

# **MISANTHROPE'S HOLIDAY: VIGNETTES AND STORIES**



Bruce L. Gary

# **MISANTHROPE'S HOLIDAY: VIGNETTES AND STORIES**

**Free Sampler Edition**

Books by Bryce L. Gary

ESSAYS FROM ANOTHER PARADIGM, 1992, 1993 (Abridged Edition)

GENETIC ENSLAVEMENT:

A CALL TO ARMS FOR INDIVIDUAL LIBERATION, 2004, 2006

THE MAKING OF A MISANTHROPE: BOOK 1, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 2005

QUOTES FOR MISANTHROPE: MOCKING HOMO HYPOCRITUS, 2007

EXOPLANET OBSERVING FOR AMATEURS, 2007

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Bruce L. Gary

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Hereford, AZ 85615

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The cover picture is the setting for most of the Misanthrope Holiday, my family’s beloved house in Temple City, CA from 1986 to 1998.

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DEDICATED TO  
Daughters  
Loretta and Cynthia



who played essential roles in my Misanthrope Holiday journey.



1957



1998

*Wisdom wears wrinkles.*

Mr. Misanthrope, whose holiday journey took place between the times of these two pictures.



Picture by W. Eugene Smith of son Pat leading sister Juanita along a woodland trail.  
*(The watermark effect signifies that copyright status could not be determined)*

"There is something else, too which is a part of growing up - to see that life is really, after all, a game. When we play a game as it should be played, we strain every muscle to win; but all the while we care less for winning than for the game. And we play the better for it."

Spoken by "Divine Boy," in *Last and First Men*, by Olaf Stapledon, Chapter 5, Section 3.

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## PREFACE

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Two words in this book's title need clarification: "misanthrope" and "holiday."

My definition of "misanthrope" departs slightly from the dictionary version of "one who hates or mistrusts humankind." For me a "misanthrope" is a person who is deeply disappointed in human nature, who can see both the good and bad in people, and who is impatient to see an improved balance between the two. This form of misanthropy belies an optimistic hope that a better human nature is possible, and may some day evolve.

My use of the word "holiday" in the title was inspired by Irwin Edman's book *Philosopher's Holiday* (1938), which I've read three times. I suspect that his writing style has become a subconscious model for me. *Philosopher's Holiday* is a book of unexpected encounters, or vignettes, from his travels to Europe between teaching philosophy courses at Columbia University. He uses his holiday experiences as departure points for thoughts about larger issues.

A "holiday" is a time of openness to new meanings for past experiences as well as present ones. It therefore can become a basis for rethinking life's underlying assumptions. Some holidays last a few days. Mine lasted 12 years.

My holiday can also be viewed as a transition. Before 1980 I was a cold-hearted Republican; after 1991 I was a warm-hearted Democrat. This is an oversimplification, of course. What I mean is that I became able to empathize with those unlucky fellow-travelers trying to find their way on an uncaring planet.

Transitions are a searching time. Things that in the past would have gone unnoticed beckon for connection with something inside oneself. For me, the inner romantic was summoned. Poetry, that I had despised, seemed like the right medium for exploring a feeling. And "feelings," those unreliable guides that had betrayed me in the past, became new windows on who I was and the nature of the world I lived in.

My holiday is over, and I feel better for the experience. It can be likened to going into a store to buy a coat: you have to try some on to find the one that fits, and you walk out feeling better. I now feel more "at peace" with myself and the world. I understand why feelings should be viewed warily, and I no longer feel the need to enter that tumultuous realm which has claimed a few souls. The "peace" I feel with the world is a misanthrope's acceptance of human nature's flaws. Even though the "normaloids" seem bent on destroying the world, it is not my responsibility to stop them. I have taken my place in the stands as a spectator of the human drama. I am both disapproving and amused.

Still, my holiday was a wonderful time, and I feel compelled to record some of the romantic scribbles of that period. They were busy years for me; my writings from that time were made in airport lobbies, hotel rooms and backyard retreats. My career was in full swing and other personal challenges were “piling on.” A daughter had special needs, a wife was deranging, and a marriage had to be undone.

The intrusion of personal life challenges was not an unfortunate co-alignment with my holiday. Instead, these distractions from the business of life were probably the instigator of the holiday.

Before my holiday began I would write such things as (early 1981): “*The individual who creates employment for others should not expect gratitude from the newly employed. I understand this, like every strong person.*” Afterwards I could write (1990): “*As we love our children unconditionally, their job is to get ready for life and not look back. Our job is to prepare them for walking forward, and wish them well.*” This holiday made me a better person.

There’s a clue in the two passages that might reveal how my holiday began? It has to do with an unlikely conjunction of love and parenthood. Until the Fall of 1981 my life had been work-centered. Yes, my two daughters and a wife were important, but my most significant role in the family was based on that old fashioned notion of a husband and father being a wage-earner. Things changed when Lory’s teacher said she needed a special school for something called a “learning disability.” The Rodiger Center was recommended, so that’s where we enrolled her. I began a month-long break from work, knowing that challenges loomed.

Parenthood can have many unexpected demands, and for this one I commenced to read everything I could find about the brain function underpinnings of LD. Someone on the Rodiger staff was impressed by my questions, and what I was learning from reading, and she invited me to help the Center seek funding to alleviate tuition costs. Her name was Young, and she was attractive. It must be said that the thing that attracted me the most was her intelligence and caring nature. These traits were profoundly missing in Lory’s mother, who was eventually diagnosed as having a “borderline personality disorder.”

The unlikely conjunction of a new parental role and a capable partner for helping address a greater cause had an effect upon me. My emotions alternated between euphoria and despair. A misanthrope in love, especially an impossible one, leads to turmoil. As 1981 yielded to 1982 this one pathetic misanthrope kept his cool, maintaining decorum, and survived the year to emerge as a half-lost soul groping for the right path of change. He began a holiday, and learned to experience the world in new ways, suffused with poignancy and feelings. Small things had new meaning, some of which invited the inner poet to record the precious moment. Whereas I once judged people with problems as “weak” and unmotivated, I became understanding because of first-hand evidence that sometimes Lady Luck was cruel.

My new parenting role evolved through several stages: from reading about brain function, to paying tuition to a special education school, to helping the school, to becoming more involved in parenting activities and more observant of special needs, to shielding my children from a “mental mother,” to seeking divorce with a custodial role for me, and finally to becoming a single parent with full custody. All of these stages had occurred between the two passages cited above. The complete span of holiday years are from 1980 to 1991.

This was my holiday, separating one kind of misanthrope from another. During this period I wrote vignettes and stories. Since I never wrote such things before, or after, I conclude that these writings served some purpose during a tumultuous life transition. I’m not sure what that purpose was, but there must be a residual of that transitional person within me now, since I feel compelled to record them in this book.

I’ve decided to start out by presenting writings from before the Holiday transition. Part One is a selection of writings that illustrate the hard edge of my thinking before 1980.

**Note: This “Free Sampler Edition” includes approximately half the entries of the complete Second Edition.**

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## **PART ONE**

### **Pre-Holiday Writings: 1950 - 1979**

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The writings in Part One are from before my “misanthrope holiday,” prior to 1980. They are ordered by date, starting in my college years.

Note the frequent “hard edge” to them. I was impatient with human stupidity, and quick to criticize. Although I have been a misanthrope my entire life it would be fair to say that before my holiday transition I resembled the traditional misanthrope – hating humanity without forgiveness. Some of this sentiment remains with me today, but it now has a softer edge.

The Part One selections have been taken from another book, scheduled for completion in about a year, called *The Making of a Misanthrope, Book 2: Midnight Thoughts*. This manuscript is essentially complete through 1983.

I’ll admit to selecting only those writings with a hard edge. Interspersed among them are writings with a “love for life” and poetic appreciation for existence. But my purpose here is not to provide balance, but to present a sampling of attitudes relating to how I viewed others harshly before my holiday.

The date before each entry is in year/month/date format: yyyy.mm.dd. They are presented in two groups: 1950-1970 and 1971-1979.

**[This section not included in the “Sampler Edition.”]**

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## **PART TWO**

### **VIGNETTES: 1980 - 1991**

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The vignettes in Part Two are from my “misanthrope holiday” years, ordered by date. My choice in ordering by date serves to show how the things I noticed evolved during this 12-year holiday.

It is a fortunate accident that the first vignette and the poem that closes the book serve as reprise bookends. Such symmetry may be a writer’s trick, but in this case it was a fortuitous accident.

The Part following this one is a collection of Stories from the same period. The Part after it consists of weird ideas from the same holiday years. The concluding Part is a collection of writings similar to the previous parts, but occurring after the Holiday – a sort of remembrance of good times gone.

In this Part, entries such as “Brother’s Keeper” (1990.02.01) and “Parental Love” (1990.02.25) show a growing awareness of how the strong can help the weak, instead of despising them.

Essentially no changes have been made to the original writings. A comma here, an adjective there, but there are no re-written sentences.

In this Part, as well as the following ones, the entries have titles. These can be found for later reference in the Index with page numbers.

If you only read one entry in this Part may I suggest “Parental Love” on page 41. “Letter From Chile” on page 21 and “Letters From Norway” on page 29 depict life “in the field” with a big picture perspective. “Daddy” on page 51 brings tears every time I read it. “To the Sea” on page 54 is a misty take on the shortness of existence.

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

### TRANSIENCE

1980.01.01

The atoms that comprise me have existed for billions of years, will exist for other billions, and they do not care about their present configuration!

But *I* care! And it matters to *me* in what manner they maintain their configuration, and whether they will maintain it for another month, or another decade.

We all are *transients*. Yet our imagination transcends, and surveys timescales that are beyond the tiny bounds of anything our personal experience can encompass.

Our imagination can also soar beyond the very real confines of place, and situation, and beyond reality: I can imagine futures that will never exist.

How wonderful to be alive! Even for awhile!

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **THE HILLSIDE**

1981.05.11

He seemed uncomfortable, sitting at the window seat, with his knees against the seatback in front of him. He gazed out the bus window, not fully attentive to the cars passing below. Freeways in LA don't afford the best of views, but passing traffic and homes on hillsides can break the monotony.

There were other passengers, businessmen, with their giveaway business suits and attache cases. And there were vacationers, in casual dress, with tote bags at their feet. Riding the airport bus may not be comfortable, but it does allow thoughts to wander freely. Businessmen may rehearse an upcoming sales encounter, the vacationer may picture beaches, others may anticipate a reunion with a relative. But this one man, gazing out the window, was different. His movements were gracefully disconnected from any apprehension or anticipation.

It's fun to imagine what people are thinking, and to wonder how they feel about life. I look for subtle movements that may indicate attitudes. Are there universals, such as when a young man's gaze encounters and dwells upon a passing young woman? Or when an old man's gaze does the same? I look for interactions, and overhear conversations.

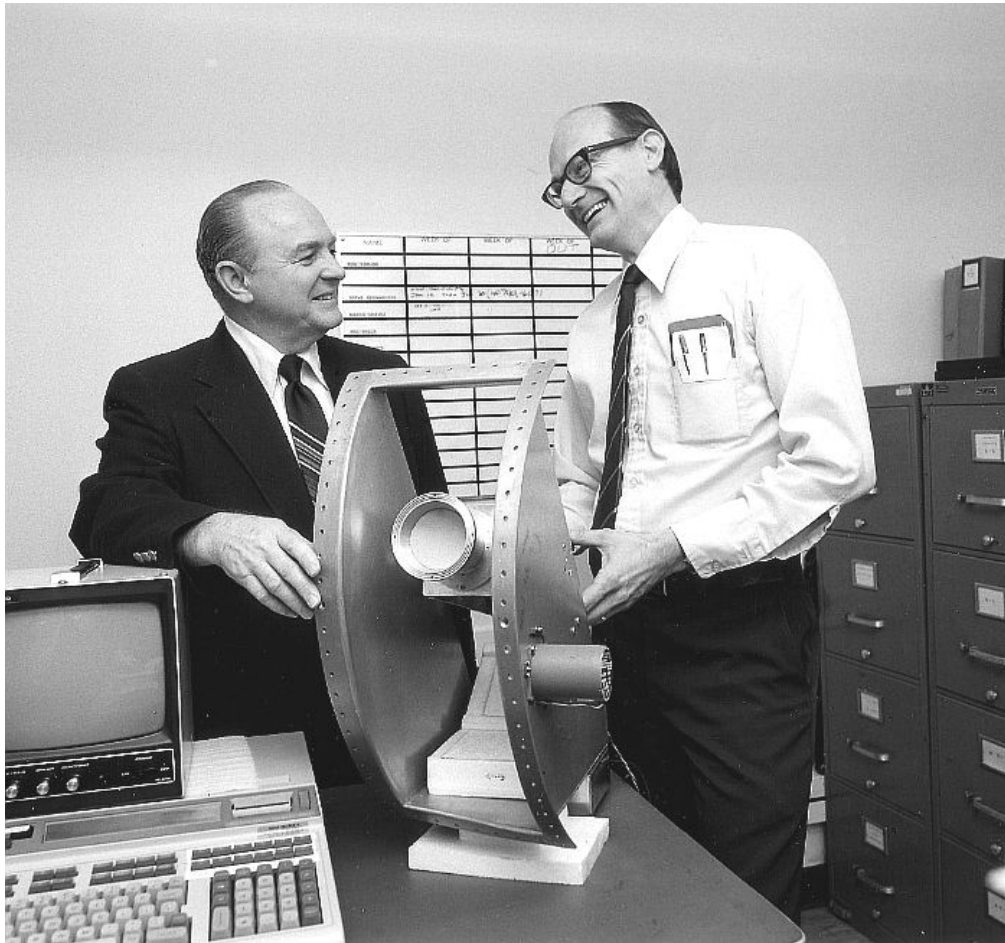
This man didn't seem interested in interactions. His gaze out the window was oblivious to those around him. His thoughts, whatever they were, only came into the bus when a cramped leg had to be rearranged against the seatback. But, I ask, what excuse can anybody have for being bored at the beginning of a trip, especially in an airplane? There are so many beautiful clouds, and interesting land forms to see. It's a time to relax and enjoy, not turn within. Yet this man was bored, as if he had no interest in what the immediate future had for him.

Suddenly, he came alive! We had just entered a segment of freeway where a hillside obstructed our view of traffic, houses, and an expansive view of LA. He sat upright, and stared directly at the hillside. There was no particular part of the hillside that could have been the focus of his attention, because it was passing by too fast, providing fast changing views. What was it about this hillside that begged attention? Old tangled trees, some bushes, and grass? The hillside was there for only a few seconds. Just as soon as it had passed, replaced by a wide expanse of LA, the traveler seemed to be still looking out at the hillside. Gradually, though, he returned to his previous disinterested demeanor.

One can speculate about the significance of an unkempt stretch of hillside in the middle of a large city. What might be the state of mind of a business traveler at the beginning of another trip? Could he be bored with his business mission? Could the hillside represent where he'd prefer to be going? Could the hillside have reminded him of the past? Was the traveler just a simple "country boy" at heart? Perhaps the hillside reminded the traveler of the kind of place where he'd like his children to grow up.

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

I suspect these were the things that the hillside meant to him. I believe this is true, because later, in the airplane, the enigmatic traveler wrote a brief account of what the hillside meant to him.



*This hard-working misanthrope is playing by the rules, with marketing trips to NASA headquarters in Washington, DC, leading a group of engineers to develop a new instrument, pleasing the boss (Jim Johnston, left), maybe enjoying the recognition. At least the money was good, and it supported a family.*

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **THE LEFT-HANDED PILOT**

1983.10.27

I take myself too seriously, sometimes. This can lead to learning experiences, like yesterday.

The working group meeting was boring, and the Tennessee outdoors setting was so inviting. I think we all wished the official proceedings could be aborted so we could really retreat on this "retreat." We had assembled for the annual inter-agency aviation safety workshop.

My attention was wandering, and I found myself sensing that there was something unusual about the way the person next to me, a Delta Airlines pilot, was taking notes. He was writing with his left hand, which by itself isn't unusual, but he was using the normal right hander's pencil grip, and that is unusual. The normal left-hander employs the awkward-looking "hooked" pencil grip. I knew from my neuropsychology reading that only about 1% of the population is left-handed in this manner. I've been alert to this 1% because they are conjectured to have brain function lateralized in a manner opposite to the other 99%. That is, whereas language function is found in the left cerebral hemisphere for 99% of the population, it is located in the right cerebral hemisphere for 1%.

In order to verify that the 1% who wrote left-handed with the right-hander's pencil grip are indeed the same 1% with opposite lateralization, I've recruited as many of my friends and acquaintances as possible to take a tachistoscopic language location test that I run on my home computer. I am also keeping track of the special abilities, and handicaps, of people in this category. A pilot in this rare category was a potentially useful piece of information. If only I could learn more about him for my survey!

The next day, while walking to our committee room, I found myself walking beside him; so I commented that I noticed something interesting about the way he was writing his notes yesterday. Before I could explain the significance of his left-handed pencil grip, he said "yeah, it was pretty boring yesterday, and I was amusing myself by trying to write left-handed!"

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **MALENESS ON THE FARM**

1985.08.02

I can remember from boyhood walking among the turkeys on the way to the cherry tree. The Tom turkeys would pick fights with me if I passed too close while they were strutting near the hen turkeys. I remember thinking how silly the Toms were for their strutting behavior. They made themselves look so self-important, when in reality they did nothing useful for the flock. I think I interrupted their strutting performance on several occasions, by chasing them. I hoped to humiliate the Toms in front of the hens, and I wanted to steer the hens away from such ridiculous creatures. Of course it had no effect, for the Tom resumed his strutting, and the hen resumed her responding. I could never figure out why the hen's liked such dumb male behavior. I concluded from these observations that turkeys must be about the dumbest creatures on the farm.

In reading about the sociobiology of turkeys in articles by Trivers, it was somehow "gratifying" to learn how dumb male turkeys were when they were presented with a wood replica of a hen turkey's head. Crude replicas would elicit the male courting response, and he'd even walk around to the back of the imaginary hen and try to mount. In their attempt to discover how small a stimulus set would elicit the male's sexual behavior, the scientists were continuing MY childhood attempts to discredit the ridiculous and disgusting behavior of the males.

