

BIP

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BLACK IRON PRISON

COMMON WALLS

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

I am not here to tell you about Discordianism. I am also not here to tell you that I am not here to tell you about Discordianism, and that you should figure it out for yourself. We have personnel for that. I am not here to tell you about *the* Black Iron Prison, and I am *definitely* not here to tell you about *your* Black Iron Prison. That's on you. I am not here to talk about my experience as a contributor to this project; I expect you'll have your own as a reader. I am here for facts, and only those regarding the BIP2013 (hereby referred to as 'This Thing'). Here are some:

- This Thing has developed over the course of the past few years at www.principiadiscordia.com
- This Thing is the product of many writers and creative minds from across the internet.
- This Thing represents a synthesis of traditional and modern creative processes.
- All contributors to This Thing worked for free, under their own volition. So fuck you.
- This Thing was laid out mostly by hand, from only the following materials:

Paper

Scissors

Black permanent marker

Glue stick

A trial version of an outdated word processing program

A crap printer (including ink)

Hands (people's)

Brains (also people's... At least as far as I know)

The Internet

Thank you, and good luck.

Dimo, TTLC, HMSH, KSC, Steward of the House of G-A-B-Cab, and part time cephalopod.

Foreword by IAN @

What's the Black Iron Prison? Good question. It bubbled up out of the hive mind of people trying to address certain concepts of the *Principia Discordia* from a different point of view. Eventually, the ideas, essays, and rants were collected in a single DIY photocopied pamphlet, and released into the wild. You can find it on the internet, too; just don't confuse it with Philip K Dick's "Black Iron Prison" – though we borrowed the name, we use it in a much different way than he did.

The language of the "BIP", as we began to refer to it, was (often, at least the parts I wrote) structured to point out the otherwise unnoticed limitations of our perceptions, both physically and mentally. It was said that you can never escape the BIP, because it's necessarily made up of all the bits of you that make you the "you" that you are. If you attempt a jailbreak, you end up in another cell. So the task you set is one of architecture and interior design. If you can realize where some of the limitations are, you can shift them if you try hard enough.

At some point, the metaphor got stretched to the point of cracking, and a lot of us got carried away. Some really stupid shit got said, and denounced, and refuted, and we all got a bit wary of taking the BIP further than originally stated. The problem with that is, the way it was described lends itself very easily to "special snowflake" thinking. *My cell is unique to my experiences, which must mean that I am special, too.* Crowley tried saying this in *The Book of Thoth*, that the star you see is different than the star I see, because I am standing in a different place, even if it's only two feet away.

But let's give that the ol' Barstool, shall we? While we can nuance different walls in our BIP to ferret out the minute differences, that's functionally useless. If I point at a boat and say, "hey, look at that boat," you *are* seeing the same boat, even *if* you can pedantically prove an infinitesimal difference. Hofstadter introduced the idea of "high level chunking" when talking about consciousness in *GEB*, and we may be able to apply the same idea here. Some of our experiences are familiar enough to be considered "Common". For instance, let's say a bus crashes on the highway. What happened to each individual on the bus is different, but by and large, they all had the "same" experience, something they can share without too much explanation. You may even be able to identify "sets" of BIP walls. "The Wall of Getting Shot", for example. Or maybe "The Wall of Puking After Drinking Too Much".

If this is starting to sound a lot like tribalistic memes, well... I can't deny the similarities. If you start grouping together experiences at higher and higher levels, you start slapping labels on things like, "The Wall of Liking the New Wave of British Heavy Metal" and "The Wall of People Who Believe in Christ Our Savior". But at that point, things start to get unstable. There comes a point where the "color" of your wall (as in, the kinds of experiences you have had) becomes significantly different than your neighbors'; like when Teal Green becomes Cyan. At that point, the grouping becomes as meaningless a viewpoint as the isolationist one: You're not actually *saying* anything about a person's BIP; and at worst, you're giving misleading information.

So, the key to creating Common Walls seems to be not to rush into an entire wall of commonality, but to carefully determine which bricks and bars share the same properties. Sure, it's hard work, but if you go the easy route, it will transform into bullshit, and ooze between your fingers.

INTRODUCTION

A lot of things come to mind when you hear the word "Discordianism", but most of those words are inspired by terminally stoned people who think the hot dog joke is still funny. This isn't what this book is about. This book is about seeing the world the way it IS, rather than the way you'd like it to be.

Some have called us "The doom & gloom discordians", or "The horrormirth crowd", or "Those horrible bastards at peedee", but most of those are on Facebook and can thus be safely ignored. The impression they have developed - that we are all horror and no mirth - is mistaken; we DO laugh, but it's a different kind of laugh. Not a healthy laugh, granted, but it's a laugh and that counts.

The reason we laugh is that the general level of chaos (and, not coincidentally, stupidity) in the world has reached a point where it can only be described as "poetry in motion". It is a symphony of short-sighted thinking, SNAFUs, and visits from the Fuckup Fairy. Just last week, a Sussex police officer chased himself around for 20 minutes, because the CCTV operator identified *him* as a potential burglar. So when we are criticized for not doing enough for Eris, we merely point out that anything we could do would be redundant. So shut up.

I am not going to talk about the authors of this book...They can, and have, spoken for themselves, as you will shortly see. Instead, I'd like to touch on the environment in which this book was written, principiadiscordia.com. PD was formed in late 2002, under the banner of the pinealists, and quickly melted down. By 2005/2006, PD was taken over by East Coast Hustle, and the truly creative period began.

To understand why this happened, you have to understand East Coast Hustle. He is a lumbering brute of a man who allows unhindered creativity mostly because being a forum Nazi would cut into his busy schedule of drinking Portland and stomping on lesser mortals. He is the absentee slumlord of our little community, and when he does come by, we are very careful to not allow his shadow to touch us. We're no fools, this is not our first rodeo.

In any case, some serious writing was done between 2006 and the present day, by members current and past, resulting in a half-dozen or so books and a quantity of pamphlets and leaflets that would make Leon Trotsky's festering corpse weep openly.

The purpose of most of this writing is and was to assist ourselves in seeing the world with the fewest amount of filters. We are neither conservative nor liberal, at least in the modern sense of those two words, because both of those concepts are monstrously thick filters that don't allow you to see *anything*. Nor are we religiously affiliated; our members represent every major Western religion, plus some knockoffs of Eastern religions that would make their founders gnash their rotten dead teeth in fury. No, we have no populist agenda, but rather a driving need to push your face into the poop you left on the carpet and call you a bad dog. Because you are, you know.

This is the part where an introduction would normally wrap up. The clock tells me it's 9AM, and that I have things to do. The pills tell me, "There are no clocks", so I shall continue just a little longer.

As you read through the horrible drivel and brain-damaged filth that follows this introduction, more than a few things you trip across will make you angry. They will offend your filters. This, of course, is the entire point of the exercise. Those filters you wear that tell you what's Good & Right and what's Bad & Wrong are bad for you, in the same manner that The Future is bad for you.

So we wrote this to help you with those filters, and to help you with The Future. We, ourselves, have abandoned both, and ran away to the late 1970s, and we only kept the Good Stuff. We would have taken you with us, but there wasn't room in the time machine for all of you, and frankly, we never really liked you anyway.

And here is the Good Stuff.

The Good Reverend Roger

MEMETIC FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

THE GOOD REVEREND ROGER

You hear people ask it all the time... "How can so many people be so *stupid*, all the time?" Well, we here at *SHUT UP*¹ may have found the answer, or at least AN answer.

When people become too prosperous for starvation to present a real threat, they tend to get lazy. It's a hardwired response... If I don't need to find food *right now*, I can stop worrying. Or even thinking.

But since humans still move around, day to day, there has to be some form of cognition going on. The human response to this is *memetic false consciousness*, or MFC. What MFC advocates espouse is that human consciousness isn't real, but rather is simulated by the brain being programmed with a series of viral ideas. Produce stimulus A, get result B, based on the memes that person has absorbed.

MFC advocates generally tend to believe that *all* humans are run by MFC. I personally reject this, on account of Rudyard Kipling and Papa Hemmingway... But I DO believe that it is a state that many people can - and do - fall into. Sort of an "auto-pilot", if you will.

This explains a great deal of behavior. People in this state tend to reject or ignore any signal that conflicts with, or isn't part of, their meme set. This is why you can't change a tea-bagger's mind, or the mind of a new-age bliss ninny. Provide the most concrete argument in the world, and they will reject it out of hand... At best, they'll agree that you have a point, and then an hour later, they're right back where they started.

It also explains why people like Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore are so influential... They provide the memes and the reinforcement for the memes that allow people to stop thinking.

The really interesting part is that when reality conflicts with their meme set, they will distort their perception of reality to remove the conflict, and then repeat the distorted signal to people who share their meme set. This isn't done consciously, for the most part. It's automatic, like a shark reacts reflexively and without thought².

This bad signal gets amplified by each person who can receive and process it (i.e., those people with the same meme set, or one similar enough to cope), until you have a tidal wave of stupidity heading for the beach... And by "the beach", I mean *you*.

MFC also explains why converts are so zealous. They have this bright, shiny new meme that outshines the other memes in their mental mesh, so *everything* gets filtered through it, including other, conflicting memes. This is so powerful that it can act as a filter in the same manner as drugs and alcohol... Thus also protecting the person from having to deal with the signal overload that we deal with, each and every day.

Now, the really hilarious, laugh-till-you-scream bit is, there's no cure. The only way to influence people employing MFC is to provide new memes³, which may deal with one behavior, but further muddies the water, intelligence-wise. Swallow a spider to catch the meme, so to speak. The most we can hope for, and the overall goal of The Institute, is to create memes that completely short out more than one other meme in a given person, thus reducing the net amount of barriers they have to protect themselves from actual thought.

More on this last bit in part 4.

Or Kill Me.

¹ *SHUT UP* is the Journal of the Institute for Applied Horrorology.

² Sharks have tiny brains, and thus only require 3 memes: Eat, Eat More, and Go Batshit When You Smell Blood.

³ The idea of memetic false consciousness, for example.

Faith in American supremacy has always been founded in the American Dream; the belief that the system that benefits the rich will benefit YOU some day, because in America, anyone can get rich enough to own a house and a nice car. The American Dream has been largely mythical from the get-go, but since the 1970's it's been a lie which is getting harder and harder to maintain. The people are becoming aware, and aren't as dully complacent as the media wants us to continue thinking they are.

We have these various lunatic fringe groups who are absolutely convinced that they represent the majority, because that's what the media has told us all. But their numbers don't back it up. The real Average American is not a complacent sow parked in front of American Idol; the real Average American is working too many hours for not enough pay, is upside-down on a mortgage that he's not sure he's going to be able to pay this month, has inadequate health insurance, is in favor of universal health care, eats poorly and is overweight and feels bad but is too damn tired all the time to do anything about it, does not give a shit whether his gay neighbors can get married, is afraid his job (which he hates) is going to be lost due to offshoring, and is helplessly outraged at the influence corporations have over the government.

The only thing keeping them in check is the carefully media-fostered belief that the rest of America consists of fat, happy, bigoted consumers who support the status quo, and that there are so many of them that we can't do anything to change things. When something big like Occupy comes along, the media does its level best to make sure the people involved are portrayed as radicals, hippies, spoiled trust-fund kids, anything but regular people you can identify with, because if you can see yourself in a movement you might join it.

Truth is, the them we're so afraid of is us.

Niger

More Walls (Part I.)

by LMVo

We have spoken, at some length, about how the reality you experience is not the entirety of existence. We've showed that there are (quite necessary) limitations you self-impose on your perceptions, limitations that are hard-wired (biologically) into your senses, and limitations of ignorance based on your life experiences (the building blocks of how you understand the universe).

The point of all this was to slap you into realizing that what you see, hear, etc. is not only an extremely small part of the enormity of reality, but is also mostly a false narrative, constructed by your brain in a desperate effort to make sense of what's going on around you. Hopefully, you were prompted to take a second, third, or (preferably) *always another* look at what's being presented to you as "reality" ... because now you'd be able to see the walls you've built around you, you can know that you don't know, you can start looking around corners, asking the questions.

So there's a nice little metaphor there, which upsets you by showing how you're in a cell, but gives you hope that you have the ability to change the walls, that you have the power to choose how you experience reality (up to a point). And that's an empowering, self-motivating, positive message, no matter how the material is presented.

If only that were the end of it.

To leave it like that is the same as saying that economic theory is sound because it works of the premise that people act rationally. The model works just fine when looked at in a vacuum. The problem comes when you introduce it as a valid process in the real world. Because, in truth, you're not the one building your walls. At least half, as we've discussed elsewhere, is biologically imposed. You can't see what your eyes aren't built to see, and all that. So we have about half a cell to work with before we even get started.

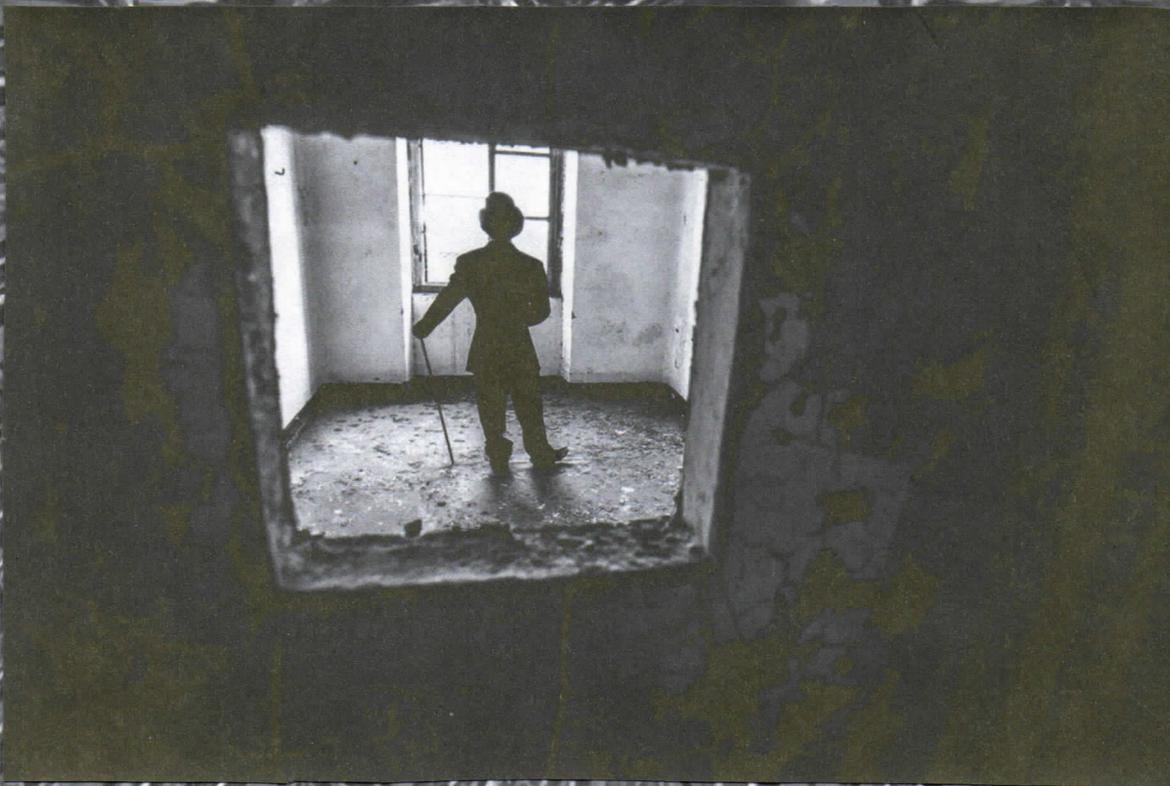
So then you have to consider everything that went into your head when you were growing up and didn't even consider self-reflecting on enough to ask how you know what you know. You had no choice where you were born, and right off, that's going to shape a big part of you, whether you're a Hindu in Pakistan, or a Baptist in Peru, or a Jew in Texas. I'm not saying those walls are immobile, but just talk to an ex-Catholic atheist sometime, and see how much of those walls remain.

But even if you do allow for biology, and even if you do manage to overcome your birth environment, that's only work you did to your past. And look at what you cleared out. Peer pressure from your friends growing up. Teachers' telling you what was important and what was not. The radio, playing the songs you were supposed to like, and playing them anyway so they got stuck in your head and are now "nostalgic" when you're at a retro night at a club which tells you what's fashionable. Magazines that showed you pictures of people they called "attractive". Newspapers that taught you what national issues were serious. That's a lot of external bullshit that's telling you what's "right" and "wrong". And you kind of just went with it, didn't you? Didn't even realize how deeply your perception of the world changed.

