

# **For Per**

Collected Works of Per Malloch

Compiled by Canon Pence

10/6/2001 - 12/6/2001

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>Pg. 3</b>
<b>2. Dedication to Per</b>	<b>Pg. 4</b>
<b>3. Editorials</b>	<b>Pg. 7</b>
<b>4. Short Stories</b>	<b>Pg. 80</b>
<b>5. Miscellaneous Writings</b>	<b>Pg. 164</b>

## Introduction

I'm compiling this collection now one year after Per's death, in celebration of his October 19 birthday. Today is October 6<sup>th</sup>, which is my birthday, and had Per been alive, he probably would have called me today. I'm putting this together in honour of Per's birthday but also in honour of Per. While time has passed since Per's death, he is still in my life and I still refer to things he did, said and wrote in thinking to myself and talking with others. I doubt he's really left anybody who knew him well.

I believe you will find many of these writings just as fresh as when they were written. In them, you can see so much of Per's mental development over the period of time when I knew him. No doubt parts of it will be offensive to many (there's a startling level of insensitivity to be found in these pages), but I'm putting it all in, no edits. I hope everyone will enjoy it and that this will help us never forget him. This collection is dedicated to his life.

Canon Pence

Oct. 6, 2001

## Dedication

TO PER:

Some knew Per as a lanky, long-stepping, obtrusively tall & solitary figure traipsing around campus. Others knew Per from his shockingly loud cursing of video games echoing down dormitory hallways. Still others knew him from his hilarious and oft offensive radio show Chamber of Chickens and Extreme Metal/Video Game Music, his opinionated determination in class or standoffish philosophical debates he “disliked” having but seemed to end up in somehow or other, and rather often. A few knew Per as a friend, and these were a lucky few. It’s not very often that you come across someone as strikingly intelligent or with such otherworldly uniqueness. In fact, it’s pretty much once in a lifetime. That’s why you, and I, were a lucky few.

Per could easily be difficult to deal with. I imagine this was largely due to his intelligence, something that set him apart from most. I often felt inadequate talking to him...he really shone the most brightly when speaking. As many know, he had a laboured manner of speaking, where you could tell that each word was chosen precisely from a frighteningly large vocabulary and the result was crystal clear, sharp and cutting, and usually the wittiest thing you’d heard all day. He could have been another Oscar Wilde – sorry Per. But it’s important to remember that while dealing with him could be tough sometimes, it was just as difficult for him. I think he often felt out of place and that was part of what made Per who he was.

Over the years, Per embraced a number of philosophies wholeheartedly, only to later become dissatisfied and move on, while taking the key understandings with him. I don’t see this in a negative way though. I think he was just trying to find himself, in a way, and he showed a lot of excitement and enthusiasm along the way. He was such a complex character, there was no way one philosophy could offer enough to satisfy him. I believe he first was attracted to Ayn Rand’s Objectivism, and as a high school student, he received 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the national Fountainhead essay competition. Later, however, he moved on to Libertarianism and Anarcho-Capitalism. Along with this, he developed an interest in Anton Lavey’s Satanism, no doubt prompted by his love of

metal. This eventually developed into Max Stirner's Egoism, a framework in which Per did some original work dealing with morality. During his junior year and on into his year off in Seattle, Per turned his focus more fully onto the teachings of Neo-Tech. This brought about some significant changes in Per's life. Neo-Tech demanded he clean up his life. No more laziness or untidiness, now there was just room for hard work and heightened productivity. In a way Per needed the discipline to bridle his enormous potential but eventually this hard-line approach wore him down. What's the point of living forever if you can't have any fun along the way. This realization made way for the last and most important changes in Per's life. He began to take an interest in really living. Increased toleration for others gave way to genuine interest. It was amazing to see, Per actually wanting to know the personal details of my life - not just to discuss the new dynamics of his video game world. Like Neo-Tech, he embraced this new mode of living whole-heartedly. He even ranked meeting new people above video games and anime in our last conversation. What's the world coming to, I thought to myself. But seriously, I was pleased that Per was really coming into his own and seemed to be more and more comfortable with himself.

One constant in Per's life was a startling productivity. He managed to breeze through his Columbia classes with little effort in order to focus on his other interests. To name a few accomplishments: his metal fanzine *Morbid Commentary*, his talks at Objectivist and other conferences, his radio show, the *Yigbook*, his video game in progress, his video game book, his metal albums, his video game music, his several techno/trance albums (mostly unreleased), his notebooks full of artwork, his short stories and of course the *Chicken Musical*. Puts me to shame, all of that. I'm just glad I was able to play a part in the development of many of his ideas and privileged to have a few inside jokes pop up here and there.

One thing about Per that always amazed me was his enduring optimism. In the face of constant hardship (though at times caused by his lack of business or organizing skills), he always looked on the positive side of things. He preferred to take a lesson from his troubles than wallow in self-misery. This was in business or romantic situations. It

may sound cheesy but it's true. He stuck with his goals and nothing could get him down, at least for more than a day or two.

In the end, I'm just lucky to have known Per. Fortunate to have spent the time I did with him, and sorry there won't be any more. No more several-hour phone conversations, no more beating video games late into the night, no more Pronto Pizza or Hagen-Daaz. But don't feel too sorry for me. I've got my memories of him and can say without hesitation that he's absolutely had a profound impact on my life. I'll never forget him and I'll never want to. He's played a part in who I am, I'm proud to say. Thinking fondly of his memory, I toast to his honour - long may his legacy stand. Be glad to have been a part of what I imagine to become a kind of very well deserved Columbia legend.

Canon Pence

November, 2000

## Editorials

### CULTURAL WINDOW SHOPPING

by Per Christian Malloch

"What do you think of the Kli-Kli culture?"

"Well, those guys makes some pretty good zigzag pots. Lot of coconut in their desserts, too. Not bad, all told."

"Fascinating. Well, I'm off to visit Japan. I heard they have four story video game arcades there."

I wish every conversation about foreign cultures were like this. Certainly my own are. I am a cultural window shopper. I take and make use of whatever I like from other cultures-- foods, habits, rituals, clothes, etc.-- for my own pleasure. I don't actually understand what it is that I'm enjoying, except in my own idiosyncratic and completely superficial manner. If the work of generations of artists and shamans is meaningless to me except as a source of momentarily amusing knick-knacks I can use as bookmarks, so be it. Whatever entertainment I can squeeze out of all the world's holy ceremonies is mine to take.

Cultural window-shopping is prevalent in our culture. Consumerization, commercialization, Coca-colaization, Kwaanzaization, Madison Square Gardenization. You evolve a myth, we'll find a way to turn it into a line of plastic dolls. You've seen the tribesmen, now play the game. Electronic postcard Shivas and refridgerator magnet Jesuses here we come-- God bless America!

Columbia is no shrine of sensitivity. Just recently the Asian American Alliance put on a variety show, bringing dances from various parts of the East for our titillation. It came in the guise of a cultural celebration, but it was to traditional dance what Ollie's is to traditional Asian food. Dancers flashed ironic victory signs to their friends in the audience, while pretending to play fragile cardboard "drums."

Later, newly manufactured "traditional" clothes were put on display by girls who were no doubt thankful that they aren't forced to wear such figure-concealing,

disempowering numbers the rest of the year. All in all, a good show. I liked it, especially the amazing glass-of-wine-on-the-head dance. Don't ask me what any of the dances meant, though. I DON'T CARE! It's enough that for a few moments I was not bored. This attitude is the very opposite of cultural egalitarianism or "multiculturalism," which is the belief that every culture has more or less equal intrinsic value. Aside from being ludicrously sentimental, multiculturalism requires one to value things just because other people value them. For instance, the multiculturalist expects us to have respect for the traditions of other cultures, even if they seem ridiculous to us, just because those are the traditions they happen to have. And he expects us to respect his own utterly arbitrary valuation of each culture. "Thou shalt not take the Kli-Kli's name in vain, or thou shalt be called a fascist." As if we should go to cultural celebrations and not be entertained, but rather just nod solemnly and respectfully at whatever we see. Away with this puritanical doctrine! When I see something funny, I laugh, loudly and cruelly! Nothing has a right to be taken seriously by me, least of all because someone else venerates it, or because someone else is foolish enough to venerate it merely because someone else venerates it. Go ahead, you believers in a human right to dignified treatment, waste your energy pandering to people you don't actually like! Keep on straining to sustain your indiscriminate love for every initiation rite and baking festival! Become doormats! Just don't pretend you're doing anyone a favor. You too are putting other cultures to your own uses. The defender of endangered species makes animals his playthings as much as the one who hunts them for sport. Face it. Consumerism is unstoppable. Every man has his price and the entertainment industry has pockets deeper than a Joyce novel. It is the fate of pre-modern civilizations to be plasticized, packaged, slicked up, made cute, individually packaged in styrofoam cartons and shipped to the shelves. Hundreds of covert cultural window shoppers will read this. It's time to come out of the closet. No need to form a club, though. The existing cultural organizations will do nicely as fronts, as I suspect they already are. Go forth, and buy without shame or compunction.



ANIMALS ARE MEAT. EAT THEM. by Per Christian Malloch

This thanksgiving, I hope all of you gave thanks to the meat, dairy and agricultural industries for your food, and the biomedical research industry for your health.

Together, their activities constitute one of the pillars of human civilization: The killing, enslaving, eating, torturing, trapping, skinning, breeding, gene-splicing, domesticating, harvesting, and exterminating of other life forms.

The fate each life form gets depends on its uses. Some animals are cute. Spare them, to breed cuddlier, more docile versions. Or if that's too much trouble, make stuffed animals-- decorated with real fur ripped from the backs to the real ones. Or, if you like to spend your life whining and complaining, start conservation efforts to keep Bambi from winking out of existence forever.

Not many conservationists objected to the virtual extinction of the smallpox virus. Perhaps things would have been different if smallpox viruses cried out when we killed them, or if they looked like kittens. Thousands of animals are subjected to unspeakable torture each year to yield marginal medical gains. Good!

Many animals and plants are edible. Eat them. There's nothing else to eat is there? So what if it hurts them? YOU can't feel it! All I feel when I see cows being slaughtered is the desire for a good steak! Vegetarians who object to the infliction of pain only worry about pain inflicted by humans (and, because we have to eat SOMETHING, they selectively ignore the suffering plants obviously undergo when we rip them up and generally do our business with them.) It doesn't bother them that all animals live by killing and otherwise exploiting other animals and plants.

Animals and plants "can't help it," we are told, when they maim each other to survive. Humans, on the other hand, have "free will," so it is our duty to let other species trample all over us for fear of being mean to them. Did I miss something? Perhaps an argument? The ceaseless war for survival is to be called to halt because a few relatively affluent Westerners whose idea of hunting and gathering is dropping by the local D'agostino's think they feel sorry for little beasts they've seen on television!

They don't mention that animals (and psychopathic humans, including some of the more militant vegans) "can't help it" when they try to kill us and live on human-claimed land. Frustrating as this fact may be to those who dream of a Winnie the Pooh-like world of human and animal coexistence, it is impossible to cooperate with animals. They can't make or abide by agreements, can't learn or follow rules of ownership, can't do anything except what their instincts prompt, and a few idiotic tricks they only pick up when humans manipulate them.

They cannot be part of our society, period. They just don't get it. If we granted every animal citizenship and the responsibilities that come with it, in no time every animal would be locked up for murder, breaking and entering, burglary, etc.-- and we'd be back to the current situation. "But it's 'immoral' to hurt animals nonetheless." As if we're supposed to believe that something can claim rights, even when it isn't willing or able to respect the rights of others! The whole idea is ridiculous. Try describing the "human rights and equality" animal rights activists appeal to, to an enraged hippo as its jaws close on you like a waffle iron!

Claiming that exploiting animals-- or even killing and hurting them for fun-- is "wrong" is simply expressing an arbitrary value judgment. Of course, claiming the opposite is also an arbitrary value judgment-- but at least it isn't SILLY. If vegetarians want people to stop hurting animals, why don't they pay us not to eat them, or explain why it would be in our own interest not to do so? Because there's no good reason not to, that's why! Animals taste good, you get clothes out of them, you can blast them for target practice-- he who wants to take all the benefits from animal exploitation away from me is my mortal enemy!

It's amazing that moral vegetarians (as opposed to people who don't eat meat because they don't like the taste or the health risks) exist at all. One would think that people that sentimental would have died of malnutrition back in the hunter-gatherer days when freshly killed meat was often the only source of protein. Luckily, the natural greed and rapacity of human beings makes it almost certain that the political demands of moral vegetarians and vegans will go ignored. Most people are too brain-dead to be able to imagine a world without McDonald's anyway.

Humans are not "superior" to animals in some metaphysical sense. They just happen to be able to beat them at their own game. In the battle to stop this age old war of all against all, vegetarians' only weapon, lacking sensible arguments, is shame-- a shame this article, and other "reactionary" pieces like it, will hopefully help alleviate. Eat!

11/1/97

## DEBUNKING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT STEREOTYPERS

by Per Malloch

A bum came up to me and said "excuse me." "Well, time to go," I said to the friend who was with me. "I didn't ask you for anything" the bum yelled after us. "But you're going to" I said. "Let me tell you something. Don't stereotype" the bum said. "You think I'm going to ask you for change just because I'm black, I'm dirty, I'm carrying a bottle of windex and I said excuse me at three in the morning?" Quite frankly, yes. Those are the common indicia of bumhood.

What would YOU think such a person wanted? I suppose he could have been a performance artist.

Abomination! I have announced myself as a stereotyper. Yes, merely by glancing momentarily at others I can form preliminary hypotheses about their age, intelligence, social class, intentions, and so on. This magical power allows me to interact efficiently with total strangers.

But stereotyping is wrong, you say, because not everyone conforms to your stereotypes. As if this revelation will make me say "oh, better not ever generalize again because I might sometimes be mistaken" instead of motivating me to find more accurate stereotypes!

Your ability to interact efficiently with strangers is totally dependent on your acceptance of by and large correct stereotypes. "You think this man's a donut salesman, just because he stands behind the counter at a donut shop all day, wearing a hat with a styrofoam donut on it, selling donuts?" Yes, my friends, I do. That is exactly what I think of when I imagine a donut salesman.

Indeed, all abstract thought is a process of stereotyping. Saying "all/most x's are y" establishes a mental image of a stereotypical x which is y. "Most chairs have four legs" is a generalization about chairs which establishes the image of an ideal or essential or average or most likely chair which has four legs.

Normally people speak of stereotypes of people, but there is no logical reason why there couldn't be stereotypes of everything else-- as in fact there are. E.g. the average dog is fond of mindlessly barking, even when illegally present in my dormitory hall. Of course there are exceptions. Two and three legged chairs, broken chairs, and the upcoming legless hover chairs do not have four legs. Dogs whose throats are damaged by well deserved kicks no longer bark. Still, when someone screams "lookout! a chair!" you expect to see something with four legs but which does not bark. Dare you deny it? Here is another stereotype: "Asians are shorter on average than White people." Show me a lanky, slam dunking Asian and I'll show you five who can't reach the cereal boxes at Mama Joy's. If someone tells me that my new teacher is an Asian I will be quite surprised if she turns out to be tall because I will be imagining a short person. Many of you will be tempted to say "that isn't really a stereotype. It's just a fact." All this reveals is that people secretly define a stereotype as a belief they think is false, or one which they don't want to be true. It doesn't bother them to think of Asians as short because there's nothing really that bad about being short, and because the futility of denying Asian shortness is so evident.

On the other hand, "Asians are prone to violent rampages" would be said to establish a racist stereotype because it is obviously false and because it is bad to be prone to violent rampages in our culture.

From my perspective, whether this statement is racist or stereotype-creating is irrelevant-- what matters is how reliable it is. Is it ever wrong to believe the truth? If I thought Asians were prone to violent rampages, believe you me I would proclaim it from the rooftops.

In summary: "Stereotyping is a product of ignorance" is a statement, as I see it false, that establishes the image of a stereotypical stereotyper who stereotypes out of blind stupidity and malice. The critics of stereotyping are, of course, the purveyors of the most crude and inaccurate stereotypes. The only way to stop stereotyping is to stop thinking conceptually at all-- an option many dedicated Columbia students have apparently chosen.

2/4/98

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! by Per Christian Malloch

A ruthless foreign power is invading our country as we speak. These are its objectives:

-To build a vast network of highways on which it can easily move troops to any part of the country- and to force us to pay for these poison-pumping arteries ourselves!

-To house its soldiers on our land in various forts and bases – and force us to pay the wages of its hired murderers!

-To force us to buy and sell using its currency, which it can print more of at will-- thus giving itself almost unlimited spending power while our savings are made worthless by inflation!

-To drive out any power that might, for whatever reason, take its place-- condemning us to live with it forever!

-To openly seize half our wealth, and control the other half with an elaborate system of arbitrary regulations!

-To vastly increase the numbers of the jobless and homeless by paying people to be poor until it owns them body and soul!

-To expand the power of organized crime by banning recreational drugs, thus creating vast, profitable industries run by abject scum who would otherwise be relatively harmless street thugs!

-To prevent us from having access to weapons that might be used to overthrow it-- all the while forcing us to pay for scientific research aimed at the development of super-weapons for itself!

-To fund depraved artists and intellectuals who will create a cultural climate in which the enormities of its officials barely raise an eyebrow!

-And worst of all, to create and force us to attend a network of schools in which we are taught that throughout history, gangs of bloated predators have been responsible for all the world's prosperity – creating generations of people whose exposure to nothing but fallacious economic, moral and historical doctrines makes them incapable of noticing that they are being openly plundered!

Unfortunately, the imperial power has achieved nearly all of its objectives. Its name is The United States of America. All of its usurpations are touted as achievements-- public roads, public schools, poor relief, gun control, funding of the arts and sciences, money supply management, etc.

But what would happen if, say, Iraq, decided to start taxing U.S. citizens, whether or not it offered bogus services in compensation? THAT would be cause for war. Every state's position is: "You can't just take people's money without their consent-- unless you're US."

Nope, people's couldn't build roads, schools, or laboratories unless other people were there siezing half their income every year! Don't you see the connection? And isn't it OBVIOUS that unless the government takes half your income every year you might run the risk of becoming POOR? Who ever heard of an artist that was able to create masterpieces without the help of the government, taking half his earnings? Not me! Without confiscatory taxation we're screwed!

None of this suggests that there is an alternative to government as we know it. I only hope some of these considerations motivate you to investigate the possibility.

2/10/98

## WHEN LEISURE IS PRODUCTION by Per Malloch

It is a common misconception that sitting around doing absolutely nothing is unproductive. On the contrary, it may be the precondition for productivity. It all depends on who is the one taking long walks through the park, playing video games in eight hour marathons, or sitting on the steps gazing blankly into space, tapping their foot. It is in these moments-- or afternoons-- of repose that new thoughts spring into being, if indeed one has the potential to think any.

This brings up the issue of who "should" have the most leisure. The libertarian says "whosoever is willing to pay for it." The idea is that by not working, you are sacrificing income you could otherwise receive, so not-working is (sort of) like any other consumption expenditure. Now this idea is similar to the "in-the-privacy-of-their-own-home" arguments used to defend sodomy and cannabis smoking, and as such all you liberals are bound to admit it has its appeal. However I want to focus on a more pragmatic answer-- leisure is, in effect, not always consumption, even if that's how the person enjoying leisure experiences it.

Everyone overvalues his own work. Day laborers, impressed by the amount of work they have put into moving large objects, etc., don't want to hear that the results of all that exertion aren't worth much to consumers. They resent the higher salaries of the people who figure out what products consumers are after, and without whom all the work of day laborers would be utterly worthless (because it would go into the production of things no one wanted)-- the entrepreneurs. Perhaps unfamiliar with the abstract thought necessary to run a business, they interpret the businessman's supine pose as idleness. Meanwhile, intellectuals, infuriated that no one is willing to pay them for spinning out ridiculous theories and vain philosophies, look enviously upon the scientists, pulp novelists and scriptwriters who have "sold out" by using their intelligence to produce something actually useful or entertaining. Unable to stand the idea that all the brow-wrinkling effort that has gone into maintaining the nonsense hatcheries in their heads was for NOTHING, they announce the corruption of the market and demand a society where all wealth and power is wielded by intellectuals and technocrats--viz., socialism and the "planned economy." Naturally they describe



these seditious activities as nothing but the product of concern for rights, equality, and other play-concepts they pull straight out of their asses. In spite of the complaints of these groups-- one undervaluing leisure and the other overvaluing it-- the only quantitative measure of how much someone is worth to "society" is how much purchasing power he can convince these others to give him voluntarily. By "society" here I mean everyone who relates to you as a \*stranger\*, as a shop-keeper, a beggar, a face on the street, as opposed to a \*unique one\* such as this friend, that wife, etc. A stranger does not care about me personally-- why should he?-- he only cares about the goods and services I can offer. To illustrate: If I am so incompetent and unpleasant that no one will even give me money out of pity, and I starve, then I am quite literally worthless to "society" in any tangible sense. That is, I have nothing to offer to strangers, not even the opportunity for them to exercise compassion. Maybe some unique one loved me, but not enough to support me! On the other hand, if I become fabulously wealthy by throwing curve balls that is a sure sign that strangers are happy that I am throwing curve balls.

Now in my role as a consumer it is in my interest for leisure to be available firstly to those who "use it productively," that is, eventually come up with ideas and production methods that will make new and cheaper goods available to me. A person begins with a certain amount of wealth, out of which he can squeeze a certain amount of leisure before he has to work (leaving aside stealing, going on welfare, etc. since I am speaking of voluntarily granted purchasing power.) If he uses that leisure in a way that gets him a higher paying job, that proves he's got whatever it takes to turn today's idleness into tomorrow's competence.

The process continues. Even more leisure is available in the new job. Can he take it to the next step? If not, his time is, from my point of view as a consumer, better spent just doing what he's good at. His leisure is no longer of any worth to me, the stranger; it is only "of worth" to him in a purely subjective and unquantifiable sense, it is... his fun. If a machine is left on nothing interesting happens; it "should" spend ALL of its time working (except for cooling off/maintenance periods). The same with literally

mindless androids whether made of flesh or metal, once they exist. No, stupid people aren't androids, although you can expect them to have leisure time of little value.

None of this is to claim that being productive is "morally better" than just wanting to have fun, or that people's duty is to produce for others. I am simply talking about productiveness for those who care about productiveness for whatever reason.

In short: idleness is not always mere fun. Some people's idleness makes their own or other people's activity more productive (by introducing machines, new technologies, etc.) The value of (the product of) this idleness in a material sense is precisely whatever idle people can convince others to pay them for being idle. So if you care about productiveness, don't be ashamed to be idle and don't reprimand strangers for being idle. (How can you, you're in college! Most of you are still parasites on your parents like me!) Not, at any rate, until you have some idea of what the results of this idleness will be. Hint--"spare some change?" means: too much idleness.

2/19/98

## GO CULTURAL FASCISM by Per Malloch

A recent editorial in the spectator says that widespread interest in exercise and being in shape is a sign of a "fascistic society."

First, a pedantic point. Whether you actually know what fascism is (the social system in which the state controls the means of production without formally owning them,) or instead you have only the popular notion of fascism as having something to do with being mean to the Jews and wearing uncomfortable looking boots, it seems obvious that societal beauty standards per se have no necessary connection with fascism. This established, it is simply dishonest to call anything "fascistic" that has no logical connection with fascism, as "fascistic" cannot possibly mean anything except "related to fascism."

The nazi fascists themselves used to call everything they didn't like "Jewish" and "Communist." The president of the United States was often called a Jew and a Communist. Dare we adopt their sloppy thinking habits and label everything we don't like "fascist" and "fascistic"?

Now, to social beauty standards themselves. WHAT is the problem? Doesn't everyone except Heidegger accept that beauty is in the eye of the beholder? If so, there is no use complaining about people's aesthetic preferences. Think you're too fat? Just stop thinking that fat is unattractive! No more need to fear that Calvin Klein ads will turn you into an anorexic! Of course, you'll have to go out with other fat people, because they're the only ones who'll accept you unless you're obviously rich! If acknowledging this obvious fact is cultural fascism, then go cultural fascism.

BIG SURPRISE that people are attracted to traits that predict healthy and virile offspring like health, intelligence, wealth and power! Do you really think that evolution would permit a gene that made people attracted to diseased, obese people, to animals, to inanimate objects, or to dead bodies, to flourish as much as one that made people desire rugged, successful partners? Don't think that's fair? Just be glad that "unfair" people were around long enough to create the civilization that keeps you alive.

When I go into a restaurant I want to see clean-cut, beautiful people welcoming me. If I just want food, I can go to the god damn supermarket! What you pay for in a restaurant

is partly the "atmosphere," which includes the servers, not to mention the customers--ever hear of no shoes, no shirt, no service? That's right, even McDonald's draws the line somewhere, no matter how much their servers might make you lose your appetite.

Boo hoo! Fascist society stops me from leaving a trail of slime as I walk into a black tie restaurant! Fascist society expects me to not eat all day and live on my sofa if I want to get hooked up! Fascist society looks down on me if I major in Philosophy or English Literature in college and wind up some pathetic thirty-year-old bum who still lives with his parents!

Humans are animals. You expect lovers to fall at your feet if you look like you might as well have a huge sign on your head that says PRODUCES FEEBLE OFFSPRING? Guess what. There are some people that are so broken that I won't even talk to them. Does this surprise you? I'm like ninety percent of the male population -- I'm just not afraid to say it.

Beauty standards are completely arbitrary, determined by genetics and culture.

Criticizing them is meaningless. No matter what they are, some people lose out. That's life. And stop complaining about it. It's unattractive.

2/20/98

## A TALE OF WEREWOLVES

Per Malloch

Imagine a community of civilized werewolves. They're perfectly decent people--polite, orderly, and productive. It's just that every week or so they feel the need to transform into wolves and kill. This killing serves no nutritional purpose, since they already have plenty to eat. "It only really starts to make sense once you've transformed into a wolf," they will tell you. "We don't expect you to understand."

Our civilized werewolves aren't thieves and murderers. They don't want to hurt other people. They wish to keep the value of their real estate high. As the mayor (jokingly known as the alpha-male) puts it, "we don't want to be a burden."

Accordingly, they have developed a number of customs and institutions to deal with the Call of Nature (as it is called in polite society.) For instance, you can buy "meat dummies"--human-looking sculptures of raw meat bound together with strings and supported by internal tubing. For a small fee, you can hire a "meat puppeteer" to cause your meat dummy to dance around like a marionette while you attack it with fang and claw.

During each performance, the meat puppeteers blow on special flutes that produce a sound not unlike a death shriek. It was found that one could cut time spent as a wolf by almost thirty percent by adding these sound effects.

Realism is the key. Without a meat puppeteer to make it move around, a meat dummy is "pretty much just a big waste of meat."

Every month, when the moon is full, a herd of cattle paid for by everyone in town is brought to main street, where a lupine horde descends upon it. It was found that the full-moon wolf accepts no imitations.

You can imagine how large an incentive people have to give charity in this society!

My question for you is: are these people rational? Is there something inherently illogical or wrong about the desire to transform into a wolf and kill things? Or are our civilized werewolves the model of taste, decorum and reasonableness?

They have various hungers for which they can offer no reason. They investigate the world so as to be able to come up with effective strategies for getting what they want. They cooperate to help each other satisfy these desires in a way minimally prejudicial to the satisfaction of still other desires.