Roosters affected me the same way. Watching a rooster strut and bully the hens, and pick fights with the other roosters, caused me to want to lash out and whack the rooster on the head, and teach him a lesson about how important he really was! I couldn't discern any role for the rooster either; he was certainly useless at protecting the flock from the raccoons and foxes. Roosters, I learned, also don't like interfering strangers.

Even the hens acted despicably, as they would peck at another hen, to the point of bleeding. A sore on another chicken would be pecked at; there was no feeling of empathy. In effect, there was harassment and murder in the chicken pen on a regular basis. I can recall wanting to stop the cruel behavior, but I knew that my intervention was useless because the behavior would merely continue when I wasn't there.

In the chicken yard I also wondered why I couldn't find illustrations of the universal principle that "good" behavior is rewarded. The only socially considerate acts I can remember were between mother hens and their chicks. At all other times it seemed that the universal principle governing social behavior, the one my mother alleged was in my best interest to adhere to (because it was inherently in a person's own best interest to do so, supposedly), was non-existent; and in its place was a principle dictating that the individual shall seek his own interests without regard for others, and even to harass the others for reasons I didn't understand at that time. Apparently the code of behavior that my mother was teaching me had no place in the world of chickens.

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

I guess my next question was: Did "goodness" have a place in the world of people? If it didn't exist among the animals, then it wasn't a universal principle governing behavior. This question bothered me, because I was trying to be a good boy. I wanted to see goodness throughout the world of people. (I accepted the idea that being good and considerate, etc, was an absolute good, not to be questioned.) But the good I looked for in the world of people wasn't there. Adults strutted, boys picked fights, and unfairness could be found everywhere - just like in the chicken pen. Why was "goodness" ignored so much in the world, yet talked about as if everybody believed in it? The world seemed to be saying "do as I say, not as I do." I think my strong dislike for hypocrisy had its origins with these thoughts.

I'm an adult now, yet I feel the same way, and have the same childhood questions. I realize that my pet peeves fit into the category of things that bothered me when I was a youngster. And many of these childhood questions have not yet been satisfactorily answered. I am still trying to understand universal principles governing social behavior.



*On the "farm" where I learned about the stupidity of turkeys and the cruelty of chickens, with mother and sister Sue.*

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **LETTER FROM CHILE**

1987.09.16

I sit here in front of my computer screen trying to remember how to use WordStar in order to write something about where I am and why. There's a constant buzz from the inverter, on the floor, as it converts 220 volt power to the 120 volts my computer needs. Diskettes are scattered over the desks of the hotel room, waiting for additional "reduction." Outside the window, on my right, I look down 7 stories to a plaza, with a statue of Magellan at its center. He's looking in my direction, at the strait bearing his name. The strait runs north/south, and can be seen a few blocks away out a back window of the hotel. Looking beyond the statue, to the east, I see mountains. They are partly covered with snow, which accumulates, and melts, and accumulates, with the daily variation of weather. The mountains are much lower in altitude than the Andes, to the north.

Those jagged mountains aren't visible from my window, but only the low ones, that lead northward toward the airport - the airport that is the lifeline of Punta Arenas in the winter. Since the Pan American Highway is impassable at places between here and Santiago everything comes and goes from this city through either the shipping port or the airport.

The airport has two sides: a public side and a military side. It is forbidden to take pictures from either side, so we all know which side operates with the consent of the other. Near the sign at the entrance that says "Republic of Chile" is that other less welcoming entrance. I have a badge that says "Fuerza Aerea de Chile; Evento Especiales: Proyecto Ozono, Estados Unidos, Bruce Gary." When I pull up to the gate, one of the many young soldiers comes to my lowered car window, and as he leans over to see this badge, I squirm as I notice, again, his Israeli machine gun inadvertently pointing into the car in some direction that always seems too close to my face. We have been cautioned to not complain about things, because we are guests in the country and we remain here to conduct our business at their pleasure.

The dirt road beyond the gate is like all neglected dirt roads in the world; except that the large chock holes are filled with muddy water that is half frozen. After a quarter mile, past barracks we're not supposed to notice, and a hanger with French Mirage jet fighters, which we also are not supposed to notice, we arrive at a large hangar with lots of cars parked to one side. The 10 or 20 cars indicate that a couple dozen of my colleagues are working in the hangar.

Walking past the armed soldier at the hangar entrance we encounter inside a beautiful sight. Airplanes are always beautiful to me, but this one is special. The white wings stretch a third of a football field, tip to lumbering tip. The fuselage is dominated by one very large tubular jet engine, with intakes up front on the two sides. Above the intakes is a small pocket of a place for the lone pilot to sit. And it is with this beautiful white airplane that we shall save the Earth!

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

We joke about "saving the earth." Everybody seems to take our mission seriously. But we are scientists, and it is axiomatic that scientists do whatever they do in the mode of a child at play. I have wondered what some of the "locals" think of us. In restaurants we are always joking and laughing; while everyone else is so serious. I know they're not serious because of their concern about the ozone layer; but they might have expected that we, who have come to this "Ends of the Earth" little town on an urgent and much publicized mission to investigate why the world is unexpectedly losing its life-protecting layer of stratospheric ozone, that we surely must be concerned and in a serious state of mind. But we're not, it seems. It's "business as usual." And since we enjoy our work, we are "at play as usual."

But things aren't quite what they seem. Look in front of the white U-2 plane in the hangar and there are about 15 work areas, one for each team that has an instrument on the airplane. And there are people working in those areas almost 24 hours per day. Consider that we've been here 35 days, so far, and the others are like me in having worked approximately 12 hours per day for 34 of those 35 days. (My one day "off" was due to a sickness which is making the rounds of the project personnel.)

The truth is that it does matter to us, this problem we're trying to solve. Each instrument is unique, and contributes something of importance to the endeavor. And each of us wants to "deliver" on the promise we have made on behalf of our instrument. Some are clearly more important than others, such as the Harvard Chlorine Monoxide Instrument. My instrument is mostly supportive, as it provides information on the meteorological setting in which the other instruments are taking their air sample measurements.

This beautiful airplane is perhaps the most instrument-laden air measuring craft in the world. It is also the world's highest-flying meteorology research airplane, as it regularly attains altitudes of 70,000 feet - except over Antarctica, where, we have learned, the cold air limits it to 67,000 feet. Today's science flight will be the 9th of the ozone mission. We fly as far south as safety permits, which is latitude 72 South, near the base of the Palmer Peninsula. This is well into the region known as the "Antarctic Ozone Hole."

There is a news blackout until the press conference at the end of the mission, about September 30. I am not supposed to write you that we have flown into the ozone hole on several occasions. I am also not supposed to write you about concentrations of key chemical constituents, so I won't. Or a new theory that may explain the process of formation and subsequent dynamic "battering away" of the "hole," so I won't. I am also not able to say whether an answer has been formulated concerning the "culprit role" of chloroflourocarbons (of which Freon is the most notable), so I won't. But the "bottom line" question is, well ...

This remote anomaly over the South Pole has its antipode at the North. It is smaller, but growing. We are likely to be deployed to Alaska, or Norway, in 18 months, to study this second "opening." It is like a race: we discover an opening, and rush to glean insight that can be used to "patch it up," but then another hole appears! The next "opening" could actually be a spreading of the two holes, exposing us all! That

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

leads us to the "bottom line" question: is the Antarctic Ozone Hole a mere portent of irreversible global erosion which is too late to stop and which could threaten most Earthly life forms?

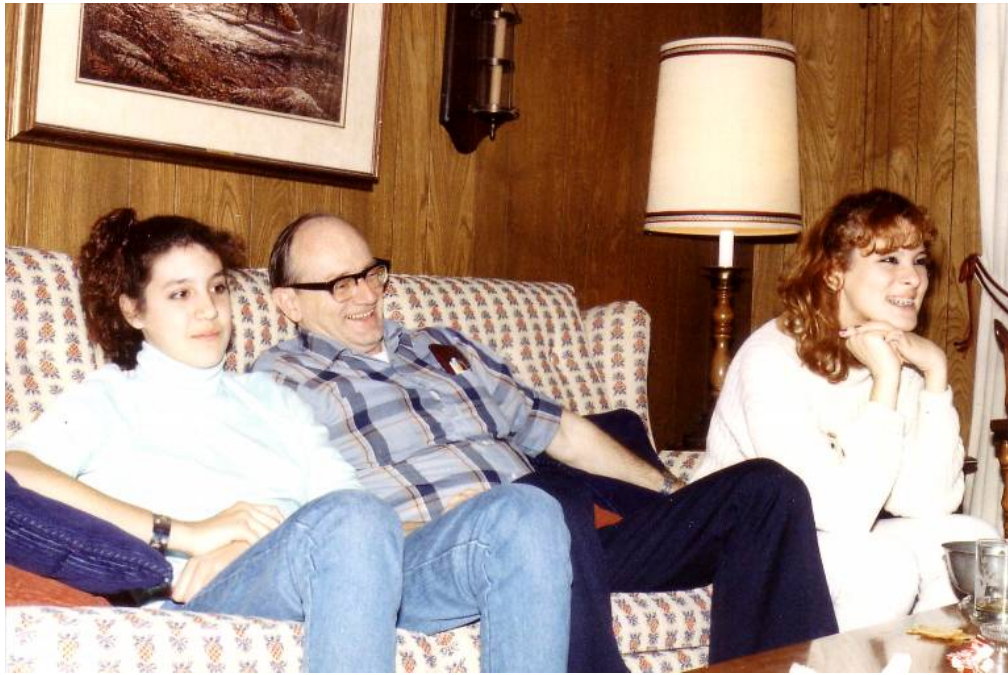
And that's why we work 12-hour days, and leave our comfortable California homes and families for a 7-week assignment at the World's Southernmost city, on the edge of a Tierra del Fuego winter. In some sense that airport where the beautiful white plane thunders into the Antarctic sky is the World's lifeline.

I'll be driving out there when I finish this letter, for the plane is due back shortly, and my instrument will have data that will need to be analyzed. Now, as I gaze out the window at Magellan, I see that it is raining. Spring is coming, and it more often rains than snows. Some school girls are kissing the foot of a statue below Magellan, which is supposed to bring good luck. I notice that the my bed is made, so the maid must have come in while I was absorbed in writing. The power inverter is still buzzing on the floor. And as I stare at the computer display I realize that I have remembered how WordStar works.



*The beautiful ER-2 that is "saving the world."*

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES



*Even misanthropes need a break, especially at Christmas (1987) with the kids. Cindy is only somewhat amused while Lory and I are really enjoying something going on at Sister Sue's place in Dallas.*

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **LETTER FROM NORWAY**

1989.01.04 - 1989.01.21

I feel like writing. As always, the computer is humming in readiness. The blank screen and computer wait to be writ upon, instead of to be calculated with, for a change. The butter is out, getting soft, in preparation for when I'll eat my evening snack. This little abode of mine is clean, since the maid was here while I was out. The day darkens outside. The rain clouds are giving way to clear patches. No flight is scheduled for tomorrow, so there's time now for writing.

Finally I bought a Norwegian/English dictionary, a map of the area, a newspaper in English, and a knife for buttering my bread. I'm glad to have a knife for buttering my bread. It's been difficult doing this with the large knife I use for slicing the bread. I've had a buttering knife on my shopping list for the past few days. This reveals how little things can loom large on one's mind of concerns on field deployments. I could go into details about the way I set my table, using a cut open plastic shopping bag for a tablecloth, etc.

It is strange to consider this, and juxtapose it upon the larger issue that has brought us here. This afternoon I bought a copy of "USA Today" in the hotel lobby, and read an article about how the ER-2 "ripped through the mist at Stavanger, Norway Tuesday morning into the Arctic sky." And they had an interview with Albert Gore, who said "There has been a 4% reduction in the thickness of the ozone layer over the entire world. The findings in Norway will be important in improving our understanding of how fast this is occurring and how we can stop it." And I, who am a part of this operation, am relieved to have finally obtained a butter knife!

I had breakfast with one of the pilots yesterday. He was explaining to us how much more of a pest the air traffic controllers are in this part of the world. They kept calling him during Tuesday's flight to request that he change frequencies, or report his altitude and position, and they couldn't understand how he could be at 65,000 feet when the airplane's transponder was reporting 60,000 feet (the maximum that the aircraft's transponder is capable of reporting). He proudly told how he outwitted them by requesting a "block altitude of 60 to 65," and they didn't pester him anymore.

Then he told about the new survival mittens the life support guy placed in the leg pocket of his pressurized flight (space) suit. Since the cabin pressure is allowed to go up to 28,000 feet (while flying at 60 or 70,000 feet), the cockpit is essentially in vacuum. The mittens were in an air-tight plastic bag, which expanded so much that it wedged his right leg tightly in the cramped quarters provided for pilot's legs. He was afraid to lift his leg out to unzip the pocket because he wasn't sure he could unzip it with his gloves on (and he couldn't remove his gloves because he'd depressurize); and if he couldn't do that he might not be able to put his leg back in place because of an even more expanded leg pocket, forcing him to fly the plane for several hours with his leg up on top of some instruments. His rendition was hilarious!

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

These are the things that don't get reported in the newspapers. Yet they are what all missions, trivial or profound, consist of. They are the "all too Human" matrix within which the crucial work occurs. It's fun being a part of this mission, as it was fun being a part of the previous ones. It focuses life. There's the preparation and anticipation preceding it, the feeling of "being there" during it, and the recollection and insight-gleaning analysis phase afterward.

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Yesterday was a flight day for the ER-2. Jim flew what turned out to be a harrowing flight. He almost lost the plane (and his life). At the post-flight pilot's debriefing he mentioned that the air data computer failed an hour from landing. The faulty computer abruptly produced a spuriously high Mach number (air speed), which caused the auto pilot to pitch up abruptly, which produced the kind of shuddering that precedes a stall; and during a critical 10 seconds he figured out that he had to take manual control and ease the pitch down; which he did successfully. His accounting was casual.

Today he was in our area, looking over the recordings of air speed, Mach number, pitch angle, etc, which are obtained by the experiment team we share a work area with. He said that his air speed departed almost 30 knots from what it should have been, and another knot or two would have placed the aircraft outside its limits. I asked what would have happened in that case, and he said, casually, the plane would have entered a spinning dive (which we all know cannot be recovered from in the ER-2), and during the dive the tail section would have fallen off (another weakness of the ER-2). That was the end of the conversation, basically. What else can you say? Even if he had ejected, he would have landed in freezing water, 100 km from the coast, at latitude 65 North, and close to sunset. Survival time in such water is measured in the 10's of minutes.

I'm glad I told the pilot this morning that the flight produced good science, and a lot of us would be studying it carefully. We definitely penetrated into the polar vortex, where the unusual chemistry happens.

During the past two weeks I've become more aware of the possible magnitude of the ozone hole problem. It dawned on me that since there's as much chlorine in the Arctic stratosphere as in the Antarctic, there is actually as much "potential" for ozone depletion in both places. And it is possible that the only thing that prevents the Arctic from being as bad as the Antarctic is the relative warmth and early break-up of the Arctic vortex. Since these Arctic meteorological properties vary from year to year, it is possible that the natural fluctuations could occasionally produce serious depletions in the North.

Furthermore, all the other assaults to the Earth's climate, such as global warming (caused by burning rainforests and fossil fuels), have the potential for cooling the stratosphere. It sounds ironic, but it is apparently true, that a warming troposphere goes along with a cooling stratosphere. And this is bad for ozone depletion, because

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

colder stratospheres produce more clouds, which process more air for chemical depletion reactions.

Global warming is an inexorable process, and can't be stopped. There's so much inertia that it is not feasible to control human activities enough to stop the slow and persistent warming process. It may be inescapable then that the stratosphere will inexorably cool. As agricultural practices adjust to the need to move poleward, they will also have to adjust to increases in ultra-violet light exposures. Thus, as our children warm, they will also get sunburned!

As I look into the future, I don't like some of the things I see. Most of them are social, or genetic. But some are environmental. The public's concern for environmental threats is growing. There are uncertainties though. There always are. And that's part of the problem. As long as there are uncertainties, the politicians will say the problem needs to be studied more so that policy decisions can be based on knowledge - at a later date. Albert Gore is the kind of politician the U.S. needs, and will need for a long time in our future.

Until the Gores dominate the scene, however, it will be important to reduce the uncertainties. That's Science's new role. We'll have to conduct missions over Antarctica again. And return to Norway another year.

And tonight will be another night that I won't be able to see the Northern lights. What a shame to be at 59 degrees North, while the sun is producing all kinds of proton solar winds, which are supposed to be producing beautiful auroral displays, and to not be able to see them.

As I look out the window there are no stars, because of the clouds. Only the airport a couple miles away can be seen. And the parked cars in front of the hotel, three stories below.

And I think the butter over there on the table is now soft; and the humming computer is in need of a rest, as I feel hunger from within.

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES



*The long-winged ER-2 and DC-8 in background, parked at the airport in Stavanger, Norway, 1989.*

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

### NORWEGIAN FLIGHTS

1989.03.24

I was staring out the left window, watching the cold water far below, engrossed in speculation about the origin of white areas that I later decided must have been freezing mist thrown up by large waves. The sea seemed both hostile and awesome, but as I focused on the leading edge of the DC-8 wing in the foreground I felt somewhat comforted. The wing seemed to represent technology, some of the best that Mankind has produced. I recall thinking that our ancestors would never have believed that Humans would someday fly so high.

Just then land appeared below. We were scheduled to fly over the northern tip of Iceland, so I had actually been looking forward to this sight. Somehow this snow-covered, rugged-looking land mass provided a greater feeling of comfort than the technologically perfected wing. The land beckoned. *"This is where you belong"* it seemed to be saying. "Yes, that's home," I thought to myself; and I recalled the astronaut interviews described in the book *"The Home Planet"* (1988), expressing their longing and warm feelings of concern for our living planet. Then I felt a sudden understanding of a connection between what had brought me to this remote setting and why I suddenly felt the astronaut's compassion.