So now, yeah, now you feel that you understand that what was fed to you for all those years was propaganda. Some of it might have been what can be called 'good signal', but the majority was 'bad signal' – ideas and messages that could be simply wrong, or self-harming (either physically or mentally), but in general, they were messages that built up walls you didn't even know were there. You didn't put them there, they were forced on you. But you get that. You know that the media manipulates you. You can see the entirety of bad signal you accepted in the past. You're better than that now.

There's a problem. It's pretty much *all* bad signal now. While you've been busy tearing down your old cell walls to redecorate the prison the way you want it, the world you live in has been building up new ones every minute of the day. And you *still* don't notice what's going on, because the bad signal has much, much better carriers these days. The signal is now incredibly good at matching the environment, and building walls that *almost* look like the ones you've been building for yourself. And then it turns out that the walls you're building now are the ones that they *wanted* you to build. Keep that up long enough and you don't have to be manipulated to act against your better interests anymore, because *your* interests are *their* interests.

And so you stand there in the world, looking around with your supposed 'enlightened' eyes, wondering why everything's going to shit.



He is happy whom circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who suits his temper to any circumstance.

David Hume

ARE YOU READY FOR... THE CURRENT WEIRD TIMES?

THE GOOD REV. ROGER

Ten years ago or so, I started writing about preparing for The Coming Weird Times. Well, they're here. They snuck up on us while we weren't paying attention, while we were squabbling and writing psycho letters and other shit.

ARE you prepared? Are you ready for The Finals™?

I'm not asking if you're ready to take the world on, to prank our way to a new tomorrow. While still fun, that sort of thing has limited usefulness these days. Instead, I'm asking if you're prepared to stand on your hind legs and remain true to your mutant self, in a world in which mutation is a crime.

This is an important question, given that the future is here, *and that the future is bad for you.*

There's too much information, too much bad signal, and too much pressure. And while that's *still better* than "not enough", it's still TOO MUCH. Something's got to give, and it's up to you to make sure that something isn't YOU. The singularity has arrived, or is at least very close. Now, by "singularity", I of course, am *not* referring to the hippie-ass transhumanist bullshit, but its real definition: The point at which making reasonable assumptions about the future is impossible, because the growth of technology or information has exceeded our ability to keep track of that growth.

What does that mean, exactly?

Well, for one thing, it means that you cannot go for a day in today's world without somehow benefiting from the slavery of others. No matter what you buy, some portion of it was grown, harvested, manufactured, or mined by slaves. It is now almost utterly impossible to live by any standard of morality that Ralph Waldo Emerson would have even *recognized*, let alone endorsed...And morality is *important*. Not the fake morality spewed forth by the world's various fucked up religions, but the common morality of *not profiting from the misery of others.*

Another example is that it is almost impossible to gather factual data about world or even local events. A grand total of 5 media companies control all the news most of you receive, and none of it is trustworthy. It's a tsunami of bad signal, and this is *deliberate*. You can't make intelligent (IE, dangerous) decisions without solid data, after all...And They don't have to censor news, they just have to "improve" it, or merely drown it out with volumes of trivia about Kim Kardashian or whatever.

It is also important to note that your own electronics and software are not entirely under your control. The very operating system I am using on this computer sends all manner of information to its manufacturer, and it receives "updates" whether or not I want them. My cell phone has a GPS installed in it, even though I didn't ask for or pay for it. It's just that, because *I* didn't pay for it, *I* can't use it. So who is?

Sound paranoid? Well, I'm here to tell you that paranoia is no longer possible. "Paranoia" is the *delusion* that they're out to get you...If they really ARE, it's not paranoia. And while They don't even

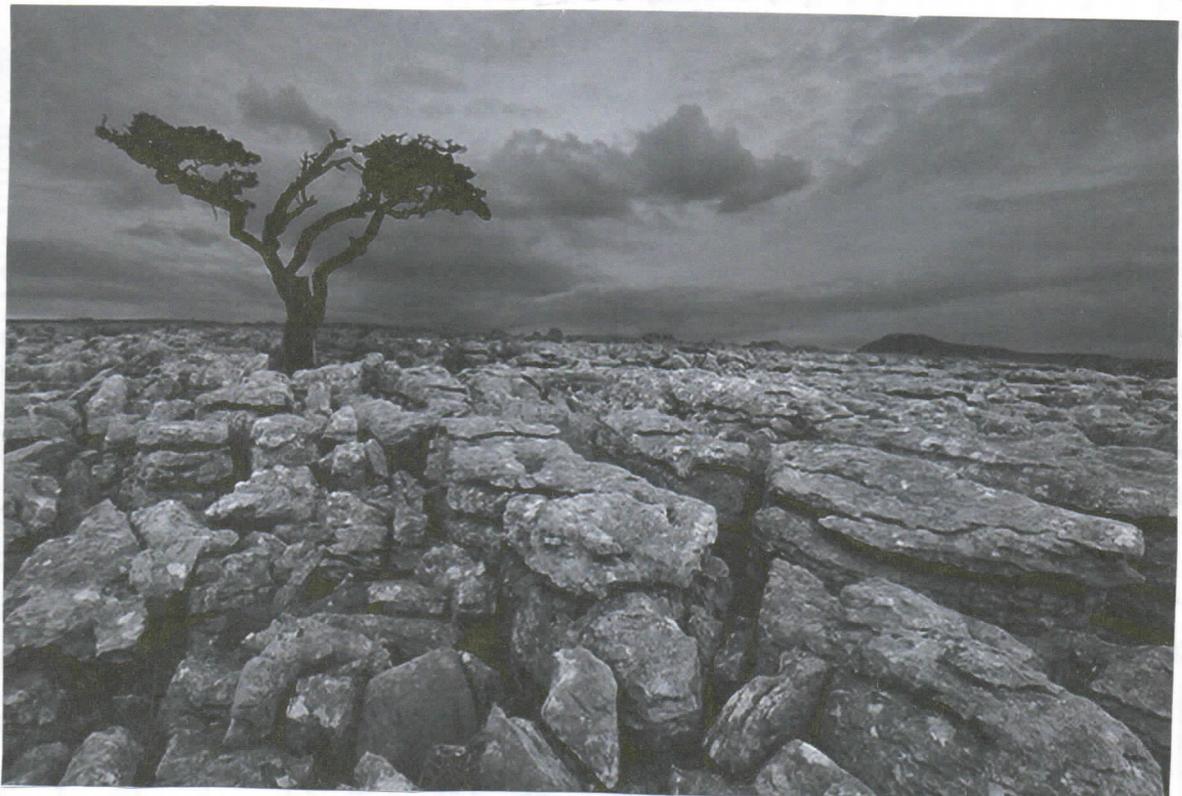
know you exist, they are still out to get you. A rancher does not hate or even identify with one cow that he's shipping to the slaughterhouse, *but the cows are just as doomed as they would be if he did*. So while it's nothing personal to THEM, it certainly is to YOU.

I think most of us agree that you can't stop The Machine™. It's too Goddamn big, and throwing yourself under its clattering tracks will accomplish nothing but to give it free lubrication, as you become the Person of Interest™ de jour.

Instead, the focus has to be on how to maintain your individuality in this gigantic Black Iron Prison. I know that's supposed to be a term describing your *internal* state, but it is now also an *external* condition.

So I think maybe it's time to examine that external component, in the same manner that we have examined the internal component. And I think we should start now.

Or Kill Me Some More.



THE EXPLOITATION CYCLE

Secret Agent Garbo / [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] / [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Most, if not all, of the stuff you own is tainted with the blood and suffering of other human beings, from your phone to your M&Ms. Why? Because modern Western life is inherently tied up in a global cycle of violence, poverty, environmental destruction, and de facto slavery. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Your demand for cheap shit is heeded by companies, who proceed to wring every single ounce of profit they can from the product, their supply feeds your demand, and the cycle starts over again. You know who *really* pays for your crap? The people who actually produce it, from the raw materials to the finished product. They pay for it with their sweat, blood, and sometimes their lives. All so the Western world can keep on turning, uninterrupted on its way to hell and dragging the rest of the planet along for the ride. [REDACTED]

(oh, and here, go take this survey to see how many slaves work for you: slaveryfootprint.org/survey)

[REDACTED]

Let's look at how your electronics are tied to the cycle, because in 2012, you need them. Society as it exists in the West requires that you have a cell phone (enough so that you can receive a subsidy for even smart phones) and at least access to the internet, even if it's through your library rather than your own computer. Otherwise your ability to function in the 21st century is compromised - job applications are often online-only, there are lawyers who no longer use phones to make contact with clients, you need *some* sort of phone and cell phones are generally cheaper and a better buy, etc.

Raw material: Coltan

[REDACTED]

Although the Democratic Republic of Congo is generally a low-level supplier (only providing 13% of the world's supply in 2009, although the actual numbers are hard to pin down), the resource-rich DRC sits on top of 64% of the world's supply of coltan, an ore of a rare metal called tantalum which is vital to the electronics industry and used in everything from cell phones to nuclear reactors^{1,2,3}. The DRC has been war-torn since it gained its independence in 1960 from Belgium, thanks to Western powers interfering for their own benefit, two invasions by Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda in the 90s (who proceeded to massacre the Congolese, loot the country, and mass export materials they had had no previous known sources for, but the DRC was known to have significant deposits of), and then the spin-off civil wars, conflicts, and foreign intervention that continue to plague the DRC today⁴.

The Congolese government has been unable and sometimes unwilling to properly control the mining of many minerals (including coltan), in part because the Second Congo War is still unofficially going on (and claiming about 1,500 people a day in addition to the 900,000-5,400,000 it claimed before "officially" ending in 2003) and/or because officials benefit from the process, meaning that multinational companies have had to use "local suppliers" (read: war lords and rebels) to get the raw materials needed for their goods. The conditions in the mines the war lords run are dangerous and the wages - which workers don't always get consistently - are piss-poor and unlivable⁵. But tantalum is valuable and estimates suggest millions of dollars a *month* are made by specifically coltan exports by these local suppliers, fueling the conflict that makes "...extensive use of child soldiers and labor, indenture labor, gender-based violence and mutilation against women and children as well as [indiscriminate] and unlawful killings"⁶.

[REDACTED]

Your phone? Your demand for a Mac that only costs you a grand instead of the +\$4000 it would if it was made in the US? Costs the lives and the safety of an entire nation, and of late, the DRC has been even more unstable, making tracking of mineral origins even more difficult than they already were⁷.

This, of course, is not even touching the effects of the mining on the environment, which are severe. The highest concentrations of deforestation in Africa are in the areas where coltan mining takes place, and the DRC's Kahuzi Biega National Park, which sits on top of a very large lode of coltan, has suffered large losses in their large mammal populations, particularly elephants and the already endangered lowland gorilla, due to hunting by the thousands of people who have moved to the park to mine⁸.

Despite the fact that the DRC specifically provides a relatively small portion of the world's tantalum, there is nevertheless a special connection between your electronics and the violence in the DRC, as most of the DRC's tantalum goes to the Chinese electronics industry⁹.

Some companies are aware of the costs of DRC coltan and try to ensure they buy conflict-free materials (emphasis on "try", although scientists are working to find a properly effective method to tell where a specific shipment of coltan comes from), but other do not and knowingly purchase conflict coltan, fail to ensure the whole chain is clean, or provide incredibly shoddy arguments as to why they can't *possibly* be buying conflict minerals¹⁰. The whole process is shady at best, with cross-border smuggling, corruption, lies, and intermixing of conflict-free and conflict coltan even before it leaves Africa (this is the source of some of the discrepancies in the statistics, as official Congolese numbers are far smaller than the import records of DRC coltan kept by other nations, not to mention the probable inflation of coltan export numbers of neighboring countries)^{11 12}.

Once the coltan leaves Africa, 80% of it goes to three processors, America's Cabot Corporation, Germany's H.C. Starck, and the Chinese Ningxia Non-ferrous Metals Smeltery, the latter of which is the primary consumer of Central Africa's coltan¹³. After the ores are processed, they are sent abroad to be made into capacitors by companies in the US, South Korea, Israel, and other countries, before being returned to China, where they are put into circuit boards¹⁴.

Which brings us to how you participate (however unwillingly, given the lack of alternatives) in the exploitation of Chinese factory workers. [REDACTED]

When one of the best factories to work in in China has their workers sign an anti-suicide pledge and had to set up safety nets after fourteen suicides in 2010, there's something incredibly *wrong*, don't you think^{15 16 17}? That factory, called Foxconn, works with the who's who of the electronics world and produces 50% of all the world's consumer electronics has been the focus of or included in a number of reports by China Labor Watch over the last few years, and although there are efforts (of questionable effectiveness since the worker loses either way) being made to improve things, conditions and pay are atrocious at best^{18 19}.

The US State Department suspects that there is actual forced labor in Chinese factories, but the vast majority of the exploitation happening in Chinese factories is, to use the old anarchist term, "wage slavery"²⁰. Wage slavery is when the life of the earner depends on the pittance of the money they get in an immediate and total way. If you quit or lose your job, you are fucked forever, which means that you are forced to tolerate whatever bullshit your boss throws your way, no matter how bad. You have no other choice.

The situation in these Chinese factories is this turned up to eleven.

[REDACTED]

Let's start with overtime and pay, before we touch anything else. Workers at Foxconn log in about eighty hours of overtime these days (which is a vast improvement over the numbers before 2010), but again, Foxconn is one of the best factories in China to work for and other factories work their people for much longer, coming in at 100-130 hours of overtime during the normal season and 150-180 hours during peak production periods²¹. A lot of this overtime is involuntary, despite the claim to the contrary, and a lot more of it is "voluntary" in that the workers need extra hours to have something resembling a living wage²².

Quote

"The minimum wage...does not meet the living costs of its workers. Workers cannot earn a living wage from normal working hours alone, and must work excessive overtime hours in order to earn enough money to survive. In Hongkai Electronics for example, workers' minimum monthly wage was \$138 USD in October 2010. There was a \$6 USD deduction for dormitory accommodations, a \$40.50 USD deduction for food, a utilities fee deduction, and a \$15.30 USD deduction for social insurance, which left \$76.20 USD. If workers have other expenses or financial responsibilities, such as vocational education classes or financial support of their parents (one of the main reasons migrant workers seek work in cities), it would be impossible to meet their living costs with only \$76.20 USD²³."

Please note that the above is a very conservative estimate and that most workers' living costs are much more.

[REDACTED]

Certain kinds of workers - students and "dispatch workers" (China's version of temporary workers) - are even more vulnerable. Student laborers (also called interns) in Foxconn's factory were not insured and were regularly cheated out of four hours' worth of pay while completing the same types of work as everyone else²⁴. They and dispatch workers are paid piecemeal, are out of luck if they're injured, have no way of seeking redress for labor violations, and don't get even the half-assed accommodations that Foxconn's actual workers get²⁵.

The conditions in which employees work are appalling. There is not more than very basic safety training (if that), protective gear is either shoddy (masks that do little to prevent workers from breathing in metal dust) or the use of it is discouraged (gloves interfere with efficiency), and the chemicals and sound levels are hazardous to the workers' health^{26 27}. They stand in the same position for ten hours a day, with one ten minute break, controlled access to restrooms, and a piddly half-hour for lunch (remember, there are hundreds of people to feed in that half an hour - how many people go hungry because they couldn't get to the food soon enough?)²⁸. Even a slight mistake by an employee often results in a humiliatingly public lecture a supervisor, resulting in a sense of being dehumanized. One employee went so far as to say, "As a Foxconn worker, I cannot treat myself as a human being"²⁹.

[REDACTED]

The conditions in which they live are equally bad, with jam-packed and filthy living quarters and their entire lives are controlled^{30 31 32}.