In short, they are us. Why do people play video games? Because there's a part of them that wants to run out and kill their enemies, command armies, conquer the world, or-- most grotesque and perverse of all -- stack blocks in orderly geometric patterns. They play Ray Storm, Command and Conquer and Tetris to gratify these urges without hurting other people.

Why do people like movies, visual art and pornography? Voyeurism. For some reason -- or rather, for absolutely no reason -- they get a kick out of staring at other people and in some way "living their lives." Instead of invading each others' homes to have something to watch, they make and purchase images to stare at instead. The Mona Lisa is, functionally speaking, a meat dummy.

Why do people even keep themselves alive, much less reproduce themselves? The universe will not care if they all die. It will not even notice. People are the only ones that care, for no other reason than that, in the course of evolution, people who didn't wouldn't have survived. If everyone thought babies were as disgusting as I think they are, I doubt the human race would last long.

I can go on, but I'm sure you get the point. Desires in themselves are neither rational nor irrational. Rationality is in the way these desires are handled-- haphazardly and savagely, or systematically and socially. Civilized werewolves are as rational as we are. If anything, they are more rational, because they are fully aware of how arbitrary their aims are, and so pursue them in a considerate fashion.

Think of that the next time you look at "great art," groom your fur, smite virtual enemies, look for a mate, or howl at the moon -- "isn't it a nice day?"

2/28/98

To the Editor:

In his recent editorial, Anurag Jain asserts that it is wrong to think that "piles of theory must be waded through before we can speak on complicated issues." Simple ignorance should suffice. Immediately vitiating his thesis, he proceeds to offer (what the credulous will mistake for) an analysis of present day politics, straight from the album sleeves of today's most cutting edge alternative rock bands.

It's all very simple. The United States, under the control of nebulous supercorporations, has as its sole objective the harming of innocent people. This objective is accomplished abroad by bombing civilian populations at random, and at home by cutting back welfare programs without which decent people who aren't cutthroat enough to want to earn a living couldn't possibly survive. All we need to do is agitate furiously, sob at conventions, and take over school buildings and the government will have to establish the socialist paradise we've been waiting for since the Declaration of Independence.

Well, let me state the conservative viewpoint with equal simplicity. The main thing we seek to conserve is our hard earned money. The world is full of intellectuals who incessantly bitch about everything and demand that we fork over our products so they can set things right with their rabid utopian schemes. Knowing full well that insofar as they sit around educating themselves about what they already believe at facetious sit ins, they will be dependent on the conventional people they deplore (i.e. their parents) to support them and bankroll their projects, they demand that the state force working people to give up half their income in income, sales, and other taxes. In this way people who hardly share their values can be made to contribute to their realization. State officials, who after all make a living taking and throwing away other people's money, are only too happy to oblige them.

These same chronic bellyachers insolently expect to be praised and rewarded for their moral rectitude instead of loathed as thieves and legitimators of the same unlimited state power they claim to oppose. Well, I have savings and anyone who wants to take them away from me can negotiate with my gun. History is the process of force chasing after wealth, morality the tool of persuasion used to gather force on your side. To you

who work or plan to do so, consider well who you want to dispose of the goods you produce.

Yours,

Epicurus

3/7/98



Titles:

MODERN LOVE

"PEOPLE DATING PEOPLE"

THE 90s COUPLE

by Per Christian Malloch

One time while I was in a cafeteria a girl I didn't even know offered me a hardboiled egg from her tray, which she was clearly taking to the trash seeing that it was covered with hideous scraps of half eaten food. I think she was actually attempting to get my attention. What makes an act this gauche possible? A lifetime of insensitivity to other people's reactions? Latent autism? Utter madness?

We'll never really know, but one potential culprit is the 90's model of romance. There they are in the restaurant next to Cinema Village, having a Serious Intellectual Conversation-- the 90's couple. She's decked out in drab, figure concealing clothes -- after all it's an insult to suggest you might find a woman attractive and that that's more important to you than her views on deconstructionism! That might mean you regard her as something other than a Person, a grayish blob used to contain ideas, human rights and political agendas!

The girl who offered me her disgusting hard-boiled egg would never have done so if she had seen herself as "trying to attract a man" rather than "trying to gain the respect or gratitude of a Person." But belief in innate non-anatomical sex differences is called unprogressive in institutions of higher indoctrination. On the current view, sex is properly an expression of respect for a Person. And of course the criteria for the respect-worthiness of Persons ought to be the same for both sexes to avoid "sexist double standards." So men and women are expected to behave the same way when they court. For instance, offering each other food -- after all a Person needs to eat. God! One advantage to this view as far as political correctness goes is that it makes homosexuality appear completely normal and unremarkable. If two Persons respect each other it's only reasonable for them to have sex. Psycho-biological explanations for

sexual urges and preferences go out the window. They might imply people don't have FREE WILL!

There are three common reasons to be interested in the opposite sex: for sex, for children, or for company.

Intellectual conversation is not normally needed to realize any of these purposes.

For obtaining sex the conversation common at frat parties is typically sufficient. Openly meaningless and trivial talk about movies and classes is the smokescreen behind which propositions are accepted and rejected. You think it's demeaning to be wanted only for sex, or to offer sex in exchange for star treatment and expensive gifts? Well, some of the ladies at these parties evidently don't. To say that it's "demeaning" for them to act on their own desires is just to say that you disapprove of them. What are you going to do about it? Pass a law? It would be easier just to accept that other people aren't like you. As for deciding whether you can stand to be around another person for long periods of time or take care of their spawn, nonintellectual conversation is sufficient to establish things like: whether they have traits that predict success such as intelligence, what their social class is, how much money their parents probably have, how dependable they are, whether they have a sense of humor, whether they are passive or aggressive, etc.

Of course, don't let me stop you if you have deep conversations with members of the opposite sex. Just don't think that what you are doing has any bearing on your romantic future. When you become genuinely interested in a topic, you start paying attention to the topic and not the person you're talking too. You're not getting anywhere if their eyes gaze off into American airspace while they discuss the mechanics of writing papers on Heidegger.

Romance is a matter of glands and instincts. A person's smell is often more alluring than their powers of cross multiplication. Flirtation, dating and body language are the behaviors best suited to it. Conversation is typically a sham and a facade, a pretext for eye contact and various acts of measurement. Thinking you have some kind of moral duty to be attracted to people on the basis of sex-invariant moral and quality standards leads to nearly Victorian sexual repression. What a surprise that the people who demand this of us are often rather plain.

If you don't know what I'm talking about I envy you. Perhaps you live in a social world where men are men and women are women. You haven't taken androgynous studies courses or read books on personhood. If so, don't worry about any of this.

3/23/98

Suggested titles:

DOWN WITH IDEALISM

THE THREAT OF IDEALS

IDEALISM: MY FOE

AWAY WITH IDEALISM

What is an ideal? An idea turned into a god.

An idealist is someone who finds the meaning of life in slavery to an idea. An idealist is born whenever someone says "henceforth, my cause will not be my own cause, but rather a higher one -- the divine cause, the cause of rights, truth, justice, liberty, the cause of mankind, of France, etc." What a difference that innocuous little 'l' at the end of 'idea' makes -- the difference between thinking and fanaticism.

They are everywhere. People who cover their clothes with an array of hideous buttons that announce their views on hot topics, eager to share the meager contents of their souls with all who will listen. People who stop and give money to bums just so they can talk to them about socialism. People who, day in and day out, wear an Ayn Rand T-shirt -- "I mean, why WASTE all that space, when it could have AYN RAND on it?" -- hoping against hope that someone will ask them who that intriguing novelist/philosopher on their shirt is. People who stand out in the cold all day handing out ratty pamphlets for talks in which they will have the privilege of hearing their own ideals defended by arguments they themselves have used ten thousand times, as a purely devotional act, as if to say, "yes, there are arguments for my side, even if, having abandoned all reason and logic long ago, I no longer see them as relevant to whether I will continue to serve the Forces of Right and Justice against the Dark Legions of Microsoft."

What is the seduction of idealism? In a word, immortality -- in three words, the meaning of life. God says "I realize that you are worried about the fact that you and your entire insignificant species will one day die off, having accomplished absolutely nothing lasting. However, if you will unconditionally serve me for the rest of your life

-- ME, the everlasting, all important Mr. Meaning-- you may console yourself with the thought that you have become one with something far more powerful and persistent than you will ever be. How does that sound, Mr. 'boo hoo, I'm going to die'? Would you like your ridiculous, worm-like existence to be dissolved in me like a sugar cube in the ocean?" Yes, comes the resounding response -- who could turn down an offer like that? No one with an insecure ego! -- and on go the buttons and the "stop the arms embargo" t-shirts.

Idealists are simply unable to face the fact that there is no ultimate purpose, justification or reason for the fact that we exist. They look with disdain on the Epicureans, Hedonists and other philosophers of self-indulgence. "How COULD they only care about themselves when people are starving in Africa and the whales are going extinct etc. etc.? In short, how can they possibly think that their interests are more pressing than those of my god?"

Their dirty pact with their god allows them to secretly indulge the thought that they are the most important ants in the universe. They even have power over life and death. They know who "deserves" to die or roast in Hell forever. It's all been worked out; they never have to think again.

If someone tells you he'd die for his ideals, watch out. That means he'll happily let YOU die for his ideals. If he says "what good is a life without honor?" you must remember that, since honor is a concept that applies to all human beings, he's also saying "what good is YOUR life without what I define as honor?" Not quite so appealing now is it? What good is the idea of honor when you are dead? This last is not a meaningful question for the idealist. His honor IS his life as far as he's concerned.

You hear idealists claim to be defenders of liberty? How can you trust them to bring you liberty when they deny it to themselves, when all they understand is service -- community service, national service, service to Man's rights, or what have you? Look at them -- entire lives spent in service to the idea of liberation! "There will be time enough for liberty once we've established a color-blind egalitarian democratic wealthy unmaterialistic planned open society -- until then it is our duty to aid mankind in his (our) struggle."

The problem I have is not with "the wrong ideals." I am as wary of "right wing" idealists as I am of "left wing" idealists. My problem is with anyone who commands me to do something without offering a reason meaningful to ME. Me individually, not "reason" or "morality" or "man" -- nothing outside myself, nothing above myself, nothing within myself, just the pure one hundred percent grade 'A' genuine Per C. Malloch right here writing this, coming atcha.

The idealist regards himself as exempt from having to justify his actions to me because he has already justified them to his god. He therefore makes any peaceful negotiation of our practical disputes impossible to the extent that he is sincere in his idealism. Even when he claims to be "tolerant", he makes a religion, an anti-social uncompromising stand, out of that too -- woe to those who not behave in the way he considers tolerant! Max Stirner describes idealists as "the possessed," an accurate enough description. I prefer to call them "vessels."

What I advocate is not tolerance but profound indifference -- the kind of indifference displayed by certain of my CC classmates, who are intelligent enough to grasp the ravings of Rousseau and Marx, but on some deep level "don't let it bother them." They are not kept up nights by the parade of never-resolved issues that issue from the overactive minds of moral philosophers. They are, in short, capable of living, just a little bit, for themselves. In sum, idealists are not your friends. They don't have friends. They have ideals. Bye.

4/6/98

## I LOVE CHICKENS

by Per Christian Malloch

While I was at The Cloisters last year I came across a chicken, just going pkaw and wandering around on the lawn. I immediately began worshipping it. Why? Because I love chickens.

Chickens are great. Chickens are the bomb. Every chicken deserves to wear a platinum medal which says "congratulations on becoming one of our rightful lords and masters." Or at least a little T-shirt that says "Pkaw! Can you say that? I think not, 'coz you aren't a chicken like me."

Chickens, our rightful lords and masters, would best be collectively referred to as "the Christ pimpalia" -- the equipment by means of which all rival Saviors and bringers of goodness and godliness are pimped. I like to imagine all of the gods and deities and holy spirits people have made up throughout history, sullenly standing in line ready to pay tribute to chickens. And they WILL! THEY WILL ALL PAY!

PAKAAAWOOOOOORRR!

Does this sound like a devotional text, dripping with Old Testament flavor? Does the rhyme "chickens love to go pkaw -- they're so exciting, you'll drop your jaw" remind you of the heavenly poetry of the Koran? It should. I can worship anything, glorify anything, elevate and exalt anything, bow before anything, make anything sacred. I can make this very editorial printed on cheap newsprint into a holy scripture. Perhaps by writing this I am at this very instant founding a virulent chicken cult. Something only becomes "greater" than me, "higher" than me" when I -- abase myself in front of it. I alone decide what is more important than I am!

Who can muster the strength of will to worship chickens? Is it even possible? Chickens are the least worthy objects of worship in the entire animal kingdom by traditional criteria. They inspire neither fear, nor love, nor respect. They are neither disturbingly ugly nor pleasingly attractive. They have nothing to offer, and can threaten to take away nothing. Their pathetic strutting engenders not awe but contempt. And then

there is that relentless uttering of meaningless noises like "pkaw," too frequent to serve any communicative function.

(Regarding "pkaw," I like to think that chickens possess the secret of infinite happiness and that if we were as happy, as infinitely fulfilled as chickens we too would be unable to contain our happiness, which we would express by uttering meaningless noises like "pkaw" in the same way that today people yell "yes!" and "oh baby" during the fleeting and transient moments of happiness connected with sex and sports games.)

What does it mean for something to be worthy of worship? It means that whether or not you like it you have to show it respect and put its cause above your own. In the case of chickens, you must starve rather than fail to feed your last lump of grain to the nearest plump, adorable chicken. The very fact that you are reading this rather than running out and feeding needy, starving chickens is an abomination. The Chicken Law, which requires all of us to worship and feed chickens, is unconditionally and absolutely binding on all of us.

Perhaps I can hear you saying "Ridiculous! Why would I serve chickens when they offer nothing in return? Why would I care about their interests more than my own? I have nothing to do with them! What do I care about your invented Chicken Law when there's no one to enforce it and no self-interested reason to follow it?" But what about God, Truth and Mankind -- do they ask anything other than that you throw away your own cause and take up theirs? Do they offer compensation on terms meaningful to you for your service? Do they offer any reason to follow their Laws other than that if you don't you'll be "immoral" and "unholy"? Do they have anything to do with you -- or are they not foreign, completely beyond you, completely abstract?

Chickens, objects of worship -- can you stand it? O devout and worshipful, I throw the idea of chicken worship in your face as if to say "this, THIS is what you are doing, this and nothing more." It makes no difference whether you worship spooks, the State or chickens. What is the same in each case is what you do to yourself -- you put yourself down.

Of course, I don't actually worship chickens. I don't worship anything. I simply relentlessly put forward the idea of chicken worship as a way of provoking the question



"why worship anything? And if one is to worship something, why not a chicken?" Yes, why not a chicken? Is not every shake of a chicken's wattle the silent command "worship me"? Answer me!

4/20/98

## WHAT WE CAN ALL LEARN FROM CHICKENS

by Per Malloch

Whether you love, hate, worship or simply eat chickens, those feisty pkawers have a lot to teach all of us. Their most important lesson: don't stop going pkaw. Yes, through centuries of oppression, of having people tell them they don't have any feelings, and (in the case of arctic chickens) enduring a never ending blizzard, chickens, undaunted, have forced open the very beaks their enemies tried to hold shut in order to emit pkaws. Such triumphant pkawing is proof that chickens have maintained a good attitude despite their Christ-like suffering and preserverance, making all "triumphs" against them on the part of conqueror-god humanity ring hollow. So, taking your cue from a certain species of plump beak-wigglers, the next time your foes have you at their mercy, pkaw right in their faces! What better way to say "you may have utterly trounced me, but I'm unstoppable! I have the secret to happiness!"

But this "never stop going pkaw" attitude which makes you unbeatable in both work and romance is not the only reward that comes from giving chickens the close analysis they so eminently deserve. No, chickens also teach us that we must cruelly bully and dominate our social inferiors. Chickens at the top of the "pecking order" may at any time peck at other chickens, as if they were seeds. Big, chicken shaped seeds, but seeds still.

So when the fashion fascists cover their mouths and laugh at you, remember: chickens would do the same. And be grateful. They are preparing you to enjoy one of life's sweetest pleasures: revenge. For, if you manage to shape up or make a lot of money, you will one day be able to torment those who now torment you.

Chickens may not have "the moves." Chickens might not have much in the way of "class." They may "have beaks" and "scratch the ground." But fate often chooses lowly vessels in which to store its most meaningful revelations. An old shoe, a fortune cookie, or yes, even a chicken, may have more important information encoded in it than a whole CD ROM full of encyclopedias. Once you understand that, the world seems ram-packed full of excitement. 9/8/98

## DON'T GIVE BUMS ANY MONEY

by Per Malloch

Do you like to have people who have given up on themselves living in squalor right on the street outside where you live? Apparently many Columbia students do. Every day they shell out their hard-inherited money to keep those garbage bags and shopping carts right where we can see 'em.

Thanks, Columbia!

Some misconceptions about giving money to bums:

"Handing out spare change actually benefits bums and is therefore compassionate."

Wrong. It just makes their work-free existence bearable enough to keep them from looking for a job, thus keeping them outside normal society where they could actually prosper.

"Bums will die without my help." Nonsense. America is such a rich country that nearly anyone can survive just by eating other people's garbage.

"Handing out spare change is our duty." You don't actually believe this. After all, why don't you go to New Jersey every weekend to give money to the bums there? What about the bums in the rest of the country in the world? Fact is, you just don't care.

"My change will, in turn, change a bum's life." Statistical surveys regularly show that the majority of bums are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or else "insane." In short, as uncomfortable as their life is, they appear to prefer it to living straight. And, any money you unconditionally give them will, far from inducing change, serve as a reward for continuing to live the way they do now.

Everyone is responsible for all of his own actions, and everyone individually is to blame for most of his happiness or sorrow. Thinking your help makes a difference evades that fact.

"Giving change to bums makes me a good person." Chances are, giving money to a bum results in zero net benefit for yourself or society. You might as well just burn the money (or its equivalent in consumer goods.) How is that good?

In fact, thoughts like the one quoted above reveal the inverted moral standards accepted by many today. Some people consider it better to donate manual labor for insignificant "make a difference" social work, and to pay people for not working, than to make an honest living producing goods that other people are willing to pay for. Indeed, these days there are actually people who are proud to be parasites -- people who think those that work are "suckers." In a more rational age, people would consider it simply illogical to give values to those who won't have or make any of their own in the foreseeable future.

People seem to give money to bums because they feel sorry for them. That's why I used to give change to bums. But, like the desire to eat sweet foods, this desire to assist strangers sometimes misfires in our modern environment, so different from that in which we originally evolved.

None of this is to criticize offering assistance to strangers (e.g. helping mothers drag strollers up the Low steps or whatever) or lending/donating money for phone calls and other emergencies. Such assistance is categorically different from "help" offered to career bums. It spreads goodwill among all without creating perverse incentives to be dependent on others.

So, if you can't seem to walk a block without being subjected to various entreaties, threats, and insane mutterings from the local wildlife, just remember whose fault that is. That's right, yours.

9/17/98

## DON'T WATCH THE NEWS

by Per Malloch

News programs and papers profit through demoralizing their customers. The long run effect of watching the news or reading the paper daily is a depletion of your fighting spirit. Why?

\*Most reported news is bad.\* It is a truism that bad news sells better than good news. If you hear about awful things happening to other people, it may make your life seem better by comparison. But the price of this broader perspective is the feeling that the world is a bad place filled with misery. In fact, for most people in industrialized semi-capitalistic countries like Japan and the US, the amount of pleasure available in life far outweighs the pain. Focusing only on bad things that happen, then, gives one an unnecessarily pessimistic attitude.

\*The news is filled with lies, distortions and misinformation.\* If journalists' dishonesty won't ensure you can't tell whether the news is true, simple incompetence will. If you want to find out reliable information about a topic, you have to do your own research.

\*The news fills your head with worthless tidbits of information.\* Thanks to the news, many of you know the names of certain animals at Seaworld, president Clinton's birthday, and countless other trivial facts which do nothing except clutter up areas of your brain that could contain something empowering.

\*The news makes you feel impotent by focusing your attention on affairs that you can do absolutely nothing to change.\* What good is it to you to learn about a war on the other side of the war, which your own individual actions can't alter in any way? None. It just gives you more to worry about in helpless frustration. If you instead concentrate on areas of your life you can change directly, you'll feel much better.

For instance, if you are concerned about crime in the ghetto, rather than wishing for more police or for the abolition of drug laws, why not move as far away from the ghetto as possible? Zap! No more crime problem, as far as your own life goes!

\*The news continually holds up unimpressive and debauched people as worth pondering, while ignoring and denigrating those who produce the greatest values for

society.\* Coke smoking Hollywood stars, coffer draining politicians and murderous football players are the subject of special investigations, while the achievements of the computer industry are denigrated with nonsensical and contradictory accusations such as "the rate of progress is too fast," "Microsoft is too successful" and "computer companies deliberately put bugs in their software." The result? The news encourages narcissistic contemplation of the worst within us -- reducing the drive to become superior by implicitly lowering standards of conduct for all. Being an amoralist is no excuse for being a damned slob.

\*The news sanctions established "experts" and commonly swallowed "truths" that keep you in ignorance.\* For special reports, news programs will bring in established "experts" who are consulted merely because their views are currently popular. And, newscasters continuously promote invalid concepts like the right-wing left-wing dichotomy, business (private property) versus the environment, and paying a "fair share" of taxes (with the amount to be paid unilaterally decided by the government). This torrent of philosophical errors can be turned to a drizzle by stopping all voluntary news consumption.

And the main reason, which encompasses all the others: \*the news generally offers no information you can use to make money or otherwise succeed.\* It's a complete waste of time to learn about events you can't affect, which concern people beneath your notice. Why not spend your time learning something useful, like how to print a book or make a decent smoothie (something no New Yorker has yet accomplished, as anyone from California will be able to tell you)? To paraphrase Nietzsche, you must forget the news to make news.

9/24/98

## LEAVE SWEATSHOPS ALONE, I LIKE THEM JUST FINE

By Per Malloch

The bottom line on sweatshops is: people who work in a sweatshop in a free country apparently don't have the skills to work anywhere else, because if they did, they would leave in a hurry. Nothing's stopping them from trying to get a different job, to learn new skills, etc. So, what's the problem? Not everyone can be a winner.

Ever heard of incompetence? It's displayed in abundance by the employees at The Wiz, Staples, Burger King, and countless other establishments. Do the oxen who work there really seem to you like they have the brains, skills and raw ambition to work someplace significantly better? Well, if THOSE people manage to get as high as the french fry counter, just imagine how flat out nonproductive you would have to be for working in a sweatshop to be your only option.

If operating a sewing machine is the best you can do, well, sorry, that's just not good enough. Everyone's value to "society" (people other than himself and his own friends and family) is directly measured by what other people are willing to pay them for what they have to offer. If you can contribute a lot, you get a lot in return.

It doesn't matter whether you were born with special talents or whether you had to develop skills through long practice; whether your parents provided encouragement or beatings; whether your intentions toward others are "good" or "bad." All that matters is: can you, as you are right now and are likely to be for a while, produce goods other people want? If you can't, small wonder they don't want to give you their valuables! Look at this way. Would YOU want the government to force you to have sex with old homeless men/women? Why not? What if the old homeless men/women in question were homeless by no fault of their own -- born with incurable halitosis, trick knees and IQs in the tens, fresh immigrated from some socialist country that taxed away all their savings, but friendly, lovable people who wouldn't hurt a fly? "It doesn't matter!" you'd probably say. "No matter whose fault it is, these ones don't have anything to offer me. Why should I have to do them a favor?"

That's just how an employer feels when people suggest that the government should force him to pay his employees more than they're worth to him. Working conditions are bad for sweatshop workers? So what! No one ever trained them to do something more valuable? So what! Kicked around by the state in their home country? So what! None of that is at all relevant to whether people who work in sweatshops have a valuable product to offer.

Besides, a job in a sweatshop actually represents an improvement in the lives of many sweatshop workers (who live in countries where government regulations and taxes slow economic growth to a crawl.) If American corporations stopped operating sweatshops, those luckless workers would have to do something even more unpleasant to get by.

"Oh, we don't want those people to be out of a job. We just want the job to pay better and take place at a resort hotel" is the usual response to this point. The people who say this are the same ones who say "well, we want the minimum wage raised to ten million dollars, but we don't want anyone to be out of a job." What if the employers involved don't WANT to pay people more than what they're worth to them? "Oh, we'll have the government force them to pay. It's their RIGHT, after all."

This solution amounts to the following: people who are actually willing and able to produce should do so -- to support those who aren't. It's the same old slogan of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" -- which might as well read "I wish the human race would just die." Taken to its logical conclusion, throughout history this slogan has invariably yielded what any economist would predict it would -- total chaos. So, the next time you hear about a sweatshop, don't get angry at the company that runs it -- get angry at the government that wrecked the economy of the country it's in, or at the workers for not making themselves more productive. YOU'LL have to pay for those jeans, after all!

8/5/98



## RACISM: THE CONTENTLESS CONCEPT

By Per Malloch

The insult "racist" has become so loaded with negative connotations that it no longer has any definite meaning. All that you can know for sure is that if someone calls you a racist, they probably don't like you.

There isn't a racist on campus if you ask each student individually whether he/she is a racist. On the other hand, Columbia is swarming with racists if you ask each student to finger other students, particularly his/her enemies. No one wants to be called a racist, and everyone calls his opponents racist, because being called "racist" is like being called a baby-eater. In fact, someone who strolls down the street, just eating all the babies he sees, would probably be ranked higher than a "racist" on many people's value scales.

In an attempt to trace the evolution of the word "racist" and its associated term "racism" into its present state of an empty insult-word like "bitch," let us map out several major forms or definitions of racism as they have appeared in the past.

First, purely emotional or non-intellectual (though sometimes rationalized) forms:

RACISM A: Bitterly hating people of a particular race for no apparent reason, leading to lynchings, vandalism, and general property destruction. Famously exhibited by the Klu Klux Klan and the Nazi Party, to which opponents of any belief system can one day expect to be compared.

RACISM B: Disliking or feeling repulsion toward the commonly encountered attributes of people of a particular race, without any strong ill will or desire to destroy them, the way one can dislike the taste of strawberries without wanting to burn down a church full of them. For instance, if you don't find flat noses attractive, then you won't be able to help finding a disproportionate number of Black people "ugly." Or, if you like classical music, you won't be into many Native American composers. Pretty much everyone falls into the B-racist category on some counts.

Second, conscious beliefs:

RACISM C: Naive, overly broad and inaccurate stereotypes about members of different races, due to ignorance, lack of attention to detail, or just plain low brainpower (e.g. "all

Asians are trained in Kung Fu.") Typical of the racism of children and the uneducated. We often hear the platitude that "children must be taught to hate," but just the opposite is true. They have to be taught to think clearly enough to distinguish more than four or five different kinds of human beings.

RACISM D: Empirically supported but politically unpopular generalizations about people of different races. An example of a D-racist belief is that Blacks on average tend to be better at basketball than Whites on average. Dare you deny it? How else can one possibly explain why there are so many more Black than White star basketball players, especially when the majority of basketball teams seemed to be managed/owned by Whites, many of whom would presumably prefer to have White basketball teams? Yet, even this seemingly innocuous and obviously true belief, covertly cultivated by everyone, is publicly attacked as one that "should not" be held, and is indeed "dangerous" as well as "racist." Basketball coaches and IQ researchers seem especially prone to having their every D-racist remark taken as evidence of full-blown, baby eating "racism."