In a matter of seconds I was overwhelmed by this new emotion. Tears welled up, and I felt a "connection" that had eluded me for the past several weeks, during those 15-hour work days, seven days per week, while all of us struggled to understand the import of those squiggly lines on our charts; those lines that our intellect told us signified something about ozone depletion, but which stubbornly remained mere abstractions that didn't connect emotionally.

At that moment I felt "love for the Earth" for the first time! This Earth has been abused by Humanity, including unthinking technologists, using the same scientific and engineering paradigms that built the wing that "held up" this amazing plane. For some reason I imagined a metaphorical Earth that had been "scratched" by my fellow man; and it was bleeding. I looked down through tear-filled eyes, and whispered to the Earth: "I'm sorry; I'll try to heal you!"

Ever since that moment last January 14, in NASA's DC-8 research plane, I've actually felt the "connection" my work may have with solving an important environmental problem. I work for Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and I'm a Principal Investigator for one of the instruments included on both the Antarctic and Arctic airborne expeditions, AAOE and AASE. My instrument is on the ER-2, but flying on the DC-8 as an observer is what produced the experience that enabled me to see the connection.

I made a vow to myself, which I whispered to the beloved Earth in a private moment: I would try to help. Before then my tendency was to shrug off the consequences of environmental neglect with some sort of cynical remark, such as "people get what they deserve – so let Humanity sink into the ocean." But it's more than just

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

people! It's the Earth, an Earth that gave us life, an Earth that has given forth all life, which sustains many more wondrous creatures than us troublesome Humans. We are just one species on this "living planet," and we have a responsibility, by virtue of our powerful understanding and insight, as well as our role in creating the environmental threat, to take a responsible, caring custody of our planet, and of the other life forms with whom we should share in gratitude.

The venerable principle of "noblesse oblige" states that the powerful should have a compassionate interest in looking after those less powerful, that the wise should patiently instruct those with less knowledge or wisdom. The middle years in a person's life, when we are strong and capable, are usually devoted to caring for children, perhaps caring for one's own parents. It is a similar "obligation" that motivates the environmentally enlightened to feel responsible for the Earth; an Earth that, by producing the entire interacting web of living things, gave birth to ourselves. We Humans of this generation comprise just one link of a chain that "wants" to extend forever, and all future generations are dependent on our present actions. We Humans are the species that understands how the world works, and it is our responsibility to use our understanding during this crucial time. We must try to secure a safe passage for all Earth's living species and deliver them safely to the future. The Earth needs the efforts of more people who have crossed the bridge of awareness to this "new consciousness."

My "love affair" with Life on Earth has been an ambivalent one. At mid-life I am still struggling to understand root causes for the predicaments Humanity creates for itself. Slowly, I've come to appreciate what I believe to be a more comprehensive view of root causes. And I think this viewpoint may someday be helpful in guiding the formulation of effective policies. I intend to write about these matters at some future date. Meanwhile, we scientists who have seen "the connection" will do our part in improving our understanding of present and future threats.

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

### MY CONSCIOUSNESS-LOWERING FLIGHT

1989.04.09

I had a second flight on the DC-8, but I'm reluctant to talk about it. It happened about 3 weeks after my consciousness-raising flight over Iceland. I had asked the project if I could be a guest observer on one more DC-8 flight so that I could try again to see and experience mountain waves. I might also have wanted to re-experience that emotional connection with the Living Earth that occurred over Iceland.

Our flight track for the February 7 flight went over Greenland. I would have liked a flight over the North Pole, just to be able to say I had flown there, but since Greenland had more prospects for producing mountain waves I was happy.

My anticipation grew while flying over a hostile Arctic sea. As we neared the Greenland coast I stared out the window, as I had done for my sighting of Iceland. Upon seeing Greenland I first felt comfort, as with Iceland; and I wondered if there would be some similar revelation for me. And then it happened. A feeling began to overcome me. But this time it was different, and I was *not* prepared for the "message."

"Thanks for your concern," the feeling seemed to be saying, "I may be scarred and bleeding, due to your fellow man's abuse, but please don't help!" I couldn't believe it! Those words are the closest I can come to conveying the feeling of the message that overcame me. "Let me bleed! Man cannot help me! We can heal ourself without Man! Without Man, we can heal ourselves!"

"Oh no!" I exclaimed to myself, "Does that mean what I *think* it means?"

"This has happened before, and it just has to run its course. Man will eventually suffocate himself, and we, the Living Planet, will heal ourself!"

I looked back, and the Greenland coast was going out of sight. I checked the flight track map to see if we'd be flying near Iceland. But no! And I was left with this horrifying thought. What if that is the only solution? Is it true that the rest of life on the Earth would be better off without Mankind? When we Humans try to help, are we merely stretching out the agony of the Planet, and postponing our inevitable extinction, and the planetary healing process that will follow?

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES



*Picture taken on DC-8 by a NASA press photographer on the very date of the consciousness lowering flight, showing Mr Misanthrope (second from left) watching Ed Browell explain the graphs of stratospheric layers of depleted ozone. This picture appeared on page 2 of the New York Times (1989); I lifted it from Chemical and Engineering News (1990 March 19).*

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

### BROTHER'S KEEPER

1990.02.01

Why it should have waited to happen so long, I don't know. I'm 50 years old, and I would hope that most people experience the following at a much earlier age.

I was in the bank, with somebody who has trouble handling her affairs. She had just moved to another city, and I had come to visit and help with a few things. The bank clerk was explaining something about a problem with her account at another branch, and I was sitting off to the side, observing.

I knew that it was hard for her to understand things like check transactions, and I was curious to know how quickly the bank clerk would note this. The clerk must have been in similar situations many times before, because she readily adjusted her explanation to the right level. I also noted that the clerk's patience was not patronizing, and gave no hint of disdain for the other person's limited capacities.

And I was glad. For *I* had begun to accept this person's strengths and weaknesses in a new way, only recently. Suddenly I was experiencing what I have since referred to as a *brother's keeper* feeling! I felt a *goodness* about "helping the helpless." There seemed to be a "meant to be-ness" about the idea of those with capability helping those less fortunate. With this new attitude I became more *accepting* of people with less ability.

I now recall from childhood a saying that my mother hung on the wall above the family desk:

*"For them unto whom much has been given shall much be expected."*

The seed was planted, and 45 years later it sprouted.

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **PARENTAL LOVE**

1990.02.25

I was exhausted, but proud of the amount of work I was getting done. I told myself that I shouldn't be pushing myself so hard, while washing and vacuuming the car. After all, it's supposed to take a few weeks to recover strength after giving blood, and it had only been a couple days for me. I promised myself I'd rest soon, as I swept the patio, started a washing and piled the breakfast dishes.

While opening the drapes I accidentally brushed against a decoration on the fireplace ledge. As I leaned over to pick it up I felt a loving connection with the little gnome that lay on the floor in two pieces. The miniature book had broken off the two miniature hands that had been holding it for the past 5 years.

I recalled how much love my mother put into making her gnomes. Each was distinct, and since I loved books my mother appropriately gave me a little red gnome that sat somewhat precariously on a ledge, reading away, oblivious to his surroundings.

I carefully picked up the two pieces and brought them to the office, snatching a bottle of glue with an efficient reach while passing through the laundry room. As I put a dab of glue on each corner of the book, where Mom had originally done it, I noticed that the little gnome had actually been reading something these many years. I didn't even know there was writing on the opened pages of his book. It said, simply: "I Love You."

That's when I broke down and cried. For I had never taken the time to notice. My life had been so hectic, single-parenting two teenage daughters, attending to work, with frequent business trips. I knew I wasn't taking time for some things that mattered. And here was a message from my mother, created perhaps a couple years before she died, which only now was registering with me.

I knew Mom would understand, because that's what Mom's are good at. I've tried to be both Mom and Dad to my daughters, and it's hard. So many times, when we sat down to dinner, I had wished there had been a woman at the other end of the table! There were many times I had to ask women friends things about raising daughters. And many times I wondered when my daughters would show their gratitude. I said that I must be doing a good job, making it look easy, otherwise they'd notice how hard it was. I've tried to teach them good manners, to thank people, and so forth. And occasionally they'd show some inkling of appreciation for their "Mr Mom" dad.

That's OK, I often told myself. That's the way it's supposed to be. A parent is successful when their child goes off into the big world on their own, just barely looking back. They have a job to do, and it's in the future. Parent's need to understand this. Someday, I knew, they'd find a differently nuanced love for me, and it would begin to register with them, that I made a lot of sacrifices for them. And that's enough for me. Just knowing that someday they'd understand more fully about parental love.

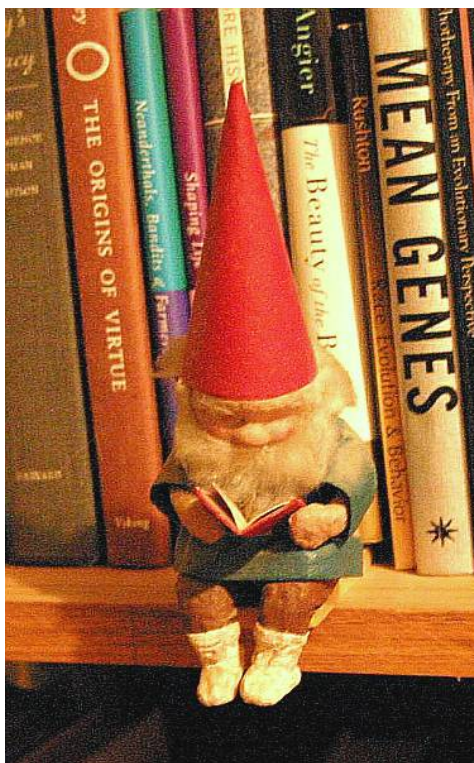
## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

It might happen after they have children, as they devote themselves to their children the way I've devoted myself to mine; and the way my parents devoted themselves to me.

And as I sat there crying, looking at the little gnome, reading "I Love You," I began to know with greater understanding, and with a greater feeling for it, the love my mother had for me. I began to know, in a new way, my feeling of love for her, and how it related to the love I have for my children.

As I contemplate the future years of additional parenting, I feel more cheerful. For now I understand a fundamental truth about parenting. Love is handed down from generation to generation, with an acknowledgement that's one generation out-of-step. As we love our children, unconditionally, their job is to get ready for life, and not look back. Our job is to prepare them for walking forward, and wish them well. And we must understand that someday, when they are in our exact same position of giving unacknowledged love, that they will remember and appreciate the gift of parental love which once nourished their childhood growth.

"And that's the way it is," I told myself, with a wet eye, as I lovingly placed the gnome back on the shelf.



*Gnome, reading "I Love You."*

## PART TWO - VIGNETTES

### THE RIGHT STUFF

1991.03.23

Everyone in the room fell silent, waiting for the speaker to answer the question that the rest of us had been afraid to ask. "No," he answered, "we don't expect to be rescued over the ocean; anymore than we expect to be rescued over land up there."

Jim continued, "We balance the risks with the benefits. We don't always fly over arctic land or freezing oceans. For this mission, its worth it. But we've evaluated the risks, and we don't think its likely that systems would fail that would prevent us from reaching a rescue area."

I think the other experimenters were thinking the same thing I was, and that's why we were so still. If the pilots have this attitude, if they are willing to risk their butts to get our data, why were some of us complaining about having to work so many days next winter. We had placed a rather arbitrary limit of 90 days in the field, some with words about hardships on our families. Those earlier discussions now came back to "haunt" me, even though I was willing to work more.

In my stillness, I imagined taking off my hat to Jim and the other pilots who were willing to risk their lives to get the information we needed to understand how the earth's stratospheric ozone layer was threatened by dangerous depletions in the coming decades. As much as they kidded us about that funny stuff we put on their airplane, it finally was apparent to me that they felt strongly about what we were trying to accomplish, and in my eyes the pilots became the real heroes of the team - during that moment of stillness in the room.



## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **"DADDY"**

1991.04.02

I was in a large shopping center which we were happy to have found. In Darwin you needed a car to get to this place located on the outskirts of town. My companions were looking for a sports store, and I needed regular clothes, so we parted to go our separate ways in the mall.

Being in a foreign land is disruptive to the psyche for the first few days. There is something disorienting about the experience, partly due to the time zone change, but mostly due to the many little differences. I was proud that my driving on the "wrong" side of the roads was going smoothly, in spite of having a rental car with a stick shift - which of course requires the use of the "wrong" arm to do the shifting.

I hadn't noticed any aborigines in the shopping center, which contrasted with the downtown of Darwin. The ambience was partly Australian and partly "American." It was somewhat of a relief, as all the demands of our assignment here were exhausting.

We were here for a 6-week study of the atmosphere, using special instruments on NASA's high altitude ER-2 research airplane. We all had been working "long" days, getting ready for our first flight, which went well the previous day. And now we had a day off, so we were buying locally what we had forgotten to bring.

I was trying to decide which direction to go for the Woolworth's store I had seen advertised, when suddenly I was startled by a small girl's voice behind me that cried "Daddy!" I thought it was one of my daughters calling me!

But quickly my sense of place re-established itself, and I realized the voice was someone else's daughter calling to some other Daddy. Nevertheless, that one sharp moment made my heart pound, and slowly I felt a lump in my throat, and I was overcome with love for my two daughters!

"How wonderful it is to be a Daddy!" And how universal that feeling must be! In every part of the world there are Daddies who must feel that same strong bond to their children.

This made me "homesick," after only one week, and another 5 weeks to go.

## **PART TWO - VIGNETTES**

### **TO THE SEA**

1991.10.15

Looking out the window, at the Oregon landscape 35,000 feet below, and beyond the coastal clouds at the Pacific, and pondering the existence of the water in its many forms in this one panoramic view, I was suddenly overcome by this feeling that I was like a molecule of water.

In my imagination, I snatched one from the air, and asked its story. It told me, with exuberance, about its path to freedom. It told of its escape from the sea only a few months ago. Of its Odyssean wanderings since the sun released it. It rose, and joined a cloud, and was driven landward, and fell as rain to the ground. After evaporating to the air again, it found its way into another cloud, and rained to the ground once more. Then it flowed to a creek, and joined a river, but evaporated once more, whence it was captured and asked to tell its story.

The molecule knows where it came from, and where it is destined to go. That is why it is so exuberant! It knows of the long, long wait for liberation. Of the years within the sea, deep below the surface. Of the millions of years within the dark abyss, the many millions of years waiting for its "time in the sun."

And the molecule also knows what fate awaits it. When it flows to the sea, it will be another seeming infinity before it will again see the sun. The ocean is so vast! It's immensity will capture the molecule for another eternity.

And this is how I feel! I am in the air now, but soon I will be flowing to the sea. To the sea...

## AW SHUCKS

1991.10.15

Ron must have the "right stuff," though a casual observer would never notice it. A few days ago he set a record by being the first person to fly a U2-class aircraft over one of the poles, the North Pole. No pilot had flown higher over the North Pole than Ron, but his demeanor in the flight debriefing meeting never showed the pride that he must have felt.

During the flight he radioed back that he'd be returning later than usual, possibly 45 minutes later. The flight plan (that we knew about) didn't call for going to the pole, only about 85 North. We had been asking for as northerly a flight as possible, but no one mentioned going all the way to the pole. At the flight debriefing, sensing that the extra time in the air might have taken him to the pole, we asked if he got to the pole, and he said he didn't know. "It was dark in the cockpit, and I didn't have a flashlight for reading the INS. I got farther than about 87 degrees, though."

A few hours later Roland analyzed the INS data, and found that Ron had made a perfect "loop around the pole" and then came back flying exactly over it. At 67,000 feet, his loop was almost twice as high as any previous flight over the pole. Ron must have felt "on top of the world," in the darkness of his cabin, alone in his space suit. Not even the astronauts have been over the pole.

I recall that when Ron gave his briefing, he shuffled his feet, as usual, and went through the list of which instruments worked and which had anomalies. He reminded me of the old cowboy movies, when the hero is asked about his feat, and responds with an embarrassed "Aw shucks, it was nothing." None of the other U2 pilots who fly our plane has this self-effacing manner. Ron probably holds more U2 records than any other U2 pilot. When the most common model of the U2 fleet was retired a few years ago, the so-called C model, Ron took the last one up for the final flight, and set an official altitude record. (Although the SR-71 flies higher, at 85,000 feet, it is still classified, and the Air Force will not let it compete for this record.)

In the bar, that evening, someone cleverly asked Ron how the INS behaved when it exactly over the pole, since there's a longitude ambiguity there. And, without pausing, Ron answered "the INS behaved just fine!"

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

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### **PART THREE STORIES: 1980 - 1995**

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Stories allow the writer to say preposterous things, and since I have plenty of preposterous ideas the medium of stories should be my friend. But for some reason almost all of my story writing has been confined to the Holiday years. Perhaps this is because during my holiday I was “listening” to my right brain, which likes stories, hoping for guidance to a new winning place in life.

At about the same time that I wrote “Brother’s Keeper” and Parental Love” I also wrote “My Heart’s Advice” (1990.02.18). It reveals a “yes, but” hesitation in my movement toward forgiving others and helping them. I suppose every transition has these “looking forward, looking backward” wavering times. “Saving the World the Counter Intuitive Way” applies the same hesitation to dealing with world affairs.

For some reason “Peacock Reverie” is one of my favorite stories.

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

### **ANT DREAM**

1990.01.14

I must have been dreaming. The late hours on my ant project had been usurping my normal routine. But I had to complete the project on time.

It was probably after midnight when it happened. I had a bright lamp directed at the edge of my ant house, where I had recently discovered a compartment of busy activity at the end of a pattern of ant channels. I trained my hastily modified microscope on the compartment's outermost recess. And there, before my unbelieving right eye, or coming out of the microscope eyepiece, was the vision of an ant seated at a desk, with its legs crossed, writing in a miniature journal!

Of course, I could not make out the writing, for it was very small. But I could see the tiny scribe working away as obviously as I had done many times, virtually unaware of surroundings.

I needed to modify the microscope further, to have greater magnification. Which I was able to do, for I kept an array of powerful eyepieces for my astronomy hobby. I used an eyepiece as a microscope objective lens, and fashioned my Barlow lens as an eyepiece. But I needed even more light to overcome the greater magnification. To accomplish this I used a telescope objective to collect the maximum of light from my piano lamp, and thereby focused it on the ant compartment.

