he did it.'

STEVE HUGHES

traditional "free 3d glasses"

🍷▲🍷 I hate to say it. They're same 3-D glasses as those that came with my 3-D viewing kit. Only with my kit, someone scotch taped them for viewing a cardboard backdrop.

STEVE and SUZANNE HUGHES

travelers tales

🍷▲🍷 TALES OF 3D. All I know about 3-D photography is what you have written here. So I will write around the topic.

I think I remember seeing the 1952 film *Bwana Devil*. Which, I seem to remember, started the '50s craze. There, man eating lions jump out at you. Also, I remember flying saucers jumping out at you in one picture. And a Tyrannosaurus Rex in another.

Second City Television made '50s 3-D the butt of a skit. Where the movie is 3-D and all the actors find excuses for throwing things at the audience. In one scene, a vendor throws potato chips at the audience. In another, the mad scientist cries, "SHOW THEM THE COCKATOO!" And an evil

manservant thrusts a stuffed cockatoo at the audience.

But that does not exhaust my memories of 3-D. In the early '60s, my mother was an enthusiastic collector of 3-D slides from the early part of the last Century, which she viewed through a Zeiss stereopticon. Later, she told me she sold a whole bunch of slides to a museum. I remember one where, at breakfast, a Frenchman has apparently opened a supposedly hardboiled egg, and finds a chick inside.

🍷▲🍷 ESCAPE FROM THE FOG. It's no wonder when I went to France in the '50s everyone was asking for liquor. Not being a drinker, I didn't get the message. Namely to buy it duty-free.

🍷▲🍷 VICTORIA AND ALBERT'S
Leave it to Disney World to run a restaurant well.

🍷▲🍷 I can identify with your adventure in saving the Marineland's 3-D movie *Sea Dream*. However, my quests have been more personal. I wanted to save the genealogy of my father's family. And find the Hugo Gernsback *Forecast* magazines. Both lie somewhere in the black hole that is my parents' house.

Also, my sister was somehow involved with trying to save my mother's mural in the Lyric Theater in Asbury Park, NJ. Actually, the theater isn't in a danger quite yet. However, it is down on its luck. It was an art theater when my mother did her murals, and it is a porno theater now.

Also, Asbury Park, for now, is a ghost town. And only the Lyric, of its great theaters, is standing.

RICH LYNCH
variations on a theme #21

🍷▲🍷 JOYEUX ANNIVERSAIRE. So Louis Moreau Gottschalk was pro-Union. A view very much at odds with most people in his native New Orleans. Of course, he was very international.

I hear the composer of Dixie, Daniel Decatur Emmett, was pro-Union too. And while not international, he traveled a lot. But that might not have been the origin of his views. He hailed from Ohio where a person could hold anti-slavery views.

🍷▲🍷 THUS WE REFUTE HEINLEIN. Libertarians seem to be very much into free lunches. A libertarian friend and librarian – she worked for the Sugar Institute – once told me about all-you-could-eat sushi at the Japanese Embassy. The Japanese provided it as a gesture to improve, what were at the time, frayed U.S. relations. It was a great feed.

🍷▲🍷 GLOBALIZE. For a lot of people, actual logic seems brutalizing, their theories being based on inconsistent reasoning and fallacies. If they were forced to use actual logic, it would kill them. It is no wonder even people who believe they represent Reason, like the Cato Institute, ask people to leave. Why risk upsetting the apple cart.

Of course, we all have achilles heels where we don't want actual logic to muscle in.

🍷▲🍷 WEIRD SCIENCE. Does a fact exist that could convince anyone in the debate over greenhouse gases? This seems an issue on which no one can be rational. On the one hand, you have idealists who have a difficult time distinguishing between threats to the ecology of plant and animal life and threats to the ecology of their souls.

On the other hand, there are vested interests who don't want the facts to interfere



with the idea that What's good for ExxonMobile is good for the nation. And people, like the Cato Institute, who believe as a matter of faith that What is good for unfettered

free enterprise is good for the nation.

It is true you are one of the few who try to be reasonable, but I caught you in a fallacy. The fact that ExxonMobile is funding the Marshall Institute's forays into policy doesn't mean that the Marshall Institute is wrong. That is Argumentum ad Hominem. It is not addressing the merits of their argument. Remember a stopped clock is right twice a day. Even a greedy clock.

🍎▲🍎 NO DIRECTION IN SPACE.

Why do people want us to get into space? Childhood wishdreams. Joel Achenbach, a *Washington Post* reporter, wrote a book recently, *Captured by Aliens*. And that was the impression I got from his interviews and schmoozing with NASA people.

Maybe someday space travel will save the Earth, but for now its core remains Buck Rogers, Star Trek, Star Wars, etc.

Of course, I don't mind the national government fulfilling my wishdreams.

🍎▲🍎 ct. Me. Even the Church changes. Cyril and Methodius could translate the Bible into the Moravian vernacular in the 9th Century, and receive acclaim. Centuries later the Catholic Church was dubious that Bibles be translated into the vernacular. And allowed it to be done only reluctantly and only with a lot of censorship, in the Douay Bible.

🍎▲🍎 I thought you approved the theory that Tungusta had been hit with a

comet originally. If you did, you changed your mind. And you have logical reasons for doing so.

Still, I am sure there is a simple explanation for the Tungusta disaster, and we just haven't thought of it. ...Perhaps a very small comet?

🍎▲🍎 ct. Gary Brown. Even if we found Weapons of Mass Destruction at this time, George 'W' Bush would still have been wrong. He said he knew where they were before the war. And he did not.

Of course, the normal political way is if you were discovered to be right in the end, you would be still being considered right. It would not work with a stopped clock, but it would work with 'W.'

In fact, George's people and the Pentagon have not only been wrong, but clueless. They were worried about weapons of mass destruction but pooh poohed the idea of Saddam mounting a guerrilla war. Which every news report said he intended to do.

🍎▲🍎 BUBBLE THAT WON'T EVER BURST. Ah, the myth of the unfettered internet. Which Governor Bill Owens has fallen for hook, line and sinker. It is the place of untrammled private enterprise.