RACISM E: Pseudo-scientific moralist doctrines about one race being "superior" to another by some absolute standard, associated (often unjustly) with Enlightenment Social Darwinism.

Now, there is one thing all of these otherwise extremely different forms or definitions of racism all have in common: they're all completely incompatible with egalitarianism. If people aren't the same, it makes no sense to treat them the same. Small wonder, then, that egalitarians rarely bother to distinguish them.

Now, the reason that people other than hard-core believers in equality support lumping racisms A through E together is that they can thereby accuse any one who is racist in any of the above senses of Nazi-style A-racism, which is so clearly brutal and uncivilized that hardly anyone would openly endorse it, or at least E-racism, which is almost as unpalatable. This gives them a potent weapon. For, since B-racist sentiments and D-racist beliefs are completely normal and unavoidable, anyone can come up with some grounds for calling anyone else "racist." Tell someone you don't really like Indian music, and you might just catch them checking your freezer for babies.

It's just like the religious trick of making unavoidable, natural and harmless feelings like lust, fury and avarice "sins," so that everyone can be proven a "sinner" whenever the authorities want their money, service and allegiance in exchange for absolution. Just to avoid being called "racist," many people give money to charities, support political programs like affirmative action and welfare which allegedly help minorities, and give in to other demands that are likewise irrelevant to whether one is an A-racist.

It's time to start over from scratch. If someone believes parents pass many of their traits to their offspring, don't call him a "racist," call him a hereditarian. If someone believes that all people deserve welfare no matter what their race, don't call him an "anti-racist," call him a socialist. If someone prefers jazz and soul music to Jpop, don't call her a "racist," call her a fan of jazz and soul music who doesn't understand how good Jpop is. The word "racist" is so imprecise, it puts most racial epithets to shame.

People have so much invested in the ploy of labeling their opponents as "racists" that there is no doubt that you will hear something like the following about this very article: "the racist columnist both says racism doesn't exist and that racism is normal and OK, in turn proving only that he is a racist." But, keep in mind that in today's cultural climate, the above means exactly the same thing as "the bitch columnist both says bitch-ism doesn't exist and that bitch-ism is normal and OK, in turn proving only one thing: that he is a bitch." THAT is the point.

8/15/98

## KINDNESS: THE ULTIMATE IN NON-ACHIEVEMENT

Per Christian Malloch

A flyer, posted on campus recently, reads "kindness is the supreme accomplishment." For those who actually believe this vapid, feel-good slogan, suicide would be the supreme accomplishment. For, no matter how seemingly innocuous and well intentioned such a saying may at first seem, it is in fact a demoralizing attack on all productive people.

Kindness is simply giving someone a value without expecting one in return (because the act of giving is itself reinforcing). In other words, kindness is giving valued things to others just because you feel like it and not out of any ulterior motive.

Kindness is not the supreme accomplishment. It is not, in itself, even an accomplishment at all. For, the value of one's kindness depends entirely on the value of what one is giving away. Whatever work went into making that value is the true accomplishment behind any act of kindness. If you can't produce much of value, kindness alone can't make you useful to other people. And in that case, what good are you to them?

Suppose you're dying of some dread disease. Imagine a "kind" social worker decides to sit by your bed giving you sympathetic looks. Now suppose a "ruthless, egotistical" doctor develops a cure for the disease and offers to sell it to you in exchange for your life savings. Who has done you the most good? The doctor, obviously. He's the one keeping you alive. The social worker is, by comparison, utterly worthless.

The only way to measure the extent and worth of an accomplishment, for any individual, is to determine how much it contributes or could realistically contribute to his own well-being (or the well being of whoever he likes). In the above case, then, the social worker has accomplished next to nothing.

It comes as no surprise that the people most likely to agree that kindness -- giving things away -- is an accomplishment (workers at religious and social work agencies), are the ones who have so little to offer others that they can't make a living by trading on a competitive market. People who base their self esteem on how much of their selves

they can selflessly give away are well aware of how little they're giving up -- generally nothing more than beast of burden labor and their own overbearing presence.

In the case of government officials, whose "accomplishments" consist of "compassionately" giving away the possessions of others which they have forcibly taken by taxation, the link between the self-proclaimed "kind" (=good) person and the actual meeting of human needs becomes even more tenuous.

It's amazing that a person can become so self-deluded that he thinks his nonproductive, brute physical labor in a soup kitchen is more important to society than the labor of the people who developed a way to cheaply mass produce the soup. But it becomes less amazing in light of the wide distribution of pernicious slogans like the one under discussion. Such slogans allow basically economically worthless people to conjure up moral superiority over the everyday business man/woman and laborer by speciously reversing cause and effect.

The bottom line is this: kindness is just one way of consuming already produced products. Whether you eat a sandwich, give it to your wife, or give it to a total stranger, most of the happiness you potentially add to the world is thanks to the person who made it. Saying, then, that kindness is the supreme accomplishment is like saying that consumption is the ultimate form of production. It's simply incorrect to credit consumers for products and kind people for the satisfaction of human desires. All praise is due to the producer, without whom no consumption of any kind, including those forms which go under the heading of "kindness," would be possible.

None of this is meant to militate against kindness -- to those who deserve it. It is meant to vigilantly guard against any attempt on the part of do-nothing volunteer workers to "morally" elevate themselves above wage and salary workers, investors, etc. Why care, as an amoral egoist, who gets praised and blamed? It's simple. Peacefully productive people potentially add more to anyone's life than non-productive people. Thus, it's in one's interest to encourage productivity at all times.

10/27/98

## HAPPINESS IS STRESS

by Per Christian Malloch

Most of the world's philosophies define happiness as a death-like torpor into which one falls after all one's desires have been "satisfied," that is to say extinguished. Thought, effort, and labor are the curse of Cain that keeps us disinterring vegetables instead of joining their ranks. Self help books advise the modern day Epicurus to develop an unconditional self-esteem unconnected to any material achievement in order to avoid stress and anxiety. Anxiety about what -- not being a walking corpse?

"Stress" is just another word for motivation. Tension, anxiety, excitement, jacked-up aggression add up to nothing other than positive action. Beating your worst enemy into a bloody pulp, literally or metaphorically, is certainly a stressful activity. But WHERE does one find the pleasure in this, the ultimate badge of manhood? Not in the aftermath, but in the act itself. The best that the aftermath can offer is a fond memory of the act.

Happiness isn't the absence of desires, because the most intense sensations of freedom, excitement, and "this-is-what-life's-all-about" come during the realization of one's objectives, not after. Of course, it is logically necessary that once you have accomplished a goal, you can't accomplish it any more, so you have to abandon that goal move on to a new one. But it is a non sequitur to conclude from that, that abandoning one's goal is what constitutes happiness.

Take one seeming counterexample: doesn't the fact that pleasure can come from muscle relaxation, or going to sleep after a hard day's work, or otherwise "unwinding," show that happiness is, indeed, a state of mindless passivity? No! All it proves is that it's possible to run out of energy on a given day, so you'd better get some rest to recharge! If you really love going to sleep, that only shows you're so unhappy during the day that you can't wait to die!

A happy person equals a person with a strong will to live. Ever heard of a happy suicide? Since living, for humans, basically consists of chasing after various objectives, whoever feels really enthusiastic about his activities thereby proves himself happier

than anyone else who does the same things with less fervor. One of the main determinants of one's level of enthusiasm about a given activity happens to be one's estimate of the likelihood that one will succeed. This explains why incompetents and people who set unrealistic or conflicting goals develop low spirits. It's pretty hard to get all fired up about doing anything if you know you can't do it.

Why is there so much resistance to the idea that happiness is a form of stress? Just because happiness IS a form of stress -- one which many people are too lazy to feel. It's not just that effort is required to achieve one's goals; it's that feeling peppy, "go-get-them," ready for action is itself tiring. It requires a certain level of mental and physical stamina to be happy almost all the time. Paradoxical as it may sound, many people don't feel like feeling happy. It's too much for them; too much work, too much stimulation. They'd rather just give up, stay under the covers. Negatively motivated, they've long ago lost any aspiration other than avoiding discomfort -- including the discomfort of enjoying a vital existence. And they can find specious rationalizations for their lifestyle in the writings of many Core Curriculum authors who tell them that desire is pain, that effort is pain, and that the best way to satisfy a desire is never to have it at all.

To repeat, happiness is the feeling of enthusiasm one feels while (one believes one is) in the process of achieving a goal -- not the motivational void left behind afterward. Just sit back and analyze your own emotions while you are doing something you really feel like, and you'll grasp the banal truth. Without your will to fight, you're useless to yourself and others. So stop dreaming of Heaven, the Garden of Eden, and Nirvana (talk about suicide!) and start dreaming of You Inc. taking over the world. At the very least, you'll find it easier to get out of bed.

9/4/98

## THE RETURN OF THE BLACKLIST

Per Christian Malloch

A 'blacklist' is a list of people with which one refuses to associate, because one sees no benefit in such association. Because virtually all personal wealth springs from trade with others, the effects of being blacklisted can be quite severe. In the information economy of the future, the blacklist will rise to prominence like never before as a tool of social control.

Blacklists play an important but unacknowledged role in the economy of today.

Insurance companies do their best to blacklist disease - and accident - prone people, despite idiotic government regulations forbidding such action, in order to reduce the premiums they charge more fortunate people. Credit card companies blacklist the financially irresponsible, making it difficult for such screw-ups to get others to loan them money, and thereby channeling capital into more productive hands. A long time ago, movie companies blacklisted Communist actors, but today the Communists own the production companies.

Blacklists are also a highly effective tool for streamlining and improving one's personal life. Although people, as the producers of basically all wealth and happiness, are potentially one's greatest asset, people are also the prime destroyers and squanderers of these values. To put it bluntly, most people are either so different from you or else such shameless parasites that any time you spend with them is basically wasted. Any time which you can free from the various hangers-on that dog you through life is time you can probably spend to put you ahead.

That said, why will blacklists (and avoiding them, i.e. having a good reputation) become more important in the future? Because the relative anonymity and financial privacy that cyberspace promises will be easily used for embezzlement, patent infringement and other crimes involving a betrayal of trust. Bribes and payoffs will be processed invisibly using encrypted transactions with no one being the wiser.

Consequently, having a reputation for honesty will have a higher value than it does



today, when people can simply be monitored to make sure they don't get away with more than minor acts of corruption (except, of course, in the government).

Another factor that will contribute to the growth of blacklisting is that blacklisting on a large scale will be easier than ever before. Vast electronic databases of rule breakers of all sorts will, by various private leasing and licensing agreements, be available to nearly any employer, easily if not necessarily legally. Today, the government obscenely allows people to conceal criminal records when job hunting to avoid "discrimination."

Tomorrow, thieves and murderers will be unable to find work outside of a quarry.

Some somewhat utopian thinkers believe that blacklisting could become a more effective system of crime prevention than prisons, corporeal punishment, or restitution-directed enslavement (the author's favorite). Anarchists at [www.neo-tech.com](http://www.neo-tech.com) argue that businesses will refuse not only to hire, but even to sell products to people whose records suggest that their existence is a net drain on society. Since most people live by a combination of production and predation, and since businesses are, reasonably enough, more concerned with selling products than morally judging their customers, this seems unlikely. However, such utopian projections do point to the supplementary role blacklisting can play in enforcing the mores of tomorrow.

The point? As it becomes progressively easier for people to decide who they will or won't associate with, one can expect to face more stringent screening procedures wherever one tries to make contact with others. To maximize your earning potential, you will probably have to learn how to project an appearance of honesty and credibility, most easily achieved by actually being honest. Otherwise, no one will want to put you in a position of trust. So, all you Columbia students who never follow up on your commitments and tell white lies incessantly -- we old school, Quaker-like honest folk look forward to seeing you toiling in the metal mines for ore to make our gold teeth!

9/10/98

## ABOLISH AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Per Christian Malloch

"The government should force people to hire people they don't want to hire, as long as the employees meet various standards defined by the government, e.g. belonging to a certain 'oppressed group,' having 'adequate qualifications,' etc. Yes, the government, not employers, is best equipped to make hiring decisions -- constitutionally 'guaranteed' freedom of association be damned."

Is the above the motto of affirmative action supporters? Undoubtedly. For, Affirmative Action is nothing other than the government's forcing employers to hire members of 'oppressed groups' as long as they have 'adequate qualifications' -- with groups, oppression, and qualifications all arbitrarily defined by the government.

But you know who else believed the above? That's right, everyone's favorite villains, THE NAZIS. In the Third Reich, racial quotas ensured that the percentage of Jews in the workforce in a given area didn't exceed the percentage of Jews in that area's population. Otherwise, Jews would have been 'over represented,' nudging 'oppressed' yet 'qualified' whites out of their jobs. Sound familiar? It should. All that's changed today is who benefits.

"But" one might respond "even though Affirmative Action is in principle exactly the same as the Nazis' racial quotas back in the day, it's okay, because this time we're benefiting the RIGHT people and doing it for the RIGHT reasons." How comforting! No doubt the Jews left out of a job in the Third Reich rested easy once they heard that THEIR government was "right."

When someone tells you something is "right," all he means is that he benefits from it and you don't, and he can't think of any way to conceal this fact. How do supporters of AA who do not themselves obtain positions through AA programs benefit? They get do-nothing jobs as academics, activists and bureaucrats, and/or they get to distribute benefits to people they want to help at the expense of others -- in short, they get power. As long as it means boosting the power of the state, potential state employees and beneficiaries of state action will jump on any moral bandwagon.

If everyone saw AA in stark, "who wins?" terms, the majority would put an end to it immediately. This would suit the author's tastes just fine. After all, when AA is enforced, either relatively incompetent people replace competent ones, or white job holders are replaced by equally 'qualified' non-white job holders who, by definition, aren't any better than the people they replaced, but just happen to be a different race, something AA supporters endlessly shriek is irrelevant to job performance. As far as everyday life goes, that's hardly an improvement, especially when the cost to taxpayers of enforcing AA regulations is figured in to the equation. It's just a big waste of time and money unless you're the kind of "racist" who just gets a kick out of seeing racial minorities wherever he goes.

Why waste all this time and money to benefit other people at the expense of oneself and society? There are all kinds of arguments for AA floating around -- e.g. that AA is needed so black children can have role models in high places (something Asian kids seem not to need), that AA is needed to repay blacks for all the damage done them by slavery and discrimination, that AA is needed to create a society where all races are evenly distributed through all occupations.

But these "arguments" all boil down to asserting AA is "right." After all, why does anyone deserve a role model? Why should people (or in this case, their remote descendants) be repaid for damage done to them in the past? Why should races be distributed amongst the professions according to any preconceived plan? These are all "moral questions" - that is, meaningless babble about people's feelings that might as well read "ME WANT CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM!" "NO! ME WANT STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM!"

Yes, AA is "right" -- it benefits various intellectuals, activists, government salary sippers and job applicants who all have a motivation to demand it. But abolishing AA is also "right." It would sure benefit a lot of job hunters, not to mention the customers of the stores that would rather employ them. Don't call this an argument against Affirmative Action. In the "moral" realm, strictly speaking, no argument is even possible. So, about all there is left to say is "ME WANT NO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION!"

9/18/98

## SPOTTING AND ELIMINATING BLOOD-SUCKING PARASITES

Per Malloch

With no significant exceptions, people produce all the wealth and happiness in the world. People also consume it, down to the last drop. Depending on who you associate with, you will either increase your share of the wealth, or have others drain it away from you.

Mosquito-like beings, human in name only, exist whose sole purpose is to waste your time. They might love sharing their trivial problems, such as a man I once met who used every social interaction as an occasion to make stump speeches about the same Tourette's Syndrome that made his speech unbearable to the ear.

They might like sitting around waiting for you to entertain and stimulate them, feeding on the dissipation of your energy and concentration like mushrooms ballooning grotesquely on a rotting corpse.

They might devote their lives to convincing you that their ideas are quote "right."

They might borrow money, books and girlfriends with no intention of returning them ever. And that's just the beginning. What about fat people who expect you to smile gratefully as they shower you with unwanted advice, as if they, who have so little control over their lives that they've allowed themselves to transform into wheezing blimps, have any idea what's best for others?

Then there are the people who express their boorish tastes ad libitum, as a substitute for contributing anything of interest to a conversation.

But don't make the mistake of thinking that "psychic vampires," as Anton LaVey named them, need to be "bad people" in order to drain your time and energy. Just because someone isn't an asshole doesn't mean he's of any use whatsoever in your life.

In fact, no matter who you are, the vast majority of people are so different from you that you basically have nothing to say to each other, nothing to do together, nothing to gain from mutual interaction on all but the most impersonal economic level.

Suppose you meet someone whose goal in life is to be a gardener, or "landscaper". He may be all right, good to the wife and kids, but so what? Unless you're into plants too,

nearly all conversation with this man must count as wasted breath. You might as well use up your lung capacity smoking.

The point? If someone doesn't contribute real material and nonmaterial values to your life, break off all contact with them. All. It's easy. When you pass them on the street, don't say hello. If they call you, find an excuse to hang up. If they call again, just hang up in their face. The bottom line is that many people will stop at nothing to eat up every spare minute of your time to turn you into inert drones like them. The only way to stop them is to get rid of them completely and forever.

Think that isn't nice? Well how nice is it to waste another person's life? And consider that every second spend in the company of psychic vampires is a monstrous injustice towards your real friends. On balance, the cruelty of ostracism is the epitome of kindness -- to those who deserve it. Mercy and compassion will only prolong your own suffering -- it's strike first or perish. Don't like this speech? Turn off the TV now and don't turn it back on. It would at least be a step in the right direction. I'm Per Malloch.

9/22/98

## PRUNE YOUR IDEAS

Per Christian Malloch

Sick of life? You may be suffering from an excess of ideas. The idea that one of the secrets of happiness is having as few beliefs as you possibly can may not lyingly promise you immortality, or a form of existence that isn't transient, fragile and ultimately inconsequential, but it CAN offer you one thing its more flashy competitors can't: a moment's peace.

Ideas turn trivia into matters of life and death. Ideas exalt actions no one would otherwise have the inclination to take. Ideas demand that you go out and try to convince everyone of them because they're "true." Ideas are the form in which you store tons of information you just don't need to know. In short, ideas -- not, obviously, all ideas, but rather a lot of them -- create problems where none need exist.

A lot of people whose lives, on the surface, look trouble-free think the world is full of "problems." There is a homeless "problem," an overpopulation "problem," a starvation "problem," a drug "problem," a dead fish "problem". Yes, even a pile of dead fish can get some idea-infected hearts throbbing with fury until hopelessly unrealistic demands for the curbing of fishing are met. As a result, even people whose external circumstances are completely favorable -- who are not, and probably never will be, homeless, addicted to drugs, or a fish -- can make themselves miserable worrying about things that don't materially affect them in any way.

If your life is full of "problems" like the above, the most effective way to get rid of them is to get rid of the ideas that define them as problems. Zap! All finished! Corpses piling up in Africa? "I don't care" -- that is the voice of the happy man, oh unwilling listeners to the song of profound indifference! Druggies jamming needles into their pupils? "I don't care." Too many bums? "I don't care." If someone starts telling you why you "should" care about these things which you are neither harmed by nor in any position to change, just don't listen.

Some people willingly die for their ideas -- idiots, every last one of them. Why submit to any form of mistreatment just because you can't win a debate? Why not just say to

the man who has "proven" he has a right to something of yours "if you touch my stuff, I'll object with my fist."

Even among ideas that don't turn their holders into placard-waving robots one can find any number of ideas, or "facts," that are so irrelevant to one's life that believing them, much less verifying their truth, is simply a waste of time. Thus, the idea that one has any obligation to seek out the truth for its own sake imposes, at best, a constant, gratuitous energy drain on its holder, however much it may be the official motto of the university.

For instance, the author has never personally seen any knock-down evidence that famous historical events like the Civil War, the American Revolution, or the Holocaust ever happened. Of course, this is not to deny that they happened. The author simply refuses to pass judgment on whether or not they happened because the truth of the matter seems so completely irrelevant to the author's own interests that he is not willing to undertake even the minimal research it would require to form an educated opinion about the matter.

Every belief, every "fact" takes up part of your mind. If it seems to lack any potential to benefit you, you are in effect the unwitting host of a mind parasite. It's as if you are possessed by some malicious ghost who either makes you do irrational things or prevents you from being able to remember anything important. Unselectively exposing yourself to television, the radio, random conversations, movies, advertisements and other idea-transmitting media results in your brain being stuffed with a noxious and potentially explosive cocktail of contrary influences.

Open up the head of an unhappy but relatively affluent person and you will more often than not see ideas swarming like silver tarantulas, tugging at his grey matter, telling him to become something he isn't. So, if you seem unhappy for no apparent reason, assuming you don't have some kind of chemical imbalance to deal with, start asking yourself which of your ideas you could live just as you are without. The answer will probably be: a whole lot of them. For, like coat hangers, ideas always multiply beyond necessity. Nietzsche philosophized with a hammer, Occam with a razor; the author recommends a pair of weed cutters. 12/3/98

## BREAK THE CRUTCH OF "DIET" CANDY

by Per Malloch

Diet soda, sugar free gum, ten calorie jello -- fun, safe ways to enjoy non-nutritive food with no accompanying risk or responsibility? Or shameful little pied pipers the consumption of which amounts to an implicit cry of "god, I envy fat people"? Before deciding, consider this:

Have you ever seen someone who has never smoked try nicotine patches or gum? Of course not. Such items are for those who would rather be smoking.

Have you ever seen a lifelong non-drinker drink alcohol-free beer because he loves the taste? Or, rather, are such drinks not simply the consolation of those who have been told by their doctor that if they have another drink their liver will be dissolved?

Now, just like smokers and drinkers, today's balloon-limbed sugar addicts tell themselves that, by eating "diet" candy, they can have the benefits of good health and go right on believing The Law of Fatness, which states: "It's okay to eat food merely for the pleasure of eating it, irrespective of whether one, physically speaking, needs it."

The Law of Fatness knows no natural boundary beyond the capacity of one's stomach and heart to withstand a never ending barrage of food. So you think it's okay to enjoy that one calorie of diet jello even though you aren't even hungry? Fine! But why not wake up every morning with a coconut cream pie by your bedside -- then waddle to the kitchen for a medley of eclairs, butter-dipped pancakes and cheese croissants? Perhaps because the consequence of accepting The Law of Fatness to the fullest is unspeakable personal repulsiveness!

"But there's nothing wrong with a little pleasure in empty calories. All things in moderation" you might say. But what is moderate is totally relative to a given lifestyle. For a fat person, only eating one chocolate bar a day may seem moderate, just as for a smoker, only smoking one cigarette a day may seem an impressive achievement. If you're used to drinking skim milk, a sip of whole milk when you're hungry tastes as good as a bite of ice cream to a person used to whole milk.



Therefore, one need never depend on empty calories to enjoy eating; all the joy of eating can come from nutri-packed calories. And once this is grasped, there's no excuse for trading the momentary, instantly forgotten pleasure of eating for one's future health and well being -- not even the tiniest portion of it. For your life is everything you have -- a taste-sensation, on the other hand, is such a small portion of your life that it's practically nothing. How can you risk giving up everything for the sake of virtually nothing?

As long as you never eat any candy, you'll forget how it tastes and learn to regard dry cups of Fiber One as delicious. But if you keep eating "diet" candy, you'll never lose that longing for the real thing. There's one thing you will lose: your free will. For, the inexorable logic of The Law of Fatness nudges one ever closer to house case status unless fought against. There's no standing still.

Diet candy makes you weak! Diet candy awakens the wimp inside who snufflingly consoles himself with food when things go wrong! Diet candy keeps you in a constant starvation "I'm dying without candy" mindset, flooded with horror at a world where candy is out of reach! Diet candy is a makeshift deal-with-the-devil compromise with The Law of Fatness! So, the next time you see rows of diet soda cans in the supermarket, think of them as little tin soldiers warring against your free will, encouraging you to yield to transient, momentary cravings. Dare you lose to such tiny, powerless opponents?

1/18/99

## THE MIND YOU CONTROL MAY BE YOUR OWN

### ACHIEVE GREATER CONCENTRATION THROUGH SYSTEMATICALLY ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS

By Per Christian Malloch

Influences are all around you. You are of course aware of advertising, but that is only the beginning. Text, images, sounds, voices, music, people wiggle their way into your subconscious wherever you go. And, just like advertisers, these things want, or behave as if they want, to capture your attention. If you don't control them, they'll control you. The consequence? Low productivity -- a condition readers of *The Amoralist* will have come to recognize as abomination central.

Everything you experience gets stored in your head. To come up with new thoughts, your brain randomly jumbles memories, images, phrases together until it comes up with something that makes sense within the parameters of the language you speak and your view of the world. If you feed your brain a bunch of crap -- like Clinton scandal news, drinking "tips," Meg Ryan movies -- guess what you're going to get back? That's right, a bunch of crap, only in slightly different arrangements.

Look at all the unfunny references to the Clinton scandal your teachers have made in the last few weeks. That the minds of these "men of learning" have degenerated into newscast-parroting quip generators is God's punishment to them -- and you -- for their watching hours of trashy journalism.

When trying to accomplish a goal, you're better off free of distraction from anything except influences that will help you achieve it. Anything that tempts you to stare at it while you are trying to write, such as a poster, or your lover, or a TV show, requires immediate removal.

Text is the worst, because years of reading ensure that you will automatically read any text you see and start thinking and associating about whatever it says, when you should be maintaining unbroken concentration on your work. Black out, erase or otherwise

conceal all text in your work environment to maximize your power to concentrate even further.

If this sounds strange, consider that no one would expect to be very productive in a room whose floor, walls and ceiling were coated with monitors displaying hardcore pornography, car chases, the word SEX, and thermonuclear explosions -- a room booming with recordings of sex-induced moans and 180 beats per minute hardcore techno music. Why? Because all that attention-getting information would constantly drag one's attention away from one's work. Logically, the best work environment would be the opposite: a silent white void in which you and your desk are suspended, with all work materials, and nothing but those materials, at hand.

But it goes further. For, how are you going to think creatively if all you have to work with is random junk you've picked up off posters, TV, the radio, phonemail, etc.? No, the more stimulation you can keep out -- other than the tiny portion of the available information out there that is actually relevant to your life -- the more your mind will stop passively consuming information and start generating some of its own.

Avert your eyes from ad posters on bus stops and subway cars. Ignore other people's conversations and sit in the emptiest parts of restaurants to prevent accidentally overhearing them. Turn off that TV -- and if you must watch, decide beforehand what shows to see, and how long the commercial breaks are so you can skip them (the networks have an exact schedule, so so can you). Pay no attention to news that doesn't directly affect you. Never let people tell you about themselves and their problems unless they're your friends or you need them for something -- that should pretty much rule out talk radio. Tear down the posters facing your desk. Because you're not giving up "the real you" or the fun things in life. You're taking steps to secure raw power -- the production power that comes from having a clean, focused mind.

2/2/99

## DON'T SLEEP

### HAVING TO SLEEP IS, FROM A UNIVERSE-WIDE PERSPECTIVE, A HORRID AND SICKLY COMIC DISEASE

by Per Christian Malloch

Ever hear of sleeping sickness? Apparently, people who have this disease get "too much" sleep. They just lie around all day. And why? Because they're weak! They need help, medicine! But just what IS "too much" sleep? How about -- one second? Yes, isn't one second asleep a complete waste -- a precious, irreplaceable second gone from your life forever without you even getting the chance to experience it?