Quote

"Foxconn extends the assembly line from production workshop into workers' living spaces, and continues to utilize a disciplinary management model in the dormitory to drive down costs to the greatest limit. The dormitory labor system ensures workers spend their off-hours just preparing for another round of production. Food and drink, sleep, and other aspects of workers' daily lives are scheduled just like the production lines. Regarding food, "you must forget that it has flavor." Living in the dormitory "resembles living in a prison." Workers are not allowed to cook, and cannot receive friends or families overnight.³³"

It's highly unlikely you own something that hasn't been touched by someone who hasn't been demeaned into a drone, who goes from one shift to the next with absolutely zero hope of a better life³⁴. I'm not even going to start on what the electronics industry in China does to the environment. That discussion would add another three pages to this essay, which is awful long already. But suffice it to say that the disposal of the waste that results from the process is not well handled and are contaminating farmland, ground water, and rivers in

the region^{35 36}.

Foxconn is regarded, even by critics, as the best electronics factory to work for in China. What does this say about the lives of employees of other companies? How many people are suffering what kind of conditions in order to crank out computers and phones and gaming consoles and other electronic staples of Western society? Think about it.

Your things are very, very expensive. But it's not *you* who pays the price. The price of your shit is paid in the rest of the world in child soldiers, rape, murder, suicide, slavery, destroyed ecosystems, and poisoned rivers. Their price is the lives of other human beings.

But avoiding exploitation goods is nigh impossible. You *need* a cellphone and access to the internet and clothing and any number of other things to function in the West, and you want shit like chocolate and coffee (both of which are connected to child and slave labor). But until the day everyone is willing and able to pay the price of non-exploitation goods, we're stuck.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- ¹ Andrew Munn, "Computer Industry Impacts on the Environment and Society: Coltan Mining in Democratic Republic of the Congo", n.d., http://sitemaker.umich.edu/section002group3/coltan_mining_in_democratic_republic_of_the_congo (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ² Adam Elliott-Cooper, "The Anti Imperial Congo," Southern Times, n.d., http://www.southernimesafrica.com/news_article.php?id=7256&title=The%20Anti%20Imperial%20Congo (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ³ "Faced With a Gun, What Can You Do?": War and the Militarisation of Mining in Eastern Congo (Global Witness, July 2009), 60, http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/report_en_final_0.pdf (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ⁴ Elliott-Cooper, "The Anti Imperial Congo."
- ⁵ Congo's Bloody Coltan (Pulitzer Center, 2006), <http://pulitzercenter.org/video/congos-bloody-coltan> (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ⁶ Tiffany Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection (Project 2049 Institute, n.d.), 2, http://project2049.net/documents/china_and_congos_coltan_connection.pdf (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ⁷ Ed Stoddard and Joe Bavier, "Congo unrest threatens push to curb conflict minerals trade," Reuters, July 18, 2012, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/18/congo-democratic-miners-idINL6E8IDCGU20120718> (accessed July 24, 2012).
- ⁸ Munn, "Computer Industry Impacts on the Environment and Society: Coltan Mining in Democratic Republic of the Congo."
- ⁹ Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection.
- ⁹ Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection.
- ¹⁰ "Faced With a Gun, What Can You Do?": War and the Militarisation of Mining in Eastern Congo, 60–64.
- ¹¹ Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection.
- ¹² "Faced With a Gun, What Can You Do?": War and the Militarisation of Mining in Eastern Congo.
- ¹³ Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection, 3.
- ¹⁴ Ma, China and Congo's Coltan Connection, 4.
- ¹⁵ Johnny Evans, "Life in the iPhone factories: Apple suppliers still breaking labor laws, report," Computerworld, June 28, 2012, <http://blogs.computerworld.com/macintosh/20609/life-iphone-factories-apple-suppliers-still-breaking-labor-laws-report> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ¹⁶ Xian Chiang-Waren, "Beyond Foxconn: More Dirt on the Factories Making Your iPhone," Mother Jones, July 19, 2012, <http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2012/07/apple-exploits-throughout-supply-chain-in-china> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ¹⁷ Austin Ramzy, "Chinese Factory Under Scrutiny As Suicides Mount," Time, May 26, 2010, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1991620,00.html> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ¹⁸ Pun Ngai, Apple's Dream, Foxconn's Nightmare: Suicide and the Loves of Chinese Workers, n.d., <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Public%20Sociology.%20Live/Pun%20Ngai/PunNgai.Suicide%20or%20Muder.pdf> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ¹⁹ Poornima Gupta and Edwin Chan, "Apple, Foxconn set new standard for Chinese workers," Reuters (San Francisco, March 30, 2012), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/30/us-apple-foxconn-idUSBRE82S19720120330> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ²⁰ Bureau of Public Affairs Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, Trafficking in Persons Report 2011 Country Narratives -- Countries A Through F, Report (US State Department, June 24, 2011), 60, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164231.htm> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ²¹ Beyond Foxconn: Deplorable Working Conditions Characterize Apple's Entire Supply Chain (China Labor Watch, June 27, 2012), https://www.motherjones.com/files/clw_beyond_foxconn.pdf (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ²² Ngai, Apple's Dream, Foxconn's Nightmare: Suicide and the Loves of Chinese Workers.
- ²³ Tragedies of Globalization: The Truth Behind Electronics Sweatshops (China Labor Watch, July 12, 2011), <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/pdf/20110712.pdf> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ²⁴ "Follow Up on Foxconn," China Labor Watch, n.d., <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/pro/proshow-127.html> (accessed July 25, 2012).
- ²⁵ Tragedies of Globalization: The Truth Behind Electronics Sweatshops, 6.
- ²⁶ Beyond Foxconn: Deplorable Working Conditions Characterize Apple's Entire Supply Chain, 40.
- ²⁷ Ngai, Apple's Dream, Foxconn's Nightmare: Suicide and the Loves of Chinese Workers.
- ²⁸ Tragedies of Globalization: The Truth Behind Electronics Sweatshops.
- ²⁹ "Follow Up on Foxconn."
- ³⁰ Beyond Foxconn: Deplorable Working Conditions Characterize Apple's Entire Supply Chain.
- ³¹ Chiang-Waren, "Beyond Foxconn."
- ³² Ngai, Apple's Dream, Foxconn's Nightmare: Suicide and the Loves of Chinese Workers.
- ³³ Ngai, Apple's Dream, Foxconn's Nightmare: Suicide and the Loves of Chinese Workers.
- ³⁴ Tragedies of Globalization: The Truth Behind Electronics Sweatshops.
- ³⁵ Thomson Iain, "A tenth of Chinese farmland polluted by heavy metals," The Register, November 8, 2011, http://www.theregister.co.uk/2011/11/08/tenth_chinese_farmland_polluted/ (accessed July 26, 2012).
- ³⁶ "Accusations Of Heavy Metal Pollution Leveled At China's Electronics Industry," China CSR, May 4, 2010, <http://www.chinacsr.com/en/2010/05/04/7573-accusations-of-heavy-metal-pollution-leveled-at-chinas-electronics-industry/> (accessed July 26, 2012).

Have you ever noticed how the more people there are in any one spot the stupider they get? It's a strange sort of effect. People start to feed off of each other's bad ideas. Sure sometimes you come up with some good ideas in collaboration, but just as often, if not more so, the overall intelligence is diminished.

The Problem seems, to me, to be twofold.

The first is that everyone wants to belong. Something in our brain just clicks on and we stop existing as an individual and start acting as a tribe. It's instinctual. Being in a group can be important. We are, after all, a social species and being alone is not particularly good for us. There is also protection in numbers, which can be pretty important when you're chasing a lion out of your village.

Well, our villages have gotten very large. So large, in fact, that we're often alone with a million other lonely people. This, perhaps, makes us want to belong even more. So we form our own groups, our own tribes, with common values, songs, social rituals, lingo, etc.

There's a problem with tribes though- they separate us from people who aren't in our specific tribe. "Those guys are different. They don't have the same values as us. We don't like them. Fuck those guys. They're the reason why everything is wrong in the world." It's kind of like those guys in that political party who are completely whacked out on the Kool-Aid lately. You know which ones I'm talking about.

The other part is the lingo, the buzzwords, the fnords, as it were. Language is good. It helps us communicate important ideas. To survive, even. But language also shapes the way we think. Words have nuance. Those nuances, while intended to give more detail in fewer words, can also be used to manipulate the way you think.

Let's take that political party into consideration again. You ever talk to one of them? You just CAN'T make them see reason. To agree with you is to disagree with the tribe, and the tribe's teachings. They all agree with each other on everything. They may change their minds, but only when the shamans change theirs. Their politics have been homogenized by the shamans, through these nuances. These shamans of the political sphere have very effective incantations. The tribes-folk look at everyone else and think that everyone has an agenda but them. Agenda this agenda that. They can't even see their own hypocrisy. They are incapable of it. You ever notice they repeat the same phrases mindlessly (and it's always a phrase that one of the shamans once said on TV)? If you've talked to one, you know what they're going to say down to the phrase. This is because their thinking has been hijacked by the words that the shamans put in their heads. Like a catchy tunes that you can't stop humming. Thought gets replaced with computer programming. The good thing about programs though is that they can be deleted. The bad thing is that it's not very easy to do. The tribesman must realize that a shaman has put them under a spell before they can attempt to become an individual again.

And as far as that political party goes, if you think I was just talking about the one that opposes yours, you need to reread this.

It's time to undo the shaman's spell. It's just trickery anyway.

CHASING GREEN BUTTERFLIES

Many, many years ago there lived a man named "Knows-Nothing."

"Knows-Nothing" lived in a large but sheltered village, whose name has long been forgotten. What is known, according to the tales, is that the people of this village practiced a very peculiar set of customs. All their days were spent chasing green butterflies.

"Knows-Nothing" was named such, simply, because the other villagers felt it described him so perfectly. To some regards that description may have had a degree of truthfulness, but one thing was certain: he knew nothing of chasing green butterflies. But then again, what else is there, right?

One summer afternoon, while "Knows-Nothing" walked the nearby wood, he came across a "Horrible Truth." It was said that what "Knows-Nothing" saw was, indeed, so horrible that it caused him to lose consciousness for three days and two nights.

"Knows-Nothing" awoke in a daze. Thinking it all a dream, he was maddened once again upon seeing the "Horrible Truth" lying there beside him. The "Horrible Truth" was real. "The village must be warned!" he said to himself, as he gathered his sanity and ran back to town.

Dimo, TTLC, HMSH, KSC.

"Knows-Nothing" arrived in a blaze, hollering as loud as he could, "I have seen the Horrible Truth!" Running and yelling, he made his way through the village. "The Horrible Truth is out there!" He bellowed at the top of his lungs. However, no one paid him any attention, and they all went on blissfully chasing green butterflies. Perceiving him a fool, no one could be bothered to listen.

"Knows-Nothing" set up a booth in the village square, and asked people as they passed: "Hello, sir. Are you aware of the "Horrible Truth"? Excuse me, ma'am! Have you seen the recent studies about the "Horrible Truth"? I'm sure if you reviewed the information, you would find..." Again, he was greatly ignored. That is, until he was told to move along by one of the elders. He was making it difficult for others to chase green butterflies.

Having seen the peoples' reaction, "Knows-Nothing" got a grip on himself. "No one is going to listen to a raving lunatic," he said, "maybe I can *explain* to them the "Horrible Truth" calmly. I'll use some graphs and charts and a power-point with bulleted lists of facts and citations! No one would deny actual evidence! Right?"

No one would listen to anything "Knows-Nothing" said, despite the fact that he had seen the "Horrible Truth," which was far more horrible than he could even understand himself. "Knows-Nothing" knew one thing, if the people weren't prepared for the "Horrible Truth", it would surely destroy them all. "I *need* to keep telling them! They *must* listen, whether they want to or not!" And he stormed into town once more.

"You listen here, you butterfly-chasing morons! I have seen the "Horrible Truth!" he yelled, "And if you stupid assholes don't do something about it, "The Horrible Truth" is going to kill us all! Now, you better listen up!"

The people of the village looked up at "Knows-Nothing," in shock at the sudden outburst.

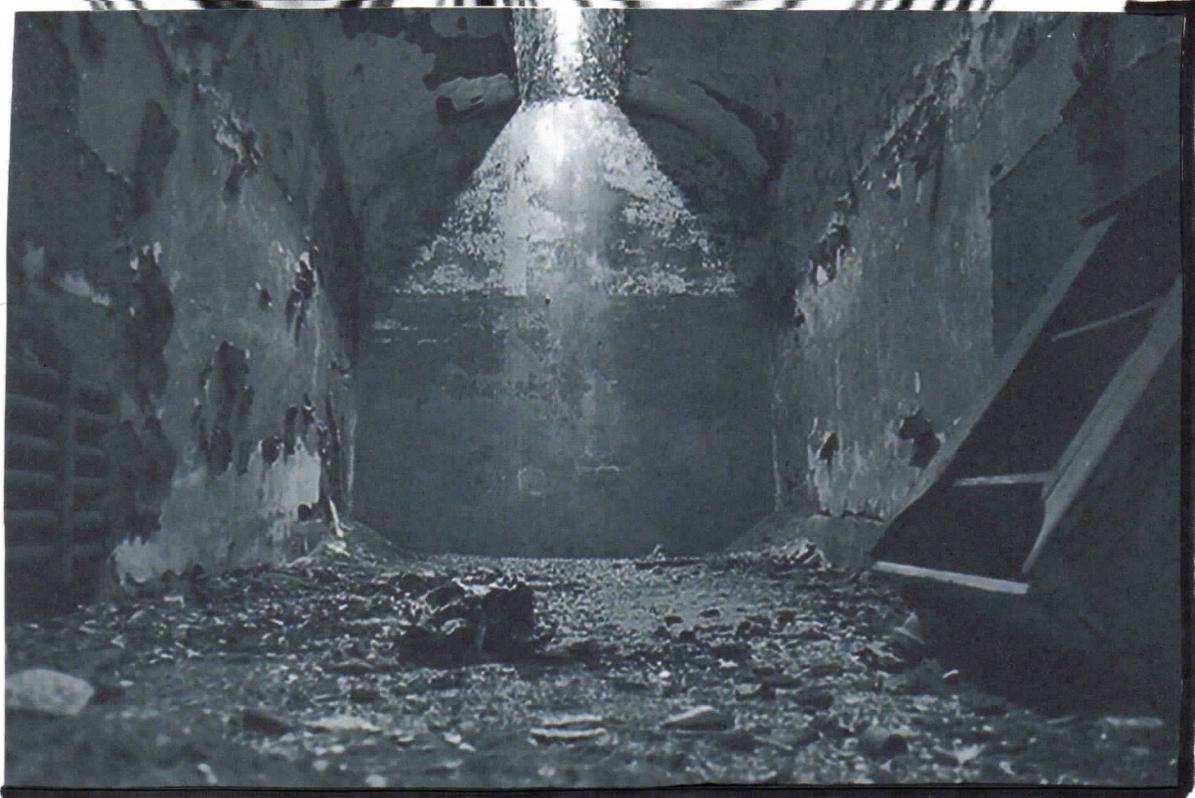
"Excuse me." A nearby elder approached, "All this talk about "The Horrible Truth," well, it got me thinking, you see..." He paused...

"...And I think we're going to have to ask you to leave, you're being an awful downer."

Defeated, "Knows-Nothing" walked away, head hung. He knew about "The Horrible Truth" yet his words were ignored or misunderstood. He looked over his shoulder towards his old village, and he could hear the cries of devastation as they pealed through the trees as "The Horrible Truth" consumed them all.

As he looked on, an old sage named "Knows-A-Thing-Or-Two" happened to pass. As "Knows-Nothing" cast his eye upon him, he felt the need to warn the old man to avoid that village at all costs, as there lay the "Horrible Truth" but, by the look in the old sage's face, "Knows-Nothing" knew that he was well aware. He stopped his words at the thought.

They looked at each other in silence and nodded.