Its thousands of miles of cable and its many servers, and the army that administers them, is ignored. People are astonished to learn that it started out as something sponsored by the military, ARPANET. And only academics could go on it 1983-89. Only in 1989 was it opened to commercial traffic.

Of course, that is the whole myth of the Neocon era. That our government expenditures and support do not exist until someone wishes to get rid of them. Then we yell like banshees.

NORM METCALF

tyndallite v3. #108 june 2003

☛▲☛ ct. Me. Actually, I have changed my mind. Someone could write an interesting novel about an alternate universe from someone's choice of socks. The universe from socks could be a wild card. It could be anything you want. We won the Vietnam War; but we lost the Iraqi War, and now we are all speaking Arabic.

☛▲☛ Maybe the magazine that was mostly L. Ron Hubbard was *Unknown (Worlds)*. My choice of magazine is based on my ever porous memory of browsing the MIT Science Fiction Society Library in the '70s.

☛▲☛ H.G. Wells pushing socialism? That's not how I remember it. How I remember it is that Wells' trademark was not socialism but being cynical. *War of the Worlds* is that we are just another animal. *Island of Doctor Moreau* was, similarly, we are not far from the brute. *The Time Machine* was that the ruling class was getting decadent and the working class brutish. I forgot the theme of *First Men in the Moon*.

☛▲☛ ct. Ned Brooks. I guess Cavourite would stay in the Earth if it is found in combination with other substances that do not have gravitation powers.

☛▲☛ Killing Hitler's ancestors would not be just; but if it prevented the Nazis from coming to power, it would prevent even greater injustices. Morality has to be practical.

Of course, I recognize the 'if' is a big if. We do not know that, sans Hitler, there would be no World War II. Not like we know in a hypothetical situation.

☛▲☛ ct. Gary Brown. Yes, translation

is by no means a straightforward process. Just replacing words leads to gibberish. We need grammar and idioms. And sometimes decisions about them.

Because of the last, the translator's opinion will enter into the translation. Especially in the hands of an ideologue. I hear the *Septuagint* translated the Torah to promote orthodoxy. The Douay Bible is notorious for translating in accord with Catholic doctrine.

I have not been able to find bias in the King James Version; just that the translators did not seem to know much about Aramaic, and got some of their Hebrew wrong.

☛▲☛ SIMON LAKE AND JULES VERNE. Well, it has been petroleum and atomic energy that have powered submarines, and not electricity. Maybe in an alternate universe, someone would have found the way to make our civilization completely electric.

☛▲☛ KEVIN L. COOK. "Doc" Smith and Verne are ignored for now, but H.G. Wells scholarship is flourishing. I read a critical edition recently of *War of the Worlds*. Basically, Wells was a crowd pleaser. It is impossible to tell what his real views were, except for the greater aggrandizement of H.G. Wells.

SHEILA STRICKLAND
revenant #19

☛▲☛ Typical college baloney. I have another example. At this one school, entrance required an essay about whom your greatest model was. My niece Joan was caught having the same sentence as her sister Pam did. Pam got in. But Joan was barred for plagiarism.

Come on, give me a break. If she had been caught cheating in class that would be one thing. But Joan had a clean record after four years of college. Instead, the offense was

window dressing on an application.

🍷▲🍷 ALA vs. SARS. My experience with library journals and speeches is that nobody cares about the so-called great issues of librarianship. The idea behind pontificating on them is to look important and scholarly and a person of parts. It is one more ticket to punch. No wonder, no one is motivated to ask questions about such things.

Of course, my experience with librarians is that they let their hair down when not being formal. And I can see singing gospel with a North Carolinian at a library convention. And even talking about sex.

🍷▲🍷 MOVIES, MOVIES. I don't know much about Louisiana in general, but I like New Orleans. At least, the actual city, as opposed to the malls. Life is slow and tolerant, yet has pizzazz.

🍷▲🍷 KICKING AND SCREAMING. I agree we have been forced to get cell phones. I found that cops no longer patrol the highways in Virginia. Without a cell phone, if you break down, you are out of luck. It doesn't just take longer for the cops to arrive as in Louisiana; you depend on the kindness of fellow motorists.

However, one advantage to cell phones was not forced on me. When I am traveling, using them is cheaper than using hotel phones to call people.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. I agree. Whether the morphine hastened my father's death or not, it allowed him to die more like he wanted to. With, at least, some comfort – if not dignity.

🍷▲🍷 Maybe my father has your parents beat. He did encourage me. As I

said, he was the biggest fan of my writings. It depended on his mood. In a good mood, he would encourage. In a bad mood, he was driven by the ghost of Horatio Alger and the demons of pride, and could be – what all his children call – hypercritical.

Of course, when people do not say anything encouraging, it may not mean much. Some people, particularly older people, don't want to show emotion. So that *your parents* did not encourage you did not mean that *you* did not encourage them.

🍷▲🍷 The assisted living facility, Colts Neck Village, continues to treat my Mom very well. She is their resident celebrity. The Village actually encouraged us to enter a picture of hers in an art contest. My sister-in-law, Debby, chose a pre-Alzheimer picture, but one that nonetheless followed the rules. And my mother won.

Nonetheless, her condition has not been so good. I do not know if my mother has actually deteriorated. But if she wasn't the place's celebrity, my sister figures she would have been placed in the section for severe Alzheimer's.

Still, my mother is continuing to draw. Something the facility encourages.

🍷▲🍷 You do well enough as a member of this APA. Especially since you have a day and night job. A day job as a librarian and a night job studying. You do far better than less busy but still lactive individuals who have sent us postcards. And handwrot notes.

🍷▲🍷 Copeland's food is better than OK. I think you are right. I suspect my friend Alicia is too used to a particular type of Louisiana food. Although, who knows, I haven't tried their gumbo. Maybe that part of the menu is not so hot.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Frequent Flyer. Of course,

Slash Fiction means two members of the same sex having sex. But it is fun to fudge the definition. And rankle a few people.

♣▲♣ ct. Oblio. Bush W wants to have it both ways. He wants to seem like his Administration is going it alone for the Hard Right. On the other hand, he is always trying to get allies for his plans. Britain was a prize in his pocket during the Iraq War. Whatever he can get the Saudis to do is a prize.