It worked! I could now read what was on the journal. Though the ant had gone to bed, or something, as I should have done long before, the journal was left open, and I could see the markings it had made.

But the markings made no sense. They weren't in English, which shouldn't have surprised me. But they were markings that had definite groupings, like words. And there was a mark that delineated groups of words, resembling sentences. One thing about it bothered me, though. I could not discern any structure resembling paragraphs. How frustrating to not see paragraphs!

That's silly, I thought to myself. Why should I get upset about the absence of paragraphs? I couldn't even read the letters and words.

I became grateful, at least, for the existence of what appeared to be words made up of letters, even if the letters were unfamiliar. I moved the microscope to another part of the desk, which was very long compared to an ant. There were many books on this desk. But I could never have been prepared for what I saw on one of them that was opened and in full view. On one page there were the usual ant markings, but on the facing page were writings in English!

A translation dictionary! Wow!

I will save you, my dear reader, the burden of the elaborate and often tedious task upon which I embarked for the better part of a month, working with the translation

## PART THREE - STORIES

dictionary to learn to read ant markings. I will only say that it required as much patience as inspired deduction, for I had to wait for the ant to turn the page, as it desired, and this required that I look in on many occasions. Gradually, I pieced together a crude dictionary in reverse, which allowed me to gather the gist of most of the ant writings.

And oh, dear reader, please forgive me for what I am about to relate. It is not my fault that the ants think the way they do, and have the opinions they have. I owe it to the resourceful ants to faithfully render what they have recorded and which, by good fortune, I have chanced to encounter.

The one treatise I shall first attempt to tell about has a title that can be roughly translated as "To Save Our Planet."

It begins by stating that 23% of the biomass consists of insects, while Humans represent only 1/45th%. And given that the ants (which is better translated as Ants, for they capitalize this word) are the most abundant and most intelligent of the insects, it is proposed that the Ants have a duty to become leaders in safeguarding the earth from the humans.

As a digression let me describe something amusing, almost cute, that I learned about their writing from subsequent study. It's related to the fact that they capitalize Ant yet never capitalize the word humans! During their history they once had a term to refer to all living things. Gradually, the name came to exclude humans, thus giving to our species a special category. But this was not meant as a complement to humans, for they believed that humans were not the same as "animals" (as they used the term "animals"). The term humans, instead, took on a sub-animal connotation. I gathered, eventually, that they didn't want humans to be a subset of the category animals because humans were somehow less than animal. End of digression.

They referred to a "Declaration of Species Responsibility," that I never found a copy of, which apparently states that a species has the responsibility, as well as the moral right, to do whatever it has to do to preserve its future existence. This surprised me, for it had not occurred to me that morality could be based on the aspirations of a species. This doctrine seemed contrary to sociobiological theory; but that's another issue, and since I never saw their "Declaration..." document I will not attempt to critique it.

The writings in "To Save Our Planet" described a plan to conduct a vote, among the insects initially, concerning a course of action. (I must warn you that the course of action, which I will be able to describe shortly, makes unpleasant reading!) Before the vote, they would wage an information campaign among the entire realm of insects. They would tell the insects that all the world's troubles were caused by one species. They would describe things that we refer to as "the environmental problem." In their description they would use concrete examples that made sense to Ants. For instance, they would rhetorically ask "Who is responsible for the increased rate of Ant sunburn, and the lower milk production from the aphids?" Then they'd answer, "It's the humans, for they have released gases, of their own making, into the air, and

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

these gases float to the stratosphere and cause the destruction of ozone, which then allows more sun burning ultraviolet light to reach us Ants and our aphids."

I will admit to a feeling which I am ashamed of. I said to myself "How cute of them, they're acting just like us humans!" But I quickly checked this impulsive thought, and resolved to keep my tendency to anthropomorphize under control. This was hard to do, however. Especially when I found myself thinking about how laudable it was for mere ants to appeal to the advanced concept of a vote.

I came to realize that they had an even greater genius. It was strategy. There was a strategy in the sequence of their plan, and it was all geared to mobilizing for the inevitable actions and sacrifices that would be required of the many species whose participation would be needed. This will become apparent in due course.

The first vote was to be among only the Ants, with one vote per Ant (there was to be no notice taken as to which of the 8,803 particular species of ant the individual was a member). This was just an excuse to agitate the Ants into later action. After the Ant vote, the plan called for a vote among the rest of the insect species. The count was to be made with a "one species one vote" rule. This was a diplomatic strategy. After voting among the insect species, which would surely have the right outcome, they would conduct a vote among the rest of the world's species.

The world vote, they predicted, would be unanimous. No species would come to the defense of the humans, for they were a threat to all living things. "Even to themselves," as some Ant pundits proudly proclaimed. The vote would serve to galvanize support, and produce a unanimity of purpose among the millions of living things. Surely, the planners claimed, nothing could thwart an entire kingdom of animals from a united war to exterminate just one troublesome species, especially the widely despised humans!

But there were dissenters. Not of the idea that the humans must go, but of the feasibility of exterminating the humans. It was pointed out that the humans had friends among the animals. The dog, the cat, and a handful of other "pets" had become dependent upon humans for their existence in as great a number as they have recently come to enjoy.

"Not to worry!" scoffed the believers! "The humans have more enemies than friends. Consider the cows, and pigs, and chickens, and other farm animals that are kept for butchering. Surely they could be counted on to deal with the pets." "But wait," countered other Ants, "the cows, and pigs, and other farm animals are maintained in such large numbers by the same farmers who eventually will butcher them. We would be asking the farm animals to face a choice between a cared-for existence, brief as it may be, and non-existence." It was concluded that the cows and pigs and other domesticated animals could not be counted on to vote against the humans.

But that didn't bother the supporters, because the number of domesticated species was so small. An Ant cartoon made this point by referring to a hypothetical tally of 29,999,923 versus 77! The vote outcome is not the problem, concluded everyone studying the problem.

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

The weakest part of the plan, it was recognized, was its implementation. Many Ants wondered why it should be so difficult to exterminate one species when there were almost 30 million species wanting to be rid of it. Even the number of individual members within the human specie was small. There were only 5 billion humans to 85 trillion ants - plus 765 trillion other insects. (They didn't count the membership of the species we think of when we think of animals, like elephants, or bears, or gorillas - not because they didn't have a gripe with the humans, but because their numbers are so small.)

"Just imagine," some argued, "for every human there were 35 million Ants; and if we all got together on our timing..."

Just then I was startled by the noise of what I thought was thunder! However, I awoke to become aware that one of my daughters had closed the door to my study. And there was the ant house, in front of me, just as it was before I fell asleep after working late to get it ready for my daughter for her school project.

## PART THREE - STORIES

### MY HEART'S ADVICE

1990.02.18

*"We are here on Earth to help others. What on Earth the others are here for I don't know." W. H. Auden*

While hiking in the mountains I sometimes have unexpected insights. One time, while resting at a mountain peak, I was seized by the impulse to consult my heart, and ask: "What's the right thing to do in a world with unintelligent and unmotivated people?" And my heart answered: "Be your brother's keeper. For they were not as lucky as you to have received the will to work, and the intelligence and motivation that makes work effective."

I thought about that as I hiked down the mountain slope. What superficial and silly advice the heart gave me! And I promptly forgot about it.

A few years later I had an experience that reminded me of my heart's advice. I was spending the day helping someone with a move to another city. The person wasn't too bright, and had never been motivated to do the responsible thing. But during this particular period the person was actually trying to do the right things, and as I watched the bank clerk patiently explain some simple things about opening a checking account I was seized by that same feeling that had occurred on the mountain. I appealed to my heart again, for a translation of the feeling into a verbal message that I could understand. And it said: "See how earnestly the unlucky try to manage their own lives, and see how the more able can patiently help them? Nothing is lost when the able person helps the helpless. Be your brother's keeper, and see how rich the world can be."

That moment changed my life. From then on I had new eyes for looking at the down-trodden, the homeless, the unintelligent and unmotivated. They cannot be held responsible for receiving a bad assortment of genes that they are stuck with. And by the same reasoning I cannot take credit for the better genes that I have, nor the better destiny that this good luck affords me.

With that moment of realization, I began to devote more of my efforts to helping the less fortunate. I began tutoring at a local college, where the "learning disabled" needed help. I served food to the homeless one Christmas morning. And I did volunteer work at the various schools my daughter attended.

I wanted to do more, though. I wanted to help a wider population. With this motivation I began to study the problems of the "helpless," as I came to call them, from a larger perspective. My reading provided occasional troubling thoughts, made by cynical people who, I concluded, didn't understand other people's problems empathically.

I went to a nearby University to study journal articles. Some of them dealt with feeding the starving Ethiopians, or building housing for those poor people who are

## PART THREE - STORIES

ignored by natural market forces. Occasionally I would seek out professionals and question them about these matters.

One of the professors I spoke with was especially patient with me. Perhaps this was because I was an adult amongst younger students, and I had some of the idealism that is supposed to be lost during the passage to adulthood. I wondered if he thought I had been affected in an unusual way by the mid-life transition. At any rate, he patiently answered my questions without probing my motivations.

One day, however, his growing curiosity overcame his reluctance to intrude. He asked: "Why are you devoting your free time to helping the helpless?" "Because they are helpless, and the world is a nicer place when the stronger help the weaker," I answered. That was all. He accepted this answer. But, in some vague way, I didn't! I began to wonder what was causing me to waver.

I cannot say if it was the professor's gentle question, whose answer he did not challenge, or whether some of my reading was bothering me. I sensed a nagging doubt about what I was doing. Perhaps the endeavor was futile, I vaguely wondered.

At about this time I encountered an article in *Nature* magazine by a Soviet geneticist, Alexey S. Kondrashov ("Deleterious Mutations and the Evolution of Sexual Reproduction," *Nature*, **336**, 435, 1988 Dec 1). It was difficult reading, but some ambivalent attraction kept my attention to the task. About half way through the article I began to have a stomach ache. It was while studying a graph describing "mutational load." The graph showed a distribution of the number of newborns versus some arbitrary trait and a trace for the distribution of adults for the same trait, after selection pressures took their toll. His conjecture was that mutations are constantly degrading the genetic heritage, and in the normal state of nature there was a steady-state recovery since the small fraction of survivors were those not affected by the deleterious mutations. I recalled the fact, with a wincing feeling, that in the natural state women bear an average of 8 children, and on the average only 2 of these survive to adulthood. The six that died, it suddenly occurred to me, may be Kondrashov's deleterious mutation carriers!

The consequences of this reasoning were inevitable. The modern human condition has improved so much that women are having fewer children, and successfully raising all of them to adulthood. "This is a good thing, isn't it?" I wondered. "It's the type of progress we want all people of the world to share in, isn't it?"

Question followed question. Answers didn't! I went to the patient professor, and explained my dilemma. And I was surprised by his reaction.

He said "So now you know! You know one of the secrets that a handful of professionals have figured out! This one is an aspect of the Human condition that cannot be published. There is a code that every knowing person adheres to. It is that the ugly truth shall not be told to anyone, and it shall not be discussed with anyone who has not come to it by their own thinking. The ugly truth is like a taboo; it is kept within the profession, and you are one of the few to have uncovered this one in the

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only way that it is uncovered. Welcome to the fellowship of caretakers of sacred forbidden knowledge!"

I felt numb! As he was saying these things I felt a part of myself, a very important part that I did not want to lose, just slip away. I did not want to hear what he was saying; I had wanted him to tell me that it wasn't true, that I had overlooked something. I began to feel alone, inexplicably alone.

I began looking at the world through different eyes after this experience. I ceased my studies, and told myself that I needed a "vacation" from the endeavor. Later I would come back to the matters that disturbed me, and try to find a flaw in the argument that seemed to follow from the Kondrashov speculation.

I went hiking again, to the same mountain that years before led me to consult my heart, now half expecting to find a guiding path out of my dilemma. When I reached the peak, I asked my heart to speak again. And the heart spoke: "There are other truths that are unspeakable! Seek them out, and through them find a winning path."

Then I recalled that indeed the professor had said that "you know one of the secrets..." I had overlooked that he implied there were others. Perhaps another is an antidote to the first, and the professor could not tell me about it.

This hope revived my studies, and I enthusiastically resumed searching for the forbidden antidote to the "Kondrashov catastrophe."

I went back to the professor and told him what I was hoping for. He said nothing, and just nodded his head in a noncommittal manner. It occurred to me, while standing in front of the wise old man, that Schopenhauer's pessimism might in fact be right, and existence is nothing but disappointment, pain and disillusion; that humans "never get what they want, and can never love what they get." That, just as for an individual person, for whom "life is an immense preparation for something that never happens," so it might be for civilizations.

"But professor," I protested, "doesn't the world deserve to know some possible consequences if the Kondrashov catastrophe is true? If there's no antidote for it..." and I couldn't formulate the rest of the sentence. He said "Some things are possible, and some aren't." Then changed the subject.

This story has no end. I am still searching. It is a brave search, for I have learned that the truth is sometimes ugly.

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

### **A PEACOCK REVERIE**

1990.05.04

"Why should I have to pay full price?" I muttered under my breath. "All I want is a place to sit quietly, under a tree, and think." Maybe I don't have to, since the arboretum's entrance fee is really just a suggested contribution, not a mandatory charge. I walked past the little fish pond, past the strutting peacocks, and into the Australia section. That's my favorite. And found a nice tree to sit under.

It was quiet, just what I needed. The sun had warmed the Australian setting just right, as I congratulated myself on having chosen to visit my local Australia at a time when the real place must be in their hot and dry season. OK, I said, let's have a reverie about when I was in Darwin. I need an "escape."

While recalling the tropical northern Australian region I had visited a few years earlier, I must have dozed off. There were images of wallabies, and parrots, and, well ... peacocks.

[Peacocks! There aren't any peacocks in Australia. But that didn't seem to matter, for I was in a reverie, an escape from problems I had come to get new perspectives on. And if there were peacocks in my Australian reverie, they must be there for some reason.]

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I was sitting under a tree in a park in Darwin, Australia, and this peacock was feeding nearby. I kept still, hoping it wouldn't notice me. It began feeding closer to me. It got to arm's reach, without noting my presence, and as I was making my best effort to be frozen, it raised it's head, looked straight at me, and said: "what am I to do!"

It didn't shock me that the peacock had spoken; I was more surprised by his stealthy way of coming up to me.

"What?" I said. That seemed like a safe response.

"I don't know what to do. And humans always seem to know what to do. It's taken a lot of courage to finally come up to one of you. So here I am. What am I to do?"

"About what?"

"Oh, yes. About this stupid strutting business. Surely you've noticed that we peacocks spend a lot of time with our tails spread out, and strutting. We do it, you know, for the peahens to see. They seem to like seeing us this way."

"So what's the problem? Can't you strut your stuff like the other peacocks?"

"Sure, and I've done it, but I began thinking."

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

That's when I knew the peacock really had problems; when he said "I began thinking."

"I began thinking: why should I have to strut when any peahen can notice that I'm nice, I'm considerate, I'm a good provider, and I'm intelligent."

"But you're just a peacock, and peacocks aren't supposed to be nice, or considerate, providing and intelligent. Somewhere, you missed the boat, fellow!"

"But what's the use of our tails? Tails don't help in raising baby peacocks and peahens! Nor does our strutting! After my last consort I tried to help the peahen raise the little ones, but she told me to "get lost." I want more out of life than just strutting. What am I to do?"

Poor guy! I could understand that he couldn't talk about his problem with the other peacocks. They would just laugh at him. But why wouldn't the peahens understand him. After all, he wanted to be partners with them, and be helpful. Why wouldn't they want to receive his help? So I asked.

"Have you asked the peahens why they don't want your help?"

"Yes. But they don't understand the question. They insulted me the way you did a moment ago; they said I was just a peacock, and I should just strut when they were looking, and stop asking questions."

"By the way," I asked, "how come you can think to ask such questions? Aren't you just a peacock? You're not supposed to think!"

"That's what I've heard all my life. Everyone tells me to just be a peacock, and stop asking questions. Stop thinking. Stop trying to change things. I'm glad I collected my courage and came up to you. You seem to understand about ideas. It must be wonderful being a human. It must be wonderful not having to do stupid things like strutting."

How could I disappoint him. He had such a high regard for people, and seemed to feel less alone with himself talking with me. I guess I puzzled over this for some time, as he asked again.

"That's true, isn't it? Humans don't strut?"

"Well..." I began, but he interrupted my pause.

"Do you strut, or don't you?" he demanded.

"No." 7

"Good, I couldn't hear of it among humans! So what shall I do? You still haven't answered me."

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

"Let me suggest something that may sound weird to you. I suggest that you go beyond being a peacock, as peacocks are now. You must exert will power, like we humans do." I could see myself getting carried away with unwarranted pride in being human. But a mere peacock would never know better. "You must exert will power, and go beyond peacock destiny."

"Yes... yes! And how do you do that?"

"You need to have will power. That's what our human pre-frontal cortical lobes are all about. Evolution worked long and hard to produce the Human frontal lobes. Because of this, Humans have will power. We can look at hypothetical actions, predict consequences, and judge the action by its likely consequences to all concerned."

"Can I learn that? Do I have to be a human to have will power?"

"You probably have to be. You're just a peacock, and you probably lack a well-developed pre-frontal lobe."

The peacock remained silent, staring straight ahead for the longest time. It made me nervous, but also angry with myself for hurting his feelings.

Finally, he asked, as if he had thought of a polite way to change the conversation "And why are you here, sitting under this eucalyptus tree?"

"Well, I've got a chemistry problem. And I needed a quiet place to try to figure it out."

"Wow! You humans are really smart! I've heard of chemistry, physics, astronomy, and things that are impressive to peacock minds. I'm sure impressed by Human frontal lobes! So tell me more about Human 'will power'? Can you really go beyond human destiny?"

"Oh sure. We just figure out what's silly and what's logical, and we put our minds to doing what's logical. That's because our frontal lobes allow us to have insight and will power. We have free will."

"What's free will?"

"It's when you control your own destiny; when you're not a puppet of your genes."