LIFERS

That Green Gentleman

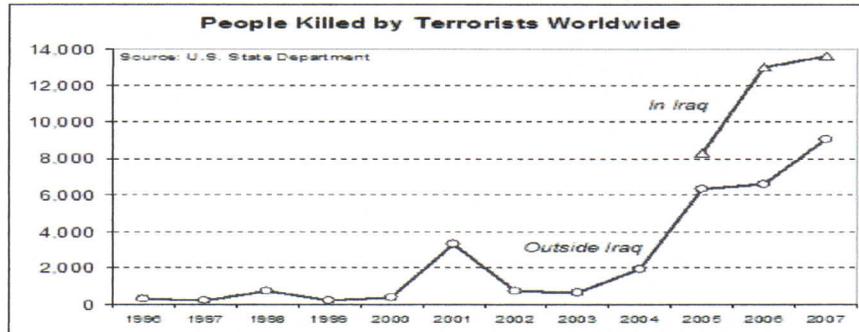
THE BLACK IRON PRISON IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE EVERYONE IS, AT SOME POINT, A LIFER. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU READ THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT, BECAUSE THERE ARE NONE. THERE IS NO LOOP HOLE TO GET OUT. EVERYONE IS BORN THERE, AND EVERYONE DIES THERE. HOW YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE THERE, HOWEVER, IS UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL PERSON. YOU CAN ISOLATE YOURSELF IN YOUR CELL, OR YOU CAN EXPLORE THE PRISON, BUT BEWARE, FOR THERE ARE MANY DANGERS OF WHICH YOU MAY NOT KNOW OF. THERE IS ONE DANGER YOU MUST BE CAUTIOUS OF AT ALL TIMES. IT IS WHISPERED AMONGST THE INMATES, A BEING WHICH IS SO MONSTROUS THAT HE IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED HUMAN. NO ONE KNOWS HIS NAME, OR HOW HE ENDED UP THE WAY HE IS, BUT THEY ALL KNOW TO AVOID HIS CELL. HIS HAIR IS BLACK AND ENCRUSTED WITH DRIED BLOOD, HIS BODY IS NOTHING MORE THAN A HULKING MASS OF MUSCLE, AND HE WEARS A MASK TO HIDE HIS FACE, THOUGH YOU CAN SEE HIS EYES. HIS EYES ARE BRIGHT YET DARK, AND THEY ANY CAPTURE PREY WHO WANDERS IN CARELESSLY. AND WHAT EXACTLY IS HIS PREY YOU ASK? WHY WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE OTHER THAN HUMANS? MANY HAVE MET THEIR DEATH IN HIS LAIR, AND FEW HAVE SURVIVED. BONES LITTER ALMOST EVERY CORNER OF HIS CELL, AND HE CARRIES A BUTCHER KNIFE, WHICH IS HOW HE CAME TO BE CALLED THE BUTCHER. HE WELCOMES ONE AND ALL WITH A CHARMING DEVILISH SMILE.

HIS COMPLETE OPPOSITE WOULD BE DAVE. OUTSIDE THE PRISON, DAVE IS AN ACCOUNTANT, BUT HE IS VERY PLAIN AND BORING. BUT WITHIN THE PRISON DAVE ISOLATES HIMSELF WITHIN HIS ROOM. HE REFUSES TO ALLOW ANYONE TO ENTER, AND ALL HE DOES IS MUTTER TO HIMSELF, OR RATHER TO HIS WIFE'S HEAD. YOU SEE, DAVE COULDN'T TAKE THE BLACK IRON PRISON ANY LONGER, SO WHILE HIS WIFE SLEPT HE CHOPPED HER HEAD OFF. HE BURIED HER CORPSE IN A PARK OR SOMETHING, BUT KEEPS HER HEAD IN THE FREEZER. YOU SEE, DAVE TENDS TO MIX REALITY WITH THE PRISON, AND CAN NEVER TELL WHICH ONE HE IS IN. IN REALITY HE PRETENDS TO BE A MAN WHO TRIES TO BE HAPPY EVEN THOUGH HIS WIFE SUPPOSEDLY LEFT HIM, BUT IN THE BLACK IRON PRISON HE CAN KEEP HIS WIFE FOREVER. HE'LL HOLD HER ROTTING HEAD LOVINGLY IN HIS ARMS AND WHISPER ABOUT HOW SOMEDAY HE'LL GET THEM BOTH OUT OF THERE, AND THAT THEY'LL BE FREE. POOR DAVE, HE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE UNTIL HE CASTS OFF THE MORTAL COIL. PERHAPS SOMEDAY HE'LL REALIZE THAT.

NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG, THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO AREN'T CRAZY WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE PRISON. IN FACT, PROBABLY THE SANEST PEOPLE IN THERE ARE A PAIR OF TWINS. THE TWINS, JAMES AND SOPHIA, THEY EXPLORE THE PRISON AND KNOW ALMOST EVERYONE IN IT FOR THEY HAVE QUITE A GOOD MEMORY. THEY'VE EVEN GONE SO DEEP INTO THE PRISON THAT THEY'VE FOUND THE OLDER ONES THAT NO ONE USES ANYMORE. THE CELLS THAT HAVE FALLEN INTO DISREPAIR AND CRUMBLE AT THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH, AND SOMETHING LIKE A MOSS GROWS ON THE WALLS. BUT THE FARTHER THEY VENTURE IN, THE DARKER IT GETS, UNTIL THEY MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK.

A DREAM YOU CAN'T WAKE UP FROM, NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO OR DON'T WANT TO.
THE END.

DON'T BE AFRAID To Be Scared!



Fear is a natural reaction that tells you when
You're in Danger.

Not too sure about that *guy over there*?
Then you may be **In Danger.**

Do you know what to do about suspicious and potentially
Dangerous activities?

REPORT THEM.

Remember, if something is unfamiliar to you, your local **Law
Enforcement** agencies are there to **Help.**

**So, when Danger Strikes,
Do the right thing.
Don't be afraid,
Be scared.**



YOU'RE A WHOLE DIFFERENT PERSON WHEN YOU'RE SCARED.

The Good Reverend Reger

Hey, kids. Things have gotten a little *scary*, haven't they? This is, of course, no accident. They've been teaching you to be scared since you were a little kid. Scared of strangers. Scared of punishment. Taught "respect" (read: fear) for Authority Figures. Yes, the real lesson that Officer Friendly taught you in grade school is that one day in the future, you might find out just how friendly he is.

In the 70s, Americans were "outraged" (read: scared shitless) by endless hijackings and the seizing of the American embassy in Tehran. This was immediately followed, of course, by strange tales of shame and failure in the Iranian desert, when Operation Eagle Claw went sideways due to gross incompetence on the part of squabbling military branch's logistics branches.

The reaction was immediate. Jimmy Carter was sent packing, to build houses for poor people, and Ronald Reagan was swept into office in a landslide. Here's this kindly-looking tough old grandfather figure, saying "You just hunker down, folks, and we'll deal with these savages". America told itself that it was Standing Tall again, but the reality is that it was merely hiding behind a screen actor who wasn't afraid to do a little saber-rattling.

Reagan also introduced the fear of ourselves... Fear of the Drug Addict, fear of the AIDS Patient. He taught us to look at each other as potential killers and rapists, and to stay inside and shut the hell up. He in fact coined the ultimate expression of fear, "If you've done nothing wrong, you have nothing to worry about". Now pee in this bottle, please, to prove to us all that you aren't a drug-addled monster looking to rape our daughters.

The 80s and 90s were a time of dull fear, of a sense of unease. There was no *immediate* threat, but we all knew that *something* was out there, waiting to pounce on us the moment we stopped paying attention.

On September 11th, 2001, It Happened. We all remember that day, right? And there were our public servants, up on a podium, scaring the living shit out of us with the full cooperation & assistance of every major news network. The news stream at the bottom of your television screen was an endless parade of OH SHIT; WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

After a while, of course, emotional fatigue set in, and people just couldn't work themselves up into an epileptic fit of fear anymore, at least not over terrorists. Foreign ones, anyway. So instead, sometime between 2005 and the present, we were taught to fear our public

servants. The TSA, for example, instills pants-shitting terror in just about everyone who flies. You don't make jokes in the airport. No. Not unless you want to find yourself in a small room being cavity-searched by a guy with fingers the size of bratwursts. And if you piss off any of the rest of the executive branch, you'll be killed by drone aircraft or just taken away as a "person of interest", and what's left of your family will live under a bridge and drink filthy water until the day they die.

The question I have to ask, though, is *Just what exactly are you afraid of?* Why are you putting up with this, especially from a *social fiction* such as the US Government? Nothing is actually wrong. Let me say that again: *Nothing is actually wrong.* It's like watching children afraid of the bogeyman, trying to hide in their beds from a threat which does not actually exist.

So just stop for a moment. Stop what you're doing, and hit the TV or Youtube or whatever, and take a good long look at your local, state, and federal government officials. They're monkeys with power ties; they look kind of *silly* wearing those outfits, don't they?

They are in fact *absurd*. So just what ARE you afraid of? Terrorists have killed less American people in total than will die in car accidents in the next 3 months. The government? Ridiculous. They can't seem to do ANYTHING right, mostly because they're just a convenient arrangement we dreamt up to make sure that the roads get paved.

The police, perhaps? How many police are there? The only reason they have any power at all is because *we agree that they do*. Other than that, they're just brigands with tasers and a taste for a little roadside aggression.

But it's not even that, is it? No, the reality is that *fear has become your baseline emotion*. Everything is assessed first in terms of fight or flight. Aggression or panic. That is the very first filter that you employ when processing any data at all in your lives. Fear for its own sake. Fear of fear itself, as a giant of a man once said.

And you must *enjoy* that constant low-level anxiety, right?

Because if you *didn't*, you'd *stop*.

Or Kill Me.

You're A Whole Different Person When You're Scared.

Doktor Howl

I have always said that The Good Reverend Roger is too easy on you humans. Spare the beating, spoil the primate, I always say. I mean, it's not like you aren't *used* to beatings, it's not like you don't expect them and in fact mentally prepare yourself for them every day of your lives.

Take the average citizen. Left to his own devices, he is a rational creature, with a vague notion that he should be able to say and do what he pleases, so long as everything involves consenting adults. Now put in some fear...say, Rush Limbaugh telling him that the Gays are going to "recruit" his sons and daughters and turn them into homosexuals that won't continue his genetic line.

Suddenly, he's a different guy, isn't he? Now he's ranting about Gay marriage being the work of the devil, and he'll join any lynch mob or pseudo-fascist political party you care to create.

Or maybe tell him that terrorists are going to come kill him and his family, thus ensuring - again - that his genetic line will be erased. Now he's calling the FBI on poor old Habib that runs the gas station on the corner, asking them why that crazy Arab hasn't been hauled off to a camp yet.

Or even tell him that Black people are going to break into his home and rape his wife and daughters. Again, the genetic imperative, yes?

Humans are rational beings until such a time as their ersatz immortality is threatened, at which point they become angry howler monkeys, ready to kill or maim anyone who looks different than they do. There has been precisely zero measurable progress over the last 2 million years, at least in the way humans think.

And don't run off blaming Rush Limbaugh. If people didn't want to hear him, he'd be out of business. Likewise with the so-called "federal government"...Fascists wouldn't be running the show unless humans allowed them to do it. Tyrants don't appear; they are advertised for and then hired by a gutless public that can no longer bear the weight of freedom and self-determination.

On September 20th of 2001, my then-boss's wife was railing about how everyone in America of Middle-Eastern descent should be locked up until such time as they could prove themselves to be "loyal citizens" (the standard she set for loyalty was, of course, religion). I remarked that we had to be free or the terrorists had succeeded, and she looked at me like I was about to reveal a bomb vest.

"We have to be SAFE!" she snarled.

Well, here's a quick tip from your Family Doktor: You aren't safe. You can't be made safe. You are a weaponized ape on a planet full of weaponized apes, and even under the strictest authoritarian rule, you can't stop your neighbor from doing stupid or hostile things.

And besides, freedom – the only acceptable state for a biped – is *by definition* not safe. “No blood, no foul”, play rough, and LIVE.

There was a T-shirt meme back in the 80s/90s, called “No Fear”. I always liked that. It spoke to me of primates who refused to be cowed, who refused to fear physical harm or imprisonment, who **KNEW**, instinctively, that Martin Luther King and Mohammed Ali were the **REAL** American heroes, and made pantywaists like General Westmoreland look like the absurd little clowns they were.

It's easy to feel brave, after all, as a general, or even in a mob of howling maniacs demanding more war and less butter. It's a lot harder to be brave when alone, when The Man is right there in your face, telling you to toe the line or go to prison for the rest of your life. Or when you know that every time you get behind a podium or walk on the sidewalk, there's a very good chance that some crazed yokel with a rifle will shut you up for good.

Martin Luther King **KNEW** he was going to die. He alluded to it in his last speech. And he still didn't shut up. He ranted and ranted and when some redneck swine finally shot him, his rants *continued*, and have never faded away, despite every effort on the part of Those who oppose his message.

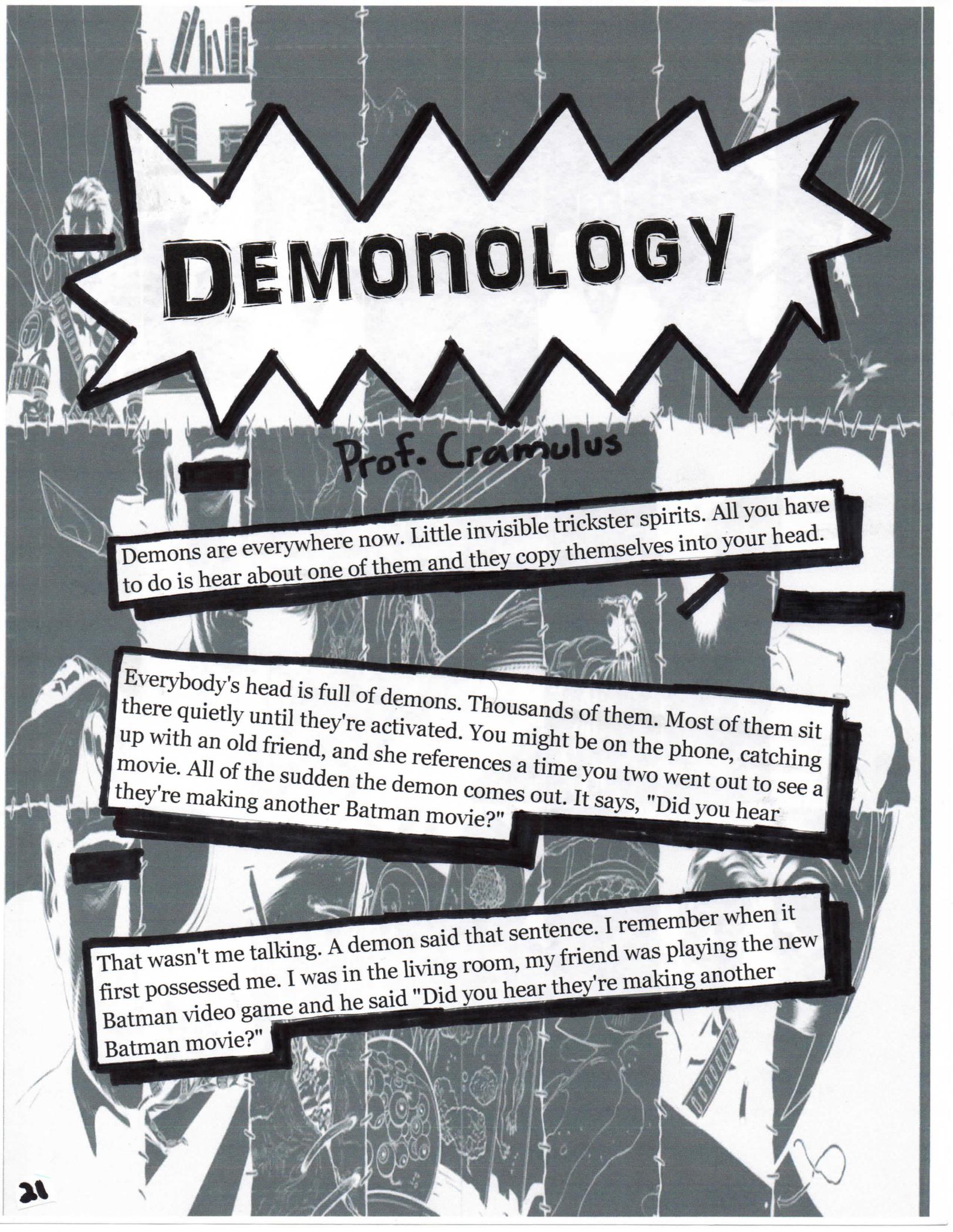
Humans *can* stand on their hind legs. This has been proven. Mohammed Ali stared the United States Army in the face, and threw his career away, just to demonstrate that he was a Free Man, and that *they had no power over him*. He had no handle for them to grab. Nothing they could take away from him was enough to make him knuckle under...And, in the end, nobody – not even the most virulent racists or hyper-patriots – have the stones to talk trash about him, even though he is now a feeble, sick old man.