♣▲♣ ct. My Month of Fame. The panelist who ate toast had no manners, but that is in. Manners are supposed to be brutalizing, a form of snobbery. But only when the objectors are asked to show good manners. They like it when others show good manners to them.

MIKE WEBER employment strikes

♣▲♣ And, Mike, it's high time.

♣▲♣ Those rubber duckies negotiated the Northwest Passage? I hear even boats have a hard time with that. That Sergeant Henry Larson RCMP took two or three years in the forties for one trip. It is true there was a very large ship with a helper boat that negotiated it in a few weeks in the late '60s, but these are rubber duckies we're talking about.

Of course, they had eleven years to do it, I hear; and the summer they made it could have been a warm and relatively ice free one.

♣▲♣ The T-bird sounds like the car from a *Mad Magazine* parody, the Ford Foulcar. After the Ford Falcon. The parody ad talked about slipped discs.

On the other hand, the T-bird used

to be considered a really cool car. I remember the Beach Boys' song about it. And, with all the problems you had with it, maybe it still is a cool car.

GUY LILLIAN III spiritus mundi 196

♣▲♣ In Susan Smith's personal ad, that she committed murder was an immediate turn off. Forget about her appearance. Forget about Mickey Mouse and the beach.

Wasn't she the one who killed her children? At least, if you are a wouldbe suitor, you would be happy to know she didn't kill adults. ...I guess.

In short, she better get a man who is nonjudgmental.

♣▲♣ ct. Me. The problem is not that I do not realize my father was a man. I realize all too well. Pride is a common enough sin. And it is common enough that it cometh before the fall. Which too often happened to him during his last years.

No, the problem is that I am a man too. And, my moral indignation – I admit, where no real deep moral issues exist – has tended to make the situation worse. Both during my father's life. And now, worse still, in his death. Certainly, right now, no wrongs can be righted.

I hope this foolish moral indignation fades with time and that picture of my father laughing remains.

♣▲♣ Of course, if the Confederates had attacked Washington after Bull Run, the Union would have defeated them four years early. However, there is the reality of the Civil War, and then there's myth. Attacking Washington then sounds like something that would win the war. Damn the torpedos and full speed ahead. And authors would rarely think of the Confederates rushing into the

valley of death. Of course, Robert E. Lee would and did. And we had four more years of War.

🍷▲🍷 In an alternate history I at least outlined, Germany won World War I. And War World II entails a democratic socialist Germany being attacked by a Fascist France run by the Croix de Fer, a Fascist group. And a revolutionary, but not Communist, Russia. I had Britain sit out the war.

🍷▲🍷 So U.S. law makes it possible for someone who commits a crime drunk to get leniency. But it makes it difficult. It uses neither the ancient Roman law nor the law of the ancient Jews. It lies more toward the lenient law of the Romans, but not too far toward them.

🍷▲🍷 No, I don't believe in capital punishment – even for cruds like Muhammad. Of course, the law of Virginia definitely does. You're right that he's going to do the recent equivalent of frying.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Don. Speaking of panic over terrorism. Someone finally proved to me that the Third Plane on 9-1-1 was aimed at the Congress. No one had done that before.

That someone pointed out that an el-Jazeera reporter called Fouda interviewed two al Qaeda big wigs. And they said al Qaeda had considered bombing atomic installations, but decided on the U.S. Congress.

The person who proved it to me was frustrated that I wouldn't accept un-cited accounts or one through the Spanish newspaper *el Mundo*. I only accepted it when he came up with an AP interview with Fouda.

It is typical for someone to believe that you should use the same standards for changing your mind that he uses to keep on

believing.

🍷▲🍷 About World War II concentration camps for Japanese Americans. Apparently, the U.S. Army did not treat the Japanese Americans too well. However, the job was soon given over to Milton Eisenhower, Dwight's brother, who was depressed about the whole thing because he felt Japanese Americans were loyal. He quickly resigned.

However, his successor believed the same thing. And he tried to get the Japanese out of the camps as quickly as possible. A Japanese woman, who had been interned, told me that after a while there weren't even any guards.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Liz. That was a bad move on Senator Ted Steven's part, asking the New York City cops and firemen to give up overtime. They are supposed to be heroes. It is like asking Audie Murphy to give up overtime.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Janet. Janet's hormone problems may seem foreign to us men. But I suspect only because we tend to think of our problems less in terms of hormones than women do. We are part hormones too, you know.

🍷▲🍷 I wish Ruth the best of luck in music therapy. She is nothing if not enterprising. And a nice person besides.

RANDY B. CLEARY
avatar press v2 #28 July 31, 2003

🍷▲🍷 RANDY RANTS. About your CD-ROM drive that gave up the ghost. I am too untech minded to tinker, and my CD-ROM drive is working fine. Maybe a little knowledge is a dangerous thing here. ... Maybe even a lot of knowledge.

🍷▲🍷 FORGE OF TITANS. Von



Daniken's old thesis from the '70s made into the above science fiction novel. In the novel, Gods from Outer Space created us. And, of course, now they want to break us. It's typical: ideas that people would die for at one time have, in science fiction, been made into literary devices.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me.

You got me on that one. I had forgotten there were thirteen copies of the *Declaration of Independence*. Which means that the signers had to sign thirteen times. ...I don't think they had photocopying then.

🍷▲🍷 It is the only way you can deal with certain people: agree with their views to the extent you can discuss things. I probably could have handled my father better had I done that over the years. I probably could have handled political 'discussions' better if I had done that over the years.

But it goes against my honest grain as it goes against your honest grain.

🍷▲🍷 So that is what happened to me. I did not want to make a stir, so I got in line; and they gave me Communion. It wasn't even the fact I was in a Jesuit Church. Any Catholic Church, not knowing my religion, would have allowed it.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Ned Brooks. Saddam a regional threat? He got his butt kicked by the Iranians. He got his butt kicked by us. He got his butt kicked by the Kurds. If we

hadn't stopped him, there is no telling whom he would have gotten his butt kicked by the next time around.