If you added up all the time you'll spend sleeping, you'd realize that your life is years shorter than you thought.

"But we need to sleep, or we won't be in any condition to enjoy our time awake" you say. But that's the point. We're too feeble and diseased not to sleep. "Diseased? Come on! Sleeping isn't a disease. It's normal -- everybody sleeps". Now, that objection seems fine from a parochial earth-dweller's point of view, but consider the following:

1. The universe has been around for billions of years if not forever. The universe is also very, very big. It seems overwhelmingly likely that, rather than being the first and only conscious beings in the universe, we are one of thousands, even millions of civilizations, most of which are literally millions of years more advanced than ours. The only reason UFOs aren't constantly raining down out of the sky is that our civilization is so backward and savage that other planets have no incentive to contact us.

2. Scientists in these civilizations have no doubt figured out how to eliminate the need to sleep, perhaps through infusing people with nanobots that multiply the power of their immune systems and metabolisms manyfold.

3. There being no reason to sleep if one can get the benefits of sleep while awake, every rational person would intensely desire this cure for sleep, if only to keep up with business competitors working round the clock. The crazed demand for the sleep cure

would soon enable its producers to mass market the product, eventually even to the dregs of society.

4. Therefore, throughout the universe, many civilizations probably exist whose members have not slept a wink for thousands upon thousands of years. Sleepiness, from a universe-wide perspective, is in fact an insane, bizarrely unnatural (abnormal) disease characteristic of only the very beginnings of civilization.

The less you can sleep without becoming seriously ill, the better. Start by deciding on a set number of hours you will sleep, and waking yourself up with an alarm and loud music even on weekends. Five or six hours seem to be enough for most people. You could sleep longer, but if you know you can be reasonably productive with six hours, why do so?

If you really can't think of what you would do with all the time you'd free up by sleeping as little as possible, maybe you should just kill yourself, since it's already evident that you attach no real importance to your own existence.

Throw down this article and go -- not to sleep, but to work.

2/9/99

## TIME SMOKIES

Per Christian Malloch

Imagine that bear cubs were always getting underfoot. Yes, imagine that these little smokies, scampering all over the place, were so numerous that you couldn't take a step without tripping over one of them. And if you fell, the smokies would, while not harming you, continue clumsily scampering around and bowling into you, making it almost impossible to get back up.

"God damn these smokies!" you'd cry, and with good reason. For it just takes forever to get anything done when they're around. Even leaving your desk for a bathroom break would take over fifteen minutes of swear-peppered tripping, stumbling and falling over packs of incorrigible smokies. Thank god they aren't real.

### OR ARE THEY?

Today's concept is: "time smokies" -- little hesitations, distractions, hassles, nuisances and inefficiencies that individually consume only a few minutes of your time, but as a group barnacle over your day until you lose all momentum and accomplish little more than eating, sleeping and solitary masturbation. Just like real smokies, these "time smokies" make it increasingly time consuming and harrying to accomplish even the simplest tasks. But armed with this article, you can recognize them for what they are: shameless smokies that must be trodden underfoot.

Some examples of "time smokies" that all of you have no doubt tripped over time and time again: phone tag matches. stop-in-the-street conversations with acquaintances conducted so as not to be rude. having to go back for something you forgot. checking email, only to discover it's been two hours since you last did so. slow restaurant service. going to the post office during prime time. excessive showering. Unsystematic internet searching. looking for lost objects. writing down the same phone number because you lost it the first time. phone solicitations. Hours spent tracking packages. idly staring at a passing TV or billboard for a few minutes. slow walking. unnecessary sleep. going to stores in the wrong order and having to backtrack. being unable to decide what to wear, or what to eat. train delays and detours. comparing trivial price

differences. going to the store only to discover that what you want isn't there. incessant snack breaks. staring off into space, at something, anything beyond your work. not having needed materials at hand. having to explain anything to someone stupid. interacting with employees beyond the bare minimum needed to maintain civility. talking to bums, or pausing to give them money. voting. watching a show, movie or person you don't really like. parking miles from your destination because you don't want to pay for parking.

What do all of the things in this list -- and many more besides -- have in common? They all needlessly consume valuable time that could be spent pushing for real pleasure.

Each of these "time smokies" can, with a little thought and determination, be stomped out of your life. But you must take them head on, ignore their cries for mercy. No, each "time smoky" must be identified, catalogued -- and eliminated.

If it were the only way to get rid of them, wouldn't you shoot any bear cubs that were constantly getting in your way? Well, you'll need to target and destroy "time smokies" with the same marksmanship. Because left on their own, those "time smokies" will only multiply -- until you are a harried wreck who "doesn't have the time" to be anything but a failure. Chances are, you DO have the time to advance in life. It's just being eaten up by "time smokies" growing fat and indolent off your time, even squeezing out the occasional loathsome pup so that you'll have even more smokies to trip over.

It's time to begin wringing those "time smokies" out of your life. So make your list of "time smokies" and get ready to smoke them.

9/15/99

A FUTURE OF SEX  
BRING ON THE VIRTUAL HOOKERS  
SEX CONQUERED AT LAST

By Per Christian Malloch

Ever contemplate suicide? Here's one consideration that'll put those thoughts out of your head: chances are that good-as-the-real-thing VR sex will be developed in our lifetimes. Strap on your helmet and simsuit and thrill as selective stimulation of your brain cells produces vivid visual/tactile hallucinations of sex with anyone you want. Can you imagine? Sex with anyone you want, whenever you want, almost for free. No disease. No talking back. No "I don't want to cater to your fetish". No singles bars (think of the savings on alcohol now that you no longer need to soften up partners with drinks)! No laughable, merry-go-round ritual of pursuit. No squirming, filthy, blood-sucking babies. No commitment. No hypocrisy, called "conversation" -- just sex, sex, sex.

Did a warped childhood leave you unable to be aroused by the prospect of sex with anyone except a person being gradually suffocated by a huge sock wrapped around their face? No problem. Need to make love to a gigantic foot? No problem. Want to jump into a hot tub full of butter-basted supermodels? You got it. Every need and desire will find fulfillment without the need to hurt or inconvenience anyone.

Feminists will finally realize their dream of being loved for their minds. Men will never be "pussy-whipped" again. Why bother taking a single, solitary molecule of crap from a woman when you can just go home and have unlimited sex with someone ten times more attractive for free? No, it'll be a new era of equality -- or will it?

Most men basically do not want children. And most men want women for sex. In order for sex with a real person to be more desirable than sex with a Virtual Hooker, that real person would have to be special, a soul-mate. Giving pleasure to that special person would itself be pleasurable -- producing almost double the fun. But how often do you run across one of those? Not often. The total number of dates in society will plummet to the level it would be at if everyone were a Puritan who abstained from sex



before marriage. Why bother looking in the real world for anything less than a soul-mate, live-together relationship when that "anything less", including twelve hour blow jobs from Cindy Crawford, is available for free on your computer?

Women will no longer be able to coast on their looks. In fact, women will hardly get any mileage out of their looks. It's hard to imagine that now, because sex is still a challenge to come by. But in the new age, everyone will be as unimpressed by physical beauty as the most jaded Don Juan. Of course, life still won't be peachy for the noticeably ugly, simply because, as always, no one will really want them around. But at least their ugliness won't stop them from having mega-sex like everyone else.

A new Victorianism will emerge as it fast becomes evident how easy it is to stay home having sex all day, never accomplishing anything. The new rich will display iron self control. The richest won't even own sex machines. They will refuse to date people who are not looking for a long term, marriage-type relationship. They'll smirk with contempt at their sex-addicted underlings as they leave them in the dust, unwilling to break their wealth-building momentum with incessant sex-stops.

Thus, the future will present the spectacle of the ultimate irony: sex, a commodity feverishly desired by all of us, once finally available for free, will be refused voluntarily. In the future of VR porn, get ready for... abstinence.

3/22/99

## BIOLOGICAL IMMORTALITY

### LIVE FOREVER

### THE CURE FOR AGE AND DEATH

By Per Christian Malloch

The following methods for preserving human life well beyond its normal span seem to be within the reach of science:

- As a stopgap measure, a human head is detached from a terminally diseased body and kept alive and active by nutrient fluids and assorted prostheses.
- Clones of a person, with brains destroyed in utero to prevent any harm coming to a conscious being, are kept in pens, to be butchered for limb and body part transplants whenever needed.
- Nanotechnological devices in the body and bloodstream continuously remove impurities and hostile agents, effectively preventing the degeneration known as aging.
- Genetic manipulation is used to disable the natural cellular functions that lead to aging, in tissues which either belong to lucky fetuses or are used to replace those of customers more afraid of death than of extensive surgery.

Yes, these methods all sound a bit gruesome. They might offend some people's religious or ethical sense. But so what? The alternative is being dead... forever.

Yes, none of these methods currently work. However, no one can seriously claim that biological immortality is somehow impossible in light of these leads and the achievements of science thus far. Medicine and technology generally have raised the average life span by decades. Nothing suggests that they will not be able to keep on raising lifespans, until the rate at which lifespans increase surpasses the aging rate.

Anyone who believes in government restrictions on research oriented toward biological immortality, e.g. the activities of the FDA, might as well wear a sign on his chest that says "eager participant in the murder of the entire human race". Why? Because if medical science makes no further advances, every single human that will ever live, just like every human that ever has lived, will be damned to die.

Doesn't sound so bad? Well, cockroaches reportedly don't seem so bad to children who have been raised in sewer tunnels. Those children have no way of knowing how wretched their situation in fact is... just like hunter-gatherers couldn't know that their lives were painful, tedious and laughably short... just like people of today don't grasp how absurd it is that they just drop dead after a few years of productivity. Lean back and think for a moment. Why should you die?

Consider the arguments against the above techniques that are advanced as if they make any sense at all:

"Cloning is unnatural." So that means the entire human race should DIE? In fact, DEATH is what is horribly, luridly unnatural, compared to the norm throughout the universe: deathless, ageless, commercially provided biological immortality.

"We don't need biological immortality because there's life after death." Well, can't God wait? People will get picked off by freak accidents once in a while. Anyway, there's only one thing after death: rotting in the grave.

"Keeping sub-human spare parts is cruel and inhumane." So it isn't cruel and inhumane to make everyone face the horror of certain death?

"People would get bored if they could live for ever." Ridiculous. Who ever gets sick of sex, except as a result of physical degeneration, or neurosis induced by either promiscuity or marriage?

"Genetic tampering is playing God." So that means the entire human race should DIE, just so someone won't think we're too much like God?

This last criticism of the radical procedures that promise to lead to biological immortality is especially ironic. By irrigating the California desert, humans transformed wilderness into habitable land. By putting up a space station, humans took the first step towards making the void of space somewhere to live. Methods for terraforming planets are already under discussion. After many thousand years, humans will probably figure out how to make planets and solar systems more or less from scratch. And the only difference between us and those heaven-creators will be their level of knowledge. Thus, conscious humans as they are right now ARE the God,

the creator of universes and the immortal form of life, that so many people have been searching for.

"Ethical" objectors to procedures that promise to result in biological immortality, and "social interest" bureaucrats who slow medical research with pointless regulations and controls, have a lot of nerve. If it is ethical to demand the pointless death of all human beings and thus one of the manifestations of God himself, it's hard to imagine what isn't. Once people grasp the true consequences of their "concerned" and "compassionate" acts, those critics and pencil pushers will be properly regarded as insane monsters whose attitudes are as inexplicable as those of serial killers are today. But in today's upside down society, those mass murderers are regarded as "serious intellectuals" whose voices deserve to be heard. The proper revenge: ignore them today, outlive them to-morrow, forget them one million years hence.

4/1/99

## JANITORS AND GARBAGEMEN: THE WORLD'S LUCKIEST UNDERPAID CEOS YOU CAN'T PAY ME TOO LITTLE TO RUN IBM

By Per Christian Malloch

Unskilled laborers -- sweating, calloused, migratory, diseased from overwork, and able to afford only busted cars, if that -- should be embracing the religious icons many of them still superstitiously carry and thanking their lucky stars. Why? Because out of all the people in a company, the people at the bottom, with the exception of certain fraudulent white collar managers, are paid the most relative to the amount of work they perform. This fundamental imbalance ensures that they will have decent livelihoods despite their lack of economically desirable qualities.

Ask yourself: if someone doubles the amount of work he performs, or the amount of money he brings into the company, does his pay double? Anyone with any familiarity with real life businesses will know the answer is no. In fact, the top executives of a successful company bring values to their company and to society whose dollar worth is many times the amount of their salary. Compared to a low-level laborer, then, a business executive is paid only a small fraction of what he produces.

Another way to see the point is to imagine you're running your own one-man business (a potential reality in today's direct mail and internet-blessed world). Now suppose your revenues double in an especially good year because you've started running it a different way. Are you going to double your salary? Of course not. You're going to use most of that money to grow the business.

Since the business is the ultimate source of your salary, you need to keep it healthy. Only after your business is a comfortable distance away from failure can you devote some of its resources to your personal consumption. Since in this example your labor alone is the source of both the business' revenue and your salary, the more value your labor produces, the more you in effect move from a low level job to a high level one, the less you are paid in proportion to that value. It would be interesting to hear Marx's opinion on whether you're being exploited in this process. In other words, the relationship between amount of value one produces and one's salary is not linear. It

couldn't be, because the amount of value produced by society's most productive people is so many times the amount of value produced by a Burger King cashier or a roadside orange salesman that if they were paid in proportion to that value, their employers, no matter how blue-chip and wealthy, would go bankrupt.

Think of the incalculable values produced by Thomas Edison. People today can't even conceive of how they might live without electric power (though some third worlders can offer the answer: it's horrid). If Thomas Edison had paid himself at the same rough value/salary ratio as he paid his low level wire-stringers, his company would have gone under.

One misconception that may be preventing you from grasping this is the idea that "money" is spending money. To a businessman, money is a tool to expand his business. People who think that all business executives do with their money is buy bigger boomboxes and baths full of champagne and prostitutes will never become successful businessmen themselves, because they only understand how to think like consumers. They just don't understand businesslike thinking.

Ironically, intellectuals who claim to be superior to "materialistic" businessmen because they, the intellectuals, don't strive to make a lot of money, are the true materialists and consumerists. They are the ones that can only see money as a static tool of gratification to be used up by oneself (or others, in the case of charity) rather than a dynamic tool of value production that, rather than being used up, gradually builds to ever higher, unprecedented levels. They are the fundamentally self indulgent ones, who think that happiness comes primarily from external sources of amusement such as food, movies, and other consumer products.

As a further irony, it is the very fact that an executive produces many times the value he receives as a salary that gives him the opportunity to enjoy a form of happiness unknown to others. For the satisfaction of bringing massive, world-moving products to mankind dwarfs the moment by moment pleasures afforded by fuzzy slippers and big TVs. In other words, to gain the ultimate happiness, you should seek to become severely "underpaid," but at a level where your salary is adequate to provide for your day to day needs and comfort.

All this contradicts the leftist claim that low-level workers are "exploited". But then again, what doesn't? There's only one reason people believe that business executives are overpaid compared to manual laborers: they're too stupid, too lazy, too ignorant or too dishonest to grasp the nature of the intellectual labor an executive performs, or the idea that money can be used for production instead of consumption.

4/2/99

## THE SEX CARTEL

### PROSTITUTION: A MAN'S RIGHT

By Per Christian Malloch

In the United States, except for Nevada, it's illegal to pay a woman to have sex with you. Or is it? Maybe that sentence should say: it's illegal to pay a woman A SMALL AMOUNT to have sex with you.

Who benefits from the fact that prostitution is illegal, other than religious quacks who can't stand the idea of people enjoying themselves? Middle and upper class women -- the same women who fill the ranks of feminist movements.

Imagine a poor, unskilled woman. Letting people have sex with her is by far the most valuable service she can offer to others. Flipping burgers, washing floors and babysitting don't even come close. In fact, they aren't even in the same ballpark. That means that a job as a hooker (in a legalized atmosphere free of pimps, harassing cops and quite as much VD) would be far more lucrative for her than any other form of unskilled labor. But today, that job is forbidden.

Now imagine a woman who is skilled enough to make more money than a typical prostitute would in a legalized atmosphere. Love aside, SHE isn't going to up and have sex with a man unless she receives even more than the highest paid prostitute. She can afford to hold out for an extended, gift-filled courtship -- or worse, even marriage to a chump who has become fixated on sex with her and her only, after too many turns on the "marry"-go-round of maddening titillation. She's "above" prostitution -- that is, it costs much more to have sex with her than with a prostitute. That's why easy women are called "cheap."

The ability to have sex is independent of social class. Men would have no problem buying sex off low-class prostitutes. In fact, men flock to developing countries where practically everyone is lower class than them to have sex with prostitutes. But, when it comes to pursuing or even pretending to pursue a serious relationship, men of a given social class will be much less likely to be interested in women of a lower social class. Instead, those men will compete for women of their own class. They'll be falling over



themselves scrambling for a relatively small number of holding-out goldiggers -- shelling out a forest's worth of greenbacks to the sex cartel.

Those movies, dinners and jewels add up! If you don't think so, maybe the logical, mathematical part of your brain has been made into mush by infatuation.

"This isn't important to me, because I only care about having sex with that one special person," you might be saying. But that's just a sad, sad indication that the sex cartel has broken your scientifically demonstrated, natural desire for indiscriminate procreation. You'd never look at that "one, special person" the same way again if you knew that you could spend the night with someone twice as good looking for twenty dollars in the Phillipines. In America, you'll have to spend twenty dollars a day just so your wife can get fat. Anti-prostitution laws in effect subsidize middle and upper class women by artificially inflating the price of having sex with them or anyone. They take away a poor woman's best tool for getting a piece of a working man's riches: her willingness to charge less for sex. It's similar to the way the government subsidizes unions with minimum wage laws, taking away the poor laborer's only bargaining chip: willingness to work for less.

This isn't to say that men are always only interested in having sex with the women that they act interested in. But anyone who thinks that this isn't in fact the case at least seventy-five percent of the time is kidding himself... or more likely, herself. The bottom line is that in the US, sex is a giant rip-off.

If a man spends his life working to produce for society instead of taking every evening off to jump through hoops, he should be rewarded for his productivity by having the option of simply buying sex. But today, men waste time that would be better spent in the office, struggling to stay afloat in the rigged American sex market. Prostitution should be legalized, immediately, entirely and forever, not just because of a woman's property right to control her own body, but because of a man's right to buy sex from willing partners.

In closing, let us pause to lament the fact that poor women are denied the option of becoming prostitutes by women who consider being a hooker a "demeaning" job that "takes advantage" of poor people. Evidently those same women don't consider it

"demeaning" to be poor and have your best shot at accumulating money taken away, so more wealthy women can make a living as the "stuck-up bitches" America is internationally famous for. Anyway, paying someone to do any work at all "takes advantage" of their relative poverty by the very definition of work, since if they had all the money they wanted, they wouldn't be looking for a job! So, when the next elections roll around, may we see the campaign slogan: "goodbye pimps, hello prostitutes."

4/8/99

## AYN RAND WAS RIGHT

By Per Christian Malloch

There's never been any attempt to deny that *The Amoralist* is a column grounded in the views of Ayn Rand -- along with Max Stirner, Anton Lavey, Harry Browne... and the incomparable trio of Frank Wallace, Mark Hamilton and Eric Savage, creators of Neo-tech. Yet your author was recently accused of plagiarism, simply because he had the restraint to not shove these names down the throats of the *Spectator's* readers.

In a way, there was some good even in that malicious attack from an envious pip, a person ironically unaware that modern day Randians regard amoral anarcho-libertarians such as the author as the embodiment of evil. For, that attack served to point out the need to pay some respect to the greats before the year winds to a close -- along with *The Amoralist*, as your author will not be around next semester, but will instead be living as a recluse in a small town on the West coast, gearing up for Y2K. So open wide. Those throats, unmolested for so long, are about to be stuffed to capacity. Ayn Rand was right. If other people want something from you, they should be willing to offer something you value in return. If not, they can go screw themselves.

Neo-Tech is right. You owe all your comforts and your very life to business. Where does your food come from? Your clothes? Your computer? House? Car? Credit card? Heating? TV? VCR? Video games? Gun? Exercise and sporting equipment? Medicine? Movies? Jewelry? Beer? Locks? Alarms? Furniture? BUSINESS. Business produces everything. Governments and their dependents produce nothing. All they can accomplish is begging or stealing values produced by business. If you aren't in business, you're nothing. You are what you produce.

Max Stirner was right. There is no God. There are no absolute values. There are no rights. There is no inherent reason to do anything. There's nothing except you, your stuff, and how you're going to get it. Anyone who says otherwise is playing you for a sucker -- or else a sucker himself, so accustomed to a life of getting played that he can wish nothing better on others.

Anton LaVey was right. If other people are draining your time and energy, quit bitching. Isolate yourself from them -- utterly and completely. Those parasites won't rest until they've sapped the last drop of your energy, thus turning you into a lazy, inept nonentity much like themselves. "And if a man strikes you on one cheek, SMASH HIM on the other."

Harry Browne was right. You don't owe anything to anyone. Not your friends. Not your family. Least of all, "your" government, which is "yours" only in that you happen to be in range of its guns. Whenever possible and advantageous, jettison them.

The Amoralist salutes these authors for their contributions to its author and to value producers everywhere. If everyone adhered to the principles they lay down, we'd all be so rich, you'd be able to download The Amoralist straight into your brain and have it printed on the inside of your cybernetically enhanced eyeballs, while sipping a cocktail full of nanobots designed keep your bloodstream free of all impurities for the next three hundred years. And rest assured, the author has all the issues of The Amoralist archived so that he'll be able to do just that, long after most of the readers of the original articles have perished.

Two websites to console you if you miss The Amoralist: [www.loompanics.com](http://www.loompanics.com) and [www.neo-tech.com](http://www.neo-tech.com). Get familiar with the material on these sites, and any accusations of plagiarism might acquire a shred of accuracy.

See you after the Y2K bomb blows up in your face!

4/14/99

## ARE YOU A SUB OR A DOM?

By Per Christian Malloch

A dom prefers to be dominant during sex. A sub prefers to submit, i.e. to be dominated. It follows that a sub pursuing another sub, or a dom pursuing another dom, is looking for something that his love object can't really offer. To avoid this kind of heartache, you should figure out whether you are dom or sub, and how much so. Maybe you even swing both ways, although I doubt this is even possible.

What follows will clarify the concept of doms versus subs.

Sexual dominance needn't accompany other forms of dominance. The literary image of the bold politician or CEO who leads others in mighty enterprises, only to head home to be tenderly spanked by his wife, has its counterparts in reality. People who are only mildly dominant or submissive probably find themselves in such paradoxical situations more often. In other words, being submissive doesn't make you a pansy.

Being submissive is not worse than being dominant. It is what it is. To desire inequality in the bedroom has nothing to do either way with demanding social, political or economic inequities. If feminism numbers among its demands female pleasure during sex, allowing oneself to be hog-tied can, for the right person, be an act of supreme feminism.

Admitting that you are submissive or dominant does not oblige you to experiment with B and D, much less S and M. Sexual power relations can be expressed in less overt ways, such as choice of sexual position, style of dirty talk, fierceness of pumping, and selection of lingerie.

Dominating someone in bed does not mean being mean to them. Actually it is the nicest thing you can do if they are submissive.

Being a submissive man, or a dominant woman, doesn't mean that you're gay, as long as you prefer to submit to women or, in the latter case, dominate men. Sexual preference in general is independent of whether one is a dom or a sub. Gay people are just more likely to be aware of both preferences, since both members of a gay couple obviously can't subscribe to society's stereotype of male dominance and female

submissiveness. It's harder for straight people to say things like "I wish I could go out with a man in a woman's body" or "I feel like a lesbian in a man's body" because they've been living in a mental straight-jacket.

Be happy with yourself.

If you end up discussing these topics with your lover, I hope that your conversation eventually degenerates into freak-nasty dirty talk.

9/15/00

## I AM THE HUG MONSTER

By Per Malloch

You should hug people that you like in order to express that you like them. Saying you like them is not enough. Admittedly, this topic, and by extension this editorial, is retarded. But that retardation only reflects the retardedness of the social conventions and psychological hang-ups that stop people from hugging each other more often. You may be nodding to these words, but God damn! do you really feel free to show others how you feel about them? Is there anyone in your life that you want to hug but never have? People like to be stroked just as much as dogs and kitties.

On the flip side, people would rather be petting other people than said dogs and kitties. How come so many stick to dogs and cats if they would rather be cuddling with people? Well, a domesticated animal that you brought up just isn't going to reject you, unless you have some kind of curse.

Showing some love to another person, by contrast, entails the risk of rejection, and the more love you offer, the more it hurts if that love is turned away. And then, on top of your fear of rejection, there are "boys don't cry" type social taboos telling you not to show your feelings. Are you afraid of rejection? You must have something to offer if you made it all the way to Columbia. And I've seen some of ya -- y'all are hot! If you keep looking, you will find someone who wants what you've got and who's got what you want, and you will screw them! If you are shy, try booze.

It's not all about sex, though. Your friends and family deserve to be hugged, too. They will understand that you do not wish to have sex with them just because you want to hold them sometimes.

Do you need a hug? Do you freeze up whenever someone else touches you? If only there were fuzzy hug monsters to ambush you and magically force you to at last relaaaaaaaax in their embrace. In their absence you will have to rely on your closest loved ones, or some friends on X, to break you in and show you "oh" what fun it is to hold and be held. Don't run from it. Throw down this newspaper at once, and say: I AM THE HUG MONSTER. 10/3/00

## Short Stories

<Submitted for *The Bubble* student magazine>

By Per Christian Malloch

He was used to failure. He no longer danced to attract women, but simply to inarticulately protest against failure. I'm like a worm on a hook, he thought, and wondered why, with such phrases popping into his head, he had ever hoped to become a good writer. His dancing was clumsy, apish. Fat, come and move around my skeleton! Legs, show your fly-hairs from every angle! The music thumped. A woman was watching him.

He couldn't believe it. Probably, he thought, I have become so insensitive that I don't realize she is mocking me. She belongs on a magazine cover. Nonetheless he wiggled his way to her through the fake smoke. He was talking to her about the movies.

Amazingly enough, her comments were full of innuendo. A bony cheeked model. He thought perhaps she lived in a display window, he said. Raucous laughter. "And speaking of my place..." she began. His long frustrated dreams of romantic conquest had their first hope of fulfillment -- those dreams so much like baby chickens dead within their eggs, now at last stirring in their putrid yolk.

Fabulous sex took place. He was lying in his apartment with a supermodel lookalike next to him. She had even seemed interesting, talkative - what was that sound? A scratching, scuffing, swishing, brushing sound. He looked at the clock -- two in the morning. He lay in the dark listening to the brushing sound for half an hour. It was his refrigerator. It was a fan he had forgotten to turn off. It was his cat scratching a new piece of furniture. Finally he turned and looked at her and saw the small repetitious movement of her arm. He sat up, turned on the light. Her hand gripped a toothbrush.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing, I'm just buh-brushing my teeth-"

"WHAT?"

"I'm just brushing--"



"GET OUT OF MY APARTMENT YOU SICK BITCH!" he roared, collecting her clothes and tossing them at her. She was out quickly.

But when he returned to his bed he saw it on his pillow: the wet, horrible form of the bloody toothbrush.