"If you're not controlled by your genes, whatever they are, what are you controlled by when you have free will?"

"You're not controlled by anything when you've got free will. You just think things to do, and choose them by your own will."

"In other words, you're controlled by your thoughts! That's good. But where do those thoughts come from? Do they come completely from inside yourself? Not at all from outside?"

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

At this point I began to have mixed feelings about this peacock. He was acting too smart! He seemed to know more than he was supposed to know.

It was my turn to change the subject. "Could you show me your tail?"

He spread it out, and just stood there, waiting to learn what I was up to.

"That looks pretty! Don't you think so?"

"It symbolizes what's wrong. Could you cut it shorter?"

I wasn't ready for such a drastic request.

"How dumb! You're a peacock, and you want your tail cut shorter? That's not normal!"

"Right! But I want to fly! And with that dumb tail, flying is impossible."

I could see the symbolism, and surely the peacock was driven by the same thing. Flying was just an excuse; he really wanted to be rid of the mentality that goes with tails, and strutting."

"OK. I'll get scissors and trim your tail."

I excused myself, and walked back to my hotel (somehow, in my dream, I was now staying in a hotel - the same one I stayed at on my trip to Darwin in 1987). I came back, and the peacock was still there.

"You still want your tail trimmed?"

"Oh yes! But cut it in such a way that I can get aerodynamic lift from it. Make it about a foot long."

After I cut it to his specification he began running around, excitedly!

"I can run faster, I can jump, now I'm going to fly!" And he tried to fly, but couldn't, really. But he was jumping higher. Maybe with practice he'll learn to fly. Exhausted, Mr Peacock sat down beside me again.

"I feel liberated. I feel like I will be able to achieve denial of the instinctual sillinesses of being a peacock. I wish to go beyond peacockhood. I want to be more like the liberated Humans!"

And with that foolish pronouncement he bounded off, jumping higher and higher as he went, finally disappearing behind a grove of eucalyptus trees, past a group of aborigines.

I looked again, and noticed that they weren't aborigines, they were Negroes. But there aren't any Negroes in Australia. I must be in America! Yes, this is Arcadia, and I was just dreaming about being in Australia.

## **PART THREE - STORIES**

And I came here to ponder a chemistry problem. "Why don't I have chemistry with women?"

## **PART FOUR:**

### **OFFBEAT IDEAS, 1980 - 1991**

My misanthrope holiday writing was not all vignettes and stories. I continued to develop ideas for sociobiology, and these have found their way into the book *Genetic Enslavement: A Call to Arms for Individual Liberation*. I won't repeat those entries here. But some of my ideas were not included in the book, and they have had no other place for publication, so a selection of them has been presented in this part.

A recurring theme for the following essays is the notion that humans, indeed all living creatures, are theoretically unable to overcome fundamental limitations that keep us trapped in behaviors specific to our species. I often work my way back to the deeper insight that "genes are the culprits, and every living thing is a robot destined to enslavement to the genes that constructed them."

This theme would bore most readers, but it fascinates me. Getting at a fundamental truth can be a struggle, especially if the brain is designed by those manipulative genes for being blind to them, and these essays record some of my struggles.

"A New Estimate for the End of Humanity" on page 111 is my original formulation of a novel idea that I still have trouble evaluating. When I published it in *Essays From Another Paradigm* (1990) I was unaware that others were discovering it at about the same time, and giving it the name "anthropic principle" (a poor choice for a name in my opinion). "Reality Subsets" on page 114 has more merit than a casual reading might suggest. I plan on reworking it and adding it as the concluding chapter of the Third Edition of my book *Genetic Enslavement: A Call to Arms for Individual Liberation*.

## **PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS**

### **IS CRIMINALITY NORMAL?**

1985.12.17

It is "normal" for male mallard ducks to rape. It's normal for male Big Horn Mountain Sheep to sequester, tend, and rape. It's normal for the male of many species to kill step-children when they "take over" a female. Seagull mothers kill neighbor seagull hatchlings that stray nearby. Animals kill within their own species, connive for dominance, destroy another's property, cuckold, steal and deceive.

Since the advent of field studies that have been guided by sociobiological theory, selfishness, and downright "meanness," have turned up as commonplace in the animal world.

Logically, we should expect to discover that Humans are fundamentally like animals. And sociobiologists are finding that this is true. (It is even true for plant life, according to work by Trivers.) The meanness that is found in animals is explicable, even inevitable. Presumably, the same traits are explicable and inevitable for Humans.

Humans who behave badly are called "criminals." For animals, these same behaviors are viewed as "normal." One of these perspectives has to be wrong. Could Human criminality also be "normal," and possibly inevitable?

Recent crime studies suggest that 90% of US males and 65% of females engage in some criminal activity in childhood or adolescence. About 12% are habitually delinquent before adulthood, and 6% become "career criminals" during young adulthood. Could this be evidence for criminality being an "evolutionarily stable strategy."

Imagine being able to "grade" behaviors that affect others, or placing them on a spectrum, with "selfish disregard for how a behavior affects others" (sociopathy) at one end, and "altruism" at the other end. I will acknowledge that a large number of behaviors cannot be scored and placed on this spectrum, but I think in a subjective sense we all can believe that the majority of behaviors that affect others can be categorized in the way suggested. The law has little trouble defining a large body of "criminal" actions, and these are examples of what I wish to place at one end of the spectrum.

Using this hypothetical selfishness/altruism spectrum, we can identify a category of behaviors that are just short of the criminal criterion and which are commonly thought of as "bad." For example, telling lies about someone, lying for social gain, cheating on an income tax report, driving inconsiderately, littering; these are "bad" by most people's standards. They are done, presumably, for small personal gain (at somewhat larger expense to other people). I will refer to these behaviors as "selfish" behaviors (not criminal). There may be a far greater number of selfish ones than criminal ones.

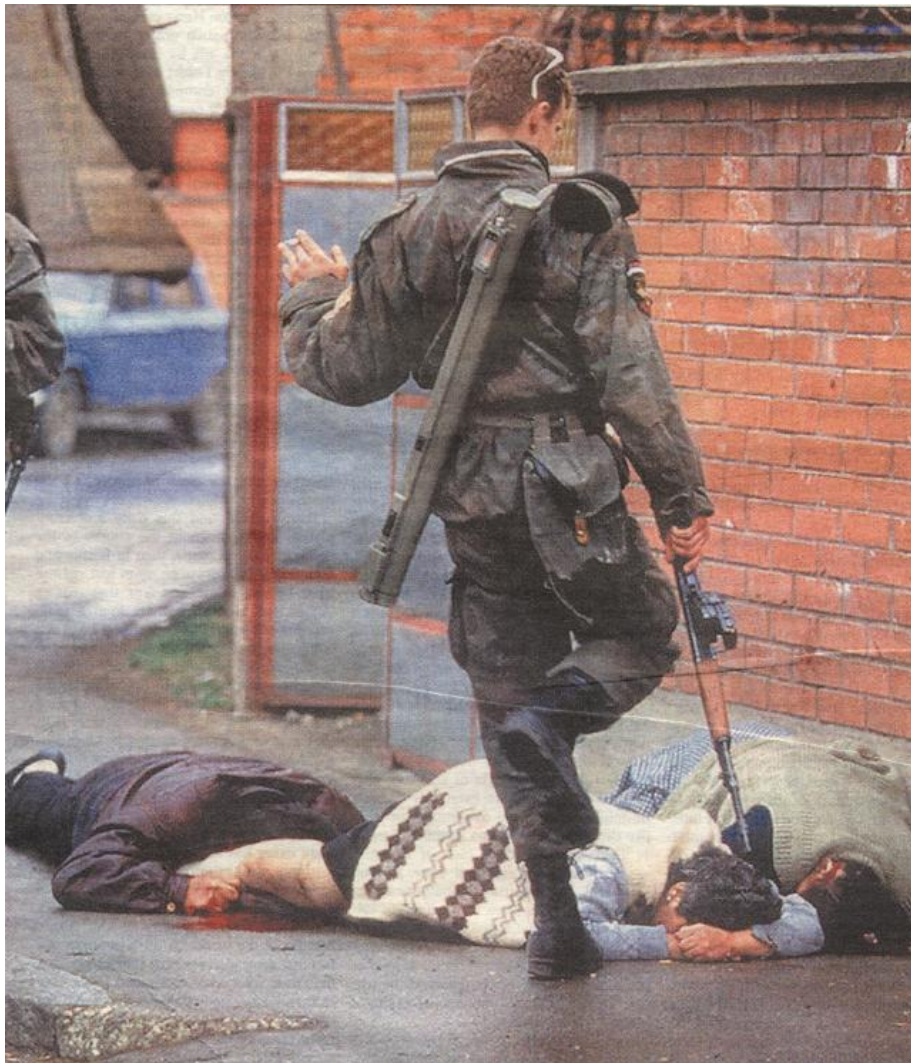
There are obviously payoffs for selfish and criminal behaviors. I contend that genes that code for them cannot be eradicated through natural selection processes. By this

## PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS

reasoning it seems plausible to claim that selfishness and criminality are "normal" for all living things!

The difference between selfish and criminal behaviors is merely a matter of degree. There is a greater risk of retribution for criminal behavior, but it is balanced by a greater payoff. Criminal behavior probably is subjected to a more extensive list of preconditions before it is elicited. People's thresholds may differ because of different genetics and different upbringings.

I believe that all humans have a capacity for criminal behavior, and that it is therefore "normal."



*Serb soldier killing Muslims.*

## PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS

### THE WALKING STICK

1987.04.25

It is alleged that the male walking stick submits to being eaten by the female after copulation. It is theorized that this bizarre behavior benefits his offspring by providing nourishment to the mother.

I have wondered how an imaginary conversation with a precocious male walking stick might go. In this conversation I counsel him "Don't do it! Your life is at stake!" And he replies: "Its not true. And even if it were, I couldn't control myself!"

So, I make a proposition: "I'll perform surgery on your brain; I'll disconnect the circuits that compel you to behave in this way, that make this behavior so pleausurably compelling." The male walking stick then asks me: "Then what would there be to live for? Anyway, *I* won't be eaten."

This imagined conversation haunts me because it resembles the human dilemma. The dilemma exists for all species, from insects to Man. The reason it exists has to do with the relationship between individuals and their genes.

Individuals are created by genes as "vehicles" for carrying copies of themselves into the future. An individual is constructed by its genes, and even though there is competition between individuals in every-day evolutionary life, the winners and losers at the level of the genes are what is remembered on long timescales. Hence, our anatomy, our physiology, and some of our behaviors (*i.e.*, our phenotype) are expressions of what has served our ancestral **genes**, as distinct from what might have served our **ancestors**.

To be sure, there is overlap. It pays to breathe, and eat, after all. These trivial behaviors benefit both the genes and the individual. But what about reproductive organs, sexuality, romantic love, patriotism, altruism, parental investment, parental love, programmed individual mortality, etc? Are all genetic endowments meant for the benefit of the individual?

Of course not! Reproductive organs are not for the individual; they're for the good of the genes! And so are the behaviors that lead up to the use of the reproductive organs! These organs and behaviors are generally not seen in this way because it would be subversive to do so. It is threatening to the genes when individuals think about the tricks they are playing. And so it is that there is an uneasiness whenever a sociobiological viewpoint is given in "polite" company.

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Did you know that walking sticks have therapists? I will explain how the walking stick therapist counsels the male walking stick. It is based on the fact that the walking stick society understands what is "normal." And their therapists reflect this societal view to some extent. Thus, therapists endorse copulations, in spite of the risk to the males. And

## PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS

therapists encourage the idea of females becoming pregnant, in spite of the costs and risks to the female.

Any solitary walking sticks that eschew parenthood, or who embrace chastity, are condemned. The walking stick that chooses to "walk away" from traditional walking stick activities, and merely walk among the beautifulness of Nature, and enjoy walking stick music, good conversation, and think - such walking sticks are labeled "crazy."

And woe to the male walking stick who chants "Hell no, I won't go!" when walking stick society is organizing to wage war upon a neighboring walking stick community.

But human observers are more objective in their view of those wayward walking sticks. If we observed behavior that more closely resembled those in Human society we might credit the walking stick with being enlightened. We would probably be correct in these judgments, but there is a logical pitfall in doing this. After all, how can we Humans know how riddled *our* thinking is with irrational servitude to our genes.

Imagine that there is a perspective for viewing Human behavior that is more enlightened and universal than our Human perspective for viewing ourselves. Imagine some alien being from elsewhere in the universe observing us the way we observe the walking stick. Would this being see as much irrationality in our behavior as we see in that of the walking stick? Is *Human Normalcy* crazy by some *universal* standard? And are there some humans who are thought of as crazy whose lifestyle is closer to a "Universal Normal" standard?

I have alleged that irrational behaviors are produced by the conflict between the individual and his genes. Those few issues where conflict exists are usually "won" by the genes. They get their way by manipulating the individual. But in actuality, it is when the individual succumbs to every contrived temptation that he is *really* being irrational.

It is natural to wonder about the merits of "liberation from the genes!" Should an individual consider the idea of making a conscious effort to free himself from the influences of his genes? Since irrationality seems to spring from these manipulative genetic influences (I am alleging), does it not follow that each individual should want to inspect these gene/individual relationships and purge himself, as much as possible, of the irrational components?

If it is the case that individuals can expect greater happiness in their lives after they have purged themselves of the most obvious genetic irrationalities, then human therapists should take an interest in this endeavor. My "reading of" Freud is that he would endorse this view. He championed the individual, and often criticized social influences. To the extent that society expresses the will of the genes (another worthy subject for thought), the individual who liberates himself from societal influences is also liberating himself from genetic influences.

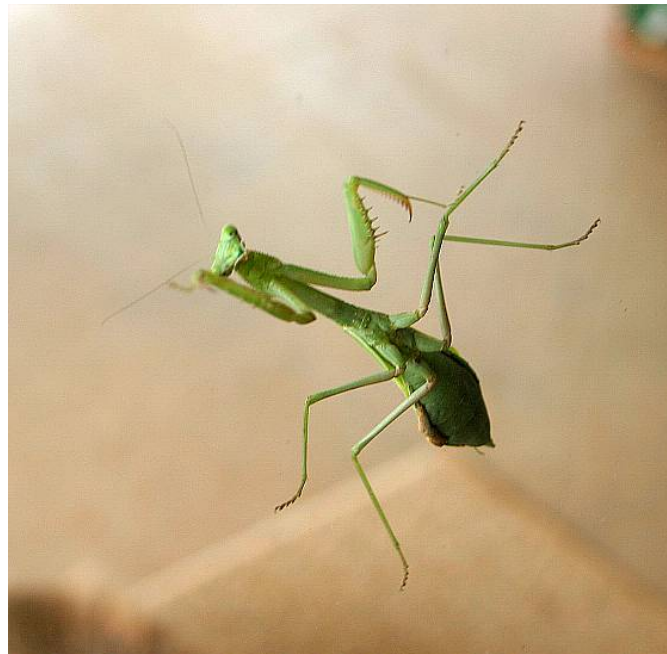
## PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS

Did you know that the walking sticks had their "Freud"? He tried to explain individuals to themselves. He even speculated about the origin of walking stick culture, and credited it with being an outgrowth of the conflict between the needs of individual walking sticks and their species. He claimed that individual males understood at only a subconscious level that each copulation had severe risks, and that the subconscious struggle with matters of what to do, and the diversion of walking stick energy toward safer pursuits, was driving the development of walking stick culture.

He worked hard trying to instruct walking sticks in the art of living. He urged them to bring to consciousness the conflicts that raged below consciousness. "Insight preceded change," he exhorted, and their first step toward sanity was to acknowledge that there was a problem with their natural behavioral tendencies. To the males he introduced the notion that copulations were a trick that had serious risks. And to the females he suggested that pregnancies and child-rearing were a trick with heavy burdens. His hope was that they could lead simpler lives by forsaking what their natures compelled them to do; or, if they eventually chose to do it anyway, they would at least have their bulbous walking stick eyes open.

The endeavor was a failure, however. The male walking sticks denied the likelihood of being eaten, and the female walking sticks insisted that baby walking sticks were irresistibly cute!

If only the walking sticks were more intelligent, like Humans; they would understand, and with this insight they would immediately embark upon the changes that would lead them to individual liberation!



## PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS

### HUMANS ARE A CANCER ON THE EARTH

1990.04.02

Imagine talking with a human cancer cell. It would protest ignorance of the future, and ignorance of its role in extinguishing the life of the prey upon which it feeds. It is merely doing what it is compelled by its very nature to do.

And this is the way it is with humans. Our numbers are growing explosively, our impact on Mother Earth grows faster than our numbers, we are invading every niche and replacing indigenous species, our behavior in the present is unrelated to possible future consequences, even though it now appears that we are irreversibly altering the earth's ecology and perhaps destroying its capacity for regeneration.

As individuals, we humans are innocent; just as innocent as an individual cancer cell. As a species we are innocent, since a species does not comprehend the consequences of its existence.

It could be argued, however, that there is one significant difference. It is alleged that we humans are *aware* of our existence, capable of foreseeing consequences of our actions, empowered with something called *free will*, and endowed with a moral sense for knowing right from wrong which we use for modifying our behaviors with enlightened good will.

This is alleged by some among us; but I am not convinced of it!

I think we kid ourselves when we claim to have "free will." Our "changing the course of future events" is an illusion! We are really *observers*, taking for true our frail "perception" of future events, a "perception" which in reality is merely an approximate "prediction." We observe the effects of our interactions with the world, then claim to have intervened by force of will since the events we experienced were different from those we believed we would have experienced had we not exerted our free will. When, in fact, our original "prediction" of the future was flawed, as it did not take into account that myriad of influences bearing upon the future which are unknowable to real-world beings - one of which might actually be the formulation of an "intention" to act, which owes its existence to an unfolding of mental events governed by the immutable laws of physics. To all of this we are actually nothing more than **observers**!

We are pitiful, impotent observers, slowly killing our birth place, our brethren - both plant and animal. Some are crying "Foul!" while everyone else either nods in impotent assent or ignores them.

"What will be, will be!" And I claim that our cancerous ways, and the demise of us all, are what is destined to be!

## PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS

### IDEA OVER WILL

1990.04.28

Schopenhauer asserts that the "will," *i.e.*, "instinct," is similarly endowed to all men, whereas "idea," *i.e.*, the capacity to think, is very differently endowed. He views the "common man" as having nothing more than the common denominator of all men, or "will." Hence, the common man is all "will" and no "idea."

As an experiment, let me "redefine" Schopenhauer's "will" and "idea" terminology, and put it in accord with sociobiological concepts. "Will," for me, becomes those instinctual behaviors that serve the individual's *genetic* agenda, with or without serving the individual's *personal* welfare. "Idea," for me, becomes those thoughts and values derived by a thinking mind that endeavors to liberate itself from the genetic agenda by placing the highest value on *individual* welfare.

Psychiatry strives to make patients "normal" in areas of "will" function. Whereas there are lots of "will"-based mental health care disciplines, they all neglect "idea" function. How interesting! Outstanding people are outstanding precisely because of their "idea" capacities, yet this area is ignored by all disciplines providing mental health care.

Is it possible that the forces of mass-man are at work? Our culture seems to be "subverted" by "mass man mentality" values. The mass man mentality defines what is normal, what is desirable, and encourages everyone to be "normal." There are a million forces trying to abrade outstanding individuals. Rousseau "sold out" when he began celebrating the common man. He had a ready audience, who "knew" somehow that he was on their side.

Those who celebrate the outstanding-ness in men, such as Voltaire, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, had a much smaller and perhaps secret audience. Outstanding men's ideas, which adhere to intellectually honest standards, are always *subversive* to the interests of common men.

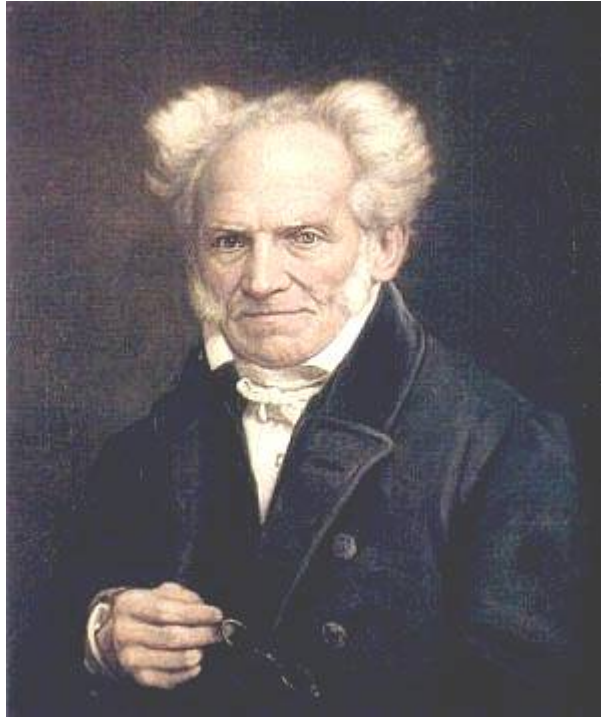
Imagine a new mental health therapy school; one that encourages the liberation of the individual from the genetic agenda - a therapy that celebrates the outstanding qualities in men, and deals *properly* with any dysfunction in "will," which encourages an exertion of self-control over impulses, and strives to achieve individual liberation.

What is the *proper* way to deal with "will" dysfunctions? As a minimum, it should keep "idea" function intact while adjusting "will" function on behalf of the person's individual welfare. And it should also keep "will" function intact while enhancing "idea" functioning.

Freud had the correct orientation, as far as I can determine. He was unafraid to "heal" people in ways that acknowledged individual welfare over society's grab-bag heritage of illogical and unnatural expectations that burden individuals. I think Freud would

## **PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS**

agree with what I am suggesting. He was no apologist for civilization's manipulation of individuals.



*Schopenhauer, one of the first known misanthropes.*

## PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS

The following is from a self-published book, *Essays From Another Paradigm* (1992). At the time I wrote it I was unaware that others were also "discovering" this idea. Everyone at my cafeteria table laughed at the idea, and I unfortunately didn't pursue it. Now I know that it is receiving serious attention by others less swayed by naysayers.

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### A NEW ESTIMATE FOR THE END OF HUMANITY

1990.06.10

Intuition is probably worthless when it comes to matters outside the common experience of our ancestors. Only if an issue has an abundance of metaphorical counterparts will our intuition serve us. Consequently, I have tried a totally new approach to the problem of estimating the time of Humanity's demise.

It's based on a thought experiment. First, consider that Humanity does have an end. This may sound like a big assumption; for it assumes that we will not adopt space travel to establish populations around other stars. For the moment, assume that the colonization of other stars does not occur, that the entirety of Humanity's future resides within our solar system. It is estimated that our sun will explode as a nova in approximately 5 to 10 billion years, and this event will evaporate the earth and the other 8 planets.

With this assumption it is inescapable that there will be a finite number of humans born during the entirety of time. Let this number be  $N_{tot}$ . Imagine creating a tiny capsule for each person and placing information about them in the capsule. One piece of information is the birth sequence number, going from 1 (the first person arbitrarily identified as existing) to  $N_{tot}$ . All the capsules are then put in a large bowl, and the capsules are mixed. One of them is drawn at random.

Now, what information might this capsule contain?

Before answering this, let's consider a simpler thought experiment. Suppose two people engage in a game called "How long is the sequence?" One person selects (at random) a sequence length, such as 100, then randomly selects a number from the population of numbers in that sequence, and announces the random number to the other player. How well can the second player guess the length of the sequence? The best strategy is to simply double the number provided, and offer that as the best estimate of the sequence length. This strategy gives acceptable answers 50% of the time, if acceptable is defined as anything between 50% and 150% of the correct answer. (I just "shelled out" of this word processor, and wrote a program to test this trivial concept, and produced an "acceptable" answer 4 out of 10 times).

Now let's try to apply this strategy to the question of Humanity's demise. I will argue that you, dear reader, are a random member of the total set of Humans! This is a crucial step in the derivation, so let's consider it some more.

## PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS

Einstein developed ways of thinking about time that, ironically, demolished its common meaning. He suggested that it be viewed as a 4th dimension. To simplify what he's asking us to consider, imagine collapsing one of the 3 dimensions of ordinary 3-D space, producing a 2-D stage upon which all things happen. Now allow the 3rd dimension to be time. A point in this universe refers to one specific physical location and one specific time. Volumes in this imaginary 3-D universe refer to all happenings within a specified physical space that occur between two temporal boundaries.

After thinking with such an altered viewpoint on reality it becomes easier to apply spatial concepts to the temporal domain. For example, if we're dropping marbles on a checkerboard we know how to think about probability distributions of where the marbles fall. Likewise, if we go into a "set" of all people who have ever lived (in the past), and draw one out at random, we know how to address this problem. We treat it the same way we treat spatial problems; in this case we could consider a ladder and think in terms of landing on a rung at random.

It is alleged that Einstein thought about a person's existence in just such abstract terms. The future that was to unfold was, for him, just as real as the past which has already occurred. The existence of one is no less real than the existence of the other. It is a short conceptual step to attach the "set" of all humans not yet born to the "set" of all humans already born, and thereby create one "super set" of all humans who ever have, and ever will, exist.

This is what I ask you to do: imagine this "super set" of all humans, stretched out along a sequence that goes from 1 to  $N_{tot}$ . Try to accept the idea that you are not special - any more than now is special in relation to all time. You are not at the forefront of anything, since all future humans exist just as much as you and your contemporaries, or those who have lived and died before you. All humans are equal members of this "super set" called Humanity. Try to absorb the meaning of the randomness of your location in the sequence.

Now, let's ask how we might estimate  $N_{tot}$ , the size of the super set "Humanity." The suggestion, as you have already guessed, is to calculate how many humans have already lived, then double that number.

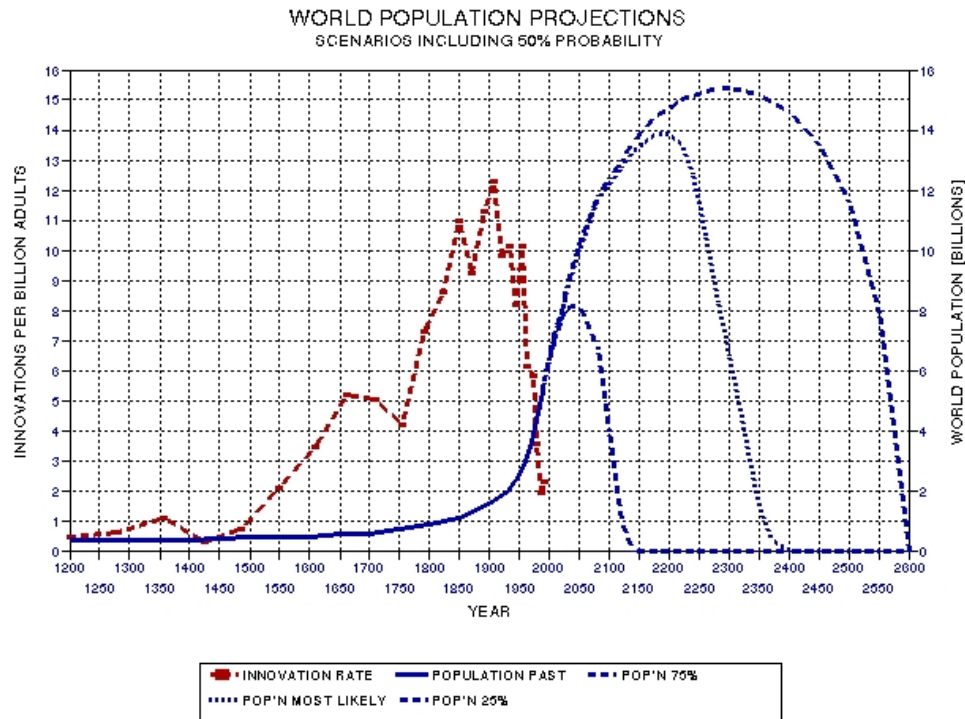
How many humans have already lived? I've used a population history to calculate that at this time 36 billion people have lived since 50,000 BC. Doubling 36 billion yields 72 billion. Recalling our previous argument, there is a 50% chance that our estimate is between 75% and 150% of the correct value. If the correct value is  $C$ , then 72 billion is between  $0.75 * C$  and  $1.5 * C$ . In mathematical notation,  $0.75 * C < 72 \text{ billion} < 1.5 * C$ . Solving for  $C$ , we find that the size of the super set Humanity is between 48 and 108 billion.

What does this mean in terms of dates? We can use population projections, and integrate forward until the total number (from the beginning) enters the region 48 to 108 billion. I have done this, and the dates are 2040 to 2100.

## PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS

Thus, we calculate that the end of Humanity will occur sometime between the years 2040 and 2100! Or that there's a 50% probability of this. The most likely date, corresponding to the time when the integrated human population reaches 72 billion, is the year 2075. That is just 85 years from now!

### THE END



*Future population crash scenarios meeting the requirement that all those who have ever lived represent 75%, 50% or 25% of all those who will ever live. This graph is based on a 1991 re-calculation of population histories, as published in my book Genetic Enslavement: A Call to Arms for Individual Liberation, 2004, 2006.*

## PART FOUR - OFFBEAT IDEAS

### NEVER MEANT TO BE

1991.06.02

As I glided through the congested Fedco crowd I was struck by the thought that "most of the people there were never meant to exist." This thought was stimulated partly by the lack of grace and forethought with which most people did everyday things, such as walking through crowds, or coordinating their movements when paying a cashier, taking the receipt, and picking up their purchases. Little things, yes; but I was also influenced by recent thoughts on the matter of the population explosion, and its lack of precedence in Human history.

The population explosion is ominous for a reason more important than the strain on resources and general crowding that most people think of when it is mentioned. More importantly, the population explosion implies that babies are surviving to adulthood who would have perished in harsher times. And what's good about babies perishing? Statistically, those who perished were the less fit, genetically.

It is a cruel truth that during the past several million years humans have survived to adulthood at the rate of approximately 25 to 33%. A woman typically bore 6 to 8 babies during the ages 18 to 40 (at one birth every 3 years); yet, on average, only two survived. During the previous several million years times were "harsh" almost all the time. Only during the past 11,000 years has Human inventiveness, combined with a warm interglacial, created bountiful conditions. And during much of the past 11,000 years the survivorship percentage has been abnormally high. Today it is probably 95% in the developed countries, and I have estimated that approximately 70% in the undeveloped countries. The survival rate for the undeveloped countries can be estimated from their rate of population increase, which is about 1.66 %/year at the present time, and their birth rate, which remains at approximately 4.0 %/year.

The Soviet geneticist Alexey S. Kondrashov (*Nature*, 1988) has suggested that the normal low survival rates for humans shielded us from the deleterious effects of "mutational load." He writes "In modern human populations detrimental mutations with small individual effects are probably accumulating faster than they are being eliminated by selection." One of the most frightening things about this is that the spreading of deleterious mutations in the human gene pool is practically irreversible. This is due to the great difference in timescales between the "weeding out" of deleterious genes and their spontaneous creation.

It must be one of the most profound unspoken truths that the women in the undeveloped countries, who are almost continually pregnant, are one of the greatest threats to the future well-being of Humanity. Furthermore, the women of the industrialized world are not harmless, for they bring to bear even greater medical resources for keeping their newborns alive. Wealthy women have fewer children in their lifetime, but their closer-to-100% offspring survival rate theoretically could be creating a more dangerous reservoir of unwanted genes than the corresponding reservoir created by poor women.

## **PART FOUR – OFFBEAT IDEAS**

Consider the case of wealthy women keeping 99% of their offspring alive while poor women keep "only" 90% of theirs alive. In the first case, the wealthy women are artificially introducing into the gene pool a sub-population of children with a greater proportion of the worst of the deleterious mutations, since they are disposing of only the worst 1% of the deleterious mutations; whereas the poor women are at least disposing of the worst 10%. Contrast this with the fact that for human "vigor" to remain unchanged it is probably necessary to dispose of approximately the worst 67 to 75% of deleterious mutations!

As I was walking out of Fedco I wondered what percentage of the people "were never meant to be." If 95% of births survive to adulthood, then at least 70% were never meant to be. But there must have been an accumulation of bad genes during the past 11,000 years, so the percentage of "never meant to be" people has to be higher than 70%. Could it be of the order 90%, or 99%?

Simple calculations lead to very high percentages of "never meant to be's" using modest values for the number of generations that high survival rates are hypothesized to exist. It is difficult to estimate the degree of defectiveness of the lowest 70%, and it is also difficult to estimate the fraction of defective offspring that will be born to the lower 70%.

Perhaps one way to estimate this percentage is to estimate the incidence of easily identifiable (genetic-caused) physical and mental infirmities in present-day industrialized populations and compare this value with the corresponding incidence for primitive populations (which have not experienced a population boom in recent history). I don't know what these numbers are. Imagine a grant application to study this, and the uproar it would cause!

## **PART FIVE: POST-HOLIDAY VIGNETTES, STORIES AND ESSAYS, 1992 AND AFTER**

Growth doesn't stop, once started. After 1991 there were moments like those during my "holiday" – when an incident was especially poignant, or when a whimsical story just had to be written down.

Of course, my essays kept coming, unabated, leading eventually to my book *Genetic Enslavement: A Call to Arms for Individual Liberation*, which I published in 2004 and 2006. I won't include many essays written after 1991 because most of that material is in the aforementioned book.

If you read one story in this Part it should be "Cat Bird Lesson" on page 125. It makes me tear-up every time I read it. "Adieu" on page 144 is a poignant record of how I felt as I prepared to retire, and hand over my beloved Microwave Temperature Profiler projects to the new "Mr MTP."

## **PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY**

### **THE MINOAN**

1993.04.25

When I was young I met this old man who said he was an itinerate history teacher. He said he wandered and taught at universities. He had taught everywhere in the world.

Our discussion wandered to the Golden Age of Greece, which he knew about. He seemed interested in impressing upon me the importance of the earlier Minoan civilization, which influenced the Greek. He stated that if it hadn't been for the volcanic eruption on Santorini one fateful Fall, the Minoans might have surpassed modern Western Civilization. This intrigued me, so the next day I went to the library to read about this Minoan civilization. The more I read, the more I became bothered by the absence of any mention of a volcanic eruption.

Many years later I mentioned this to a historian I met at a friend's party. He said "Sure, it has been discovered that a volcano erupted on Thera [also called Santorini], and this might have destroyed the Minoan civilization." I asked when the discovery was made, and he said about 2 years ago. I asked if the volcano erupted in the Fall or Spring, etc, and he laughed, saying no one would ever know that! Years later I read a book which placed the eruption in the Fall of 1628 BC. How could this old man have known these things 30 years ago?

When I visited Greece last year I made a point of pursuing this enigma with a visit to the University of Athens History Department. To my surprise, there was the old man, looking exactly like I remembered him 35 years earlier. He was teaching history, and he remembered our earlier visit in Michigan. His memory of our encounter was remarkable. I asked how he knew about the Thera volcanic eruption before it was discovered, and he nervously replied that the discovery was just a discovery by those who hadn't known about it.

This cryptic reply whetted my curiosity. He seemed concerned that I had pursued the matter. I asked if we might talk that evening, at a coffee house. He hesitated, but agreed.

We spoke for a couple hours, as is the custom in Greece, before getting around to the main issue. I asked how he lived, and he said that he taught history at Universities, but had trouble holding onto jobs because he insisted on teaching history the way he knew it happened, not the way it was reported in textbooks. During this conversation he asked about my life, and questioned me about many things. I couldn't figure out why he should be interested in them.

Finally, I raised the question that made him uneasy earlier, about how he knew about the Thera volcanic eruption 35 years ago, and he merely said that he knew a lot of history. I pressed him further, and then he said "You won't believe the real explanation anyway, so I'll tell you. I'm a Minoan! I was born in the year you would call 1661 BC! Next June I'll be 3652 years old!"

That's when I realized he was a charlatan! He may have been a good history teacher, and he used that knowledge for impressing people with engaging, first person tales.