🍷▲🍷 I just remembered another Islamic democracy. Indonesia, for now, is an Islamic Democracy. And there are, for now, not the ifs or buts of Turkey and Morocco.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Rich Lynch. You're right that, in politics, one should "remove the mote in one's own eye first." But that would take all the fun out of it.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Don Markstein. I find it impossible to believe the most popular conspiracy theories about the Federal government. The reason is I have worked for the Federal government for twenty-six years. I don't doubt there are conspiracies aplenty in DC. Just that, as far as secrets go, the place is more porous than swiss cheese. For instance, no forty year secret could exist that millions wish to pry loose, like the alien bodies in Area 51.

I had a discussion with a flying saucer 'enthusiast' on that. And he said the Federal government still 'could' be covering up the alien bodies. Of course, in order for a 'could' argument to be credible, you have to believe in it to begin with. You certainly couldn't find it laughable. Which is my reaction after my Washington experience..

🍷▲🍷 ct. David Schlosser. Probably I should root for us finding Weapons of Mass Destruction so that the Iraqi War would not have been in vain. But my politics are intervening too much.

GARY ROBE
tennessee trash #54

🍷▲🍷 UNLIKELY WEDDING. I did the marriage thing even cheaper and quicker – I

eloped. Actually I didn't do it to save money. I did it because both sets of parents disapproved. We were married within a morning in Virginia.

No benefit of the clergy, I fear. But plenty of the State. What took longest was listening to the Justice of the Peace pontificate on marriage. Basically that, the test for venereal disease, and purchasing the marriage certificate were it.

Of course, our marriage was lacking in fun and the amenities. My wife sometimes pines that our marriage had not been bigger and more formal. It certainly was not for everyone. But it was our only option under the circumstances.

🍷▲🍷 Now you have migraine headaches. What are you held together by, chicken wire? My heart goes out to you. It is more distressing that you don't know the reason for the migraines. But I am glad you can control them to some extent.

🍷▲🍷 With any wedding, something has to go wrong. But many believe the slightest flaw will ruin the entire marriage. I ran into this syndrome at the wedding of my friend Jerry. His two sisters felt they could die because of this imperfection and that imperfection. I told them it was superstition and the imperfections would not amount to a hill of beans. The important thing was that Jerry and Mary Ann were married. Which had been accomplished.

Strangely, Jerry's sisters were grateful for that bit of advice.

I hope there were not similarly sensitive people at Rickey's and Betsy's wedding. That could make the sisters' taking over a bone of contention for decades.

🍷▲🍷 NO ROOM AT THE INN. The

Reptile House and the bird collection at your local park reminded of this one exhibit at the National Zoo: the marine exhibit. I remember it the most clearly of any exhibit there. At least, I remember the intelligent cephalopods most clearly: e.g., octopuses and squid. However, my guide claimed the cuddlefish were even more intelligent. And communicated far better. They were small things that didn't seem like they would have any intelligence. But you could see them communicate by changing their color.

The reason I remember it so well is it struck me Nature really has different ways to do the same thing, even intelligence. It shows far more creativity than we.

🍷▲🍷 HARRY POTTER. With the ambiguities and the gray areas, that Harry Potter novel sounds a lot more adult than a lot of books written for adults. Of course, I wonder whether kids can take that much reality, and still be in fantasyland?.

As for the plot to teach the kids only the theory of defensive magic and not the practice, that has altogether too much reality. It seems like all American education is that way. Elsewhere in the world, it is worse. Dr. Richard Feynman said that, in Brazil, it was difficult for the physics students to relate any of what they had learned to real things.

🍷▲🍷 AT THE SUMMER MOVIES.

Critics liked *Pirates of the Caribbean* for the same reason you did. Depp and Bloom put on a great performance. Someone complained that Depp was overacting as Captain Jack Sparrow. But isn't that the way you do pirates? ...Har! Har! Matey.

🍷▲🍷 PARTING SHOTS. Alicia might be able to get Ernesto for racism in the U.S. What were her chances in Mexico? Even in the Mexican part of your corporation. In any

case, making complaints is always difficult: U.S. women still usually rack such episodes up to the school of hard knocks.

TOM FELLER

frequent flyer July 23, 2003

☪▲☪ While Anita is going to have to spend a lot on art work, we get ours for free. We always decorate with my mother's paintings, she having been a painter of some local fame for fifty years. We are fortunate enough to have lived too far away for my mother to come and take it back, like she did with my brother during her paranoid period.

Of course, whether her art suits our apartment, and we should buy other art, is another thing entirely.

☪▲☪ **BRUCE ALMIGHTY.** The problem is George Burns as God or Morgan Freeman as God does not poke fun at God. But at believers. At the believers we ourselves are. Of course, a lot of believers are too self-important to take any ribbing about their beliefs. In fact, it is unclear they do not see themselves as God.

☪▲☪ **LITTLE NEMO.** What the sharks will eat rather than fish. Why tofu, of course. Someone in my agency has a Gary Larson cartoon, where the lions find a Tofu-debeest. Of course, when the lions discover their mistake, they spit the 'meat' out.

☪▲☪ **SUMMER MOVIES PART II.** Some people don't get the message. *Legally Blonde II* has been attacked because Reese Witherspoon looks like a bimbo and a ditzball. Which is the idea. There is an intelligent woman inside.

Of course, her animal rights kick might be a little bit more than I can take.

☪▲☪ **YEARS OF RICE AND SALT.**

So technology repeats itself even though European civilization died off in the black plague. That was the theory of history about a hundred, two hundred years ago: that human progress would be the same no matter what.

Hey, 'human' progress would be the same on other planets as it would be for us. The Venusians reflected our past. The Martians reflected our future.

Of course, as I said to Randy, all these ideas have for many decades bucked around in science fiction as literary license.

☪▲☪ **YEAR IN LINEAR CITY.** I hope

Di Filippo can end his Linear series better than Philip José Farmer did his Riverworld. Farmer's ending was something awful. After a series of moves right off the gameboard: and far longer ruminations about such moves: it was found Lewis Carroll was responsible for Riverworld.

☪▲☪ **PRESENCE.** Isn't that the present state of an Alzheimer's cure? We can only slow the disease down; we can't cure it.

☪▲☪ ct. Me. I think my mother inundated the house by ordering lots of stuff from fancy stores rather than mail order. She could afford it. We are having a harder time affording the mess.