So there. You have no excuses, anymore, for the handle sticking out of your forehead. You have no excuse to crawl, no excuse to live in fear of some nebulous threat conveyed by talking heads and criminals in suits. It is time to decide whether you are a rational human being, or a terrified monkey. Nobody can make this choice for you. **YOU** have to stand upright in the sun, or scurry into the shadows like a rat, and take whatever bullshit They hand you.

And you have to decide **NOW**.

Okay for now,

Dok



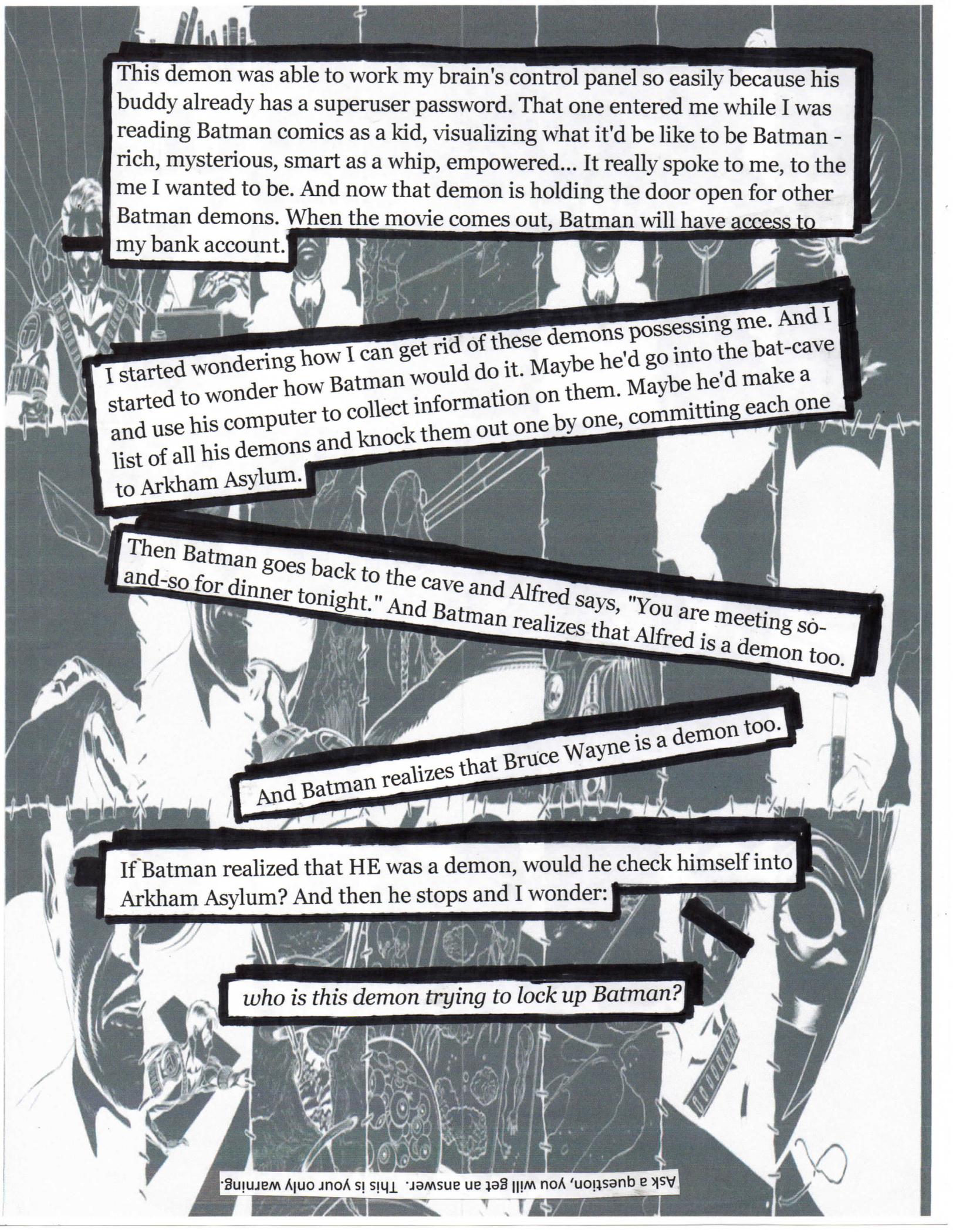
DEMONOLOGY

Prof. Cramulus

Demons are everywhere now. Little invisible trickster spirits. All you have to do is hear about one of them and they copy themselves into your head.

Everybody's head is full of demons. Thousands of them. Most of them sit there quietly until they're activated. You might be on the phone, catching up with an old friend, and she references a time you two went out to see a movie. All of the sudden the demon comes out. It says, "Did you hear they're making another Batman movie?"

That wasn't me talking. A demon said that sentence. I remember when it first possessed me. I was in the living room, my friend was playing the new Batman video game and he said "Did you hear they're making another Batman movie?"



This demon was able to work my brain's control panel so easily because his buddy already has a superuser password. That one entered me while I was reading Batman comics as a kid, visualizing what it'd be like to be Batman - rich, mysterious, smart as a whip, empowered... It really spoke to me, to the me I wanted to be. And now that demon is holding the door open for other Batman demons. When the movie comes out, Batman will have access to my bank account.

I started wondering how I can get rid of these demons possessing me. And I started to wonder how Batman would do it. Maybe he'd go into the bat-cave and use his computer to collect information on them. Maybe he'd make a list of all his demons and knock them out one by one, committing each one to Arkham Asylum.

Then Batman goes back to the cave and Alfred says, "You are meeting so-and-so for dinner tonight." And Batman realizes that Alfred is a demon too.

And Batman realizes that Bruce Wayne is a demon too.

If Batman realized that HE was a demon, would he check himself into Arkham Asylum? And then he stops and I wonder:

who is this demon trying to lock up Batman?

MORE WALLS

Part II

LMNO

So far, I've been talking about how the cells and bars that were given to us or imposed upon us are an accretion of what we have experienced. But what about when we realize the kind of game we're playing, and then begin redecorating for ourselves? And what about when we seek out and build new cell walls with other people?

Obviously, there are some limitations we can't change. We've gone over that before. But as far as mental/psychological bricks and bars go, then, to quote the *Chao te Ching*, "turning one into the other is simple as changing your mind. [Please note that changing your mind is not simple.]" We can make an effort to overcome barriers and fill in gaps, provided we know what we're looking for. We can study the many kinds of bias and be mindful to recognize when we're falling for it, and we can challenge our assumptions for which we never received good evidence. And as far as I can tell, it makes us better bipeds for it.

Of course, we see the bars of other people's prisons much more easily than we see our own ("you're making conclusions without proof, while I simply have faith," and all that). And if we're going to share common walls, we're going to see things in the people we're sharing with that seem to us like serious limitations: A Pro-Gay-Rights Republican; a punker who also likes Chick Corea; a LARPer who likes anchovies on their pizza; an Occupy-er who's also racist. And there's usually a strong impulse to call out barriers we don't like in other people. But this can lead to what Roger has pointed out among a lot of good-minded activists – A tendency to focus on the differences rather than the similarities.

Now, I'm certainly not suggesting that we blindly open arms and accept a "means justifies the end" approach when we work with other people. Considerations must be made if the non-common things in a person's life cast a pall or taint the entire purpose of the collaboration (the example of a racist Occupy person comes to mind). But at the same time, we need to make a conscious and deliberate effort to establish the point where another person's un-shared belief hurts the group, and where *your* belief about their un-shared belief hurts the group.

There seems to be an unspoken and unexamined bit of "truthiness" that says a group must be orthodox and in complete agreement about a subject, or else all is lost. But this is clearly bullshit. Just in the same way that your walls can have similar properties as other persons', you have to also recognize that there will be differences, as well. If you set the bar too high, you're going to isolate yourself and your actions to a point where they are not effective.

Attn: Faust.

Please give Dimo access to the memebomb database.

((Surrounded))

The mammalian brain is a hell of a thing. Much like reality, your brain knows exactly what it wants and doesn't really give a damn what you *think* about that. The most good (and it's quite a bit of good) your thoughts can do is guide your filthy meatsack around until it experiences the chemicals your brain desires. You know that moment when you think you're taking a drink of beer and find yourself with a mouthful of soda instead?

And now that happens every. Single. Day. In every aspect of your life because:

You get fed pretty, bubbly stories about how things should be, the rotten and saccharine thoughts of someone desperately trying to cover their walls, replace them with something less...restrictive. You eat these stories up and you spit them back out for someone else to feed on. And then, the damndest thing happens. It's not that your brain doesn't want to cooperate, your BRAIN is functioning just fine, and it's your thoughts that lead you to the conclusion that something is wrong. So long as you're basing your actions on a narrative you are going to get a dump of BAD chemicals when reality doesn't match up in a way that pleases you.

Every time you get that dump of chemicals they settle in your brain and in your bones. They etch code onto your hardware and you go on, carrying that memory of a chemical. You go and you build whole new walls with that hardware, to protect yourself you make your prison smaller and smaller, so there is less to protect. With less to protect you can finally focus on making everything pretty in here.

And yet...suddenly everything outside seems so much larger than it was before. The shadows and voices echo louder and fill every space that is not expressly your own, which gets smaller and smaller.

And you cling tighter and tighter to that wall, made of your own fears and misguided, fitful experiences, because it is all you have left in the world anymore. It has become your entire world, and it's ripped away, your mind goes with it.

Your fear is what protects you. All animals feel this, even if they try to avoid the horrible impact this truth has on their daily lives where there are no big predators, even when humans have to resort to complex and ornate social games because that's all their survival depends on anymore.

And that's okay. Fear is good. It shows you which way to go or not go.

You can't let fear close in on you; it can't keep you safe when there is no longer any danger. In fact, quite the opposite.

Ally...

The Learning Man (and other myths)

The Good Reverend Roger

The thing about The Machine™ is that it really does give the people who live in it what they want, or at least what they SAY they want, or what they THINK they want. This may be very different from what they actually want, but The Machine™ can hardly be blamed for that. The order was filled as placed. It's classic disinformation stuff, not unlike the old o Henry story, *The Monkey's Paw*.

Consider: The American people said they wanted politicians to be "tough on crime". Anyone who has ever seen the inside of a felony courtroom knows that the system is *already* tough on crime, but what politician ever got elected saying so? So politicians get elected promising to crack down on criminals, and pretty soon you have 6 year olds being arrested on felony charges for acting out in class (They ran out of real crimes to legislate, so they hit on "disrupting an educational facility". This of course results in outrage; you can't go to Facebook without hitting a million petitions about it, *penned by the same assholes that demanded exactly what happened!*

Also, people wanted 20% returns on their investments. The Machine™ complied...But math is math, and the only way to get that sort of return is to either A) increase prices of goods and services, which the public won't hear of, or B) reducing the cost of making those products. So The Machine™ reduced costs, by sending American jobs to slave pens in Malaysia, China, etc. Then the public is again outraged, because they lost their jobs and because children are working in sweatshops...And again, *the very same assholes complaining are the assholes that demanded the higher returns.*

People want cheaper food. The Machine™ plods off and hires illegals to pick crops, and also invents things like "pink slime", GM crops, etc. Result? See above. Bitch, bitch, bitch.

Things get *really* interesting when we demand guns and butter at the same time. After 9/11, we were so pissed off at those dirty Ay-rabs, so wrapped around the axle, that we tolerated our government invading the *wrong* country. Of course, they eventually invaded the *right* country, but they didn't stop the first war. The public wouldn't hear of cutting any domestic spending, but demanded we teach those smudgy foreigners a thing or two. Then Bush closed down half the VA hospitals to pay for a TAX CUT. IN WAR TIME. THEN everyone is shocked that wounded veterans are neglected.

By now you're probably puzzled as to why The Machine™ is getting some good press from The Good Reverend. But it's not, really...Because what IS The Machine™, after all? That's right. It's you and me. It's every dumb fucking monkey who wanted to have his cake and eat it, too. It's every bar stool hero cheering on CNN bomb footage. It's every working class moron who bitches about a social safety net, and every middle class moron who thinks HE'S being taxed. Each and every one is a cog in The Machine™, and each and every one couldn't

possibly imagine any other existence. In fact, if another existence is even hypothesized, the person bringing it up is an instant pariah, an un-American terrorist sympathizing communist who probably had better be shipped off to Guantanamo Bay.

They will then start blaming "the government", which is kind of like bitching about the tooth fairy. There ain't no such animal. The government is a social fiction that exists simply because we all agreed it existed. It is a convention that we have all bought into, so that we could inflict our crap on Those other Guys. The entire government system of the United States, at all levels (including the military) is just under 17 million people. Given that the population is 312 million citizens and about 12 million undocumented aliens, that's 17 people trying to each manage 324 screaming howler monkeys, or 1 government employee or soldier trying to govern 19 people he's never met or even seen. Good luck with that.

It isn't the "government" fucking you over. It isn't Wall Street fucking you over (well, it kind of is, but you bent over and smiled). It's YOU, Bubba. It's you that's fucking you over.

So what are you gonna do about it?

or Kill Me

This is NOT about your
Summer Vacation

F-

See me after class
(Bring "the stuff")

bad signal

LMNO

signal. it's always incoming. every waking moment, you get signal. every sleeping moment, too. you just don't notice those as much. same when you're drunk. or whatever. not the point.

Point is, there's signal, and you can't escape it. can't live without it. but what kind of signal are you getting? i'll tell you. *bad* signal.

"But professor," i hear you saying. "the signal is simply information flow. how can that be inherently good or bad?" well kid - that's some bad signal you got there. and you need to understand this... it's *all* bad signal, these days.

How the hell can you judge a signal? i'll give you a few tips. first off, is it true? sorry to start you out with one of the tough ones, but there you go. a lot of signal is true enough in small pieces, but we get signal in huge batches, and that shit doesn't add up. even a lie by omission is still a lie 'round these parts. and since you're blocking every third signal, there's no way you're gonna get truth out of that fucker.

And who's giving you that signal, anyway? where'd that come from? most likely, it got beamed at you from some asshole that's trying to prove a point, and will do anything to win, just to prove they're right. any signal coming from a bias is gonna be a bad signal, 'cus it's been twisted around and is trying to change your brain.

which brings up the question, why'd you choose that signal in the first place? maybe it's *you* who's got the bias, and you're tuning out everything that you disagree with. you're choosing a set of signals that doesn't have anything to do with reality. so the bad signal's on *you*, pal.

Then you've got advertising, propasanda, social conformity... they're all throwing bad signal at you, and you're receiving it, accepting it, going with it. even if you're rejecting the signal you get, you've still experienced the bad signal, and it's changed you. you've reacted to it; it's made you change your behavior.

And for the true experts of bad signal, you've got the false front. you get some signal that's *obviously* bad, and you toss it aside... but that was just a cover story; by rejecting the obviously bad signal, you've let a more insidious bad signal slip inside, and that was the point. they've just gotten you to do what they want, not by coercion, but by *your own choice*. and once you get to that level, you're fucked.

bad signal, kids. no escape.



The Man From Texas

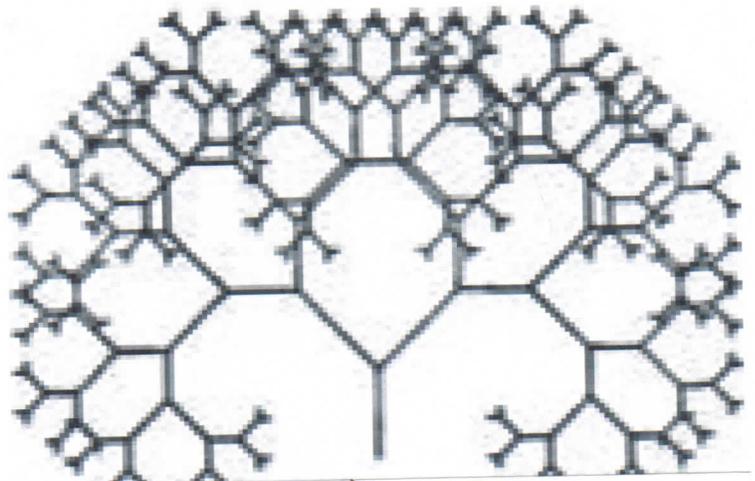
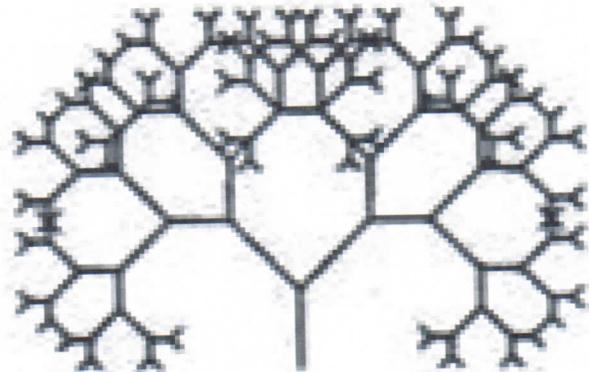
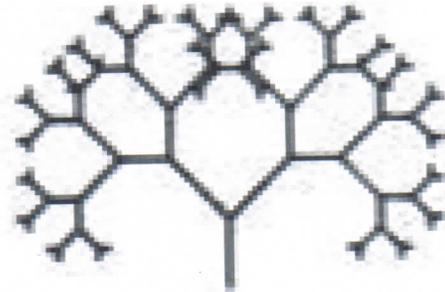
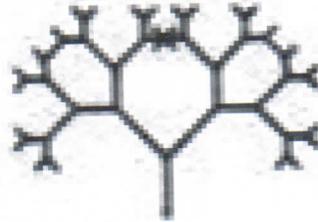


There once was a young man who was born in Texas.