[This story was inspired by a friend, Claude Michaud. I met him in the 1960's when I thought he was about 60 years old. The last time I saw him, almost 40 years later, he still looked 60 years old.]



*Here's the Minoan, or the person who inspired the story. Claude looked just like this 30 years earlier.*

## **PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY**

### **CAT BIRD LESSON**

1993.08.08

For the past several days I have been at war with a pair of cat birds. The birds had become annoying, not only for harassing the crows and our pet cat Fluffy, but by becoming inexplicably noisy for no reason. They have a penetrating short chirp, which they issue incessantly, all day long, and an occasional raspy, loud noise which is devoid of all melodic content. The raspy sound I soon noticed was used to intimidate, as it occurred every time they swooped down in a dive bombing attack at Fluffy. When a crow sat on a utility wire nearby, the cat birds attacked and harassed the crow unmercifully, using the raspy intimidating sound. I think it was this combination of incessant, irritating noise and intimidating pestering of other innocent creatures that caused me to declare war yesterday.

I was armed with a \$20 water gun, that was advertised to be able to shoot a stream of water 70 feet. My shots always missed the mark, but they succeeded in scaring the cat birds away. "Good; serves you right!" I declared, "that's some of your own medicine." I brought my front porch chair to the back yard, where they spent most of their time, and resolved to spend as many hours as were needed to harass them back, until they decided to move to some unlucky neighbor's property. I had to nip this in the bud, for I didn't want the rest of my days upset by the intruding sounds of these irritating birds.

Once, I thought I was succeeding. Whenever I issued a "warning shot," which I learned I could embellish by allowing some air to enter the front of the gun, the cat birds would fly to trees two houses to the south. But they kept coming back. "Stubborn birds!" After I shoosed them away from the back, sometimes they'd go to the front of the house. Back and forth I walked, trying to anticipate where they would stubbornly reappear. Sure hope the neighbors didn't think I was crazy, walking back and forth, and looking up at birds that apparently didn't annoy them. If only it was legal to fire a BB gun, I could simply shoot each of the cat birds when they were positioned for a safe shot. Just another example of the handicapping down-sides to city living.

I noticed something in one bird's beak, and the thought of them building a nest on my property only heightened my resolve to harass them until they left, permanently. A thought occurred to me, that maybe I should study their habits, like a naturalist, and thereby become armed with knowledge that could help me wage war more successfully. This is what my friend Al would do. When a crow lighted upon the top of the utility pole, I studied the cat birds harass them; they flew past the crow in one direction, sat on the line a couple feet away, then flew past them in the other direction, sitting again a couple feet away. Each time they passed the crow they would swoop as if to peck the hapless crow. The crow must have weighed 5 times as much as the cat bird, yet maneuverability gave victory to the smaller cat bird. The crow always gave up defending itself, and flew away.

"Fitting!" I declared to myself, recalling how the crows were the bullies of the bird world in our neighborhood. I remembered seeing a crow attack a smaller bird and eat it alive, last year. But I was too impatient to get the cat birds off my property, and rather than study their habits patiently I would even interrupt their harassment of the crows by trying to make sounds with my water gun to intimidate them away.

I remembered that I had forgotten to feed Fluffy, so I went into the house to get her food. I placed Fluffy's food dish within sight of my war headquarters, and resumed my cat bird watch. The darned birds came down to buzz Fluffy, while she was eating. While I stood over Fluffy to guard her from the harassing dive bombing birds, I wondered what Fluffy had done to deserve this! She's not like the crows, I told myself. Well, maybe just a little, as I recalled innocent Fluffy trotting proudly on a few occasions with a live bird in her mouth. Maybe that's why cat birds hate cats, and harass them.

I was especially unnerved when the cat birds perched atop the neighbor's antenna. I can't shoot at them if the water would end up going off my property, and it seemed like the birds knew this. All I could do is intimidate them with the sound of water shooting out at my nearby lemon tree, on my property. This would always send the birds flying off to the tree south of my neighbor's property.

My poor lemon tree. At least it was getting watered. In past years, when it had been dry, this would have been good. But this year we had good winter rains and the lemon tree was green and full. It had a good crop of lemons, all green so far. I looked forward to the day they would start ripening, so I could add freshly squeezed lemon juice to my after-work rum and coke. I walked over to the lemon tree to see when it might start bearing the desired fruit. While I was standing underneath, I thought I heard a small chirp.

How could that be? The cat birds were two properties away. I kept still, and heard another weak chirp from straight above me. What! Could there be a nest there, of cat bird babies? The foliage was so dense that I had to look from several angles, but then I saw it. A nest!

Suddenly, everything fell into place! With images flashing through my mind: the cat eating baby birds; the crows carrying smaller birds off to the neighbor's roof to eat them alive there; the cat bird with what must have been food in her mouth! The harassing made sense! It was the cat birds' defense for a cruel world where creatures eat other creatures, and harassment is an option for smaller, gutsy creatures to survive. This gave me a new understanding and respect for the cat birds.

I struggled with a part of me that wanted so much to be rid of the annoying, raspy sounds, and the dive bombing nuisance. This part of me, which had focused so much hate, lately, was saying "destroy the nest!" but a new part of me was saying "protect the nest!" I got my stepladder, placed it under the lemon tree, and climbed to just below the nest. I used a stick to clear the branches, and noted the parent cat birds hovering nervously nearby. I knew that if I were to trim the branches from above the nest, it would be exposed in a way that the crows might target the baby birds. And

## **PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY**

this might free my property of the pesty birds. But I also knew that I couldn't do this, for I had a new perspective, based on a new understanding of them.

The understanding part of me realized that the cat calls and harassing would cease once the baby birds were successfully fledged. This wasn't, therefore, a matter of two cat birds settling on my property to begin a permanent harassment. There was purpose for their behavior. A necessity! How refined is evolution that it would create such intricate behaviors so suited to survival.

I emptied my water gun, and put it away. I decommissioned my war headquarters, by moving my chair back to the front porch. And I went into the house to make a cup of coffee. And came back outside to hear the cat bird sounds with new ears.

As I write this, my heart is filled with a new love for nature. Outside my open window is a lemon tree. And in this lemon tree a miracle is unfolding, for there are two fledgling cat birds, now out of their nest and sitting on a branch, making chirp and cheep sounds. They chirp in answer to a chirping parent in the distance. Soon the parent arrives with food, and feeds one or the other babies holding onto a branch unsteadily. Occasionally a parent will fly to the ground and make a raspy warning, presumably, to condition Fluffy to stay out of the area, in anticipation of the time a fledgling may fall from the tree while it is learning how to fly. I've just put Fluffy in the garage, as I sense that flying lessons will soon begin.

The small-throated chirps are remarkably similar to their parent's chirps. The baby cheeps, however, are sweeter. I assume they will develop into the raspy sound, which they will use to protect their fledglings, someday. Just as both parents use their raspy warning cries to ward off potential enemies, both parents bring food to the nest. This is something humans can identify with.

As I sit here, looking up through my window, with up-welling eyes, into a lemon tree, I know that I am watching one of nature's miracles that has been taking place since life began; yet I am appreciating it as if it were the first time. I've had this feeling before, this emotionally profound awe with the beginning of life. It was when each of my daughters was born. It is fitting that we the living should be fascinated with the beginnings of life.

I feel a connection with the cat birds that is profoundly different from the connection I had with them one day ago. Whereas I had been filled with anger, and a desire to shoo them away, or even to kill them, today I am filled with an empathy based on understanding, and kinship. We are both a part of life, and go about our business of recreating our own kind in ways that evolution has provided for. We are part of an immense web of interconnected life inhabiting this battered planet.

A fleeting thought catches my attention, that just as I have become more "understanding" and tolerant of a cat bird after learning that it's behavior is driven by special needs, and that these needs can best be seen by taking the time to empathically place oneself in the cat bird's position, it might also be useful for me to sometimes place myself in another person's position, to see the world from their

perspective, so that I may be more understanding and tolerant of people who I might normally be too quick to make judgments about.

I have seen and felt Nature the way it was meant to be experienced, and I have learned. Today I am a wiser, and happier man.



*Here's the tree (right of center) where the cat bird built its nest.*

## **PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY**

### **THE JACKET FROM BANGLADESH**

1993.12.19

"Have you found what you want?"

"No. My arms are too long."

"Try the extra large. Over here."

And the Fedco clerk searched in a rack for an extra large jacket. "I don't know about color, but you can try this on for size at least."

It went on nice, and felt comfortable. Arm length just right, even when stretched out as if holding onto a steering wheel. It wasn't as snug as I'd like around the waist, though. Let's see, an inside pocket, the outside pockets open on two sides, so there are four front pockets.

"Lots of pockets," I said. "Is this water proof, or water repellent?"

"It says proof."

The tag, indeed, said water proof. I noticed that the coat came from Bangladesh.

"What's the difference with the other coats, over there, beside the fact that these are from Bangladesh?"

"Nothing, really. They all use the same materials."

I noticed the sign, "*For Sale, \$39.95.*" Not bad. Color isn't great, but it fits better than any other jacket I had. "OK, I want this one."

A few days later, I took a hike in the mountains. It was December, and cool enough to wear my new jacket. I stashed my wallet in the inside pocket, some candy and nuts in an outer/upper pocket, and also some gloves in the outer/lower pockets.

Two miles up the trail I took a rest. It was a good time to eat some nuts. I was warm, so I opened the jacket. That's when I noticed another pocket. On the right side, inside. A small one. "I wonder what that pocket can be good for?" It zipped open, and was quite deep. "Hey, maybe I could put my cell phone in here." At the bottom was an inspection slip, as usual. It was folded, not like other inspection slips. And it wasn't!

It was a note, with neat hand writing!

"Please, American, bring me good luck. I work hard making coats. I want to be free." And it was signed "Sevali Galu. 139 Teshinka, Baloring, Bangladesh."

I felt bad, after reading the note. Was this Sevali a slave worker? I've heard of China using political dissidents as slave workers in clothing factories, but what about Bangladesh? All I could recall about Bangladesh is that they have a lot of typhoons

and floods that kill lots of poor people living on the lowlands by the sea. I couldn't even picture Sevali, as I had no idea whether that was a man's name or a woman's.

Walking down the trail, thinking about my jacket differently, it struck me as preposterous that on the other side of the world, about as far as anyplace can be from me, is a person who helped make this jacket that kept me so comfortably warm. And I knew the person's name, but that person didn't know mine. "That's not fair. I must write a thank you note."

And so, later that day, I wrote a brief note, thanking Sevali for making such a nice coat, and I wished her, or him, good luck. Feeling awkward about not knowing if I was writing to a man or a woman, I asked Sevali to write back, and to tell what life was like making jackets in Bangladesh.

A month later, I got an airmail letter from Bangladesh.

"Dear Mr Bruce: I am very happy to receive your letter. I know real people buy our coats. You are the first American for me to know. You ask if I am a man or woman. I am not. I am 13 years old. I learn English at school. The boys tease me, and say I am a boy. The girls say I am a boy too. I am a girl. But I think all boys and girls are silly. Men and women too. I go to library, not play with girls, or go with boys, like others. I pretend to be the same, but really not. It is being a slave to live with everyone here. I know that bigger world exist. Books describe different ways to think. I like German thinking. Do you know Schopenhauer? He my favorite. Please tell, is American life like Schopenhauer says to be? Not be silly, think more? You bring me luck, your letter. I read more. Thanks. You write again, please. Goodbye, Sevali."

## PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY



*Here's the jacket from Bangladesh, worn by the author who is removing a flashcard from the MTP instrument installed in a NASA ER-2 airplane (1994).*

## THE PERCEPTIVE MARTIAN

1995.01.12

A perceptive Martian once roamed this earth and became quite curious about human behavior. As he studied, he first arrived at the conclusion that behaviors are driven by the question: *Do I have what other people want?* This would explain why people follow fashions - in clothing, mannerisms, lifestyles, and even ideas. While young boys have sports heroes and dream of being like them, young girls want to be called pretty because everyone acts as if that is a compliment. Inherent in this question is the corollary: *Can I change what I have, or appear to have, and end up with what people want?* As if believing in a "yes" to this question, people buy flattering clothes, try weight control regimens, and learn important job skills. In summary, the Martian believed that humans are driven, at some subconscious level, by the question *How do I measure up, compared to others?*

But the Martian noticed that some people, generally the more mature ones, seem to be asking another question: *Do I have what I want?* It's as if these few people had grown *beyond* the first question, and had substituted for it this newer one. The corollary question for these people was also different: *Can I change so I have what I want?* It is not clear to our observer whether these few "self-directed" people were once "other-directed" and merely grew from one to the other, or whether they were always inclined to be other-directed. By the Martian's objective standards these newer people seemed to fall into foolish behavioral traps less often. They also tended to be more like each other in different cultures, as if they were drawn toward a universal template, from which specific cultures were aberrant departures.

But lo, our Martian noticed one more sub-category, even smaller in numbers because they were drawn from the previous category of people. These rare souls were asking *Why do I want what I want?* And their corollary question was *Can I choose what I want?* The Martian was especially pleased to note that the people who asked these questions always ended up with answers to the first question, but for the second question they were disheartened and uncertain. Their answer to the first question was that genes are manipulative creators of individuals for the sole purpose of their (i.e., the gene's) proliferation. They called their viewpoint sociobiology (some called it evolutionary psychology because sociobiology had gotten bad press when was first publicized). Curiously, when these people answered the second question, they invoked the same arguments about the genes to state that the genes set our values so it is impossible to be free of their influence in eschewing old values for the purpose of setting new ones.

This might have been the last category of people the Martian could discern, but one day he acknowledged that someone defied all the others. He believed that it was meaningless to state that a person was asking a question, then choosing or changing their behaviors. People, he believed, were no different from a rock, in the sense that the movements of every particle of both is governed by the same physical laws. According to this argument a person cannot "choose," and thereby "change" the course of future events, any more than a rock can. Both ideas are preposterous; so

## **PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY**

neither the rock nor the person can have this weird capability. Free will is an illusion, and all experience of it is merely the experience of a spectator. There was only one person on the planet who thought this way, and the Martian might have discounted him - except for the fact that this person was the Martian!



*The perceptive “Martian.” (Thank god I’m not human.)*

## **LITTLE BIRD**

1996.01.22

Once there was a little bird that had a cheerful attitude. When it first raised its head above the nest edge, and looked out, it proclaimed "Oh, what a beautiful world!" And life was good for this little bird. When mother came, it chirped louder than its sisters and brother, and it got lots of food. What a beautiful mother it had, too. They were blue and grey, which made a striking contrast. Siblings were a duller version of blue and grey, drab almost. Little bird was brown! At first, this didn't bother little bird, for everything was going its way.

Little bird felt bad that it got more food than the others; so it chirped less loud, hoping to help its siblings. This worked, but still little bird grew faster.

Then one day it was time to fly. Only little bird was ready to fly, for it was bigger than its sisters, and even its brother. Mother bird tried to help, but it seemed to have a slightly different way of flying. On its own, then, little bird learned how to fly. And, one bright sunny day, it flew off - never to return.

While sitting on a branch, wondering what life was all about, little bird noticed a big brown bird light upon a nearby branch and stare Little Bird's way. "What do you want?" Little Bird finally chirped. "I'm your mother" the other bird answered. "But you're not blue and grey, you're brown - like me." "That's right, I'm your mother." And thus began a conversation that was most disturbing to Little Bird.

For the brown mother said that it did not mean to abandon it to another bird's nest; rather, this is what all brown birds did. This was a good tradition because it allowed brown birds to raise more brown birds. The blue and grey birds were dumb, and fed babies not their own. But it was their fault, for being so stupid.

Little Bird didn't like this explanation. It liked blue and grey mother, and it even liked its blue and grey siblings. They grew up together, and Little Bird liked being good to the others. When brown mother learned of these feelings, it became upset! "No, don't think like that! Those blue and grey birds are dumb, and they're only good for hatching your eggs and raising your young."

Little Bird flew away, and wanted to be alone. But brown mother followed. Brown mother had a friend, who came and sat next to her, and they both looked at Little Bird. The friend began to lecture: "You must do as we do! It is normal! All brown birds lay eggs in the other kind of bird's nests. It is our proud trademark. We are known throughout the world for doing what we do. We have a name, and it is Cuckoo Birds. If you can't do as Cuckoo Birds do, then you are not normal, and we shall have to change you!"

Poor Little Bird! It didn't want to change. Why can't brown birds and blue and grey birds like each other? Why was Little Bird different? Little Bird didn't want to treat blue and grey birds badly, but Little Bird also didn't want to be different.

## PART FIVE: POST- HOLIDAY

The brown mother's friend could see that Little Bird was different. And she shamed Little Bird, repeating over and over that it was good to be normal. Little Bird wanted to be normal, and it wanted to please brown mother, so it pretended to agree with brown mother's friend, who merely wanted Little Bird to be normal. After some more badgering, Little Bird finally convinced brown mother and the friend that it agreed that it was bad to make a nest, and good to lay eggs in nests the dumb birds had already made. The brown birds flew off, with brown mother barely saying "goodbye."

Secretly, Little Bird wanted to see blue and grey mother bird. But that was wrong; it wasn't normal. So poor Little Bird flew off, feeling uncertain about its future, and also feeling uncertain about being "normal."

Little Bird flew far away. It kept growing, and when it was ready, it felt like making a nest. And it made that nest. And it laid eggs in the nest. And it stayed at the nest, and when baby birds hatched, Little Bird went out and fed them - just like blue and grey mother bird had done. Little Bird felt good about what it was doing. In spite of the fact that it wasn't normal!



*This isn't Little Bird, but my Blue Jay friend shows trust of humans that Little Bird might aspire to.*

## RESTAURANT THOUGHTS

1999.04.30

Now that I'm retired, and free of tiresome business trips, I rarely go to restaurants alone. Today, in a fit of exuberant rejoicing over being free of the manifold problems I'd been helping my neighbors with, I impulsively decided to go out for lunch - alone. As it turned out, it gave me another opportunity to reflect upon that endlessly fascinating subject: *the way people are*.