☪▲☪ Supposedly right now is a real estate boom. Can't Anita unload her mother's house for a bundle? Of course, there may not be a real estate boom everywhere. As they say in real estate: location, location, location. The Statue of Liberty condos are worth ten million; condos out in the wilderness are worth nothing.

☪▲☪ So what happens in Keith Laumer's Imperium series when Germany

wins?

🍷▲🍷 I treat hypodermic needles like your hotel chain. Of course they are my own, and not someone else's. I use them in injecting Avonex to control my multiple sclerosis. Then my wife Heidi stores them in plastic juice containers. Maybe we should use something sturdier, but so far so good.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Richard Lynch. Well, this tax reform is no exception to tax reform complicating the code. In the case of my family, the problem has been when my mother will die. And under what provisions.

If she dies now, we pay a lot of Federal tax. And we have to go through all sorts of tax contortions. If she dies in 2009, we pay no tax. And no contortions are necessary.

My own view is not to worry about it. What will be will be. And the big thing is taking care of my mother while she's living.

🍷▲🍷 About Anita's problem with Fiber One. There was a Saturday Night Live parody ad for a fiber supplement – Colon Blow. The most powerful version was supposed to have 100,000 times as much fiber as a bowl of ordinary cereal. With consequences we can half picture.

DAVID SCHLOSSER

peter, pan & merry #50

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. I know why my father chose that Rabbi. He was the Rabbi of the Conservative Beth-el Temple my father had belonged too, while never attending. My father did not wish to offend his Orthodox relatives, especially not at his funeral service. And, he felt, a Beth-el Temple was as liberal as they would go.

🍷▲🍷 That Scrooge only changed the

future may be another reason why Christmas Carol was not an alternate history.

🍷▲🍷 Actually, there seems to be worse p.r. when Israel fights back against terrorism surgically. Killing a Hamas leader here, an Al-Qamsa there. The big wigs whom they get have more extensive propaganda apparatus than humbler individuals. Whose houses get knocked down.

However, a surgical attack is less likely to increase support for terrorist organizations. It is not happening to humbler individuals who have been the rank and file. And the forest in which the terrorists hide.

🍷▲🍷 The problem is that Clancy is probably better at the symbol of terrorism than the substance. And the symbol of the Cold War. And the symbol of our condition.

The way I see it, the substance of terrorism goes completely against the symbol. In our minds, the Terrorists attack the Statue of Liberty and the Washington Monument. In reality, even though al Qaeda may have planned to attack the Congress, its usual targets are a different mindset of symbols: embassies, international capitalism, the military, tourists.

Also, in our minds, hitting hard is the answer. In reality, bin Laden wishes us to overreact.

🍷▲🍷 That is one thing people will never question – their own culture. On the other hand, it is easier than pie to question outside influences. Of course, it is even easier to submit to outside influences. To go to the local McDonalds; particularly when it serves squid.

🍷▲🍷 What I should have said was that there were passages in the Bible where someone has, if they have had a mind, interpreted them as death for being

disobedient to one's parents and death for masturbation.

First, death for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21. "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them. Then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city., and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city. This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die."

Now death for masturbation.

Genesis 38:8-10. "And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his, and it came to pass when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also."

And then, let me add, death for homosexuality.

Leviticus 20:13. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their

blood shall be upon them."

This is from the King James Version. As I said, I am speaking about the interpretation if a person has had mind. I realize pious interpreters have interpreted these passages differently.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Ned Brooks. Repressed memories making you a victim and gaining you sympathy; what more Evolutionary a function can there be than that?

By the way, I remembered something that is close but not matching as far as repressed memories are concerned. Physical trauma can cause people to forget. If people are in a bad accident or in the midst of battle, people forget.

While such incidents were not attributed to shame or fear as more recent repressed memories, they were treated as a repressed memories. My father claims that he used Sodium Pentothal, the men recalled the incident, and then were cured of the bad effects of the trauma.

I do not know how effective such therapy actually was. It is no longer practiced. My father believed it was an art that had foolishly been allowed to languish. But after the spell of Freud had been lifted, maybe it did not seem effective after all.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Gary Brown. Tax cuts seem a panacea because they seem to be getting the government off our backs. And lifting roadblocks to prosperity. People do not look at the deficit, which in effect is a tax. And they do not look at the government services they use. For now.

With this case of tunnel vision, a tax cut to jump start the economy is a no brainer. ...If you have a brain, you might have to look for another panacea.



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♥▲♥ ct. Janice Gelb. There is plenty of data about the stock market, but how much is helpful in playing it? With all the data, the stock market remains an enigma wrapped in a puzzle.

♥▲♥ ct. Gary Robe. End game strategies for security, basic services, etc. in Iraq were nobody's department. The military just conquers places or occupies them. The Bush Administration just goes from one photo-op to another. Someone did have an idea that it should be somebody's business, it is true. But that somebody was Bill Clinton.

♥▲♥ You can't tell the difference between forgotten, repressed and induced memories. Neither can anyone else. That is why people wish to pretend one or the other does not exist.

♥▲♥ APAC=NC². You have the milk of human kindness when it comes to films. Everyone else panned the *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. The snobby critic, I would ignore. But honest SFPAs didn't like it either. They seemed to say that the action made no sense. And the acting was tired, especially Sean Connery's. But you seem to see the graphic novel in the movie.

On the other hand, you're going to

get it for saying Tarzan was an "American" literary character. I think a hundred people here are going to say that Tarzan was a "British" literary character in American novels.

JEFFREY COPELAND cats on ritalin v2, #41

♥▲♥ So you are enthusiastic about letting Allie go. That isn't the view of a lot of parents. However, I do know one who has ultimately come to that realization too. My sister-in-law Debby.

Debby has physical problems, and to a great extent her daughter Joanie has brought up the youngest daughter, Laura. Joanie will be much missed in other ways too. But Debby knows that at twenty-two Joanie is going to have to leave.

Debby is not one to remain quiet, but she has hardly said a word to her daughter, Joanie, about Joanie's plans to leave home. And live with the oldest daughter, Pam, in Philadelphia.

♥▲♥ I know Liz says, Oh no, not another operation. But I would be relieved that her doctor knows what is going wrong. And that that might be the last of her operations.