3/31/98

## SIGNAL TO NOISE

by Ecco D. Teres

I had a dream in which I was looking at the numbers on a digital clock, listening to an irate, mother-like voice telling me “it all goes in one ear and out the other; you can read the numbers on a clock face but only because you know that A is the first letter in the alphabet.” When I woke up and looked at my digital clock, which read 8:25, I understood what the voice had been telling me. 8:25 on the clock meant that it was the  $(8 \times 60) + 25 = 505^{\text{th}}$  minute of the day. Now the fact of it being the 505<sup>th</sup> minute of the day would mean nothing, would go “in one ear and out the other” as the motherly voice in my dream would irately say, if it weren’t for my placing this 505<sup>th</sup> minute of the day on an imaginary timeline between the 504<sup>th</sup> and 506<sup>th</sup> minutes. “Alphabet,” after all, breaks into “alpha” and “beta,” first and second. For those of you left unawed by this philological pseudo-profundity, I mean that I trusted the clock to always count the 505<sup>th</sup> minute after the 504<sup>th</sup> minute, and so long as it adhered to this convention I would be able to understand what it “meant” by displaying its 8:45 (viz. that to-day so far it had managed to count all the way to 505, make of that fact what I would).

All this is no doubt extremely interesting. However, in light of the recent developments, I thought it would be important for me to set it down. I believe that the dream was the first in an as yet incomplete but momentous sequence or series of events that is quite literally putting my life in order. I am writing this memoir or testimonial because I believe the solution to the puzzle that has perplexed me for so long is close at hand, and I want to give others the chance to -- well, in reality I think that circumstances have dictated that I write this now and not later, yes, my writing this right now and not later most definitely has something auspicious about it.

To put my theory somewhat bluntly, I have found that if I assign numerical values to the events of my daily life based on a few simple variables such as the order in which it occurs to me to bring them about and the order in which they actually happen, and arrange the resulting number-series on a chart, I can, by analyzing the patterns in these number lists, decode and interpret them to yield information and messages.

I will attempt to reproduce my chain of reasoning here. The insight about my clock's communication with me led me to think about communication in general. Smoke signals, Morse code, speaking -- all these are commonly agreed to be media of communication. What does it mean to interpret their long and short clouds, beeps and syllables? A particular sensory signal or series of signals is mentally associated with a certain thought or impression or imagination or activity-impulse by the communicator. Once the receiver also has these associations, thoughts and images and impulses-to-act can be "transmitted" via these sensory signals. Some signals are "information" because they are predictably connected to certain inner states or operations. In this sense computers process "information" because they connect particular sets of keystrokes to particular task-performances. Other signals are not "information" but merely "noise" with no set interpretation, derisively called random or fragmentary.

The limits of the associations of the communicator and of the recipient are the limits of the communication itself. However, these limits need not be the same for both parties. Perhaps meaningless words are all acronyms for meaningful words to some expert. Perhaps, e.g. the word "jmmop" stands for Japanese Motor Maintenance Operations Personnel to certain experts. Speaking to experts -- psychologists and parents, for example -- can lead to unintentional and one-sided communication. A gibbering madman could type, completely at random, a lucid explanation of the relativity theory which a sane man could read and make use of. A man could speak a language which sounded like another language, unintentionally conveying to people who spoke the foreign language the complete opposite of what he would convey to people who spoke his own language. A computer can be programmed to print out text, meaningless to itself, upon its detection of certain conditions -- red alert! -- and thereby one-sidedly communicate information about these conditions to people. The point is clear: communication is not necessarily conversation. One can receive a communication without its having been intentionally sent, as long as one possesses the key, the code-breaking set of associations that can convert the seeming chaos of sensory signals into thoughts and impulses.

These considerations led me to conclude that any and all sensory signals are potentially information. Different events could, as it were, be the letters of words and sentences. The universe itself, in short, may be inadvertently and one-sidedly be communicating with all of us in the same way that, e.g. an electronic billboard flashes messages without being aware of doing so. If I believed in such a being, I might say that history is a document written by God in the most intricate of code languages. Certain methods might effect a partial removal of this encryption, giving one access to the messages constantly and secretly beamed forth by the universe.

I first began to apply this principle when I noticed that on some days I would pour milk into my bowl before the cereal, and on other days do the opposite. Also, whether I poured milk first or cereal first seemed to be connected with what time it was. I purchased an electronic stopwatch and precisely timed the elements of my morning routine in their various orders: cereal milk shower, shower shave milk cereal, and so on. I charted the time quantities thus obtained and began to subject these "breakfast routine transcriptions" to analysis and comparison. I was able to produce word fragments using various methods of converting numbers to letters (e.g. 1=1st=A) and compare the content and coherency of the fragments obtained by reading the numbers off the charts in various orders. Gradually I refined my morning routine, sticking to patterns which seemed to yield more coherent word fragments. Around this time I also began to take the numbers in my breakfast routine transcriptions and convert them into musical pieces using a variant of Schoenberg's twelve-tone system. I would play the resulting compositions on my piano (they were, of course, exceedingly ugly) and modify them using the usual composer's tricks -- inversion, fugue, retrogression, and so on -- later to convert them back into the entries of a prospective breakfast routine transcription. If a later breakfast routine transcription turned out to be reasonably similar to the prospective transcription generated out of the developed composition, I would carefully compare the word fragments yielded by both the prospective and actual transcriptions, and I am proud to say that the transcriptions that achieved this kind of synchronicous correspondence were on the whole more coherent. Some sample word fragments (with random or gibberish characters x'ed out):



measurement and resetting the watch whenever a cloud had traveled all the way from the right to the left side of my markings. I obtained the following sequence as the clouds alternately sped up and slowed down:

7 15 8 15 13 5 14 15 23

Interpreting the numbers as referring to words in the alphabet, I immediately got the result:

GOHOMENOW

which I broke up, as one might expect, into:

GO HOME NOW

Now I come to a part of my story the memory of which never fails to fill me with the most bitter regret. Like a fool, I ignored this prescient suggestion -- by far the most explicit message I have ever received -- and remained in the park a few minutes to finish a sandwich. When I arrived at my building I heard my phone ringing through the window. I fumbled with my keys -- it had already rung at least three times -- and stormed up several flights of stairs to my room. Five, six, seven times. I practically dove for the phone when I got inside, but of course it stopped ringing just as I reached it and no one was on the line. Now, for believers in coincidence, this may seem like an unremarkable event. But I heard a curious kind of static on the line which I later confirmed was a sign that I had missed a contact of tremendous importance. I recorded the static and played it back in various ways -- sped up, backwards, slowed down -- as I do with all of my phone calls. And at certain times I could almost make out a formless, thickly buzzing voice underneath the static, a lone and indescribably indistinct signal amidst an ocean of noise. I often spend many hours listening to this tape over and over again trying to make out that lost voice and its unbelievably inarticulate and secret message amid the constant hissing and crackling of the curious static on the tape which I first heard on the line after a seemingly botched attempt to answer the phone before an unknown caller hung up, and I sometimes wonder whether I was after all not too late to the phone and whether this curious static was what I would have heard if I had picked up the phone on the first or second ring. I have been keeping careful track of the clouds and, with a few simple modifications to the wiring in my room, have made the

phone's dial tone play loudly at all times so that I can listen for the return of the curious static and its all but inaudible buzzing voice. I have several notebooks of my breakfast routine transcriptions and have subjected them to the most rigorous correlational and factor analyses, manipulating the results with every conceivable mathematical operation and number-letter conversion procedure. The pages of my notebooks with their messy rows of intercorrelated numbers look more and more like the white noise on the television screen and the notes on my sheet music, and carry the same promise of the one truth hidden somewhere in all that foaming chaos as did that suggestively inarticulate and garbled voice overcome by the static of my telephone line. All of the events that happen to me are essentially the same as these horrid dots that swarm over my screen and my carefully prepared pages of musical and arithmetic notations in meaningless blizzards. But I am certain that in a short time this noise, this nothing-storm will dissipate, allowing me to hear the precious barely coherent voice somewhere out in it, and I will have in my hands the key, the message, the word that will tell me what I need to break out of this lethargy, this saddening sense of senselessness that makes me feel as if every part of my life is impossible to understand.

4/19/98

## THE PITCH

By Per Christian Malloch

“Okay, there’s this guy who’s kind of normal and conventional and official generally, but one night he feels like he’s in the mood for something a little different, so he goes to a nightclub he’s never heard of called the Proximal Distance. I should say that of course it is a Friday night, he wouldn’t dream of going out except on the weekend, that’s what weekends are for, right? But when he shows up he thinks he must be really early, because there’s practically no one there -- in fact, he soon concludes that everyone there is part of the staff. There’s this big bar with a lot of bottles but no menu or price list, and the bartender just sits there looking at him, because of course he’s the only guy in the club, but he doesn’t want to sit there and just pack away drinks by himself, so he doesn’t sit at the bar, he sits at the other end of the lounge. Naturally the bartender can see him since there’s no one else in the club to get in the way. There’s a big dance floor illuminated by a strobe light, but there’s nobody dancing, unless you count the DJ, who’s bobbing over the turntables as if he’s so into the music that he hasn’t noticed his club is completely dead.

“Eventually this other couple walks in and sits on a couch about halfway between the guy and the bartender. By now the guy has already bought several drinks, having absolutely nothing else to do, so the room with the dance floor and the strobe light has begun to resemble a wall of static. He sits there watching the couple out of the corner of his eye, delicately turning his head to keep them in his peripheral vision whenever they shift position. He hears the girl making a gasping sound, and during a lull in the music he hears a mechanical whirring or buzzing, so he starts getting the idea that the girl’s boyfriend is getting her off with some kind of sex toy. He sits there, shifting now and then to accommodate his erection, listening intently for the gasping sounds and the mechanical whizzing, still afraid to look and see exactly what’s happening, but getting a furtive satisfaction just from eavesdropping on the couple, which is really understandable considering how little he has to do. Then the couple gets up and he gets a good look at the girl and she’s nasty. She’s just so completely like ass that he



wants to throw up. And now the guy is feeling disgusted and a little guilty that he sat there listening to this hag getting off with some kind of mechanical device, which she probably has to use because no one wants to get near her spore launching, bone dry pussy.

“But the couple’s left for some other part of the club, or conceivably the dance floor, to dance all by themselves. The guy checks his watch and he can’t believe it, it’s one-thirty and this club is still completely dead, so rather than waste any more money buying drinks from the bartender, who has started to stare at him again and, to judge from his contemptuous nod, had been watching him watching the couple the whole time too, he decides to leave, and as a kind of parting shot from the club, the crappiest club he has ever been to in his entire life, it turns out that the women at the coat check aren’t women at all, they’re transvestites.

“After this awful experience at Proximal Distance the guy is ready to live the rest of his life with his ass planted firmly on the straight and narrow line. But it turns out his association with the club is just beginning. An article in Newsweek on the decadent New York underground club scene reports that parties at clubs on the X-list, which includes Proximal Distance, regularly feature “women sobbing on the front steps of the building, just dumped by wealthy boyfriends who have turned homosexual; men found dead or unconscious, lying face down in toilets after prolonged drug-induced vomiting; and upstairs, a glass dolphin filled with liquid cocaine, with a pipe on its nose, one puff from which inevitably produces an inebriating narcosis”. Similarly, the listing in Time Out New York describes Proximal Distance as “the absolute Mecca for orgyists, where frantic and indiscriminate coupling is watched out of the corner of the eye by furtive masturbators and the dance floor is completely slick with olive oil, scented lotions and human filth”. Soon his friends start coming up to him and asking “hey, didn’t you go to Proximal Distance this weekend?” from over the tops of their Newsweeks and Time Out New Yorks. At first he denies it, then, when he sees the photographs of him in both magazines complete with innuendo-laced captions, he tries telling the truth, but of course no one believes him.

"This makes him slightly glamorous among his female acquaintances at first -- they too occasionally want something a little different -- but as increasingly lurid and grotesque articles about Proximal Distance begin to circulate, articles which still include his picture even though he only went once, because the photographers who helped on the articles didn't want to risk tarnishing their reputation by actually going to the club with any frequency, he finds it increasingly difficult to get a date or really receive any acceptance at all from his friends, whose conversations about him begin to be filled with phrases like "you know about him, right?" and "Well, we do know what he is, but we assure you he isn't all bad". He begins receiving catalogs of sex products, which he immediately discards, but he gets so many catalogs that the garbage men get in the habit of going through his trash in order to get them, and eventually one of his friends finds a catalog accidentally dropped by a garbage man during an especially enthusiastic rooting-through of the guy's trash bags, stinking of garbage and with his name and address on the label. About this time, random men whom he identifies as homosexuals begin approaching him and asking whether he would like to go to Proximal Distance with them.

"You get the idea. Eventually his friends abandon him, his parents refuse to speak to him, every kind of kinky geek weirdo is calling him up. His entire life is ruined just because of one trivial attempt to diverge from the straight and narrow path even once. At the end of the story he's thinking about killing himself, and the story ends before you find out whether he's really going to do it, but you're left feeling pretty sure he's going to do it."

Bob paused.

"So..."

(The head of Livid Horror Books sat at his desk, regarding Bob with an impassive, toad-like stare.)

"What do you think?" Bob said.

"Bob-- that is your name, isn't it? Bob? -- I have dozens of writers come to me in my office each day to pitch stories. Horror stories. Blood and guts. Where is the horror in your story?" said the head of Livid Horror Books.

“Well, I mean, the whole idea is... the horror of the story is that there is no horror where it’s supposed to be, there is only a – false horror, if you like. Official people like Bob think that any deviation from conventional behavior leads you to all of these atrocities, so in Bob’s story, his deviation does indeed lead to an awful situation, but ironically the cause of the situation is the blinkered attitudes of people just like Bob. There’s this abyss where the horror is expected to be, but the real horror is looking into the abyss of a life which sees horror in everything different from itself...” Bob trailed off, unable to remember the rest of the speech he had prepared.

“Bob, let me tell you something. We have just signed a contract with a promising writer who has promised to write a series of six books about a painter who likes to paint with intestines. That is the kind of book we here at Livid Horror Books are interested in printing. Your story isn’t about horror at all. Which brings me to my second point. This story is about you, isn’t it?”

“What do you mean it’s about me?”

“You went to some nameless, crappy club and had to spend months explaining to your friends that you weren’t a sexual pervert.”

“Well, I suppose the story does have some... autobiographical elements... you might say it has a slight mimetic relationship to my life. But it’s not just about me. The way you put it, the story is just some kind of confessional crudely disguised as a work of fiction.”

“Mmm Hmm. Having friends doubt your morals? You think that’s horror? You think that compares to having your intestines cut out and painted with? I really think you’ve come to the wrong place.”

“Look, this guy, this painter of yours -- is there any apparent reason or motivation for his actions?”

“None whatsoever.”

“Does he have some kind of crazy story about himself like the guy in Seven, where he’s doing the Lord’s work or something? I can see how the story could be a satire of contemporary attitudes toward cubism...”

“No. He lives an ordinary life except that every once in a while he scoops out people’s intestines and paints with them. He’s a surgeon, you see, and one day this artist whose

been hit by a car is dragged into the emergency room still convulsively clutching some blank canvases, and he decides the artist is a hopeless case, so he's about to ring for the orderlies, but then he sees the artist's intestines just sitting there and he gets the idea that he could do a painting with them, because the small intestines look a lot like a row of paint tubes. This takes up most of the first book in the series. After that he starts robbing graves and killing people to get at more and more painting materials. He becomes a famous artist, and of course there's this scene where's he's at a new opening --for some reason we haven't decided on yet, people don't realize he paints with intestines -- and this art critic starts talking to him and kissing ass, so he takes the critic to the back room and bang! Ten minutes later he comes out waving a brand new painting and he sells it on the spot for an hundred thousand dollars."

"That's it? They look like paint tubes? That's his reason? At least I -- I mean, the guy in my story has an intelligible set of motivations, at least he has a harmless and even slightly noble intention to broaden himself a little, so that you can have some sympathy for him when it all goes out of control. He's not some kind of killing robot! He's a real person! There's some kind of psychological depth. I can't believe you want to publish this themeless, issueless, market-driven crap!" Bob screeched, by now much more interested in the argument than in his long vanished chance of making a sale.

"You think people have to suffer through dreary prose and wrestle with complete vagueness to deserve to enjoy a piece of art. You think your brain-driven, neurotic worrying should interest other people just because you find it so intensely fascinating. Well, I'll tell you what's intensely fascinating to our readers. Spilled blood, and lots of it. You don't like it? Why don't you start your own publishing house -- "Cocksmoke publishing," it should be called -- and see how many people come running to buy your anemic, hand-wringing little sob stories."

Bob sat silent for a moment, preparing a response that would be the most eloquent thing he had ever said.

"Ah yes, thank you" the head of Livid Horror Books said to an assistant, as she came into the room, set down a blank canvas, and left.

Bob looked at the canvas.

“What is this?” Bob said.

Ignoring him, the head of Livid Horror Books began rummaging through the drawers of his desk.

“What are you doing?” Bob said.

The drawers were full of question mark shaped razors.

4/23/98

## PENGUIN AND DOLL

By Per Christian Malloch

Jerry thought of himself as a fun loving man who meant no harm, and today's purchases seemed to prove that this was indeed what he was. First among them was a plush penguin which would bob back and forth in the presence of music, because some kind of sound sensitive motor had been built into it. He installed this curiosity in his room alongside other objects which attested to his zany sense of fun. As for his meaning no harm, this was reflected in another purchase he made that day: a life size doll in the form of a woman. This doll was exceedingly expensive, as it had been constructed of materials meant to feel just like human skin and muscle.

When he took the doll out of the box it was forbiddingly limp. However, he soon had it standing in his closet, held up by various cords tied around its wrists and under its armpits. Installing the doll this way had the double advantage of giving it a more lively appearance and of making it easy to conceal. Of course, he was now one closet short and his coats would have to wait for a new home, piled up next to his bed. His apartment was not very large, since he was a student.

Jerry was able to do to the doll what he would never want to do to another person. Most frequently he would slap its face and breasts, which would heavily and lifelessly turn from side to side with the force of his blows. This pastime allowed him to forget the day's frustrations in a matter of minutes. He never pretended that the doll was someone else. He focused all of his aggression on it exclusively. Occasionally he would give in to the inevitable temptation to ejaculate on its face, although he tried to avoid this since, number one, he thought sex and violence should be kept separate, and number two, he always ended up fastidiously wiping off the doll afterwards, which made him feel like he was showing affection to it. He would tolerate no ambivalence of feeling about the doll; it was there to silently and unrepentantly bear all of the cruelty he had it in him to dispense, which really wasn't all that much.

Aside from his adventures with the doll his life in college was exceedingly dull, offering few opportunities to express his truly zany sense of fun the way he had in the purchase

of the plush penguin, which was the most talked about item of decoration in his room, although its main potential competitor was admittedly kept in the closet. His classes, all requirements, were insufferable, aside from a literature class whose teacher was entertainingly preoccupied with what she called the “theory of the nonsense”. Women occasionally showed interest in him, even to the point where he considered disposing of the doll in preparation for a possible visit to his apartment, but when it got right down to going out for the evening there was always some excuse. He had his share of friends, but who didn’t. And, unlike them, he believed that there was such a thing as too much bowling.

Jerry’s literature class ranked only below beating the doll in importance. Not only were the teacher’s theories colorful, she would cheerfully give high grades to every paper that appeared to accept them or to imitate her style of speech. A typical class would open with the teacher reading a passage from some book or story she had dug up at some used bookstore. The most recent story centered around a couple living in a high rise apartment:

One day this couple hears a thunderous knocking on their door. “Open up! It’s inspector pkawr!” says an authoritative voice. “What do you want?” they ask. There is a brief pause, in which the couple can hear the faint sound of far off chickens going pkaw. Then, without explanation, the knocking sounds again, more insistent than ever. “Open up!”

The teacher took this story to be the height of literature according to her “theory of the nonsense”. “In the intrepid knocking of Inspector Pkawr,” she said after putting down the book, “in his unexplained appearance, his unguessable agenda, his vague link to chickens, the absurd animals par excellence; we see the nonsense presenting itself and demanding to be recognized as sense. In whatever guise it appears – a burden of guilt for crimes one has not committed, a god that represents all that is obscene and evil that nonetheless compels worship, an irrevocable decision on the part of a government committee than one must die in the next five minutes -- the nonsense is the same: something unbearable, impossible, unthinkable that nonetheless must be faced, that one can do nothing else but face even though one never asked for it or did anything to

deserve it. To the ordinary person the nonsense presents itself as the mere fact that he must die, a fact for which the religions of the world say someone must be to blame. But in addition to being metaphors for death, each form the nonsense takes is a truth beyond bearing, a sentence without appeal, in its own right, and must be appreciated as such in all of your papers."

Jerry ruminated on his teacher's ramblings while beating the doll. He himself -- or his ministrations -- would, after all, count as "the nonsense" to the doll, if his teacher were writing a story about it. However, there was no possibility of injustice toward an inanimate object. There were times when his daily activities and interactions failed to provide him with enough pent-up frustration to beat the doll with any enthusiasm. There was nothing more sordid and depressing than a half-enthusiastic slap here and punch there, delivered to the unresponsive doll sagging in its supportive lattice of cords and wires as its false flesh purpled and bruised. He was occasionally able to make this sordidness a source of frustration in its own right and thereby redeem the day's beating, but other times he would close the door half-apologetically -- that was the worst part, as if to say "sorry for disturbing you"! -- after a few perfunctory slaps. But the doll's constant availability made him serene in the face of the minimal adversity he was obliged to confront every day. How ironic that the doll's therapeutic potential would long languish overlooked because the common man "knew" that people who kept company with life size dolls were "sick," end of story!

Toward the end of the semester certain developments threatened to disturb the peace Jerry had achieved with his regimen of severe beatings. Factions within the English department were avidly campaigning for the dismissal of his teacher. Not only did she focus almost exclusively on little known texts (the class readings were generally bundles of Xeroxes), making her students woefully unprepared for standardized testing, there was some concern that the authors she discussed wrote under pseudonyms and, to put it bluntly, were her. Certainly many students had commented on the remarkable similarity between the styles of the different authors assigned over the course of the semester, and the even more remarkable extent to which their stories served as illustrations of the theories she presented in class. Concerned parents accused



her of being a fraud. Jerry's teacher, for her own and not very impressive part, claimed that the accusations leveled against her were "strictly nonsense," fit for inclusion in one of the tales of the authors she analyzed in class, which were most certainly not her.

Anxiety over the fate of his class -- and of his grade in it, which promised to be his only A, 'the mollifying, conciliatory A' he could show to his parents on his return -- drove Jerry to feats of beating he had never imagined possible. However, this period in his life most fraught with frantic beatings turned out to be the last because of an event that took place during an especially prolonged and savage session of marathon pimp-slapping. As he was delivering the umpteenth pimp-slap of the evening he felt a certain amount of moisture on the doll's cheek which made him recoil, until he realized that it was surely his own sweat. (What?) He raised his hand to strike the doll again. As he did this the doll flinched.

His hand dropped to his side. (What?) She was breathing shallowly. (What?) He was beating a real person.

He shut the closet door and sat down and thought. What? he thought. What? he thought. What?

What?

Maybe one of his friends had, as a sick joke, put a woman in his closet and taken out the doll. Maybe someone had sold him a woman lost in some kind of a coma, labeled as a doll. These explanations were no less ridiculous than the idea that the doll had simply turned into a real person. How long had he been beating, torturing, striking unmercifully at a real, feeling human being? How long had he been swatting and smacking and masturbating on a person who could feel every blow and every trickle of sourly spat out fatherhood? There were mistakes which were so awful that it did not matter whether they were innocent mistakes.

He had to move away from the closet because the woman inside had begun making sounds -- sniffs, the occasional sob-like breath. Later, when all was quiet and he had corrected some of the errors in his thinking, he locked the closet. He was a fun loving guy who didn't mean any harm. He had obviously purchased a defective doll. He

would not hurt another person. He would not keep them imprisoned. He would not strike another person and make them suffer so that he could feel better himself.

The next week was a slow week. The defective doll continued to make occasional sounds. He worked out a daily routine in which he would only have to walk past the closet twice per day. Every time he walked past the closet he considered turning the knob to make absolutely sure that it was locked, but he always decided against it when he imagined accidentally opening the door and seeing the purpled and bruised doll sagging in its harness of strings and wires. His apartment was so small that this did not entirely eliminate the problem of the sounds produced by the defective doll. This turned him into a music enthusiast. The thumping techno music he played at all hours must have made his floormates think he was quite the party animal. But 'party animal' was a term best reserved for his penguin doll, who appealed to his impressively zany sense of fun. The penguin doll was activated by the sound of his music and now spent much of its time bobbing back and forth festively.

As uncomfortable as he was in the proximity of the closet, he wouldn't leave his room. He was afraid that others would come in and discover the defective doll. He had his groceries delivered, paying by credit card and tipping with his remaining cash. There was no washing machine in his room, so eventually he dug into the boxes of clothes his parents had mailed him which he had never opened. There was not enough room in the laundry basket for them and so he began to pile them on the floor along with his accumulated garbage bags. He would obviously have to figure out how to throw away the defective doll eventually since it was late in the school year and he would be moving out soon. At the end of the week he noticed a new, nauseating smell mixed in with the smell of the garbage bags heaped by his door in readiness to be taken out. The smell was strongest in front of the closet, which had finally grown silent except for the sound of flies. He knew that soon enough his neighbors would begin complaining of the smell. But the thought of unlocking the closet and taking down what was hanging silently inside, of swinging the extremely smelly and limp defective (woman) doll over his shoulder and carrying it somewhere, to its box, to the trash, straight into the hall perhaps, was even more unpleasant than it had been before. In fact he was aware that

there was nothing that could make him open the door. He really wanted to leave the room but he was afraid that people come in, would open the closet door and eventually force him to look at what was inside. Is this yours? Did you do this? You should know better than to buy a defective doll. Is this your work? Would you like to see the other side? He was intensely conscious of a desire to be punished, ironic considering that it was the store that had sold him the defective doll. Ironic or not, it appeared that this desire to be punished, swift becoming unconditional self-loathing, would soon be gratified. For when he finally turned off the techno music which had been playing in his room throughout the week, the plush penguin which he had purchased on the same day as he purchased the doll continued to bob back and forth. Far from stopping, this marvelous and unlikely little executioner waddled to the kitchen and wrapped a duo of knives in its furry flippers. And Jerry, eager to get himself over with, lay on the carpet, offering himself completely to his surprising guest and closing his eyes in anticipation of agony when he felt the penguin tying his wrists together in a businesslike fashion. But after a moment he realized that the penguin was elsewhere. The door of the closet, which perhaps he had forgotten to lock after all, was hanging ajar, and he suddenly knew that the miraculously alive penguin was deftly cutting the wires that held up the dead body in his closet, the penguin was cutting it loose so that it would flop onto the floor of his apartment with its decaying face turned toward him. He knew that this was the sentence he deserved and he felt a kind of awe for the nobility and love of justice exhibited by the penguin. But he began to scream curses at it, all the while admiring it for putting up with his rudeness, when he realized that the binding on his wrists made it impossible for him to scratch out his eyes.