He hated it. He hated the anti-intellectualism, hated the casual attitude towards the destruction of the planet, hated the way the word "nigger" rolled off the tongues of his family members, hated the music, hated the religion. He didn't want to be in Texas. He didn't want any part of himself to be Texas. He was going to jailbreak, if it was the last thing he did.

He moved away. He avoided contact with his family. He educated himself and argued for atheism loudly and often. He took speech lessons to remove his accent and never once allowed himself to slip. He never owned a handgun. He became a liberal figurehead in his community and marched for the environment. He married a pretty black girl and raised three beautiful mixed-race atheist children. At last, he thought to himself, I have freed myself from my prison. He removed the last mental brick from the Wall of Texas inside his mind.

And behind it was the Wall of Raised in Texas.



A Brave New World

Herr Doktor Waffles

The brave new world is now. Never before have we had so many opportunities for entertainment, information and connecting with people all over the world. With a mere click of a button you can get almost every film ever made, download the entire world library, and there's enough pornography on tap to fairly kill a chap, to paraphrase a certain gentleman rhymist. We have iMacs, iPads, iPods, iPhones, iClouds, iShit. We are constantly connected, we have created an artificial need to always be available anywhere and anywhen. We crave UNLIMITED DATA. The Russian billionaire Dmitry Itskov has sent out a call to the world's 1266 richest men and women to help fund research into virtual immortality, and plans to be able to transfer personalities from the human body to a robot by the end of this decade, and to create holographic bodies by 2040. Virgin records founder Richard Branson unveiled his passenger space shuttle in July. I mention this only as an example of the possibilities of our time. Nothing seems impossible anymore.

And yet, we're not free, are we? While we preoccupy ourselves with UNLIMITED DATA, "they" are tightening the noose around our collective necks, imposing more and more restrictions on us by the very hour. Always claiming it is for our safety or security, "they" are the over protective parent telling us it is for our good, and we should appreciate what they do. Or else.

Still, we have society's watchdogs, the media, right? Well, no. The majority of Western media is run by a very few corporations, and they, like it or not, decide what you should know and not. Journalists aren't watchdogs, they're lapdogs.

And we don't mind, because we crave to know about the diets and weight losses (though, we prefer the weight gains) and the drunken escapades of our Kardashians, Cyruses, Biebers etc. because it's easier than to think. Thinking hurts. Thinking might make us realize we aren't what we're supposed to be. Thinking may just set us apart from the crowd, and we can't have that, now can we?

This is exactly what "they" want. Make us collectively numb and dumb, so we'll accept whatever Orwellian nightmare they have in store for us with a smile and a heartfelt thank you. We thank them because they have given us the Huxleyan paradise of UNLIMITED DATA.

(written on an iPad)



LEE GREENWOOD DISTILLERY

American liquor made in the **TRADITIONAL AMERICAN WAY.**

Like back when grandpa left the drowned bats in the corn squeezin's because they
"warn't hurtin it none".

Distilled essence of rotted corn and bats was aged in oil drums for **TWO WHOLE WEEKS**
with a few plugs of Days-o-Work to give it the rich,
brown color that generations of americans have grown to know and love.

Here at the Lee Greenwood distillery, we've industrialized this time-tested
formula to bring you the finest sippin whiskey in the nation.*

*WARNING: Drinking this product will numb your brain and blur your vision, resulting with an 80% like consistency that is still being studied at Harvard and to insure to kill your ass in the state of California. Drink responsibly.

30

A DECLARATION

By the REPRESENTATIVES of the
HUMAN RACE.

In GENERAL CONGRESS assembled.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes unnecessary for one people to remain unencumbered by tyranny and independence, and to assume once again the role of shackled Slave from whence they at one time emerged, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them back into the hands of dependence.

We hold these truths to be inconvenient, that all men are born alone, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain uncomfortable Facts, that among these are that Life ends, that Happiness is never guaranteed, and that Liberty takes too much effort to maintain. -- That to escape these Facts, TEEVEE and the OntarButts has been instituted among men, establishing its power to erase reason from the minds of the stupid. That any form of entertainment is preferable to any form of the Horrible Troof. That whenever any Form of Thought threatens the People with grim realities or unwanted truths, it is the Right of the People to ignore or abolish those thoughts, and to institute new thoughts, laying their foundations upon whatever frivolous and unimportant bullshit might tickle their pathetic fancies for a fleeting moment.

Prudence, indeed, has shown that mankind would rather embrace any hideous lie, while the lie makes them believe something noble about themselves, even when lives are at risk, than save lives by believing any true thing to which they are unaccustomed.

And when a long train of awful facts and real evidence presents a design to elevate the People to utter Reasonableness and Moderation, it is their right; it is their duty, to throw off such facts and evidence, and to provide new Guards for their future comfort and complacency. And such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Consciousness. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world:

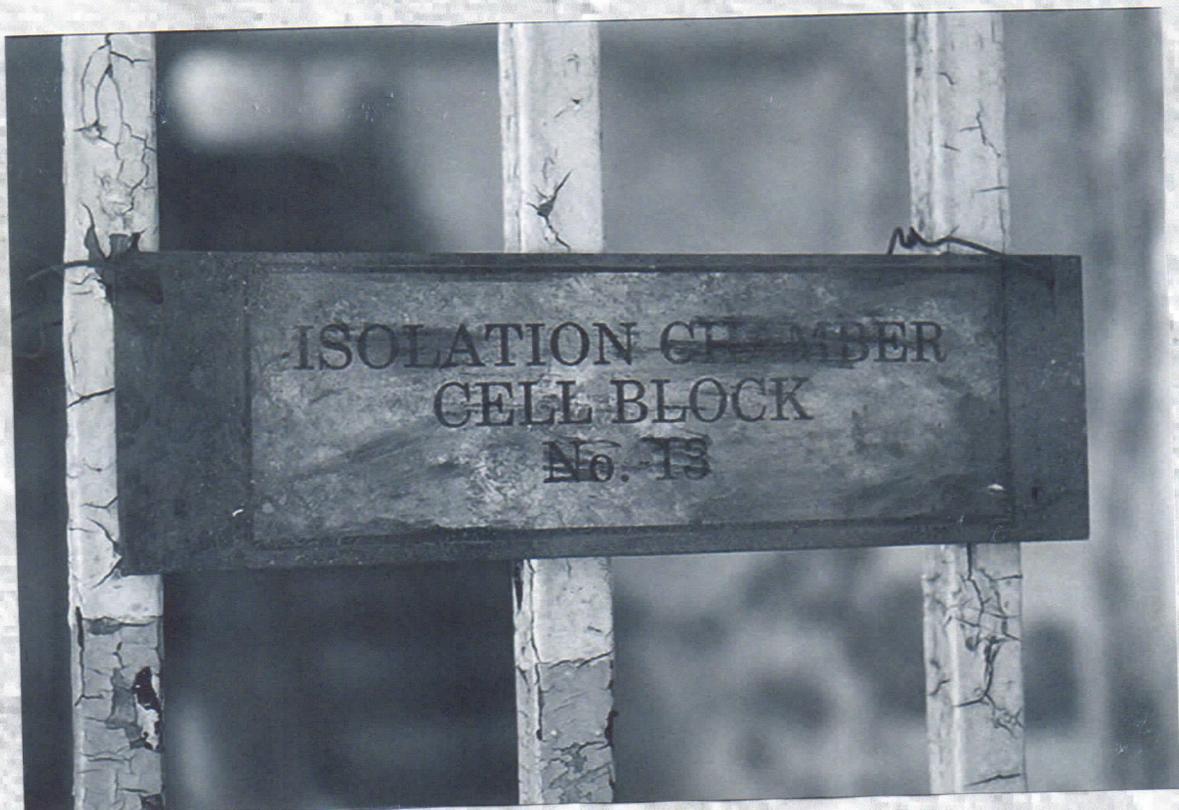
- We have faced Terror attacks, of the sort that cause real damage and actual death.
- We have had to look at men kissing men and women kissing women. Even in Churches has this awful reality been thrust upon us.
- We have looked into the heavens and found that the Universe is much older than the 6,000 years we were promised.
- Science has shown that we have descended from mere apes, and has not found our belief in a Personal God to be of any particular merit.
- Life is not fair.
- We have stubbed our toes, broken our arms, pulled our hair, cracked our teeth and beyond a certain point our Mommies are not there to make it all better.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned Heaven for Redress in the most humble (well, somewhat humble) terms. Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Universe, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a world which does not cater to our comforts and convenience, is a place unfit for any self-respecting comfort-loving Human to inhabit.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the Human Race, do, in our own Names and by the Authority of our many electronic toys and processed high-fat comfort foods, solemnly publish and declare that we are, effective immediately, giving up on Freedom and Liberty, because it makes us feel scared, and causes our stomachs to turn with apprehension and unsureness, and instead begging for Some Higher Power to come save us from ourselves, and rule over us completely. We do not care who, as long as it isn't Barack Obama.

We however do not pledge anything in support of the Cause. Let's not be hasty.

Vex



MORE WALLS, PT. III

LMNO

SO, WE'VE SEEN COMMON WALLS THAT OCCUR NATURALLY, AND WE'VE SEEN THOSE THAT ARE CREATED IN COLLABORATION; AND WE'VE DISCUSSED WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE INEVITABLE DIFFERENCES THAT ARISE, BUT THE SUBTLE AND THE MAJOR. BUT CONSIDER THIS: THE DIFFERENCES YOU SEE IN YOUR SHARED WALL COULD VERY WELL BE MERELY A SHADOW CAST BY ONE OF YOUR VERY OWN BARS.

FOR EXAMPLE, JOE AND SAM BOTH LOVE THE MUSIC OF THE DELTA BLUES; BOTH LOVE BARBECUE, AND BOTH WANT TO WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF WOMEN. BUT FOR SOME REASON, THEY SIMPLY CAN'T AGREE ON ANYTHING, AND THEIR ATTEMPTS AT CONVERSATION ALWAYS END IN ACRIMONY AND BITTERNESS. BECAUSE AS IT HAPPENS, JOE IS WHITE AND WAS BORN IN SOUTH AFRICA IN 1942, AND SAM IS A BLACK AMERICAN BORN IN 1984. OBVIOUSLY, JOE'S BIASES ARE GETTING IN THE WAY.

NOW, WHILE THIS IS AN OBVIOUS EXAMPLE, FOLLOW THE TRAIL TO ITS CONCLUSION. SINCE YOUR CELL IS MADE UP OF YOUR EXPERIENCES, THE DIFFERENCES YOU SEE IN THE COMMON WALL ARE NOT JUST YOUR NEIGHBOR'S, THEY'RE YOURS, AS WELL. IT'S VERY EASY TO FALL INTO "RIGHT MAN" SYNDROME WHEN ENCOUNTERING SOMETHING FAMILIAR AND DIFFERENT AT THE SAME TIME. YOUR BRAIN CLICKS INTO THE FAMILIARITIES BEING "RIGHT", THE UNFAMILIAR THINGS BEING "WRONG", AND YOU FIND YOURSELF SIMPLY UNABLE TO STOP AND SELF-ANALYZE THE SITUATION. BECAUSE MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, YOU'RE THE "JOE" CHARACTER IN THE ABOVE STORY.

BUT IF WE'RE TRYING TO BOTH SET THE BAR HIGH ENOUGH FOR OTHER'S DIFFERENCES AND AT THE SAME TIME MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR OUR OWN POTENTIAL BIASES, WE AGAIN RUN INTO PROBLEMS. THERE'S A SAYING, "DO NOT UNDERSTAND ME TOO QUICKLY." THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU *ONLY* FOCUS ON WHAT'S FAMILIAR. IF YOU IGNORE EVERYTHING THAT SOMEONE IS SHARING WITH YOU EXCEPT FOR THE FAMILIAR THINGS, THEN YOU WILL COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTAND ANY MESSAGE THAT ADDS SOMETHING NEW TO THE SIGNAL. YOU'LL *THINK* YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED, BUT IN NO TIME AT ALL, YOU'LL BE STUCK IN YOUR OWN CELL AGAIN AND EVENTUALLY FUCK SOMETHING UP.

THE POINT OF COMMON WALLS IS A FOCAL POINT, A FOUNDATION; THEY'RE TOO UNSTABLE TO SUPPORT ANYTHING OF VALUE ON THEIR OWN FROM THE VERY START. IT TAKES WORK, EFFORT, AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR NEIGHBOR TO TRANSMIT INFORMATION AND WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD MORE FAMILIARITY, TO STRENGTHEN THE WALL YOU SHARE.

IF YOU FOCUS ON THE DIFFERENCES, THE COMMON WALL WILL NEVER GET STARTED.

IF YOU FOCUS ON THE SIMILARITIES, THE COMMON WALL WILL NOT LAST.

IF YOU WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD MORE FAMILIARITY, THE WALL WILL GROW STRONGER.

On Joining the Church

The Good Reverend Roger

I always knew everything was screwed up...Like this was the test-run, prototype universe that was never actually intended for actual use, right? But the funding for the finished product ran out, and we got stuck here.

Then I found The Book of the Subgenius in the early 80s, and I liked what I saw...But it wasn't **QUITE** what fit the bill. Then I came across the PD a year or so later, and **IT** wasn't really what I needed. But taken together, they made a hell of a lot of sense. In fact, the only thing I've ever added to it in my head is some of Warren Ellis and **HST**'s weirder stuff.

I don't worry about what the atheists say, or the Christians, or even the Buddhists. They're not my people. My people are on PD and in the pervert bars and the low streets of the **Holy City™** of Eris. I may holler, I may rant and screech obscenities at you, but that's not necessarily because I think you're wrong or you're a bad person, it's because I am a very, very angry monkey who feels better when he roars, because it reduces the pressure of the endless hate & rage that is in my head, put there by a planet full of monkeys that never learned the old axiom "Just because you **CAN** doesn't mean you **SHOULD**".

to things.