♥▲♥ MAILING COMMENT SFPA 232. ct. Me. Ah, you are wise in the ways of DC. My brother wasn't. He said, when he was going to Bethesda, that it would be too far away to visit me. I pointed out it would be subway ride and a short bus ride.

♥▲♥ Of course, right now, you're right. These days, big wigs can get into government buildings; but you, forget it. That was not always the case. In Jimmy Carter's time, even when a murder/suicide occurred, security just meant showing your driver's license at the

like a criminal or violent, we open the card-protected doors for them.

🍷▲🍷 Maybe the first words out of your mouth during 9-1-1 was “Baghdad. Into glass.” But, during the 9-1-1 Presidential Briefings, Rumsfeld, and maybe another, were the only ones pushing an attack on Iraq right then. While admitting they didn’t have a plan.

Of course, not having a plan didn’t stop the Administration in March.

🍷▲🍷 Ah, it was of great importance that Hillary’s taskforce not be allowed to meet in closed doors. There might be information to get Bill Clinton on.

By the way, I hear Larry Klayman and his Judicial Watch, who harassed Clinton, were trying to open the closed doors of Cheney’s Energy Taskforce. Against the great opposition of the Administration. I haven’t followed the issue too closely, but I think they have had some success.

Of course, looking at Klayman’s website, his organization seems more interested in harassing Arabs than anything.

🍷▲🍷 **ROBERT HOUGHWOUT JACKSON.** The function of the government is not to keep citizens from falling into error?! Then most laws would have to be repealed.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Sheila Strickland. So Michael Moore was booed at the Oscars. Just not by Hollywood liberals, but conservative stage hands.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Janice Gelb. It is firmly established in people’s mind that bin Laden and Saddam were as close as peas in a pod. The security guard at my building was really astonished to learn that Saddam’s Party, the

Baathist Party, is known throughout the Arab world as a secularist party. That it was founded that way. And it’s reputation there remains just that.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Mike Weber. So much for the war being over. I talked with an officer back from Iraq, a major. He said what we knew. The only ones who have been grateful to us are the Kurds. The Sunnis hate us for taking away their goodies. And the Shiites dislike us on general principles.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Gary Robe. Collapsed economy? An economy only of copyboys and clerks? I think Milton Friedman is right about something for once: the most efficient production is a division of labor. You do what you’re best at.

Given cheap wages, some countries are going to undersell us in certain industries. They are the best at them. But not in others. Not where we have the advantages of an advanced economy. Not where production requires an extensive infrastructure. Or a lot of skill and education. Or employees with the skills of modern life. We are the best at those industries. Technical support exported to the Third World, I hear, is often a disaster.

The problem is that a nation may not know what it’s good at.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Eve Ackerman. Let’s face it. The Iraqi War accomplished its objective: to make the public think we are fighting al Qaeda. And, I guess, there is some virtue in reassuring the public. Of course, there are even greater debits in messing up a whole country and then us getting stuck there.

🍷▲🍷 **MAILING COMMENTS SFPA 233.** ct. Me. Strange as it seems, my mother seems to prefer assisted living to living at ‘home.’ She never felt at home ‘home’: she was always looking for her parents’ house:

even greater debits in messing up a whole country and then us getting stuck there.

♥▲♥ MAILING COMMENTS SFPA 233. ct. Me. Strange as it seems, my mother seems to prefer assisted living to living at 'home.' She never felt at home 'home': she was always looking for her parents' house: but she seems at home in assisted living.

Maybe she enjoys being with people. And being attended to better. But it is hard to tell what she is thinking at this stage.

♥▲♥ Have burgers been meat all along? Or have they actually been onion, ketchup and pickles? And if the meat wasn't there, we wouldn't know the difference?

♥▲♥ When I tried looking up a word in the online Oxford English Dictionary, "Calamus Aromaticus," it asked for my User Name and Password. So much for that.

♥▲♥ Medical insurance reimbursing chiropractors? What next? Witch doctors? ...Actually, I can see them reimbursing chiropractors for back problems. And maybe some other muscle related things. But, for ear infections, dyslexia and such, I wouldn't want them to pay a red cent.

♥▲♥ Christine Todd Whitman turning her staff into personal errand boys. That's nothing. For the past ten or twenty years, with our Under Secretaries, it has spilt over. Outside their staff. My office managers has been too busy being their errand boys to manage.

♥▲♥ Since then, Howard Dean has become the Great Dem Hope. Of course, if the Iraqi War remains popular at election

time, we can forget him. But politics is often a crap shoot.

♥▲♥ ct. Arthur. I think you and Arthur are mistaking Colonoscopies and Sigmoidoscopies. The Sigmoid is the lower third of the colon, and is usually not given with anesthetic. And is uncomfortable, to say the least. The Colonoscopy goes completely through and is always given with anesthetic.

The Colonoscopy costs more. And the Sigmoidoscopy is on the cheap. So that is done a lot more these days. But my wife believes that the Sigmoidoscopy actually finds not much of anything, and we would be better off with Colonoscopies at less frequent intervals.

♥▲♥ SPY AND FBI. Well, common sense did prevail in a situation where not a lot is shown: investigations of espionage. While the FBI man was very grouchy about it, he was right that Les not say a word about the code key he made at twelve.

EVE ACKERMAN guilty pleasures #29 July 2003.

♥▲♥ You were a lot closer to someone who died in the Iraqi War than I was to anyone who died on 9-1-1. My condolences; I am glad that the family and friends made the best of it.

I notice something interesting in this war. Those who oppose it don't blame the soldiers; they blame 'W' Bush. Where the blame belongs. I remember in the Vietnam War everyone was always blaming the troops. The left because they were baby killers; the right because they were the wimps who lost the war. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon did not seem to get half so much blame.

♥▲♥ MOSTLY MARTHA. Yes, life is chaos and a lot of bad things. Of course, it is,

capable of confusing people. I once gave a speech about a war. The title had the word war in it, and I must have said the word war a hundred times. And somebody asked me if my speech was about a war.

And it could have been that agent.

🍷▲🍷 Raphi may no longer be dating the mysterious Naomi. But I bet he would if you had disapproved. Nothing cements a youthful relationship so much as parental meddling.