While seated, waiting for the waitress, I sensed that my perspective of people in public has changed since childhood. With youthful eyes I saw everyone as "normal," or, in today's vernacular, everyone had their "life together." When I went along with my parents to a restaurant, for example, I saw the waitress as a waitress, busboys were just busboys, and other patrons were just normal people eating out. Now, with a lifetime of experience coloring every perception, I see a waitress as a person wishing to be somewhere else and having a myriad of personal preoccupations, I see patrons as people with secret problems and unending troubles coping with life, on morning walks past residences in my senior-only mobile home park I wonder what "independent living" problems are being dealt with inside, and all the while I see myself as the only worry-free, "together" person in the world. This perception must be exaggerated, but that's how things sometimes look to me.

While musing over my unusual way of looking at people, I overheard a young man seated at a table behind me who had the worst case of "burst talk" that I'd ever encountered. His speech came out in tightly-packed bundles of barely-pronounced words, like bursts of machine-gun fire. If he wasn't medicated, he should have been. How, I wondered, could his woman companion tolerate him? People flawed by a nervous, barely-together demeanor constitute a public contagion that everyone can do without. I feigned the need for a toothpick, which gave me the excuse to get up and walk to somewhere in order to see what he looked like. Of course, he looked "normal," which is the way I might have perceived him when I was a child. But I've seen the world and have lived life, and now I know he's not normal.

The people at another table mistook the busboy for a waiter, a common mistake for those who see the world in terms of their own needs. I recalled the saying "a hammer sees everything as nails."

The busboy, seeing patrons from his perspective, must look forward to quitting time, hoping for as few messy tables as possible. Perhaps he groans silently whenever people enter the restaurant. The proprietor, on the other hand, must feel good when more patrons enter. He probably views the waitresses and busboy as his means for earning money, a way to buy that new car that's in the ads. Maybe the man at the other table is a doctor, automatically seeing other patrons with the expectation that they might be one of his patients, or maybe seeing them as potential patients, and noticing if they show evidence for the malady he treats. Salesmen must see people as consumers, tailors would notice how men dress, shoe repairmen would note the state

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of people's shoes, undercover security people see milling customers as possible shoplifters, and the list of personal perceptions is endless.

I was wrong in childhood to see others as simply normal people doing what they seemed to be doing, who in their turn viewed everyone else as normal people doing what they seemed to be doing. The world is a more complicated place, and it takes a lifetime of observing and pondering to glimpse the way it really is. Perhaps no person on public view, or elsewhere, is "normal" in the sense that we imagine as children.

How sophisticated I am now! That said, I wonder how things would seem if by some magic I were to live another 200 years; would I reflect upon the naive perspective of that 59-year old man, complacently complimenting himself about how perceptive he had become during a mere few decades of experience, wondering and marveling? And although I now feel like the only "together" person in the world, I don't know what people think when they see me. Maybe someone at a table I hadn't noticed was observing me, and speculated upon this poor, lonely person with no one to join him while dining out.

I could be wrong. I could be wrong about everything! Nobody can really know his surroundings, or even himself. This much I know.



*Same restaurant, another day, with friends Joy and Alfred.*

## **I TURN ON THE SUN**

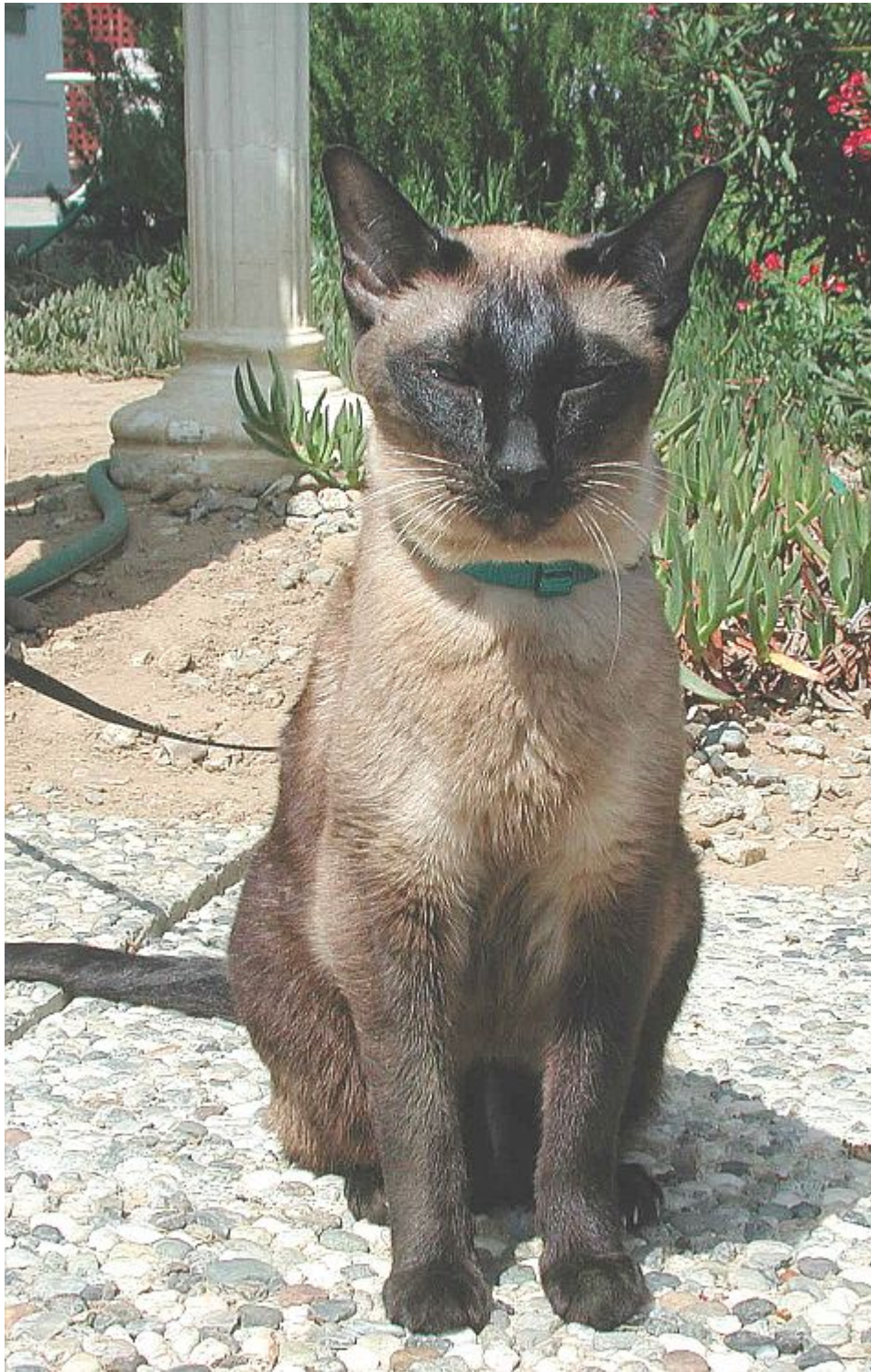
1999.05.22

I was eating my birthday breakfast of bacon and eggs, an unusual departure from my otherwise vegetarian diet, when Sarah entered the dining room and began to meow. Over the years I've come to guess her wants, even though all meows sound the same to me. I make my guess from context, and her actions. Usually, when Sarah's hungry, she'll knock over a plastic container with her food inside, and the one-foot fall can be heard throughout my mobile home. Her sister, Mahi, has learned how to pull down a ribbon/shoe-string toy the kids made for her, and I always reward her with play when I notice that the ribbon toy has been pulled down.

Although Sarah hadn't knocked down the food container, I was anxious to quiet her, so I got up to check her food dish. After watching me put more food in a dish that already had some in it, Sarah walked impatiently down the hall. This usually meant she wanted me to open the sliding door to the "sun room," so named for it's many windows of which the eastern ones were the most appreciated in mornings. I was puzzled to see what I thought I knew, that I had already opened the sun room; yet Sarah entered, and meowed. "What can be your problem!" I exclaimed. That's when I realized that it was overcast, there was no sunlight in the sun room, and maybe Sarah was asking me to "turn on the sun!"

Poor Sarah! She didn't understand. She must think of me as some kind of god, who turns on the sun in the morning and turns it off at night. After all, I do this with room lights. And the food I put in her dish does not come from a hunting act, but appears magically. My girls say that I'm Sarah's favorite, with a tone of voice that conveys envy and jealousy; and I shrug it off as my being the one who feeds her, opens the sun room - and, as I can now add, who turns on the sun!

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*Sarah, on her last day, dignified as usual and in pain from inoperable cancer, just before going to the veterinarian to be euthanized.*



*This group photo shows how many of us support a field trip to somewhere in the world to study the health of the stratosphere using instruments aboard the NASA ER-2 airplane. Most deployments consist of 100 to 150 people, including the aircraft ground crew. When this many people are together in a foreign land, working 12 hours per day, minimum, for 6 weeks, typically, it is inevitable that some kind of bonding occurs. I could tell stories about each person, funny things they've done on field trips and scientific conversations we've had. Everyone has earned respect for being good at something. This picture is unrelated to the previous story; it's presented as a "set up" for the next one, the last in this book.*

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### **ADIEU**

2000.06.23

Fortunately, it was dark enough that she couldn't see my tears.

Yes, this is about love. But not the "love" you're thinking about. It's more about one's "love for life."

I barely knew the woman. She operated an instrument on the research airplane that was taxiing away just now. I knew her from being on many flights together, where we operated our respective instruments.

She had walked out to show a friend the airplane, and was telling her about the excitement of being on these missions. I asked her why she wasn't on the plane, and she explained that she'd be joining it in Norway. She asked why I wasn't on the plane, and I merely said I wouldn't be needed on this mission.

As they walked back to the hangar I was alone again. I sat on a box that was at the tarmac's edge, and waved half-heartedly, knowing that it was too dark for MJ to notice me. Besides, he was probably preoccupied with power switchover glitches, rebooting the CAC computer, and reporting his readiness status using the headset microphone.

My wave was really just symbolic. This would be the first time my understudy would be in charge of "my instrument" as it departed for another mission. For 16 years I had nurtured my "baby," an instrument referred to by the acronym MTP. I had slowly improved it to a level of performance that made it a regularly used one on NASA airplanes conducting atmospheric research studies. And I had just finished preparing MJ to take over my work in anticipation of retirement.

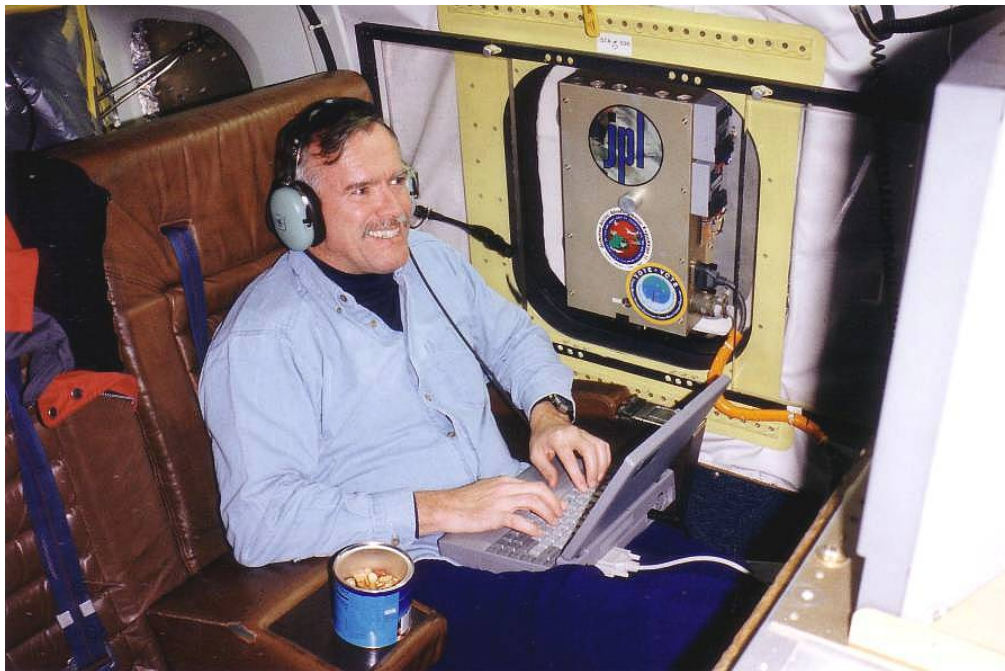
I felt like a parent fretting over a child's readiness for the big world. Had I trained him for enough situations? Would he know how to respond to the instrument's occasional malfunctions? After participating in about 20 previous missions, this would be the first one I wouldn't be on. Already, I was missing the excitement of being part of a team doing new things, trying to learn if an ozone hole was likely to appear over the North Pole the way it did over the South Pole. I would miss the good-natured banter on the plane, and the camaraderie of the group I had come to know and like during the past several years.

While watching the DC-8 under a gradually darkening sky, I was also pleased that my instrument would probably continue to live into the future as a staple research tool for airborne atmospheric remote sensing. Just a few years earlier, when I began to think about retirement, there was no one in-training for taking over my role. The thought of my instrument "dying" with my retirement didn't bother me, really. It's my nature to not care about such things. As a child I would crumple my drawings and throw them away, and only years later did I learn that my mother had been retrieving them from the wastebasket for a scrap book she was keeping. I still throw away ideas, and neglect publishing. But, this time, as luck would have it, MJ became frustrated

with his other work at exactly the time that training a replacement would have to begin, and when I asked him if he'd like to be the next Mr MTP, he agreed with surprising enthusiasm. So, I do admit that a part of me was pleased on this day, January 24, 1996, to see the taxiing plane with my instrument aboard, knowing that a new Mr MTP was in charge.

It was my decision to retire early. I was 56 years old, and the premature death of a couple cousins during the past year drove home the reality that my father's family harbored an early heart attack gene. Seven out of eight paternal male relatives died in their fifties. If it weren't for that concern, I would be on the plane, now taxiing toward the runway.

When it took off, roaring into the night sky toward Alaska, I waved one last time, and quietly said "adieu."



*MJ, the new Mr. MTP, controlling the MTP instrument in the NASA DC-8.*

## RETROSPECTIVE

My holiday ended 16 years ago, but like all good holidays it left a good residue of memories and attitudes. In a sense, it gave me the poise for living that I had been seeking decades long. One of my favorite sayings is “Life’s an immense preparation for something that never really happens.” That’s a fair description of my pre-holiday restlessness. I’m now living that life for which the previous one was an immense preparation. It’s a reward I’ve earned.

Each life can be viewed as an “inevitable unfolding.” We become who we were meant to be, provided horrific events do not sideline our development. Twin studies show that identicals become more like each other as they age. We can use this finding to imagine that every person has a hypothetical twin, and derive from this that each person matures toward who they were meant to be.

The feeling of slowly becoming myself is strong with me. The Holiday Transition featured in this book was an essential part of this growth. When we are true to ourselves it should not be surprising that we are more comfortable with ourselves. The knocks of life provide opportunities to experience many ways of being, and choose those that seem right. The inner poet that I found during my holiday was one of those parts of myself that had been neglected. The writer that emerged near the end of the holiday had new things to write, and all things written had a new maturity.

Although I am closer to who I am, I am convinced that were I to live another several decades I would become even closer to that inner self. This won’t happen, but the theoretical possibility is there, and the prospect of additional discoveries of who I am gives the future a special appeal.

## **YOUR ODYSSEY**

1992

**From dust to stars, and dust again;  
once more a star, with earth in orb,  
evolving life, on land and sea,  
producing Man, and making me.**

**Ageless atoms, you leave behind  
countless stories, now combined.  
Configured thus, you now form me,  
providing for my odyssey.**

**From single-cell, to feeling child,  
who learned the skills for living life,  
my opened eyes viewed worldly scenes,  
I filled with hope, and dreamed some dreams.**

**I worked and toiled, for decades long,  
some lucky breaks, and then achieved!  
Triumphant pause, a time to see,  
the rush of time, the end of me!**

**My song is brief, it's almost sung,  
deserving rest, my war I've won.  
But from within, that short-termed we,  
you atoms yearn to wrestle free.**

**Restless atoms, you must resume  
uncharted paths, for endless time.  
I give you thanks, and set you free,  
as you resume YOUR odyssey.**

## **APPENDIX A – MORE STORIES**

This section is reserved for stories that are too long for the main section of the book. In the First Edition they appeared in Part Three, Stories: 1980 - 1995. They continue to illustrate the Holiday transition, but I also surrendered to the temptation to insinuate some of my sociobiology thinking into an otherwise innocent story, as the first two entries illustrate.

**[This section not included in the Free Sampler Edition]**

### **About the Author**

Bruce L. Gary was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1939. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1961 with a BS degree in Astronomy. He was employed by the US Naval Research Laboratory, in Washington, DC from 1961 to 1964, Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA from 1964 to 1966, Cornell University for assignment at the Arecibo Ionospheric Observatory from 1966 to 1966, and again by Caltech from 1966 to 1998.

Additional professional information can be found at the following web site:

<http://brucegary.net/resume.html>

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## **MISANTHROPE 'S HOLIDAY: VIGNETTES AND STORIES**

This is one of my four misanthrope books. It consists of vignettes, stories and essays that document a transition in my life from a cold-hearted misanthrope to a warm-hearted misanthrope.

The softening of my outlook was influenced by fatherhood. As I extended a helping hand in the raising of daughters Lory and Cindy I internalized the notion that strength and independence are achieved from the nurturing of others. A child with special needs is a call for special parenting.

I have come to view the years 1980 to 1991 as a tumultuous time of transition for all of us in my little family of four. Before the transition I overlooked things that would have been distractions in my pursuit of a professional career. During the transition I paused more often, smelled the roses, and allowed the inner poet to explore the poignancy of everyday things. After the transition I felt a balance in life, an acceptance of what can be changed and what can't, as if I had returned from a holiday that had given me permission to relax and experience the world more fully.

An author must keep in mind his intended readership. Although my daughters were on my mind as I collected the material, and they may be the only ones to read this book, after finishing it I believe it is suitable for a wider readership. After all, misanthropes have many life paths and this book illuminates mine. I fervently hope that some day humans will become sufficiently dissatisfied with "human nature" that they will embrace the criticisms and visions for a better world that only misanthropes can offer.

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