4/27/98

## THE HONKING PIMPAPUS

By Per Christian Malloch

One day advertising became too much for Bob. He was watching a TV commercial for Shameful brand cheesecake when he first realized how condescending and insulting ads had become. The commercial had a pretentious, art-film like appearance. It showed an obese woman eating cheesecake with her hands in blurry, black-and-white slow motion, while a voice said “rejected by your husband again? I know, why don’t you eat some cheesecake? Yeah, that will make you feel better.”

To avoid the demoralizing influence of snide ads like this, Bob decided to stop watching television and listening to the radio.

A few weeks after he made this decision, Bob accidentally enraged a motorist. For, why else would someone be honking behind him in traffic? Still, Bob couldn’t help but find the honking annoying. Since the freeway was clogged, he didn’t see how he could have done anything illegal or inconsiderate. In fact, he was pretty much trapped where he was by all the slow moving cars around him. So what was the problem? Was the driver behind him perhaps punishing him for tailgating the car ahead of him?

Bob looked in the rear view mirror. What he saw surprised him: a bright pink Volkswagen “bug”, wearing a giant cap with a feather in it. Plush tentacles dangled from its rear windows, and on the front bumper was a bumper sticker that read: “I’m a honking pimpapus.” The driver was invisible behind the car’s tinted windshield. If Bob could have seen him, though, he probably would have been leaning on the steering wheel, what with all the honking coming out of the car.

At first Bob was grateful to be exonerated. The driver wasn’t honking because he was mad; he was just honking for the hell of it, or as some kind of prank. But as the honking continued, Bob started to wish he really had done something wrong, so that he could atone for it and make the honking stop. It really was very annoying. Couldn’t this “honking pimpapus” have picked someone else to honk at?

Bob thought that the honking pimpapus could not have a more appropriate name. That it honked was indisputable -- painfully so. Its plush tentacles certainly brought to mind

an octo'pus', while feathered hats -- and hats in general, if you didn't count baseball caps -- were generally worn only by pimps these days. Moreover, the honking pimpapus was in a metaphorical sense "pimping" the people immediately around it by putting them in the irritating and humiliating position of having to endure its never ending honking. And this pimpapus' fondness for boldly intrusive self promoting or self announcing activity, so reminiscent of the legendary braggadocio of pimps, left no doubt in the minds of those in its vicinity as to what it was (a pimpapus) or what it was doing (honking).

The traffic began to clear and Bob, not without some relief, accelerated away from the honking pimpapus, which honked its farewells amiably, as if the opportunity to leave its victims with a parting shot (or honk) more than compensated it for its loss of an audience. And, Bob thought with a grim smile, soon enough other motorists would be randomly selected for an audience with the pimpapus. Hell, far from feeling deprived, it -- or, he should say, its driver -- no doubt welcomed the opportunity to show off before a new set of onlookers. It was a showman, that much was clear.

Despite the irritations of the morning drive, Bob found his work day pleasant enough. He did feel a little trepidation as he got into his car at the end of the day, but quickly dismissed his irrational fear that he was bound for another jarring, honk-filled encounter with the pimpapus. The probability that he would run across the pimpapus and its eccentric driver again was vanishingly small. The real object of his anxiety, he reflected, was probably his daughter's visit tonight.

As he drove onto the Pasadena freeway he was startled by a car horn. Incredulously, he saw a familiar pink, tentacled, honking shape in the rearview mirror. And if memory failed him, there was always the front bumper's bumper sticker to tell him "I'm a honking pimpapus". Idly, he wondered how the pimpapus' hat stayed on in the wind. Perhaps it was bolted to the top of the car. The pimpapus harassed him on his entire drive home, honking in syncopated rhythms reminiscent of the complex patterns beat out on hide drums by African tribesmen. He laughed humorlessly. Years of training as an anthropologist had apparently led to this climactic moment, in which he detected an unconscious cultural resonance in the random honkings of some deranged motorist.

Thankfully, the honking pimpapap did not follow him off the freeway. Apparently it didn't want him to feel threatened -- or it preferred to stay in heavy traffic to ensure a steady supply of fresh victims.

His daughter, who would be arriving in a cab taken straight from school, was late for her visit. She had probably stopped by a friend's house. He knew all too well that her mother would be punctual in picking her up, and wondered whether to suspect collusion. He knew better than to fight this kind of "teaming up" directly. He would just have to hope that his own actions showed that one night of beatings didn't necessarily augur a lifetime of the same, especially now that he was getting his alcoholism under control. But when she finally arrived, all of the fatherly advice and tenderness he had been preparing to give seemed to have left his mind, replaced by teary reproaches. At first, the conversation was about her lateness. Then, the conversation was about their conversation -- who was being unfair to whom, what certain comments implied, etc. Then came the sound he had come to dread: his ex-wife honking the horn outside. He knew how deeply he'd failed when he saw how his daughter rushed to the car (which remained on the curb, his ex-wife being unwilling to see him in person).

Alone once again, he sat down in the living room sipping a cola, spiced up with some spiced rum, until he fell asleep.

He was suddenly woken by the sound of a car honking outside. He began searching the house frantically, tripping over things in the dark, calling his daughter's name. It was time for her to go. His ex-wife would file a complaint if she wasn't at the car in ten minutes. Then he realized that it was the middle of the night and his daughter had already been picked up. He looked out of the window to see who was honking in front of his house. Yes, there was definitely a car.

Suddenly, he knew which car.

He opened the front door, determined to haul the driver out of the car. But the honking pimpapap sped away as soon as he stepped outside.

Over the next few days, the honking pimpapap followed him through freeway traffic to and from work, and buzzed his house late at night, often several times. The campaign

of harassment soon took its toll. But Bob refused to tell his co-workers why he looked sleepless, skeletal and jumpy. He accepted his demotion with good grace. It had been a long time coming, he knew, given his inability or unwillingness to perform anything more demanding than rote physical tasks and book balancing arithmetic ever since his divorce.

Actually, there was another reason he didn't tell his co-workers about the honking pimpapus. He had never overheard anyone talking about having the same problem. And the pimpapus spent so much time following him around that it arguably didn't have time for anyone else, assuming it and the driver had to stop for rest and fuel. If the honking pimpapus had chosen him above all others, couldn't that mean that he was special? Bob often scoffed at himself for even thinking these thoughts. The pimpapus was a annoyance which imposed net losses on him by destroying his concentration and frying his nerves. Whoever could have conceived of such a thing must be a monster. But he did feel a sort of absurd pity for the honking pimpapus when it followed him on a rainy day and its wet tentacles started to droop.

Eventually Bob's company sent him on an assignment in Philadelphia. He chuckled at the thought that he would have to buy an alarm clock; he wouldn't have the pimpapus to wake him up at the crack of dawn. Now he would finally be free of it, at least for a while. Maybe it would lose track of him and fasten on to someone else. Anyway, it would be the first time he had any feeling of privacy in a while, what with the custody court's prying into his life and a certain pimpapus' keeping him under constant surveillance.

However, Bob found himself feeling a bit morose in Philadelphia. Bothersome as the honking pimpapus had been, it had been his companion for quite some time. It used different honking patterns to say hello and good-bye, and Bob wasn't convinced that it wasn't trying to express some of its feelings with its complex honking polyrhythms. It showed a kind of devoted, dog-like loyalty in its sticking by him rain or shine, honking, its pimp's hat moving to and fro as it made sharp turns. And, in its own bizarre way, it was kind of cute looking. So, ridiculous though it seemed at first, he began to miss the pimpapus and its ebulliently cheerful honking. Unlike Bob himself, it was unshaken by

any adversity. And no one could deny that it was content with being itself, just the way it was. For better or worse, it was its own pimpapus.

As usual, Bob began to fall behind in his work and catch up on his drinking. One rainy evening, after he had failed to sort a batch of files on time, he stopped by the Wolfe bar for some heavy boozing. A large bearded man who disagreed with a number of his views on sports gave him a shove, and Bob retaliated with a punch. Before the fight could escalate into the random mayhem movies had led the bouncers to expect, he found himself hurled out onto the sidewalk. He lay face down, feeling the rain fall on him. He didn't get up, because he didn't feel he had anywhere better to go, or anything better to do than just lie there.

Apparently, the bouncers had carelessly thrown him into the middle of the street, not onto the sidewalk as he had initially supposed, since he heard cars honking at him to get out of the way. Through the rain and the fog of his drunkenness he could make out a pair of headlights. He had half a mind to stay put and hope the car ran him over, but its honking was so insistent and annoying that after a while he grudgingly got up and staggered to the curb. But the driver wasn't satisfied with that, it seemed. The honking continued, giving him a headache. "Stop honking, asshole!" he heard one of the bouncers say from the bar's entrance. At hearing that, Bob raised his head from his hands and looked closely at the car.

It was a pink Volkswagen with a pimp's hat and tentacles.

Bob let out a whoop of joy and waved to the honking pimpapus. It drove off, as he knew it would. He was no longer alone. He fondly imagined the honking pimpapus driving across the country to find him, honking the entire time. He imagined the Nevada desert at night, a black place as big as the sky, lit only by one pair of headlights and echoing all night with the sound of honking. He imagined the zigzagging streets of small towns waking up in sleepy wonder as the pimpapus came honking through. He really was special, it turned out. The pimpapus had picked him as the one person worthy of its support and friendship. In fact, the pimpapus had saved his life. It loved him. He had been ready to give up completely. But now, he could see that he could stay sober. He could do more than meaningless make-work. He didn't need to retrieve



his ungrateful daughter from his bitch ex-wife. He could do something that really mattered to him if he chose, just as the pimpapus had done. Right then, he could feel his life moving off the death slope and onto the life escalator. In fact, he could see how these powerful, catchy metaphors -- death slope and life escalator -- could be used in feel-good essays and books which he could sell to people even more abject than himself. In the cab, on the way back to his hotel, he was already scheming to replace his boss in a few months' time.

From then on, inspired by occasional but more and more infrequent visits from the honking pimpapus, Bob built a modest but lucrative publishing empire. Although he felt a little saddened by the fact that the pimpapus didn't come to see him any more, he understood that it had other lives to save on its holy mission of benevolence. And he bet that all over the world there were people who would gratefully wave to the pimpapus when it cruised by and favored them with its incomparable honking. Because he never watched TV or listened to the radio, nor talked to people about them, Bob never found out that the honking pimpapus was a promotional gimmick employed by Nabisco to market their new Pimp-a-Chip and Chip-a-pus brand chocolate chip cookies to 70's buffs, inner city target markets, and marine biologists.

6/7/98

## THE EXCELLENT DUMPLING HOUSE

By Per Christian Malloch

I read the sign over the restaurant: “excellent dumpling house”. Whether someone had named an already existing restaurant thus in honor of its excellent dumplings, or whether the name had turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy for a just opened restaurant, one thing was clear: the dumplings in the window did indeed look excellent. They tasted good too, as I discovered weeks later, when, unable to resist those chewy bundles of meat and dough a moment longer, I dined at The Excellent Dumpling House to celebrate the end of my diet. I hadn’t quite achieved my dieting objectives -- in fact, I weighed more than ever-- so from one point of view I had little to celebrate. But that wasn’t my own, dumpling-starved point of view. The chief merit of my dieting experience, I told myself, was that I had learned that no amount of personal attractiveness was worth giving up food like the very dumplings I was eating.

For quite some time I felt content to eat nothing but dumplings at The Excellent Dumpling house, whenever I stopped by, which as you can probably imagine was quite often. But after a while I felt a bit guilty for not allowing the cooks to demonstrate their skill at preparing other foods, which I allowed might be considerable. So, one day I ordered sweet and sour chickens’ (obviously a misprint) and a bowl of soup. Much to my surprise, my soup came in a small bowl made out of dough which I had to pry open, and had the thickest broth I had ever seen. As for the sweet and sour chickens’, one expects sweet and sour chicken to come fried in some kind of breading, but this was the thickest breading I’d ever seen – and there was no sauce other than the usual condiments!

I didn’t feel ready to give up on the chefs yet, though. The next time I came in, I ordered moo-shoo pork’ and vegetable fried rice. When they served the pork -- and pork it was, there was no skimping in that department -- it was already wrapped in small pancakes that were so thick I could barely taste the plum sauce. When the vegetable fried rice came I was a little taken aback. Evidently the proprietors made no distinction between rice as we know it and rice mashed into a paste and used as the

exterior of a dumpling. And the vegetable filling, for all its pleasingly meaty taste, was really homogenous. All in all, I couldn't help but feel cheated, since the items I had ordered were much more expensive than the appetizers I was accustomed to ordering, but tasted pretty much the same.

So I didn't leave a tip.

Later, I conceived the idea of the tip bounty hunter' or tip pimpster' to explain why it appeared that one of the waiters for The Excellent Dumpling house was following me. Following my wallowing, I thought -- months of feasting on dumplings were taking their toll, just as they were with the other customers I had come to recognize, many of whom were awkwardly fat. This tip pimpster' was ready to collect, that much I felt sure about. I tried several times to approach my tracker in the hopes of mollifying him with a belated gratuity, but he disappeared into alleys too narrow for me to enter whenever I got too close, all the while pretending not to be following me.

When I saw the waiter for The Excellent Dumpling House standing across the street from my house, staring at me through my living room window, I began to get nervous. Perhaps the dumplings at The Excellent Dumpling House were made of human flesh, the flesh of the very customers who stuffed themselves with excellent dumplings until they became too fat to outmaneuver the waiter. Then, the erstwhile tip pimpster' would turn out to be the meat collection daddy', as I immediately named him. It was no use calling the police, who would only laugh in my face -- the nature of the crime he planned was too incredible.

I watched the meat collection daddy outside my house for quite some time, but eventually nodded off. When I awoke, he had gone - apparently deciding it was possible for me to get even more fat. I didn't doubt it. I could still move around on my own -- something that didn't look likely two months from now, at the rate I was gaining weight. It was amazing. Perhaps The Excellent Dumpling House used ultra-condensed dough in their dumplings. Perhaps they simply injected a large quantity of fat and dough directly into your bloodstream while you were unconscious -- for many of the patrons, myself included, had the tendency to eat until the pain of fullness made us faint. But I had not forgotten the revelation of my diet. There was no way I was

returning to that world of pain and discomfort. I often fought the urge to tell the skinny people around me what they were -- walking corpses unable to enjoy life to the fullest. Fear that the employees of The Excellent Dumpling House would eventually butcher me in order to make more dumplings didn't prevent me from eating there every day. In fact, I ate there more than ever, figuring that if the end was near, I might as well go hog-wild. In fact, I chuckled, I had been eating almost nothing but dumplings for so long that I was practically made out of dumplings.

One thing I had always appreciated about the interior of this remarkable restaurant was the size and comfiness of the chairs . I finally realized that the chairs were shaped like dumpling shells. It was so obvious. They might as well have called the restaurant dumpling prep school. My only chance to avoid being butchered alive and being forced to watch bloody lumps of my own fat sizzling on the frying pan for use in future dumplings was to hope that the restaurant owners themselves would turn into dumplings. It could go either way. Dumplings and dumpling-ness seemed to rule over the whole restaurant. No matter what you ordered on the menu, you got dumplings. Even the building was uneven in a way that suggested the pinched-shut, extra chewy ends of a dumpling. God, typing all of this is making me hungry. Luckily, I never neglect to take-out a few orders of dumplings after I've had my fill on premises. But I'll have to stop writing, since I'm not going to get my keyboard greasy just to eat a few dumplings.

6/21/98

## THE ANGEL SPEECH

By Per Malachi

"What the hell are dolphins doing in the Arctic Ocean?"

"Beats me, captain. Do you want to follow them? They seem to be headed somewhere."

"Are there any marine biologists on board? We don't want the smarties saying we're wasting their grant money."

At this point I interrupted, saying that I was a marine biologist. If questioned later, I could always say that I had always thought that a marine biologist was someone who loved dolphins. THAT kind of marine biologist I certainly was.

The dolphins chattered excitedly when they saw that the boat was headed after them. After hours of pursuit, we appeared to have accomplished nothing other than not sinking. The first mate wanted to turn back. Ignorant though they were of all nautical matters, the grant-sipping wonder students would eventually begin to demand the ice, snow and barren rock they had come to study.

I think the captain was more determined to have his conviction that dolphins could not survive in the Arctic Ocean validated, than he was to cultivate the students' favor. He announced that he wasn't stopping until he saw every last dolphin frozen into a rock solid corpse.

Suddenly a mile high red ball of coral appeared above the water on the horizon.

Worried about crashing into a coral reef, the captain ordered the ship to halt. Everyone took a look with the captain's spyglass. Dolphins and jets of water shot continuously out of the coral ball's pocked surface, falling into the waves below. Larger holes near and presumably also below the surface admitted both water and dolphins.

Steam coming from the huge red ball of coral gave me the idea to check the water's temperature. Sure enough, it was abnormally warm for Arctic water. The sextant indicated, however, that we were well into the upper latitudes.

I advanced the following hypothesis. These fiendishly cunning dolphins had figured out how to heat the ocean with nothing but a coral reef. The ball of coral above the surface was connected to a system of coral tubes laid out beneath the ocean floor, which

piped in water from warmer oceans. The coral was beaten into a suitable shape with their noses while still in a living, spongy form. Centuries of painstaking, nose bruising labor in the making, this palace of warmth was the first step of the dolphin race towards colonizing new environments.

Sternly reminding the captain that I was a marine biologist, I demanded and was granted the use of a lifeboat, so that I could row out to the coral reef and confirm my hypothesis. Once in the water, I began to sink immediately, my boat punctured by countless spines. The local dolphins came to my aid, forming a raft with their bodies and carrying me over to the rock.

Once I had set foot on dry coral, I used my flashlight to signal to the ship that I would be staying for a few days. The boat's remains were well stocked with provisions, and I needed some quality time with the dolphins in order to measure the scope of their astounding intelligence. The captain ordered me back on board, but there wasn't much he could do, so eventually the ship left -- ready, I hoped, to return in a few days.

I set about trying to learn the language of the dolphins.

My interest in language began in my college days, when it seemed that all of my classes were on Heidegger. My teachers had a number of different approaches to interpreting this philosopher's work. Of two classes on his book *Being and Time*, one was titled "persistence and time" while the other was called "God and time". In the hands of my favorite professor, Heidegger's work was nothing less than a search for the supreme being, or "the big B" as she would often call it with presumptuous familiarity. In other classes, Heidegger's concern was centered on what it means for everyday objects to seem "real" to us -- "the dialectical ontology of carpentry", as one professor put it a touch sneeringly.

Perhaps the most radical approach to interpreting Heidegger was that of professor Bob Ylados. His approach was based on the "fact," which I later found out was an unproven, arbitrary assertion, that Heidegger had had his name legally changed to Heidegger shortly before the Nazi's ascent to power. "Why is this?" Ylados would say. "Because he needed to communicate something to the free world while remaining a

good citizen. Yes, in changing his name, Heidegger became a kind of double agent. And, if we can detect the message in this highly visible linguistic performance, it can serve as the key to deciphering just what he means by "being". "I'm sure your OTHER professors have taken a few wild stabs at it --" at this point, the class sycophants would mechanically chuckle -- "but with the secret of Heidegger's name revealed, grasping the true meaning of statements like 'language is the house of being' and 'the nothing notes itself' will be child's play. And just what is that name's significance? There are a number of possibilities, all contradictory. First, 'Heidegger' can be broken down into the phrase, 'hide nigger', suggesting that Heidegger, mouthpiece of fascist ideology though he was, covertly sheltered black people on the run from government eugenics programs on his property. But, before we begin seeing Being and Time as a grand, albeit incompetently written, allegory of resistance, consider also that 'Heidegger' decomposes -- and, as far as the implications about his character that would obtain if this reading were true, decomposes is truly the right word -- into 'hide nigger' or 'nigger hide', in the sense of the tanned skins of black people. For, photos of Heidegger wearing leathers and the other accouterments of a motorcycle-riding homosexual abound, and since these photos are black and white, no pun intended, it's not easy to say just what material his crinkly slick clothes might be made of. But if ambiguity is your bag, try this one on for size: crack 'Heidegger' into 'Hyde nigger', as in Jeckell and Hyde, and we have a picturesquely neo-Victorian tale of repression, in which our philosopher, leather boy and spitting image of the Führer himself, darling of high fascist society, roams the streets at night in guise of a black man, a fried chicken in one hand, a watermelon in the other. But just which, if any, of these readings of Heidegger's name, so crucial to decrypting his coded writings, is the correct one, I have not yet determined to my satisfaction. Thus, in the weeks ahead, class discussion will reign supreme -- yes, all of us will engage in linguistic analysis, each hypothesis locking horns with the other, until the true meaning of that brazen act of choice that is Heidegger's name becomes evident to all of us."

After Ylados delivered this incredible speech for the first time, everyone in the lecture hall just stared at him in amazement. Eventually, however, people got used to his

politically incorrect way of speaking when they realized what an easy grader he was. At least, we thought he was an easy grader until he announced on the last day of class that "no satisfactory explanation of Heidegger's name change was discovered. I have failed. And you, my students, have failed with me." No one was sure what he meant -- as far as obscurity was concerned, he and Heidegger were birds of a feather -- until the glaring "F" grades appeared on everyone's transcripts.

After I'd set up my little camp I went out to watch the dolphins. They taught me a few words of their language by playing a game of charades. Whole swarms of them would swim in formation, creating images, while squeaking out the word associated with the image. Sometimes the dolphins would not hold the shape as long as I would have liked them to, and sometimes I wished they would squeak the word more often. I also had some difficulty coming up with an accurate system of notation -- eventually I settled for something resembling written music. But I figured that, being so extremely intelligent themselves, the dolphins had difficulty grasping what a slow learner I was. No doubt to them, when they held a particular shape for even a few moments -- like the masses of boy scouts forming rotating swastikas at Heidegger's beloved Nazi rallies -- it seemed like an eternity.

Soon enough I had words for the directions and for the sun, sea and air. Unfortunately I had so much difficulty reading my own notation and struggling to produce the high pitched squeaks my dolphin friends made so effortlessly that there was little I could say to thank my benefactors. After dusk fell and I could no longer make out the shapes in the crowd of dolphins -- who were evidently practicing for tomorrow's lesson -- I set about exploring the ball.

Water and dolphins were supplied to the upper levels of the ball by a periodic geyser that rose up a shaft in the middle. Which hole one would exit through was a matter of chance, there being no connection between many of the rooms and tunnels, many of which were little more than holes, dents and furrows. When I pictured the dolphins mashing together soft coral from all around the world into this great ball, the lack of



architectural niceties seemed less important. Impressive enough that they had cobbled it together at all, when they had only their noses to work with.

Unfortunately the water at the bottom of the ball and especially the geyser shaft was so frothy and bubbly that I couldn't make out the coral tubes I expected to see disappearing into the water below. I was, however, able to make out a huge, dark shape some distance below the ball, and also something that glinted when I shone my flashlight on it, which I resolved to investigate more thoroughly come daybreak. I stretched out in my sleeping bag and practiced saying the words I'd learned that day until I fell asleep.

I never seemed to do well on my papers on Heidegger. I had trouble remembering the details of each professor's interpretation of Being and Time, with the result that I was always being accused of mis-reading. Prof. A would demand that each paper expose Heidegger as an accursed Nazi, while Prof. B expected Heidegger's role as postmodern vindicator of the rights of squirrels (although not, damningly, the Jews) to be both clarified and comparecontrasted with his participation in the ambiguously named "Squirrel Championships".

Ylados, whose grading system I have already outlined, but who was unforgiving to me even when he was still in his "good grader" stage, based every paper assignment on one or two candid photos of Heidegger, which I later was told were forgeries. My speculations concerning the nature of the "Squirrel Championships" were, I suspect, heavily biased due to my exposure to one such photo, which depicted a sweaty, out of breath Heidegger clutching a carpenter's hammer whose head was thickened with blood and fur. The caption of the photo was Heidegger's famous saying "things are most present in their absence".

It was Ylados' opinion that the words "being," "time" and "nothing" formed what he called the "architectonic" of Heidegger's philosophy. All the key concepts and sayings, he maintained, could only be interpreted once the meaning of those terms was fixed and constant. But, these concepts were so profound that they could not be defined by reference to other concepts -- certainly Heidegger made no effort to do so in his work --

and only an angelic being could grasp them on their face. The only clue to their meaning was Heidegger's alleged name change, about which we had a number of frustrating discussions.

I remember getting back a paper one day. I had proposed my own definitions of "being" and co., constructed some arguments of Heidegger's based on those definitions, and refuted them. The only thing written on it, other than an "F," was the sentence "who are you to interpret the angel speech? Signed, Dr. Bob Ylados". It was clear that Professor Ylados wasn't willing to take the easy way out. At the time I admired him for his dedication to appreciating the full depth and scope of Heidegger's philosophy, which, I reasoned, must have be truly titanic.

The next day I did some diving in the water beneath the rock. It was quite warm, almost hot, and smelled like eggs. Though I was forced to navigate at all times through a cloud of bubbles, I was able to see that large scraps of metal were embedded in the bottom of the ball. Assorted mechanical parts and human bones were also occasionally visible. I nearly joined the dead beneath the ball when I lost track of the nearest route to the surface in all the bubbles. For a moment I thought I would drown, pinned up against the bottom of the ball by upward currents, mouth filling with bubbles.

"Cockmania" I swore, with no effect other than to add even more bubbles to the fatal cloud that hid the exit. But once again the dolphins came to my rescue. It wouldn't do for them to lose their prize student. I had an exhilarating trip up the water jet and out the side of the ball.

Warm as the water was, the air up top was still quite cold -- a fact I had forgotten in my enthusiasm. I had only one spare set of clothes, which I changed into immediately to avoid freezing. Until my clothes were dry, there would be no more diving for me.

I noticed for the first time that the walls of my chamber were beginning to glisten with a pelt of moss. Perhaps the warm temperatures had energized some long-dormant colony of spores which had become accustomed to simply drifting around in the dead lands of the Arctic. If so, I expected the moss would be incredibly hardy.

The dolphins renewed their efforts to teach me their language, occasionally throwing in old words for review without warning. For the first time, however, I felt sure that the words were being strung into sentences. There were two or three words that occurred so regularly that they had to be sentence particles of some kind. The most common, which sounded like a single, sharp, very short squeak, and was symbolized by all the assembled dolphins rotating clockwise in unison, I called "kaos", since it seemed that chaos was all I was in for until I figured out how it fit the other words together.

I looked over my notes on the sentences I had heard that day in an effort to solve the mystery of kaos. It sometimes appeared first, sometimes last, sometimes in the middle of a string of words. It might appear once; once it appeared to appear ten times in a single sentence. It was combined with other words and also used as a stand alone sentence. In short, despite its seeming nature as a grammatical particle, there seemed to be no rules governing its use -- a sure sign that the rules were complex indeed. Perhaps the dolphins had such a limited vocal range -- or power of pitch discrimination -- that there simply weren't many possible sounds for them to use as words. If so, finding many, many uses for the same word in different contexts and combinations would be an innovative way to cope with the lack of natural variety in dolphin speech.

I found a warm, dry spot close to the bubbling surface of the water in the ball, and managed to dry my clothes. That meant one thing: more diving! This time I made an effort to swim for the giant dark hulk some distance beneath the ball. But the upward current eventually had me swimming in place, by which time I was so out of breath that I had to ride the geyser back up, banging my head severely in the process. Around this time I began to notice that most of the dolphins were covered with cuts and bruises -- wounds they had no doubt suffered enjoying the unpredictable geyser rides.