🍷▲🍷 I agree with you. It's a blessing Micah waited too long and is not going to drive for another six months. At his age, however, I probably would have made great lamentation at his plight.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Weisskopf-Reinhardt. An Episcopalian minister tells me that the Torah does not beat around the bush about things, like the King James Version does. Certainly not about "helpmates."

On one thing, however, it tried not to beat about the bush while the Torah did – the name of God. That is how the KJV'ers got the name Jehovah. They took literally the vowels given by Masorites in the 9th Century. They did not realize the Masorites were reluctant to make the spoken Name of God common knowledge, so they gave it the same vowels as Adonai. Which makes it sound like "Jehovah" when the real name is "Yahweh."

On the other hand, the minister's example was not as good as "helpmates." He told me that while the King James Version says that Mary was with child, the Hebrew terms used to describe it are earthier. The problem is the Mary he was talking about had to be from the New Testament and not the Torah. And her pregnancy described in Greek not Hebrew.

🍷▲🍷 How did Jayson Blair get away with all his lies, inaccuracies, plagiarism, etc. He was a good con man. He sucked up to the right people.

Or was he a good con man? Was he just an ordinary con and was a little flattery sufficient to convince his boss, Howell Raines?

GARY BROWN

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🍷▲🍷 Even though the T-bird comes from my time, I bet Scott is still going to be a big man when he wheels it around campus. I bet it is evergreen cool. Sports cars in general look the same as they did in the '60s. And, I gather, the '50s and '40s. And the same people are piloting them. And they are always considered cool.

🍷▲🍷 WHERE ARE THE WAMDS. It could be a problem for the Bush Administration that they have to depend on the ignorant to pull their coals out of the fire. That people who are informed know that they are lying through their teeth. Or that they have no idea of what they are doing.

As H.L. Mencken said, 'No one ever went broke underestimating the American public.' Of course, while you can't underestimate them, you can estimate wrongly in other ways.

🍷▲🍷 WEIRD CON TALES #2. Your keys wouldn't work at Comic-Con. What I now believe to be shit came up from the tap at DeepSouthCon. That is the problem with traveling, Murphy's Law: what can go wrong will go wrong.

🍷▲🍷 WEIRD CON TALES #3. You can't wait in line two hours any longer. I thought the older you were, the longer you

now believe to be shit came up from the tap at DeepSouthCon. That is the problem with traveling, Murphy's Law: what can go wrong will go wrong.

♥▲♥ WEIRD CON TALES #3. You can't wait in line two hours any longer. I thought the older you were, the longer you could wait. Of course, the older you are, the more you know what is worth waiting for. Obviously Matt Groening's autograph is not one of them.

I notice you weren't too old to negotiate a Bart Bucks.

♥▲♥ ct. Me. Yes, my father did well in his search for truth. Better than 99% of all people. Maybe better than 99.999999%. All my complaining about him can't take that away. It also can't take away that he was a decent individual.

Just, at times, completely annoying.

♥▲♥ When I disparaged letter columns, it was hyperbole. Just to show how many avenues there are for people with unique interests today, and for those then. I didn't intend to say that wasn't one of the ways comic book fans or science fiction fans learned about each other.

♥▲♥ Adventure? Free life? Poetry of life? Those terms still don't do it. I would still have to be there, at a Jimmy Buffett concert, listening to a Jimmy Buffett record or reading a Jimmy Buffett novel, to understand the mystique.

♥▲♥ The lure of the cowboy being a blip? I am more apt to think that our era of disparaging cowboys is a blip.

♥▲♥ The *Wall Street Journal* article insinuated that Gays love SpongeBob SquarePants for the same reason kids do –

his optimism.

♥▲♥ ct. David Schlosser. Nah, we're not going back to Liberalism. Of course, the Conservatism we knew has changed too. We can never go home again. That is the fact of life. As opposed to dreams, which is what politics is made of.

♥▲♥ ct. Jeff Copeland. The California budget shortfall has been solved for now. But the Recall of Gray Davis goes ahead at full blast.

I have chosen to be counterintuitive here. Ultimately, I suspect Gray will win out. The Recall has already started to resemble a circus. And Arnold Schwarzenegger has lost momentum since he made the mistake of opening his mouth.

♥▲♥ I remember Bob Hope from the '50s. I can't say he was my favorite comedian. But he was a tradition so he didn't have to be. And I hear he was a good father, who liked to play with his kids. Unlike, apparently, his friend Bing Crosby.

GEORGE WELLS

cow drifters, off to eat some grass

♥▲♥ Robert Redford pie? Has Robert Redford grown fat recently? It has layers of whipped cream cheese, chocolate pudding, whipped cream, crushed pecans in a pie shell.

♥▲♥ Then there is the member of the Royal Family known for flashing. ...You mean you have never heard of the Royal Flash? ...Sssssoooooorrrrrryyyy!!!

♥▲♥ If Freedom Fries give you a fear of persecution, wouldn't Slavery Fries make you feel OK? Of course, Slavery Fries would be a hard sell.

♥▲♥ Obviously. with comments like

Spears been an expert on semi-conductor physics? <http://britneyspears.ac/lasers.htm> says so.

🍷▲🍷 Yes, anthropologists believe there are no superior cultures – except themselves.

🍷▲🍷 I can understand Margaret Meade's antipathy toward Women's Lib. It had a number of bad raps at the time and thereafter. Philip José Farmer, in one of the River World series, portrayed a Women's Lib member as a man-hating lesbian who piloted dirigibles.

🍷▲🍷 Better for kids to work than to starve? Haven't you learned by now, George, that you don't look at alternatives when you're do-gooding. Child labor lies in a vacuum.

🍷▲🍷 *"Skin Game" has a brutal murderer who is later brought to life with such empathy that the reader gets a real work out.* I hope the reader is not in danger of being killed.

🍷▲🍷 No comments to me!! ...Of course, any publication by George Wells is a comment to everyone.

LIZ COPELAND home with the armadillo #59

🍷▲🍷 You are at least thinking of getting on with your life. You took a dyeing course, although you haven't gotten back to your art just yet. And you have plans for September. Also, you are writing things down in a notebook. The depression hasn't gotten you completely down.