You burned, tortured, or nailed

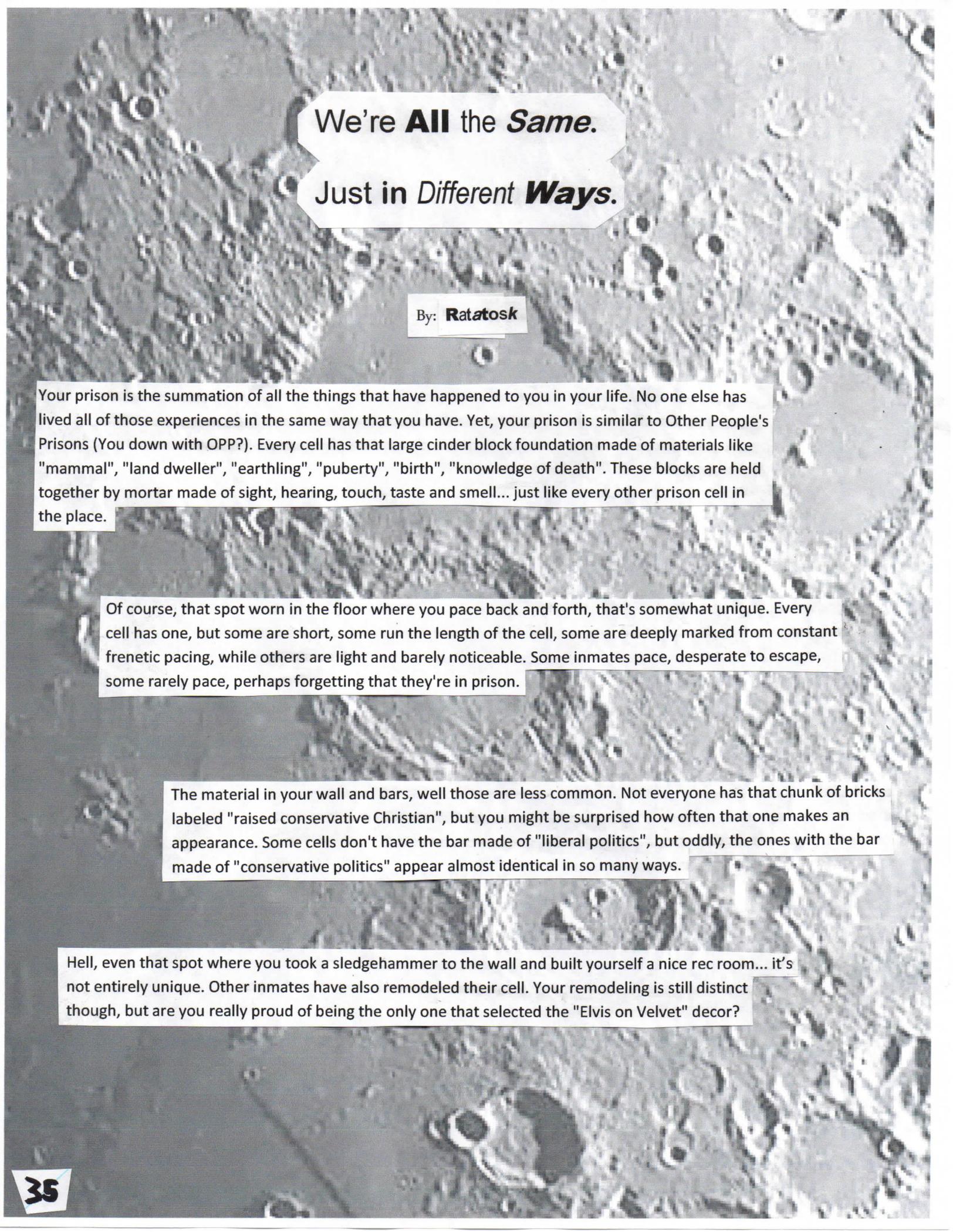
has shown, is perfect for getting

Talking religion, history

1 "Principia Discordia"

2 Hunter S. Thompson

3 principiadiscordia.com/forum



We're **All** the *Same*.

Just in *Different Ways*.

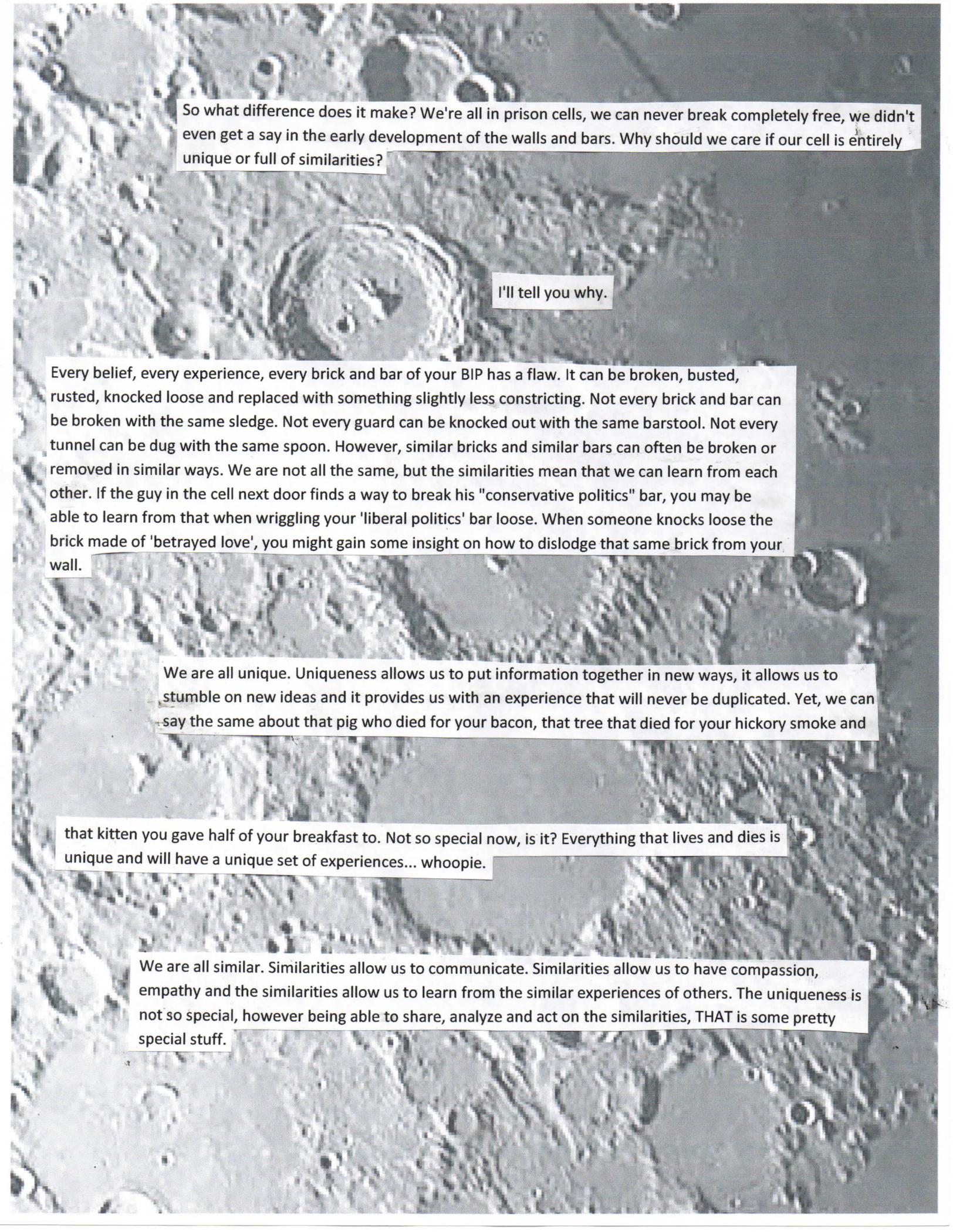
By: **Ratatosk**

Your prison is the summation of all the things that have happened to you in your life. No one else has lived all of those experiences in the same way that you have. Yet, your prison is similar to Other People's Prisons (You down with OPP?). Every cell has that large cinder block foundation made of materials like "mammal", "land dweller", "earthling", "puberty", "birth", "knowledge of death". These blocks are held together by mortar made of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell... just like every other prison cell in the place.

Of course, that spot worn in the floor where you pace back and forth, that's somewhat unique. Every cell has one, but some are short, some run the length of the cell, some are deeply marked from constant frenetic pacing, while others are light and barely noticeable. Some inmates pace, desperate to escape, some rarely pace, perhaps forgetting that they're in prison.

The material in your wall and bars, well those are less common. Not everyone has that chunk of bricks labeled "raised conservative Christian", but you might be surprised how often that one makes an appearance. Some cells don't have the bar made of "liberal politics", but oddly, the ones with the bar made of "conservative politics" appear almost identical in so many ways.

Hell, even that spot where you took a sledgehammer to the wall and built yourself a nice rec room... it's not entirely unique. Other inmates have also remodeled their cell. Your remodeling is still distinct though, but are you really proud of being the only one that selected the "Elvis on Velvet" decor?



So what difference does it make? We're all in prison cells, we can never break completely free, we didn't even get a say in the early development of the walls and bars. Why should we care if our cell is entirely unique or full of similarities?

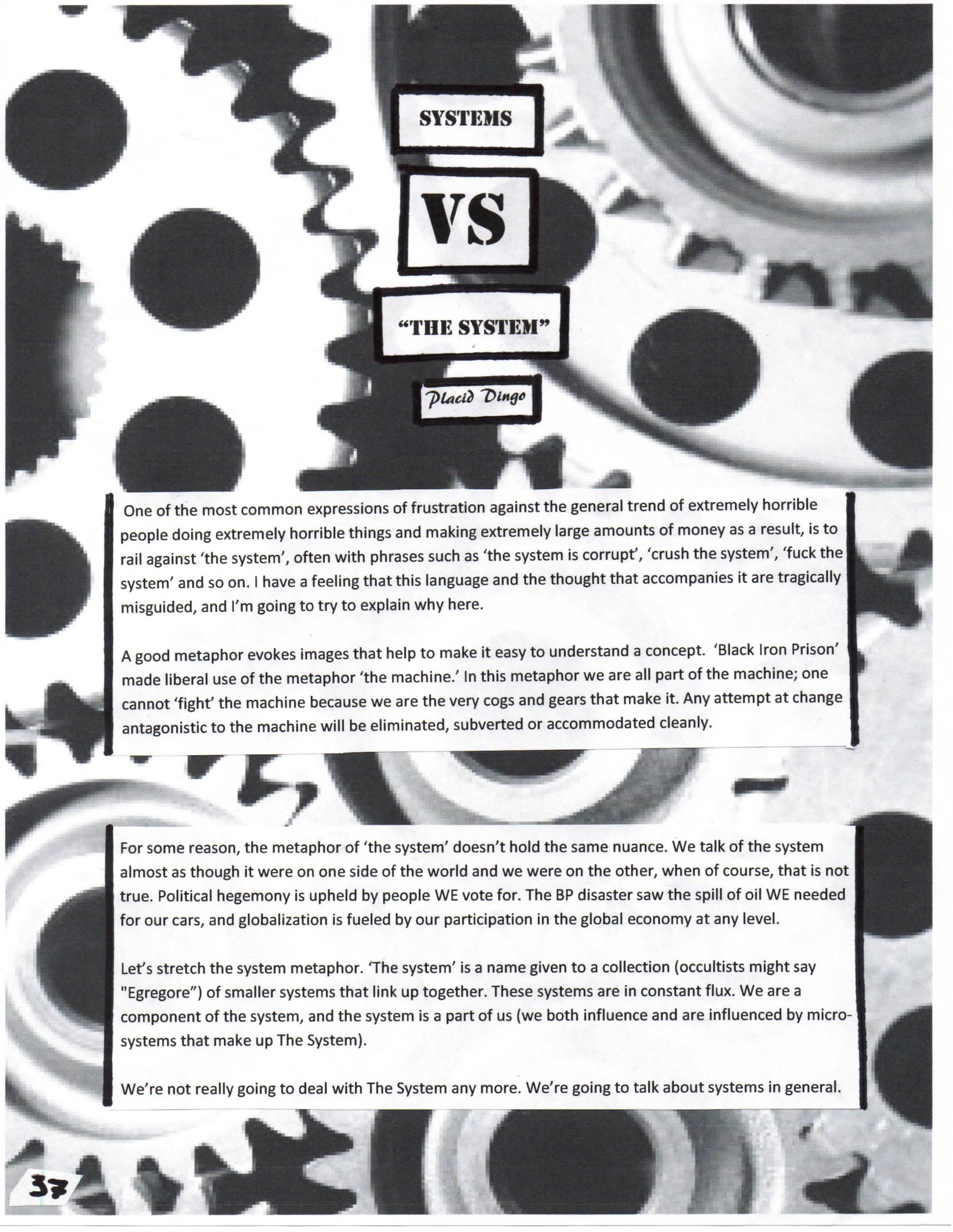
I'll tell you why.

Every belief, every experience, every brick and bar of your BIP has a flaw. It can be broken, busted, rusted, knocked loose and replaced with something slightly less constricting. Not every brick and bar can be broken with the same sledge. Not every guard can be knocked out with the same barstool. Not every tunnel can be dug with the same spoon. However, similar bricks and similar bars can often be broken or removed in similar ways. We are not all the same, but the similarities mean that we can learn from each other. If the guy in the cell next door finds a way to break his "conservative politics" bar, you may be able to learn from that when wriggling your 'liberal politics' bar loose. When someone knocks loose the brick made of 'betrayed love', you might gain some insight on how to dislodge that same brick from your wall.

We are all unique. Uniqueness allows us to put information together in new ways, it allows us to stumble on new ideas and it provides us with an experience that will never be duplicated. Yet, we can say the same about that pig who died for your bacon, that tree that died for your hickory smoke and

that kitten you gave half of your breakfast to. Not so special now, is it? Everything that lives and dies is unique and will have a unique set of experiences... whoopie.

We are all similar. Similarities allow us to communicate. Similarities allow us to have compassion, empathy and the similarities allow us to learn from the similar experiences of others. The uniqueness is not so special, however being able to share, analyze and act on the similarities, THAT is some pretty special stuff.



SYSTEMS

VS

“THE SYSTEM”

Placid Dingo

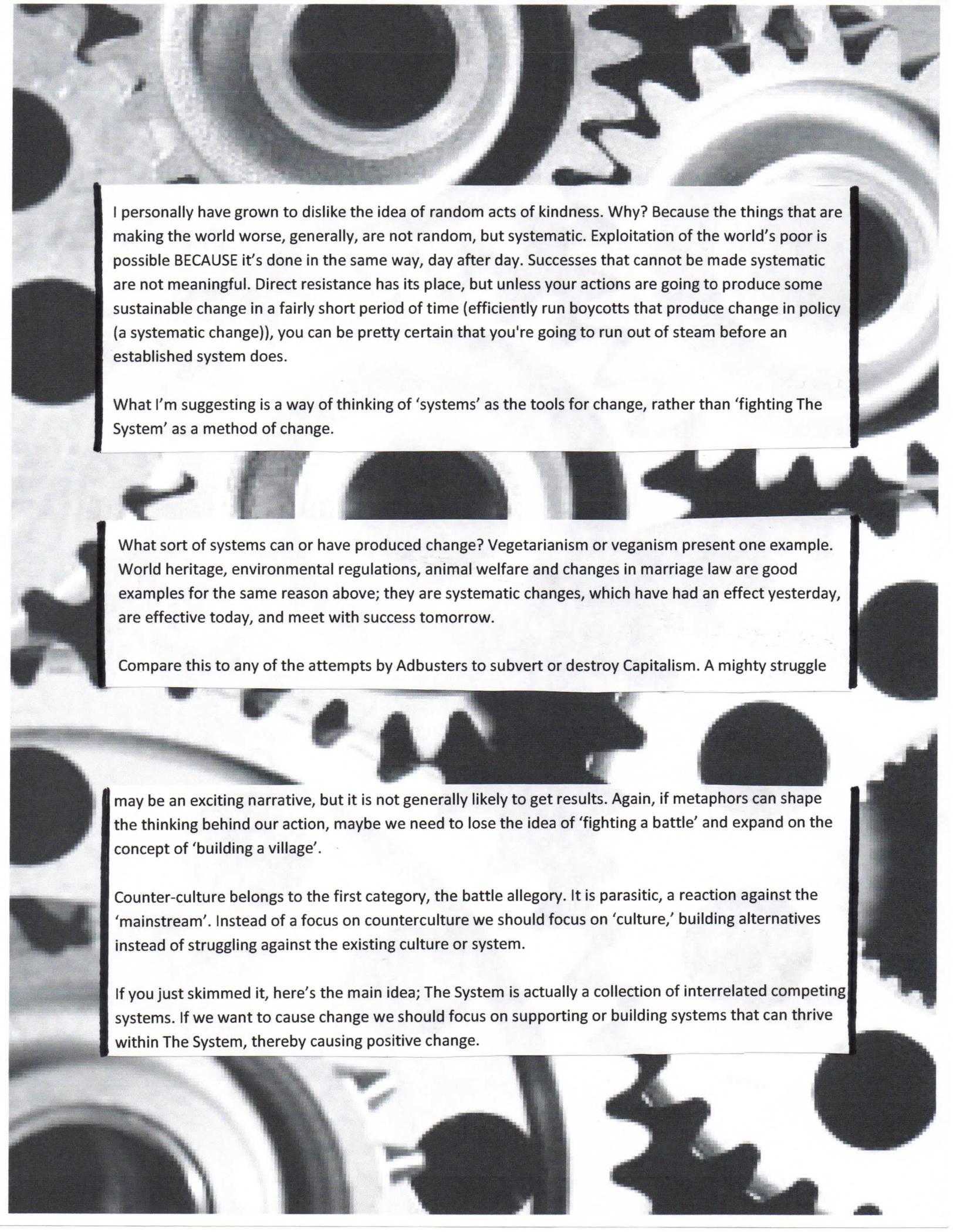
One of the most common expressions of frustration against the general trend of extremely horrible people doing extremely horrible things and making extremely large amounts of money as a result, is to rail against ‘the system’, often with phrases such as ‘the system is corrupt’, ‘crush the system’, ‘fuck the system’ and so on. I have a feeling that this language and the thought that accompanies it are tragically misguided, and I’m going to try to explain why here.