Later in the day my ship appeared on the horizon and the captain began signaling to me. In an effort to get me to abandon my search for meaning, he claimed that he had heard on the shortwave radio that an asteroid had struck an airplane over the waters of Antarctica, causing it to lose its cargo of Sea World dolphins. He had also heard that scientists had just uncovered a newly active undersea volcano in the far North. I laughed off this ridiculous, cobbled-together explanation of New Dolphin Neo-

Domination City, as I had come to call it, and told the captain to send a boat for me in a few days. He replied that he was going back south, and another boat wouldn't come for several weeks. I told him to go nonetheless. Lifeboats were deployed -- no doubt full of grunts sent to haul me away from my Nobel prize in the making -- but without the assistance of the dolphins, who were out hunting, they couldn't make it to the City past the maze of razorbacked coral.

I was aware that my provisions would soon run out. But I had tried out the moss and found it edible. Also, I was an accomplished fisherman.

A week has gone by. I am beginning to feel very hungry and thirsty. The boat's provisions have run out and the moss, while filling, appears to have little or no nutritive value. Owing to the fact that all of the dolphins must stay in the warm water near the City, the surrounding waters have been heavily fished. In fact, I haven't been able to catch anything except a cold.

Yesterday a dolphin was killed during a geyser dive and the other dolphins ate it. In the meantime I have developed a number of alternate systems for combining kaos with the other words in the dolphin language. Though each works for a number of cases, none of them allow consistent interpretations of all of the sentences I have amassed in my notebooks of quasi-musical notations. In fact, far from being the "architectonic" of the dolphin language, as my old professor Bob Ylados might say, kaos seems to drain surrounding words of meaning and context. It is an anti-grammatical particle, the foundation of an anti-grammar. I think the dolphins have been made sick by this word. Or, that this word -- and the synchronized rotation that accompanies it -- is itself a sickness. Why else would they be starving even in the shadow of their greatest achievement?

The extremely hardy arctic moss has taken root in my hands, giving me greenish, hairy palms like a werewolf. I can only hope that as my physical enfeeblement progresses the moss begins to grow in my intestines, so that I can digest it steadily without going to the effort of chewing. Eating the dolphins is out of the question; talk about biting the hand that feeds you!

I have started to wonder whether Ylados was not wrong about Heidegger as well. Perhaps those words in "the angel speech" -- "being," "time" and "nothing" -- were not foundation words but shadow words that threw everything into doubt, symptoms of a linguistic sickness. If it is true that only angels could grasp the true meaning of those words that put the meaning of other words into insane flux, what kind of angels would those be? My memories of Ylados' class have become unbearably clear and vivid, a perpetual reminder of my past failures as a linguist. Maybe if I had known those shadow words for what they were back then I would have found a way to fight them, keep my mind clear. Now I have very little time indeed to figure out how to do so. Last night I clambered up to the top of the ball to look out at the water. I heard the dolphins splashing and chittering below. I realized for the first time that I was completely alone until I could make some sense of the dolphins' language. All the sounds I and the dolphins have made in each other's presence are, as of yet, nothing but noise. I feel like an unresponsive, uncomprehending stone. If no one else can understand what I'm saying, how can I be sure it makes any sense -- that I'm not infected with shadow words that take away everything in my words? I have always had a great amount of difficulty even explaining to other people just what I mean by a "dolphin". Sometimes, I would point out a dolphin, only to have others tell me "that isn't a dolphin, it doesn't even live in the ocean". I ran away once, afraid of becoming an enormous dolphin. Then, others claimed that dolphin's can't be enormous, or get turned into. But I definitely remember a friend of mine turning into an enormous dolphin, so to speak. My mother would say that a certain thing was a dolphin on Monday, but a different thing on Tuesday, when it seemed obvious to me that it was the same thing and not anything different at all. Most people agree a dolphin has a nose. So what is a dolphin? You tell me. I know one when I see it. Sure, dolphins can be wounded, modified. They can have body parts missing, others added on. There are young versions of dolphins that don't look like the older ones at all. We've all heard the one about the dolphin with a human face. But, deep down, all dolphins have that same essence that makes them a dolphin. Some people are more sensitive to it than others, I guess.

I don't know why I'm writing this. I have accumulated thousands of pages of diary entries in my life, all unread -- and unreadable, according to certain self-proclaimed critics. Maybe I have always needed someone to talk to. I really think the dolphins are making a sincere effort to communicate with me, football helmets and all. Their infection makes it so difficult -- my own infection makes it doubly difficult. If only Heidegger had never been born! I am weary and tired, completely coated with moss, a Toyota. But, there's no turning back. I will teach the dolphins to be rid of kaos. I will finally learn what they have to say, their message for mankind. Will it be a declaration of war? The command "prepare to be colonized"? An overture of friendship? A plea for obesity? Perhaps just a poem about the sea. Whatever it is, I will be their messenger. Or perhaps I will simply die alone on this rock. I may not be coming back at all. Explorers might find my moss-coated skeleton along with the remains of this journal, and wish they had arrived in time to save the precocious dolphins if not me. Oh, but if, instead, I return, if I make it back I will be bringing such wonderful news...

11/3/98

## THE CROWN JEWEL OF POSTMODERNISM

By Per Christian Malloch

“IF YOU FEEL YOURSELF BEGINNING TO TRANSFORM INTO A CHICKEN, STOP READING THIS AT ONCE” said the title page of *The Man who Transformed into a Chicken*. Ridiculous, Bob scoffed. Did they think a bogus warning like that could frighten off a real man? What did they take him for -- some kind of chicken? After a few minutes of reading Bob noticed that what he was holding the book with were not hands, but wings.

11/4/98

## THE TRAP

By Per Christian Malloch

"At last, when it seemed the torture would never end, the monster removed Conan's bowels and shook them out like garbage bags" read the last page of 'Conan: Trapped?!', a book Johnson was beginning to suspect was not the work of Conan's creator. It certainly made him regret peeking ahead. He couldn't believe that was the last sentence. Or rather, he couldn't believe what that sentence's place in the book implied: that Conan might actually die. He studied the book's cover in vain for evidence that it was part of a series.

It didn't help that the book was pathetically lame. For the first half of the book, in fact, Conan had done nothing except run away from a creature that seemed to defy exact description, but was alternately compared to a pink, armless cactus, a giant tongue with swollen taste buds, and a pickle with human flesh. While its upper body appeared to be a one boneless trunk of muscle, the creature had short, stumpy legs, and wore boots and suspenders -- surely a first for a Conan villain. Since it had no shoulders to speak of, the straps were always astray -- the author made no attempt to explain how it had managed to put on these clothes or tie its laces. When it was angry -- or, the book unclearly hinted, aroused -- little razors protruded from the bumps or warts that covered it. It made no sound, other than an insistent, high pitched squeal that was described as "a cross between the sound of flesh squeaking along the side of a bathtub, and the sound of a muted trumpet playing its very highest note."

Far from displaying his usual bravado in the face of this creature, Conan, at the first sign of its presence, would drop whatever he was doing and flee the scene in abject, unreasoning terror. The brawny arms and bulging legs Conan normally used to pulp his opponents would pump wildly in a marionette-like dance of fear; the smoldering, volcanic blue eyes one expected to see staring down an enemy bulged with panic; and the author never failed to describe the trail of bodily waste Conan left behind, or the footprints it left in it by his pursuer. On the chase would go, for miles on end, until Conan, who could run somewhat faster than the creature, had completely lost sight of



it. Then, with a sigh of relief, he would settle down in the nearest town -- only to have his new life once again destroyed, weeks, days and sometimes only hours later, by the appearance of the creature.

Johnson expected Conan to go on some sort of quest to learn how to defeat the creature. However, so far Conan had not even discussed his problem with anyone, not even himself. In the none too capable hands of the book's author, Conan seemed incapable of both introspection and all but the most basic forms of social interaction. Of course, there was no point in his making any friends if he would only abandon them, never to return, as soon as the creature found him.

Johnson would normally have thrown out a book this bad after the first hundred pages, but he was stuck downtown. It all started when he overheard a mailman saying "yes, it's about 2:40". 240 being his lucky number, as well as his personal favorite, he stopped what he was doing and looked around, on the hunt for opportunity. He soon spotted a large banner that said "Anime" in pseudo-oriental lettering. As a fan of Japanese Animation or "Anime", Johnson was elated at what he took to be the discovery of a new video store.

He walked up to the banner's building and saw the words "Animation Express" written on the second floor window. Curiously, on the first floor was simply a deli/convenience store, which he had to walk through to reach a staircase in back. He tromped up the stairs, encouraged by banners depicting Anime characters on the walls, and reached the second floor.

Where he saw a locked iron door.

It was the middle of Tuesday, and there seemed to be no reason why the store should be closed. Looking around for clues, he noticed a pay phone mounted on the brick wall next to the door. On the pay phone was taped a flyer that said "Animation Express" and a phone number. He paid the machine, dialed the number, and heard a phone ringing on the other side of the door.

Downstairs again, he asked the deli's employees why the store was closed. They responded that it didn't open until six. Johnson thought it must be a very hard-core Anime store if it kept such weird hours. Perhaps it was a family business, in possession

of a massive collection of bootleg videos, he fantasized. Anyway, to kill time, he had his new Conan book.

Oh, how optimistic he had felt before he'd gotten well into "Conan: Trapped?!" Before, the prospect of a few hours of reading had seemed pleasant enough. Now, the thought sickened him. He was almost tempted to just go home and come back -- except that the train ride would be so long that he'd have to spend the time reading the book anyway to avoid being bored out of his skull. Reluctantly, he settled down on a park bench to continue reading. He, too was trapped, he thought with an ironic grin -- trapped reading the book. He'd often wanted to be in a book, but with today's postmodernism, he'd probably only find himself in a book exactly like his own life, written expressly to mock his aspirations.

In a flashback, the book finally revealed how Conan had acquired his pink pursuer. It turned out that the creature was a predator of sorts that had the ability to psychically tune-in to a certain personality type. It would, by projecting holographic illusions, present an artificial environment specially suited to appeal to someone of this personality type. It would then lurk in this environment, like a spider in its web, until someone of the right type happened across it. Their reaction to the environment would be so strong that the predator could take a psychic "reading" of them which would allow it to forever thereafter locate them with unerring precision. Guided, as it were, by a homing beacon, the predator eventually tracked down its victim and slew them. In Conan's case, he happened to happen across a cyclopean fortress, adorned with storm clouds, thronged with crocodiles, and echoing with the screams of captured maidens, not to mention the throaty laughs of their dark skinned captors. Overcome with that combination of lust, racial fury, and foolhardy love of battle that Conan's fans have come to identify as the prime mover of his personality, Conan rushed headlong into the fortress, sword and axe at the ready. But no sooner had he set foot inside this veritable fortress of illusion, than he found himself wrestling with the creature, which he at first mistook for an enormous penis. Unable to stand the implications of all this, Conan fled in terror: a performance he soon found he was locked into repeating time and time again.

During this account, Johnson had a hard time forcing himself to keep reading. It seemed that the entire book was nothing more than an arbitrary and mean spirited attempt to put Conan in the most unpleasant, embarrassing and downright degrading situations conceivable. And, to judge from the sneak peek, the book climaxed with the ineffectual barbarian being cornered by the creature in some deserted cave or alley and disemboweled.

He'd picked up "Conan: Trapped?!" for its novel cover. Instead of the usual oil painting of a bronze muscle man hacking up orcs and serpents, the book had had only a pencil sketch of Conan's face, frozen in a grimace of horror. At the time he'd been looking for something a bit different, and this book seemed to fit the bill. But he hadn't realized just how different the book would be. It was even printed on cheap paper and stapled instead of bound, for Christ's sake.

Finally it was ten after six, and Johnson could head back to the "Animation Express". He went in through the deli and up the stairs to the landing, where he found, along with the phone of course, the large iron door, now open.

Beyond was a wooden door with glass panels. He peered into the glass. The day's last sunlight, coming in through the window that said "Animation Express" backwards, was the only illumination, so all he could make out were a few tables and chairs that looked quite old. He tried the phone again and heard it ringing on the other side of the door. After a few rings he heard footsteps on the stairs and hung up.

He hoped the footsteps belonged to the owner. He chuckled at the thought of how Conan might react to this same situation - anxiously watching the wall for a bumpy shadow, bracing himself to run up the stairs, up onto (and off, if necessary) the roof. He couldn't help but feel a little tingle of excitement himself when he saw how short the shadow of the person on the stairs was. But it turned out to be nothing more than a portly little nerd-boy, peering out of his bulky glasses with a fishy stare. The boy asked Johnson about an animation store that was supposedly up here and all set to open at six. It was clear that he and Johnson had been jumping through the same hoops. Hell, Johnson was almost surprised not to see a copy of "Conan: Trapped?!" in the nerd's hand.

"Should we go down and ask them what's happening?" the boy said. But Johnson himself felt the very unwillingness to confront the mocking deli owners once again that had presumably motivated the boy to ask, in his nerdy, indirect way, that Johnson go down and find out what's happening for him. Well, Johnson wasn't in the mood to do this little parasite the favor. Here he'd been, reading this awful book and trying to get into a store that kept peeling back layers of security like the skins of an onion, and now he was supposed to be the intermediary between little Mr. Autism and The Big Bad Outside World? Not a chance. He was just sitting here on his ass until the owner came, and he told the kid so. The nerd stormed away, passive-aggressively stomping -- not, of course, willing to engage in a direct confrontation -- and left Johnson alone with his book.

He had half a mind to call City Hall on that payphone and demand to know when this cock-maniac store was supposed to open. But he didn't have the number, nor any conviction that an answer would be forthcoming. And he couldn't leave for a while in case the nerd saw him and realized he'd been bluffing about being willing to wait for the owner. He wasn't about to let that chump feel superior to him. Trapped reading the book once again, he thought to himself; this time by my pride.

He'd known the climax of the book would involve Conan wretchedly begging for his life and finally dying at the hands of an overgrown pink cucumber, but he hadn't realized it would come so soon. In fact, thirty pages before the ending, Conan was already at the creature's mercy. The creature attacked by whipping its whole torso around like a giant whip or club to knock down its victims, then nudging its spike-covered tip into their bodies. Sometimes it would also flog fallen victims with its torso mercilessly -- giving the phrase "tongue lashing" a new meaning -- all the while making its characteristic ear-piercing ululation. The creature's repertoire of attacks also included constriction and various more or less harmless kicks and stomps, which it used on only the most fully subdued opponents, as it had great difficulty keeping its balance.

He'd seen the creature in action before -- it seemed to reward towns that harbored its target with spree killings -- but in the final battle, the creature achieved almost

unbelievable levels of sadism. It took only a few pages for the creature to break Conan's arms and legs with furious beatings, thus immobilizing him. Throughout this early stage of the "battle", Conan did nothing to resist, instead cowering in a catatonic ball. Only then did the creature sprout its cruel razors and begin peeling away strip after strip of flesh. The last few pages of the book were an unreadable odyssey of pain, suffering and horror the likes of which Johnson had never seen, and which, he hoped, he would never see again. Turning irately to the title page to find out who had written this atrocity, he discovered the author was listed as "The Conan Foundation."

Only when he had gotten up to leave, tossing the book aside as litter, did it occur to him that he hadn't actually tried the door. When he did so, he found it unlocked. Stepping into the murky confines of "Animation Express," he called out, demanding service. The last of the daylight was gone, so he really had no idea what kind of room he was in. He considered it more than doubtful that the store was open for business in any meaningful sense, but he figured maybe the bootleg loving family that ran the place only took special orders and kept the lights down when they didn't have a customer, to avoid attracting the attention of the police. A weak hypothesis, to be sure, but what else was he supposed to think?

He looked out onto the street through the window that said "Animation Express" backwards and, in a maudlin moment, wondered what Anime stores the pedestrians below might be on their way to. This one, apparently, since he heard someone trudging up the stairs again. He hoped it was someone useful this time, instead of the nerd who was as clueless as he was and had only come in because of that silly banner. It sounded like the newcomer was in good spirits about something, since he was whistling - or else trodding on the stairs so hard they squeaked. Johnson tried seeing who it was by carefully looking past his reflection in the window, but the light wasn't very good, since all he could tell was that whoever it was had a sunburn and was quite fat. "Hey there," he said, not turning around, as the footsteps grew louder and louder.

When he turned around the pink, bumpy thing was already rushing towards him, tongue-like body flexing eagerly. But he had one thing that Conan didn't: a gun. He raised his six shooter and blew the creature away. It fell onto the ground, flopping like

a fish on the deck, squealing in agony. "Never been shot before, huh?" he asked, unloading his remaining bullets into what he took to be its face. It hadn't quite stopped twitching, so just to be on the safe side he reloaded and emptied the chambers again, this time all over its body. "Thought you were going to wrestle with me, bitch?" he snorted, mentally checking off one of the things he'd always wanted to say.

Grinning broadly, he strolled out of the deli, with the owners, who had no doubt heard the gunshots, staring open mouthed after him. He'd seen that one coming a mile away. Evidently he'd have to be more picky about what he read.

A few days later, Johnson saw an article in the Daily News about a portly young Hunter College High School student who had had both his thick lenses and the inadequate orbs of vision they existed to compensate for blown straight out the back of his skull by what appeared to be a thrill killer. The article went on to say, adding the unnecessarily gruesome details he loved the media for, that the coroner had determined that the boy had still been very much alive and conscious when the rest of his body was shot in six places, as the first shots had managed to skid right on past most of his overgrown gray matter.

Later that evening Johnson was arrested. His lawyer informed him that the evidence against him was largely circumstantial. The main problem was that all the bullets in the victim's body were of his gun's caliber. Still, he still might be able to squeak by. Aside from not wanting to hear another god damned thing about squeaking, Johnson wasn't so sure his lawyer knew what he was talking about. The way he saw it, as he put it to himself privately, either the creature had possessed that little kid, or else the government was trying to cover up the creature's existence, maybe because it was some kind of CIA experiment. Either way, chances of a fair trial were minimal.

Still, he was an optimistic guy. He just might make it anyway, especially if more of those things started popping up, making a cover-up pointless. As he walked into the courtroom on the first day of his trial, he was even smiling. He only began struggling violently against the police leading him to his seat when he saw the pink, bumpy form of the judge.

11/4/98

DR. COCKMANIA

By Per Christian Malloch

"Johnson laptops technical support. May I have your first and last name, sir?"

"Bob."

"And the last name?"

"My parents didn't give me a last name."

"I'm sorry to hear that, sir. What seems to be the problem?"

"Well, I can't seem to print anything off my new Johnson laptop."

"You have a Johnson printer, of course?"

"Of course."

"Have you connected the parallel cable?"

"Parallel to what?"

"The thick gray cable that says 'to printer' on one end and 'to computer' on the other, that came with the printer."

"Oh, right. I got so used to calling it the 'kitten lasso' I forgot its real name. See, after trying to get the computer to work for a while I started telling the cord that that was all it was good for: lassoing kittens. Not that I have any kittens. But, seeing as I have this cord, that's probably fortunate."

"I'm sure that kittens aren't going anywhere in the houses of many of our customers because they've been securely lassoed, sir. Now, you say the printer won't print even when it's online?"

"Can you stop using all this technical jargon? It makes me feel like you're the technician-god, telling me how to fix the problems of a computer I'll never understand. My kids try the same high and mighty act, and they don't even know what they're doing. In fact, I was considering requesting service in Spanish, just so the technician would have to speak to me in broken English. It's pretty hard to feel superior when you can't even talk clearly."

"Bob I'm afraid that I'm the only technician on at this time of night, and I'm fluent in both English and Spanish. So your idea, good as it may be in general, won't work in

this case. You'll just have to trust me not to take a lofty attitude. Now, does the little green light on top of your printer -- well, why don't you just tell me your name for it."

"I call it 'Mr. Go'. Because it looks like a green traffic light. Sure wish it would tell my printer to go, instead of just sitting there, not printing anything."

"And Mr. Go is on?"

"Oh yes, the printer gives every indication that it's all set to print. But my computer won't have any of that. Seems to think the printer is some kind of lower form of life, not worthy of talking to."

"Don't worry, Bob. Soon enough they'll get a proper introduction. But first, I'll need to perform a 'Cabon Copy'. That's where our two computers get connected by a phone line, so that I can have an exact copy of your desktop in front of me to work with."

"Okay, but I rather doubt that my computer, which I have renamed 'Dr. Cockmania' in honor of its phenomenal non-performance, will be willing to have much to do with something as lowly as a phone."

"Okay Bob, I want you to plug the, um, Kitten Lasso into the big port on the back of your phone."

"There's no big port on the back of my phone."

"Just have a look. I'm sure you can find it, even if your children don't believe in you."

"Well doesn't that just beat all. I've never seen that big port there in my whole life."

"Well, the new phones these days are bit different. You probably just assumed your latest phone was like all the other phones you've ever owned, even though it is in fact profoundly unlike them."

"Okay, I've plugged the Kitten Lasso in the back of the phone. Now what?"

"Just a few moments while I perform the Carbon Copy process. The weather's nice over there, according to your computer's built-in thermostat and climatological sensor. Have you taken your family to the beach?"

"No, both my son and daughter are so morbidly obese that they refuse to appear in public in bathing suits -- a fact for which the rest of the world, if it only knew, would probably be thankful."

"How did they get that fat?"



"By eating. There's no other way to get as fat as they are. Whenever I picture them, they have no knees at all. Just stumpy, elephant-like legs. They refuse to spend their lunch money on anything but candy. When I put them on a school lunch program, they'd just trade their lunch tickets to their poorer classmates for candy. If it weren't for my wife's continually replenishing the house's supply of potato chips and donuts for her own use, no matter how rapidly my children's gluttony diminishes it, something might be done, but as things are, they're unstoppable fat-juggernauts."

"Aren't you afraid they'll overhear this conversation and suffer so much damage to their self esteems that they, as escapism, turn to eating even more?"

"No, I can always hear them tramping up the stairs like a herd of rhinoceri when they want to see me. What are they going to do? Lower themselves from the roof and hang listening by my window, like ninja dumplings? I don't think so. Anyway, if you think they're self esteem is low, you're mistaken. There's simply nothing more important to them than food. Being fat doesn't stop them from eating even more food, so it doesn't bother them. They don't want jobs, lovers, photo ops. They don't want long life. I mean, that's what they say, and I can tell from those dimpled smiles of theirs, so quick to appear in the presence of the latest éclair or slice of cheesecake, that they really mean it."

"So Bob, I've now got your desktop Carbon Copied, and I'm looking through the files which contain information that might be relevant to the problem you're having with Mr. Kitten Lasso."

"It's just the Kitten Lasso. It hasn't displayed enough personality to warrant giving it a salutation, which I've always considered somewhat honorific."

"Okay, now I'd like you to follow along with me Bob, so you don't lose track of what's happening. You wouldn't want me giving you commands for no apparent reason, like some external authority that knows just what's good for you and gets to kick you around, right?"

"You've got me there."

"Go to start... then settings... then My Computer... then the bar that says device manager... then to the icon that says 'parallel port' - you can rename it later if you wish. Now, what do you see once you've clicked on 'parallel port'?"

"It's says 'this device is working properly'. But that's using the computer's -- that is, Dr. Cockmania's -- self diagnosis. The computer could be telling you the port was fine even when it was weeping bloody tears. It's like you're asking the computer whether it's fine, and it's saying 'feeling great. I don't know what's the matter with this guy that says I'm broken.' Well, the computer's the broken one. You should be asking MY opinion."

"Okay, let's quit out of all of those windows -- click on the little x on the upper right of each box until you're back on the desktop."

"I hate that part. It's like I'm burning postcards from all the places I've visited."

"And do you take many vacations?"

"No. My family's food budget is enormous. Anyway, their of a good time is staying home, watching TV and eating. At least, that's the kids' idea, and my wife always takes their side."

"This time, I'll need you to click on Start, then Preferences, then at the bottom of the file list you should see a folder called 'My Life'. Let's open up that little pimpster."

"Okay, I'm looking... Funny, I don't... Oh, there it is. Wow, there are icons for me and my wife... and there THEY are..."

"Your children? To judge from these images, they are indeed quite fat. Looks like right now they're asleep in their beds."

"Not beds. Beanbags are the only things that will support their shapeless bodies."

"Now, looking at the graph of your marriage over in the 'ratings' section, it looks like things started going downhill right after your wife had the kids."

"Yeah, before then, she was the most wonderful, fine gal... But when those two little monsters emerged from her like a couple of... shrunken copies of that tire-man they have in the tire ads who, for some reason, is all white, it was like all she wanted to do was let them bloat grotesquely at our expense. I guess it's some kind of dark instinct. Looking at her breast feeding the creatures, I couldn't see why these two sagging

bundles of fat deserved our help more than, say, a couple of stray cats or a lost puppy. But as she became increasingly defensive about the children, I lost contact with her."

"The graphs indisputably show that total yearly date time dropped off sharply as soon as the tire people came on the scene."

"You know, you hear a lot about how you're not supposed to get jealous, because it's wrong to think that someone has a finite amount of love that gets divided up. But that's a bunch of bullshit. Of course the more time and attention someone devotes to other people, the less they devote to you. The only thing that makes it bearable is believing those other people deserve it -- or, failing that, not really wanting to spend much time with that person."

"And she still spends a lot of time with them, according to the latest statistics..."

"Yes, taking them, the twin personification of undeservingness, to restaurants and so on. It's a marvel she doesn't get fat herself. I guess they just eat right off her plate. Of course, that only makes it worse. If she became... like them, at least I wouldn't miss her."

"So basically, would you sum up your problem as 'my wife is in love with a monster'? Because if you look at the 'Values Contributed to Bob and Society' index under the kids' names, there just isn't anything there. That's pretty unusual. Most kids at least have some drawings or something by this age."

"I know, right? Neither one of them has ever even told me a funny joke. Not once. Because if they had, I would have remembered. I would have written in my diary 'had my life in some way bettered by one of my children for the first time today.'"

"Indeed, the fact would have been recorded in the index for you to look at today."

"A few times, I came into my room, and I saw the kids kind of rolling around next to the computer. I'd walked in on them by surprise, and they were trying to get up off the floor, never an easy task. When I asked them what they were doing they would only say that they wanted to look at the computer. At the time I thought they were just hoping to shop for food via internet, making their lives even more sedentary. But now I wonder whether they found out I was planning to print out autopsy photos of obese

people, wrap them up, and give them to them as their Christmas present, with a note that said simply 'what the future holds.'

"Well, the computer doesn't seem to have been physically tampered with, but you never can be sure... I think I've found something. If you right-click on the icon for your kids, you'll get a new menu. I want you to click on the 'probabilities' option in that menu."

"Got it... What are all these lines? It looks like some kind of tree."

"That's a chart that represents the chances of various things happening given your current circumstances. Why don't you try clicking 'find' and typing in 'parallel cable'?"

"Huh, the line with the parallel cable icon on it is heading away from most of the other lines. Is that bad?"

"It's quite bad, Bob. You see, in collaboration with a few insurance companies, we've developed a way to forecast what you might call 'bad luck'. In your case, the diagram's basically saying that no matter how many ways you try to get your parallel port fixed -- no matter how many new drivers you install, how many printers you try, how many cables you buy, how many times you call the technical support centers, and how many times you check to make sure that your cables are securely connected as a result of your applying gentle, yet with firm pressure, you will never, ever get it to work. A never ending series of seemingly unrelated complications, difficulties and disasters of various kinds with always seem to interfere with the port's smooth operation, until you finally lose all will to continue fighting or even get out of bed."

"Is there any way to change that?"