🍷▲🍷 Good luck on your surgery. I know surgery is getting old fast.

🍷▲🍷 **OPTICAL ILLUSION.** No, I think only our Iraqi victory is an optical illusion, not the sniper war. The situation is not a Necker's Cube but a Shell Game.

🍷▲🍷 As I said, there is a new breed of Republican. Deficit spending, which used to be the domain of Democrats, is now sold as a tax cut. Of course, somebody is paying it, the banks. And they demand a pay back later on.

T.K.F. WEISSKOPF-REINHARDT "yngvi is a louse" and other graffitos

🍷▲🍷 **ODDS AND ENDS.** For once, I agree with you. We should be out of Iraq. The longer we stay there, the worse things get.

🍷▲🍷 **CHARLOTTE PROCTOR.** Ah, Miss Julia does right, no matter who she offends; and is decisive. What a relief that is from our everyday lives!

🍷▲🍷 **PAT GIBBS.** Maybe there shouldn't be racial quotas and preferences. But, without them, would all positions, all jobs, all university slots, all sports teams be chosen on merit? ...Don't make me laugh.

🍷▲🍷 **HANK GOES TRIPPIN'.** Ultimate BLT at Arbys. No, no, they are known for their roast beef.

🍷▲🍷 **HANK'S COMMENTS.** Losing at hearts means you ain't got enough money to get home? A millionaire without a credit card, isn't that blasphemy?

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. I doubt you'll be very convincing. Everyone here believes their political views are based on the facts. When you called Gore a fool, it was based on the facts, right?

Of course, facts are in short supply in

political 'discussions.' For example, I don't see many facts here. Lots of impressions, though. So you are in line with what politics is really about.

🍷▲🍷 TONI'S COMMENTS. ct. Jeff Copeland. I don't know whether my nieces know how to stand on their own two feet yet. But, as for jobs, they got 'em. Joanie has three because of his expensive tastes. Pam is a seamstress while she hopes to become a psychologist one day. I think Libby, the third youngest, seventeen, has a job too.

I am sure you will agree that Laura, at eight, is too young to have a job.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Janet Larson. I take Glucosamine and Chondroitin too. They are supposed to help with the arthritis. I think I have a few more months to see whether they make any difference.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Gary Robe. That's the idea. Separation between Church and State is a Protestant idea. Religion is our conscience; a place where the State cannot intervene and has no business trying to. It merely pollutes Religion.

Of course, Separation of Church and State is no longer an Evangelical or Fundamentalist, Protestant idea. And I have to agree that too often the secularist types see Separation as preventing Religion from polluting the State rather than its proper function: preventing the State from polluting religion.

🍷▲🍷 Vis-a-vis some other places and the past, we are living in a 'utopia.' But it really hasn't made us any happier. Real happiness comes from inside.

GUY H. LILLIAN III@

challenger 18

🍷▲🍷 TRINLAY KHADRO. I must have been a mutation because no one else in my family has been into fandom. Science fiction is another thing. I seem to have plenty of cousins and nieces and whatnot who are interested in it.

However, none of them affected my interest. I remember when I was four. Three? I told myself that Westerns, which were very popular in the '40s and '50s, were OK; but I liked spacemen.

What helped was that the Flash Gordon serial with Buster Crabbe was one of the few movies the studios allowed on TV. Along with Buster Crabbe's Buck Rogers serial. And Gene Autry's *The Phantom Empire*.

However, they helped because I gravitated toward them: the Westerns outnumbered film SF ten to one.

🍷▲🍷 GREGORY BENFORD. The difference between Japan and China. China is halfway in the Middle Ages and halfway in modern times. With men with pick and shovel in place of tractors, and medicine being Qi Gong. Yet with satellites launched and heart transplants done.

On the other hand, Japan is Modern Art, minimalism. In fact, I hear many Modern Artists from the 1890s to the 1920s got their ideas from them. And artists are continually being inspired by the Japanese. Taking their motifs out of a context of tranquility and putting them into a context of boredom.

🍷▲🍷 E.B. FROHVET. I wouldn't want to make the decisions you do as claims adjustor. Decisions to not pay some poor shlep's insurance claim. Having said that, you have made sound and Solomonic decisions.




Henry's parents are going to have to




get psychiatric and custodial help for him. And recognize that he is not all with it. I usually suspect people exaggerate what professional care can do. But if it is for anyone, it certainly is for Henry. As opposed to making him a consultant, which is not going to help him much.

Also, I agree when you gave Xavier's insurance money to his kids. In fact, I think it is the best decision you presented. At least Xavier acknowledged his kids.

On the other hand, I am not so certain about your decision regarding Alfred. There was no evidence Alfred committed suicide. I would have insisted that Bridget wait the seven years and see whether Alfred turns up. Then re-apply.

Of course, as you said, there is no science in determining these decisions. Just prayer.




   **NO PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK.** You stupid fool, Guy, for getting yourself in a precarious position like that on Hanging Rock. Of course, I have gotten myself into many stupid fool situations. And they are not on some mountain I have not climbed before; they are in regular automobile traffic.

   **MIKE RESNICK.** We are in a quandary here. Danish, pastries when you have diabetes? On the other hand, you would not be Mike Resnick if you didn't eat vast amounts of food. People are attracted to you because you are the big, generous man with a big, generous appetite.




However, I am glad to see that you do not seem to be eating as much as in past years. And you can't do without sleep like you did in past years. Old Age is nature's way of telling you to slow down.

Of course, people have said that

about death.

   **TERRY JEEVES.** An authentic Feghoot. "A Thyme Machine." But you must remember this: "A Thool and his Bunny are soon Smarted." I had a story that went with that. Fortunately, I won't tell it here. Also, the motto of the Trojan War is "Beware of Gifts bearing Greeks." And, of course, the Trojan War was the "Plaster of Paris."

Sooooorryyyy, I couldn't help myself.

   **THE CLINK.** Oh, obedience to authority is natural. It is just how much obedience. In the clink, where you were, entirely too much obedience is demanded. Which is why there has to be bars and guards with clubs to enforce it.

THE END



This was an ad for Uncle Ben's converted rice