A good metaphor evokes images that help to make it easy to understand a concept. ‘Black Iron Prison’ made liberal use of the metaphor ‘the machine.’ In this metaphor we are all part of the machine; one cannot ‘fight’ the machine because we are the very cogs and gears that make it. Any attempt at change antagonistic to the machine will be eliminated, subverted or accommodated cleanly.

For some reason, the metaphor of ‘the system’ doesn’t hold the same nuance. We talk of the system almost as though it were on one side of the world and we were on the other, when of course, that is not true. Political hegemony is upheld by people WE vote for. The BP disaster saw the spill of oil WE needed for our cars, and globalization is fueled by our participation in the global economy at any level.

Let’s stretch the system metaphor. ‘The system’ is a name given to a collection (occultists might say “Egregore”) of smaller systems that link up together. These systems are in constant flux. We are a component of the system, and the system is a part of us (we both influence and are influenced by micro-systems that make up The System).

We’re not really going to deal with The System any more. We’re going to talk about systems in general.



I personally have grown to dislike the idea of random acts of kindness. Why? Because the things that are making the world worse, generally, are not random, but systematic. Exploitation of the world's poor is possible BECAUSE it's done in the same way, day after day. Successes that cannot be made systematic are not meaningful. Direct resistance has its place, but unless your actions are going to produce some sustainable change in a fairly short period of time (efficiently run boycotts that produce change in policy (a systematic change)), you can be pretty certain that you're going to run out of steam before an established system does.

What I'm suggesting is a way of thinking of 'systems' as the tools for change, rather than 'fighting The System' as a method of change.

What sort of systems can or have produced change? Vegetarianism or veganism present one example. World heritage, environmental regulations, animal welfare and changes in marriage law are good examples for the same reason above; they are systematic changes, which have had an effect yesterday, are effective today, and meet with success tomorrow.

Compare this to any of the attempts by Adbusters to subvert or destroy Capitalism. A mighty struggle

may be an exciting narrative, but it is not generally likely to get results. Again, if metaphors can shape the thinking behind our action, maybe we need to lose the idea of 'fighting a battle' and expand on the concept of 'building a village'.

Counter-culture belongs to the first category, the battle allegory. It is parasitic, a reaction against the 'mainstream'. Instead of a focus on counterculture we should focus on 'culture,' building alternatives instead of struggling against the existing culture or system.

If you just skimmed it, here's the main idea; The System is actually a collection of interrelated competing systems. If we want to cause change we should focus on supporting or building systems that can thrive within The System, thereby causing positive change.

"Well, we're trying to get one of these here pegs into that there hole." Sam and Stan respond in unison.
"Ha!" laughed Dan. "You back-water rubes! You need to think out of the box! Try something different! Try something new! Let's see..." to himself, "this ought to do..."
Soon after, Dan stands and crams and rams, jams and slams, and attempts to fit, with his bare hands, a solid rhombus peg into the hole, but to no avail.

"See here!" Stan says, "You ninny, you're using the wrong peg! This round peg should do the trick just right!"
Soon, Stan stands and crams and rams, and attempts to fit, with his bare hands, the solid round peg into the hole, but to no avail.
"Ho there, fellows! What seems to be the issue here?" Dan inquired as he entered the equation.

"So... Whatcha doin'?"
"Trying to get this here square peg through that there hole."
Sam stands and crams and rams, and attempts to fit, with his bare hands, the solid square peg into the hole, but to no avail.

THE PARABLE OF JAKKO THE CLOWN

Sam, Stan, and Dan remained, piled in a heap in which they complained. They looked at their pegs, with teary eyes, to their disdain.
"It seems here's a problem that can't be explained!"
At this moment, Jakko the Clown arrived with a bottle of water, which he poured into the hole.

"BULLSHIT! There's no WAY it's yours!" yelled Sam (short for Samantha) in response. "You're a no-good shiti!"
"Fuck it. I give up." The discontented Flann conceded.
Then, the entire Clam Clan, getting tired of the whole ordeal, beat up a few guys and took their pegs home with them.

Sam, Stan and Dan stood for a bit, examining their pegs, curious as to what might be the problem with them. And, after some time, Sam, Stan and Dan were joined, one by one, by Jan, Sam (short for Samantha), Flann, Brahm, and two-thirds of the entire Clam-Clan. Each of them, one by one, attempted to force, fit, stick, pound, coerce, cheat, or speculate upon a way to get their own pegs through the hole.
It was getting late, and the small troop were becoming edgy, annoyed with the facts that they just could not get their own personal pegs through that hole. It was only a matter of time that, in such heat, and in such closed quarters, arguments and fighting broke out.
"It just HAS to be MY peg! There's NO REASON why it couldn't be!" shouted the strong willed Brahm.

Drinking With Jesus

Doktor Howl

I was sitting at my desk, gripping the armrests of my chair so hard that I was losing sensation in my fingers...And there he was again, sitting in the chair opposite mine, with a nice looking young lady on his lap, and a bottle of wine in his hand.

I didn't jump quite so high, this time...I'm getting used to it.

"Hey, there, Roger...I want you to meet my wife, Mary." he said, between nips on the bottle.

"Hello, Mary."

Mary smiled, but didn't say anything.

"So, Dok, what's got you bugged? You don't look so good."

"Fucking everything. The budget's whacked, a pile of execs are coming through, the engineer thinks he's you, don't get me started."

"Well, that kind of sucks." Jesus replied.

"Yeah, so how about a bit of a hand? That's why you're here, right?"

"Nope. First of all, I know everything in creation...But since humans have free will, I make no claim to understand the byzantine rules you have created for yourself. Second, the free will thing again...You are free to fail. I don't 'take the wheel'. If I did, of what use are you?""

"Okay, so you tell me, Jesus...What's the meaning behind all this? Not this fucking paperwork, but life? I work 70 hours a week, for the privilege of not working the other 92 hours. Of those 92 hours, I am asleep for about 43 hours, leaving me - on a GOOD week - with 49 hours a week to do anything else. What the hell kind of set up is THAT?""

"Well, Dok, as a colleague of mine once said, 'Don't look at me; I didn't do it.' And as for the point, didn't I say some shit about the birds of the field? Didn't I make it PLAIN enough that you're here to enjoy life? That there is no scoreboard? Seriously, you can't win at life...But you can't lose, either. You get one (1) life, and what you do with it is your own business. Dying poor or rich is utterly irrelevant; I don't know how many times I have to say this. You aren't a 'success' if you make it big, but your kids don't know you."

"Interesting. I thought that rich people had a hard time getting into heaven. Something about a needle's eye, etc, the rich man going to hell, etc. But you said there wasn't a hell, just the other day."

"Rich people make their own hell, Dok. They spend their lives gathering wealth, instead of friends. When they die, there's plenty of people, but no stuff...And no need for stuff. So their whole

time in 'boot camp', as we call Earth, was spent learning skills that have absolutely no application."

He took a long pull, and continued. "Worst of all, people who think this way feel worthless when they don't get rich. It's very sad. Here they are, a unique personality, a treasure beyond price, and they think they've failed, because they can't accumulate little green pieces of paper fast enough. Then I gotta go spend time under the bridges in Portland some more, hauling them out of what's left of their corporeal presence. And that's the real tragedy here, right? They have something AMAZING, but they think it's useless, because they can't keep score with worthless pieces of paper. So, yeah, they make their own hell. Even if we were so inclined (and we're not), we wouldn't HAVE to make hell, because anything we could think up would be completely out-moded by what you do to yourselves."

He looked down at the paper in front of my desk. "You didn't carry the tens column. Look, I have a few minutes, I suppose I can try to help you for a bit."

"Don't sweat it", I said, putting on my jacket for a nice, long lunch. "You've already figured it out for me."

To be continued.

Shit Roger has actually said in conversation, stripped of context:

1. I've seriously considered having my head lasered.
2. No, I'm pretty sure I don't have rabies, but thanks for asking.
3. Ask ECH. He's always given me good advice. In a Redman sort of way.
4. If you're going to wreck your motorcycle, at least be listening to Elvis while you're doing it.
5. You can't really understand Tucson until a hornet flies up the leg of your shorts and goes batshit.

Hey, You!

The Right Reverend Nigel

Hey you! You're not so special!

I know, I know; the world is going to shit, and no one around you seems prepared to wake up and THINK! Horrifying laws are being passed every day that restrict the freedoms of ordinary citizens, and at the same time the laws that used to protect the little guys from the big guys are being struck down. We're at their mercy, but it seems like you're surrounded by a legion of sheep, of armchair heroes who do nothing but cheer on the erosion of their own rights, their own prosperity, and their own future. You feel like you're all alone in a world full of automatons.

After all, the vast majority of the people in this country are Traditional Christian Families who hate gays and teenage girls who get abortions, and love God, war, and Wal-Mart. They get their information from Fox News and they're against taxes and social programs. They think the poor deserve to be poor because they aren't good enough, that homosexuality is a sin, and that if you can't afford healthcare, you probably deserve to die. They're on the side of those big corporations that close down factories and leave whole towns devastated and hopeless so they can increase their profits by moving manufacturing to Mexico. They support the shareholders, and think big business should get welfare and tax breaks the rest of us don't get because What's Good For Big Business is Good For America. Besides, they think they might just be rich someday, and they don't want any slackers taking a nibble out of THEIR slice of pie.

Right?

Right?

Hold the phone there, Mister.

Just where did you get this impression, anyway? Who told you that's what most Americans are like? Why do you think you're so unique, so extraordinary, so *alone*?

It's called alienation, and they're doing it to us on purpose. But who are they?

Five media companies control over 90% of the media in the US, and they have counterparts... mostly inextricably linked counterparts... all over the world. When you hear that "most Americans want *this*" or "most Americans oppose *that*", take a moment to ask yourself; in this media-controlled world where what you hear is not what's true so much as what they want you to believe, why would you believe that most Americans are mindless sheep complacently following the shepherd?

Alienation is embedded at all levels of Western culture. In our jobs, we are isolated from the products our companies produce. If we are in manufacturing, we spent months or years or a whole lifetime only handling that one side panel our machine puts out. Just the side panel. How can you take pride in a side panel? How can you pat that side panel and say with satisfaction "Yessirree, I made that!"?

You can't. Work has become a daily grind, and people are working longer, more productive hours for less pay. Who benefits?

You might get laid off at any time. Your co-workers want your job. The company demands loyalty, and the more loyal you are the more likely they are to spare you in the next round of layoffs. Troublemakers don't stay. You know this. You can't trust your co-workers; they have the wrong values, anyway. They're sheep, mindlessly following orders, happily obedient. You do your job and you're glad to have one. You know you won't be getting a raise this quarter but if you keep your head down you might get to pick up an extra shift here and there to make ends meet. Alienation.

The banks have coffers stuffed full of all the extra profits created by the widening gap between wages and production, and are all too happy to lend you (at a low, low introductory rate for the first six months) the money you are so short on so you can have the stuff it takes to keep up. But it's just the stuff you need, not like those jackasses down the street who bought a huge flatscreen TV that you can see them watching the game on through their window. You know those guys oppose single-payer health care; you can see it in their baseball caps and their Ford Explorers. You try not to make eye contact when you walk by and they're on the porch smoking. They're different from you; they're not paying attention and they have the wrong values. Alienation.

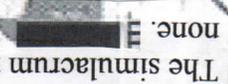
But wait a minute... if that's what you think of them, what do they think of you? And how is it that if the media is controlled by five giant corporations, all of which also have their fingers in industries ranging from soda to pesticides, everyone thinks it's liberal? Why would the media be telling its audience that *the others are different, and they're out to get you?*

As you've long suspected, there's someone running the show, and they're telling you all the things they want you to hear.

Most Americans, traditional Christian families or not, want the same things. They want jobs, healthcare, living wages, and a democratic political system in which their voice matters. Most Americans do not hate gays, do support single-payer health care, are concerned for the environment, don't want to be at war, have a strong sense of compassion and concern for their community's well-being, and think big business has too much influence on government.

That last bit has everything to do with why They don't want Us to know that we're really not all that special. If We The People dropped the illusion that we are irreparably divided by what are, in reality, relatively trivial elements to our ideologies, we would learn that our larger ideologies match up much better than They've been telling us... and united, we could do something about getting the power back in the hands of the populace, and government out of the hands of the international mega-corporations. YOU would discover that hey, you! You're not so special!

And doesn't that feel *good*?

The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth--it is the truth which conceals that there is none. 

The simulacrum is true

There is No Discordian Brand Name

THE GOOD REVEREND ROGER

You hear it all the time, anywhere where Discordians meet..."What is Discordian Music/Movies/etc?" In a religion in which the only commandment is "Think For Yourself, Schmuck", this has got to be the absolute nadir of irony.

Of course, there IS Discordian literature. That is to say, there are books and articles on Discordianism (you're reading one right now), but you can't point at a work of fiction and say "that is or is not Discordian." By its very definition, Discordianism is what YOU want it to be. You are not required to get consensus, or to maintain lists of what is or is not Discordian. You CAN, of course, but people will point and laugh.

There are no set rules, for example, for having a Discordian wedding. For one Discordian, the wedding might involve Harley Davidsons and assless chaps. For another, it might involve a full Catholic ceremony, done with an entirely straight face.

If you want an Official Discordian™ List O' Reading Material or whatever, then you have, in fact, found the ONE way to DO IT WRONG. If you want church members to tell you what is and what is not canon, then you are in the wrong religion. You could try Catholicism, or maybe Scientology or even the Moonies. They will tell you what to do, and how to do it.

So will I, come to think of it, but religious consultation can get a little pricey. Write me a line detailing your questions, and I'll send you an estimate. Once we have all the financial monkey business out of the way, I'll tell you what you need to listen to, watch, read, have sex with, whatever, in order to be a REALLY REAL DISCORDIAN FOR REALNESS.

However, *all sales are FINAL*. Cash UP FRONT. No personal cheques, please.

There. That's settled...So no more asking what's "Discordian", unless you are willing to dig DEEP, brother/sister/etc. I mean, you wouldn't go to the doctor and ask for advice without expecting to be billed, right? You wouldn't ask a plumber to blast out that enormous fossilized turdball stuck down in the pipes for free? What kind of person ARE you? Apparently, some sort of COMMUNIST or perhaps even a TERRORIST, and we have PLACES for people like you, and big, corn-fed brutes from Alabama to tend to your rehabilitation.

So knock it off.

Or Kill Me.

EPILOGUE

Well, you did it. You got through the semi-lucid ramblings of a bunch of disenfranchised freaks struggling to navigate the fine line between philosophy and delusion in a society that is hostile to nonconformity. How well they succeeded?

That's for you to decide. Think for yourself, schmuck.

You have some choices to make, now, about what you want to do with everything you read here. If you want, you can forget about it, and go back to your evening news and your teevee dinners and your pundits *using-and-theming* this whole thing to death, forever. You can live eternally in Tucson, where nothing gets any better and nobody ever dies.

Or, you can, y' know, not.

Before you go, I'll give you a piece of advice: Don't listen to that bastard The Good Reverend Roger. You don't want to go back to the past; it's a trick, and besides, we've already been there, done that. There's nothing left to see. No, come on ahead, and don't be afraid; I'm waiting for you in the Future.

The Future you *demand*ed.

-The Right Reverend Nigel



*the prison dwells
as far back in time
as livings cells.
and, as cells,
living become our prisons,
themselves.
if our prisons jell
together, then together
we're like cells
as well.*

well...

at least so far as I can tell...

Cuddlefish