"Well, you see those huge, thick lines that most of the little lines tend to converge on?"

"Let me guess -- those are my fat kids, aren't they?"

"That's right. What that image represents is that right now your children are the major determinants of just what is likely to happen to you. In other words, you children somehow influence everything that goes on in your life more than any other factor."

"What would happen if they... if those lines weren't there?"

"There's no telling, Bob. The power of your children over your fate is so all-pervasive that we can't even draw up a hypothetical model of what your life would consist of without them. All we can say for sure is that it would be extremely different."

"I see. Well, I, um... I'm still under warranty..."

"And you want Johnson to make good on its promise that your computer will indeed work the way you were led to expect it would when you paid one thousand dollars for it?"

"I mean, there's a chance the port will work if the probability... the tree thing... right?"

"Bob... would you like me to... clear your children from the desktop?"

"Yes. That's exactly what I want. Or else you can kiss my thousand bucks goodbye."

"That's easy. In fact, you can do it right there. You've always been able to. You'll notice in the bottom of the screen a toolbar."

"That row of little pictures?"

"Right. Just click on the delete icon -- the one that looks like a no sign. Your cursor should turn red. Now, just click on your kids. If you've done all that, you should see a message saying 'are you sure you want to delete these from the desktop? Yes/No.'"

"Do I ever! Okay, I hit Yes. Anything else?"

"Nope, all finished. Now go to Start-Settings-Printers and try and print a test page."

"All right, I'm doing that... Holy shit! It's printing! I can't believe it!"

"Will that be all then, Bob?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Thanks so much -- er, I don't remember your name..."

"Just call me Dr. Cockmania."

"Thanks again."

"Just call back if you have any more problems."

"Sure thing. Well, g'bye."

"Bye now."

## OBESE CHILDREN FOUND MURDERED

Two children whom police described as "remarkably fat" were found murdered in the living room of their Los Angeles home last week. Police initially considered the children's father, Bob (no last name), who "seemed elated" at the news that his children were no more, as the prime suspect, but changed their minds when they were unable to find more than circumstantial evidence connecting him to the murders. At present,

there are no suspects and no leads, although detective Miles Popper believes that "the way their intestines were sectioned into dozens of links and neatly arranged in test tubes, it had to be the work of some kind of doctor."

The family doctor, George Santiago, could not be reached for comment.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, Bob and his wife claim they have discovered "a new strength in each other we never thought existed." "When I look into my wife's eyes," Bob added while leaving the police station, having made what looks like it will be his final deposition, "I see the rekindling flames of romance."

11/12/98

## THE TRUE PIMPS

By Per Christian Malloch

Bob woke up one morning and realized he'd become a pimp.

His wife had loved him, but had begun to hunger for new lovers after the onset of his inexplicable impotence. He'd encouraged rumors within his circle of male acquaintances that his wife wanted an affair -- not, of course, in so many words, or in a way that would reveal the reason, but by casually alluding to her secret pornography collection and several undisclosed purchases from adult catalogues that had shown up on his credit card bill.

Bob had assumed that one of his friends would up and sleep with his wife on his own initiative, but he'd underestimated his friends' honesty and loyalty to him. His friend Sam had approached him with the confession that Bob's wife had been coming on to him, had in fact filled him in on the whole situation; and that, to ease his conscience, he wanted to pay Bob a handsome sum for the privilege of taking her away for the weekend. Bob glumly assented, not knowing that soon enough, his other friends would be approaching him with similar offers -- would in fact be competitively bidding for his wife's company on special occasions like Valentine's Day. Through it all, his wife displayed only the sweetest emotional loyalty to Bob, as if by her promiscuity she was attempting to make sex with her so meaningless that Bob no longer missed it.

Yes, he'd pimped his own wife. He'd become Ellen's pimp! Oh, but how much less satisfying the thought was than it was when he had first entertained it at the age of fourteen -- when he had sworn to his pimped buddies, all of whom died drunkenly riding a Chevy into an oncoming bus before graduating college, that he would do just that to an as yet unaware of his existence blonde debate teamer named Ellen. How much less, for he had learned to want her all for himself. Perhaps he had always been that way -- perhaps the absolute control over another person's sex life inherent in pimping appealed to him only because it could be used to truly guarantee faithfulness. With monogamy no longer possible, on that hypothesis, what good was that power?

Still, the next time he observed his wife having sex with another man in his private observatory, the thought that he was indeed pimping Ellen was enough to bring his wizened, long inert genitals back from the grave. Not so when he attempted to make love to her that evening, in an event that ought to have been entitled "sobbing marathon of flaccidity" – he could hardly pay himself to have sex with Ellen, so the pimping element was as sadly absent as his own erection. Somehow only the satisfaction of finally keeping that vow to his friends after all this time was enough to excite him. Bob was at any rate pleased to have some semblance of a sex life returned to him, no matter how unreasonable were the terms. But a few pimping sessions later, a thought occurred to Bob that stopped him in mid-stroke. If his only route to sexual satisfaction was through keeping his old oath to his friends, didn't that mean that they were pimping him? He groaned at the thought that his life was becoming a B-horror movie called "Pimped from Beyond the Grave". If only that one moment of arrogance hadn't got him caught in a cycle of impotence, pimping and communion with the dead from which there seemed to be no escape! Well, he told himself, there was no point crying over spilled milk -- or unspilled seed, for that matter. He was a pimp, and a pornographer to boot, since his friends had also pressured him into selling them videos of each escapade, so that they could all get together on "Pimpmania Thursday" every month to watch them in a marathon, comparing and commenting on their sexual performances. That was that.

Bob soon developed an unbelievably painful boil or blister on the inside of his ass. This lump of pain bled regularly, caking his hairs with dried blood and dyeing the surrounding skin a pinkish color which made the whole package look disturbingly like a vagina. The illusion could be dispelled only by frequent showers. Since she never saw him naked anymore, he was able to conceal his embarrassing condition from his wife.

One day the water stopped running. In a panic, Bob called a plumbing agency, but it was late at night, and he was told he would have to wait for hours. He spend the time waiting in the bathroom, anxiously studying the disgusting, hairy reddish patch on his backside as, like some giant single celled organism, it made its way around the bottom



of his rump and engulfed his genitals. He sadly waved goodbye to his forlorn, drooping penis as the last of it sank into the swamp between his legs.

He heard a window breaking and ran out of the bathroom to investigate, buck naked. It seemed the plumbers had arrived and were so eager to start work that they were hurling themselves through the giant windows at the front of his house. The late night plumbers were clearly of a lesser breed than their daytime counterparts, as they had arrived in a badly beaten up Chevy, and were dripping with rotting flesh. Soon enough the zombies had both Bob and his wife strapped down to the living room floor and were taking turns dipping the remains of their cocks into their struggling bodies. As Bob recognized the faces -- or at least the bone structure -- of his classmates, it became clear to him who the true pimps had been all along.

11/28/98

## MR. COOL

By Per Christian Malloch

Bob took after Mr. Cool right away. Indeed, he did his best to imitate Mr. Cool's swagger, his heraldic rings that were said to betoken great wealth, even his hairdo which made the top of his head look like a perfect, neatly folded over portion of toothpaste as deposited onto a toothbrush in every toothpaste commercial, in order to encourage the consumer to waste as much toothpaste as possible in each brushing session.

Far from resenting Bob's efforts to replicate his every attribute, Mr. Cool took Bob under his wing. Generously, without ever having to be asked, Mr. Cool would pass judgment, instantly and finally, on every outfit Bob wore; every long disused pick-up line he dusted off for its own use, and he hoped, second life; every opinion he expressed.

But the biggest honor for Bob was being taken into Mr. Cool's confidence. Every week he would awe Bob with tales of his fiery romance with his girlfriend. Being too cool to have an on-campus girlfriend, Mr. Cool preferred to see his chosen one far from the prying eyes of schoolyard gossips. As a result, Bob never met Mr. Cool's lover. Oh, but he was told everything: about her beauty, her amazing sense of decorum, her insatiability in bed. He knew that only by radiating Mr. Cool's invulnerable confidence, his same atmosphere of guaranteed, in-the-pocket success, could he hope to catch himself a comparable mate. The cool people, Mr. Cool once explained, can afford the high social and monetary price of having other cool people; the rest have to settle for the shit. A copy shop owner just isn't going to end up with a movie star for a girlfriend no matter how nice a guy he is.

It was just as well that Bob never met Mr. Cool's mistress. After all, as Mr. Cool himself stated, if Bob and his girlfriend hit it off, then he would have to worry about her infidelity and the breakup of his friendship with Bob; whereas, if Bob and his girlfriend turned out to dislike each other, he would be in the disagreeable position of adjudicating between them. And his relationships with Bob and his girlfriend were too

important to jeopardize either one of them by attempting some kind of integration of the two.

A few years after their admiration society was formed, Mr. Cool announced that he was marrying the girl of his dreams. Now that he had established a relatively permanent claim on her, he went on to say, he at last felt at liberty to show Bob her picture. Of course, he added, it's always a bit anticlimactic when you see the face of the woman a man has devoted his life to, but this photo should nonetheless secure massive bragging rights for the one entitled to carry it in his wallet. With that, he ceremoniously handed Bob a photo. Bob handed back the picture Mr. Cool had mistakenly handed him -- a photograph of a seventy year old woman with a silver, bowl-shaped wig covering her skeletally bald head who was no doubt Mr. Cool's grandmother -- and asked to see the promised photo of Mr. Cool's girlfriend.

Mr. Cool handed the photo right back. Bob looked long and hard at the photo. She certainly seemed like a nice little old lady. Still, he couldn't help but wonder whether Mr. Cool couldn't have used his coolness to attract someone a little better. He decided to sit and look at the photo some more. No need to arrive all at once at the conclusion that he had wasted his entire adolescence.

12/1/98

## THE CHICKENS IN THE LIBRARY

By Per Christian Malloch

When Bob walked into the Johnson Library stacks, he found his way blocked by an enormous chicken. It was sitting, as if incubating eggs, but it had no hope of standing up without ramming its head through the ceiling, which its crest was already flattened up against. Nor was there any hope of Bob's getting to the book he wanted. Indeed, the chicken was so tightly wedged between the bookshelves that he wondered how it had managed to get there at all.

The chicken seemed to pose no threat to Bob, despite the fact that it looked like it could peck open his head like a grape. It eyed him sleepily, but otherwise refused to respond, even when, somewhat foolhardily, he poked its belly.

"What seems to be the problem, sir?" the librarian asked.

"I can't reach my book" Bob said.

"Do you want me to loan you a stepladder?"

"No, that's not it. The reason I can't get the book is..." Bob paused. How was he supposed to tell the librarian his way was blocked by a gigantic chicken?

Bob ventured back into the stacks. Perhaps he could work his way behind the chicken by weaving through the other bookshelves.

It turned out that unbelievably huge chickens, each as lethargic as the first, were wedged between all the bookshelves, making the entire floor impassable.

Bob dutifully ascended to the second floor, where he saw row upon row of titanic, near-comatose chickens blocking all the aisles.

A few weeks later, Bob returned to the library, eager to begin the senior thesis he had put off due to the condition of the stacks on his first visit.

He wasn't sure how he could tell, but he was absolutely certain it was the same chicken.

Didn't the library hire any janitors? Didn't it hire anyone except incompetents who couldn't even keep the stacks from being overrun by mind-bogglingly large chickens?

As the thesis could no longer be put off, Bob told the librarian about the stacks, still half expecting to be laughed at. But the librarian knew all about it. "Yeah, they didn't used

to be so big. The first one we caught was about the size of my thumbnail. But the chicken that hatched out of its egg was a little bigger. It burst out of the shell fully grown, and laid another egg a day later, even though it hadn't mated with or even seen any other chickens. Well, we were already getting fed up with this, so we smashed the egg, but another chicken was already inside, and kind of inflated to its full size right on the spot. They actually take longer to hatch if you leave them alone. Meanwhile, the first chicken had already escaped and started laying its eggs all over the place."

Throughout the library, many students were supine in front of the chickens, as if their inability to complete their senior thesis had made them give up all hope.

Bob found his friend Sam gazing passively at one of the chickens. It returned the favor. He asked Sam whether he hadn't better get up off the floor and start looking somewhere else for his books. "I feel so sorry for this chicken, but somehow I feel that it feels even more sorry for me" Sam said. Bob took Sam's hand and pulled, intending to help him up, but Sam made no effort to move; when Bob let go, Sam's arm dropped. When Bob looked into the eyes of the chicken, he saw not compassion but bland, pitiless indifference.

On his way back to the main desk, Bob found himself pelted by the intestines of one of the chickens, which exploded without warning. The reason for the explosion soon became clear: unable to lay its egg anywhere, the chicken had been the center of the rapid growth of its successor, which as the librarian would have predicted was larger yet. In fact, its head was not visible, as it had forced its way through the ceiling.

Later, Bob almost stepped right on the face of another chicken, which, having forced its way up from a lower floor, was at about foot level. The face of the chicken as Bob stood with his boot poised over it betrayed neither fear nor defiance. It looked at Bob, as it might have looked at the wall.

Bob asked the librarian about the demoralizing effect the chickens seemed to be having on his classmates. The librarian said that many of his colleagues reported to work only to spend all day sitting in front of the chickens. "I came up to this guy I used to hang out with and asked him what he thought he was getting paid for, and he just said 'I feel like no matter what I do I will never relieve the suffering of this poor chicken. Look, it

can't even turn around -- why do you expect to see any hope in its eyes when it can't turn around? And I know that this chicken must understand my own suffering'."

It occurred to Bob for the first time that he had never heard any of the chickens in the library go pkaw, or make any other sound other than the hiss of intestines whizzing through the air.

The next day, Bob found Sam sitting in the same position in front of the same chicken. To judge from the smell, Sam hadn't moved at all since Bob last saw him -- and who knows how long before. The chicken was gazing at Sam without interest, as if the effort of moving its eyes to look at something else would be too great.

The librarian had managed to get some books on chickens by clambering over one of the chickens, which had offered no resistance. "I was interested," he said, "by this Swedish legend about the going of pkaw. Normally, chickens, who are so naturally full of ebullient happiness that they can't stop going pkaw, bring free energy to other life, like the very sun whose rising their crowing heralds. Pkawing also burns off tissue, keeping them fairly small. But if some kind of inhibitor stops them from pkawing, they can grow into massive chickens the Swedes knew as the 'Jotun.'"

Bob had begun to feel a strong bond of friendship with the librarian, who seemed to be the only other one to question the chickens' right to inhabit the library.

As they discussed different possible ways of handling the invaders, the building was rocked with periodic explosions that announced the arrival of ever larger chickens. The librarian confessed that on one of his trips, he had glimpsed something that had looked like a feathery pillar, which he realized was a throat.

The chickens' admirers, whose numbers seemed to increase daily, grew thinner and thinner. Bob began to suspect that the chickens were somehow feeding on them, on their will to live. There was no sound in the stacks other than the far off rumble of sections of the building collapsing as more and more chickens burst into life.

Bob had a nightmare in which the news showed footage of Big Ben and the World Trade Center, both of which had vast chicken heads protruding from their sides, looking, unmoved, at throngs of admirers camping in the street beneath them.

The librarian gave Bob a call. Apparently the letters he'd been writing to the city council had finally convinced them that they had something like the legendary "Jotun" on their hands, as he and Bob had been asked to participate in a containment operation. Several vans screeched to a halt in front of the library and disgorged SWAT teams, which headed right for the stacks, boots clomping. With the help of Bob and the librarian, they located and rounded up all the chickens' admirers and herded them into trucks painted inside and out with large yellow happy faces, all the while smashing them with their billy clubs in the hopes of provoking resistance and restoring their fighting spirit. Normal, pkawing chickens were waiting at the camps the government had already prepared, in case beatings alone weren't enough.

Using grenades, assault rifles and flamethrowers, the SWAT teams then charged through the library, systematically killing every chicken in sight. Mute, uncomplaining, the chickens watched as teams of men emptied cartridge after cartridge of bullets into their flabby, inert bodies; dumped bundles of grenades into their mouths; blasted them with fire. To save bullets, the soldiers generally stomped on the heads or beat them with the butts of their rifles. The trickiest part of the operation was killing the protoplasmic thing inside each chicken before it could grow into another one. Everyone would stand in a circle around the dying beast, firing like mad, pausing only to reload; most of the work, though, was done by the flamethrower users, who ensured that the would-be new chicken was "born" in an infernal womb of burning flesh.

A wrecking ball broke down one side of the library, exposing a number of chickens which were several stories tall, and which had clearly been motionless their whole lives, so tightly were they clamped by the floors they had burst through in their moment of growth. After all people had been evacuated, Apache helicopters swept in front of the building and fired volleys of missiles at these gargantuae, who, smoking, shuddered through floor after floor, bringing the building down on top of them. The helicopters then circled the wreckage, discharging a multi-million dollar storm of bombs, missiles and explosive, uranium-tipped rail gun rounds.

After the smoke had cleared, the SWAT teams wandered the heap of rubble, checking for any remaining chickens. Occasionally, a soldier would boot aside a concealing rock

and shoot a small chicken that had somehow escaped annihilation during the invasion, demolition and carpet bombing of the library.

Bob kneeled by the library's remains, vomiting. His recent experiences notwithstanding, his mind wasn't that used to the sight of internal organs, especially in their native element. Still, he felt good -- as if he were vomiting out the last of his weakness. He thought about the chicken face he had almost stepped on, but spared; if given the same chance in the future, he thought with a smile, he would stomp it out of existence. Today, he had become a man.

12/8/98



## THE RELENTLESS PIMP

By Per Christian Malloch

Timmy was a handsome youth often seen at Dartmouth's drinking parties, where his boyish, never quite combed black hair ended up bobbing over many a welcoming vagina. Yet, after a few months of touring the party circuit, Timmy began accumulating a reputation as a brooding, would-be pimp. For, not a minute would pass after Timmy had zipped up, before he began attempting to "sell" the services of the girl he had just finished with to other partygoers. His "customers," after being furiously rebuffed by the female in question (often still crying "tears of semen,") would do their best to turn Timmy's night from a night of pimping into a night of getting his ass severely beaten. And once the word got out about Timmy's entrepreneurialism, his face found it a little more difficult to talk its way into the warm confines of nearby pussies.

But there was a certain type of girl that seemed drawn to Timmy even in spite of, or perhaps one should say because of, his reputation. A martyr of sorts, who believed that she could "cure" Timmy of his habits by showing him the power of love. This kind of girl often wasn't the type to go to parties -- was more the type to stay home reading a book, albeit often a pornographic one, on a Friday night. That meant no passersby would be available to whom Timmy could attempt to sell her services seconds after his first grunting discharge. Not to be foiled, Timmy would leave a hundred dollar bill by the bed, folded around a note that said, simply, "pimpn' ya". Eventually, such treatment was enough to cool the ardour of even the most masochistic bookworms. After a while, Timmy's activities as protopimp went into steep decline -- and then abruptly came to a halt. Word soon got out that Timmy was entering the marriage market. Women that had once found him irresistibly desirable found themselves put off as Timmy peppered them with pointed questions about their cooking and cleaning skills. Skin pale, dry and taut from monkish sexual abstinence, Timmy, who now wore all black clothes, soon became known as "the apostle of a new Jewish Mormonism" rather than "campus protopimp".

Rebecca shared Timmy's victorian value system, and as a result was soon sharing many a thing besides with him: walks in the park, puffs of sugarless cotton candy, foreign films shot entirely in cafe's, and pretty much everything else -- aside from corporeal juices. After a year of courtship, no longer able to bear the tension, she begged Timmy to make love to her -- baring her plump breasts, which he coldly put away at the same time as he told her he loved her. It wasn't long before the inevitable marriage proposal came. But the marriage itself would have to wait another year, as Timmy insisted on getting his degree and securing an entry level position in Axelson Chemical Engineering before taking on the responsibility of supporting a family. During the agonizing wait, Rebecca made enough discreet, brown-paper package purchases to have been able to turn her entire front yard into a forest of dildos, had she so chosen. Not that she didn't have plenty to do: Timmy was paying her way through finishing school.

At last, the marriage day arrived, and those prostheses could be thrown away, creating havoc among the garbage men. Timmy, black clothes appropriate for the occasion for once, marched Rebecca down the aisle, eager to have their souls sworn into eternal bondage by a wizened priest. But before the ceremony could be completed, Timmy had one request: that the wording of the oath be changed from "till death do us part" to "forever". Rebecca knew that every cracked egg, every boiled bean, every swept floor had existed for the sake of this one moment -- and then it was upon her, his kiss.

That night, in the house Timmy's first bonus had enabled him to buy, they celebrated their marriage in a long-awaited ecstasy of blowjobs, breast slapping, and panting, on-all-fours rutting. There was enough pleasure to shrink their minds to tiny pinpoints, aware of only the passing split second, in this, their shining cash-in on all those foreign films, all those shared interests and hobbies, all those special moments together. And when Rebecca woke up the next morning, she saw a hundred dollar bill, crumpled around a note that said "pimpin' ya" next to her on the ground, and the bare walls and floor of the house, which no longer had any decorations, any furniture, anything in it to suggest that people had ever lived there.

3/15/98

## THE IMAGE COUNSELOR

By Per Christian Malloch

At first Cinderella was delighted to marry the prince. On their wedding night, however, she found out that her wifely duties would revolve around "lactation simulation". Fresh milk was deposited by the bed with a clatter, and the prince would alternate between splashing milk on Cinderella's bared breasts -- the only portion of her he would allow to go unclothed in his presence -- and squeezing them with an exceptionally blunt pair of pliers. With the right timing, and practice made perfect, droplets of milk would seem to escape her nipples until the prince fled into the next room, leaving her to clean up the mess while listening to his furious masturbation. In an irony only a sadist could appreciate, the prince's interests did not extend to genuine lactation, an event their sterile lovemaking made an impossibility.

Other than words of encouragement during "milkings", her husband said nothing to her. This was just as well, she often told herself. The prince was a bore -- his every pronouncement a pretentious, pompous absurdity. Listening to him boast to his friends of his sex life was the worst. Instead of replacing his lies with the truth, a potentially disastrous move, she would silently curse the mother whose teats had apparently run dry far too early in the life of a certain Prince Charming.

When Cinderella attempted to cook, her cringing attendants were routinely beaten. The slightest rattle or clatter would provoke a hail of stinging blows, in the delivery of which the whole staff was ordered to participate once the princess had exhausted herself. Not even her most trusted handmaidens were ever told the reason for her hatred of clattering sounds -- their resemblance to the sound made by the slopping bucket of fresh milk as, every night, her husband slammed it onto the floor of their bedroom with the words "time for lactation... simulation".

As she lay on her back, enduring the grotesque parody of breast feeding whose nightly enactment was her only form of interaction with her spouse, her eyes rested on the giant bear trap the prince had affixed to the ceiling, threatening that he would use this trap to tear out her womb if, somehow, she ever became pregnant.

When, after three years of torture and humiliation, it seemed clear to Cinderella that the prince's fascination with "lactation simulation" would never abate or even dampen, she decided it would be better to use the bear trap on herself.

"How many of these obscene Cinderella books do you estimate were slipped into the shipment?" Johnson asked his client, a Mr. Jimster Cladwell of Neo-Bantam Book Co.

"One in every twenty out of the box books appears to have this, ahem, unfortunate addendum in the back," said Cladwell.

"In other words, twenty thousand could theoretically be in the laps of surprised mothers -- the real lactators -- reading to their children as we speak" Johnson said evenly.

"I'm afraid so. Now, Mr. Johnson, you are aware that the Cinderella myth is crucial to the stability of our Zone. Without it, all of those big balls and glass slippers aren't going to mean jack shit. If the myth is told wrong, either by word or through these despicable books, it will cease to be a common frame of reference. Our Zone might become so non-atmospheric that it got annexed by some fairy castle in a few seasons. Fairies running around on our properties -- Johnson, it makes me sick just thinking about it."

"Calm down, Jimster." Johnson soothed. "No need to rush to the doomsday scenario. Now, you say that most of the boxes of your latest run of Cinderella books are unopened, correct?"

"Correct."

"There's no way to smother this new version of the myth now that it's reached so many people. Our only option is to try to distinguish it from the original as sharply as possible."

"Are you suggesting we scrap this run and put out a new book?"

"You can't do that, because tens of thousands of people have probably seen the legitimate book, which is outwardly indistinguishable from the illegitimate one."

"So what do we DO then?"

"I noticed that on the cover, the title is written in a crazy font with all these ribbons and flowers used to make up the letters."

"So?"

"Seems to me like the first letter of 'Cinderella,' as rendered in that font, could plausibly be interpreted as a 'G.' I recommend you distribute the books as normal, only with a note or sticker attached which says that there's a new myth on the loose, called 'Ginderella,' which features the notion of 'lactation simulation'. The note shouldn't make clear whether the book it comes with is 'Cinderella' or 'Ginderella'. However, thanks to the note, the way the reader interprets the title will depend on whether they encounter the words "lactation simulation". Even if they bought the book thinking they were getting 'Cinderella,' once they get to the part you just read aloud, they'll say 'whoops, looks like I bought 'Ginderella' instead".

"What about the fact that the book covers are exactly the same? Won't people compare their copies?"

"Neo-Bantam Book Co. will issue an official apology for releasing editions of both 'Cinderella' and 'Ginderella' with identical covers, and the ensuing confusion."

"But that will just help spread this corruption of the Cinderella myth to more people!"

"Look, Jimster. Cinderella's never going to be the same. You have to accept that the public conception of the Cinderella myth is bound to change. All we can do now is minimize the damage -- try to make sure people don't think of blunt pliers and milkpails whenever they see glass slippers and pumpkin coaches. And the best way to do that is to insist that any version of the myth that features a prince who squeezes his wife's milk-drenched tits with a pair of pliers isn't Cinderella at all, but rather 'Ginderella.'"

"But we don't use that fancy font in the text, just on the cover."

"So what? The main character's name may be Cinderella, but the story's still called 'Ginderella.'"

"That's bullshit!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cladwell, but your hour's up. Please let me know if one of my competitors comes up with a better solution. A courier is already on the way with your bill" Johnson said, cutting the intercom connection and opening the kit from his five-o'clock client.

The kit contained a videotape, so he popped it in and started watching.

The video was ostensibly a recruitment video put out by Zymantec Software Corp. Soon, however, it metamorphosed into a pseudo-documentary on the life of Peter Nortton, Zymantec's founder and CEO.

According to the video, Peter "Cock Guzzler" Nortton (as the narrator began to call him almost immediately) had long ago amputated his own penis and saturated it with a preservative, in order to be able to gratify his penchant for cock sucking whenever, as it often did, the mood struck him. It was well worth the loss of the opportunity to provide the joys of cock sucking to others. He had never been one for reciprocation. "Probably got my baby teeth knocked out sucking cocks -- the bigger the better" Nortton mused in an obviously fabricated interview segment, thoughtfully sucking on his own amputated, preserved penis. "My favorite TV show was always Inspector Gadget. Not only did the inept inspector remind me of my own weak father, but I like to imagine the 'Gadget cock' extending for ten or fifteen feet, like a prehensile tail made of segmented metal. Not only would such a device enable one to receive blowjobs through the bars of a prison cell -- the venue where many of us first learn the art -- but it could also wrap around an opponent's neck before entering it, strangling him from both within and without."

The video then became a study of the daily life of a Zymantec worker. Each day, at the blowing of a whistle, the entire male staff was required to gather around a huge, funnel-shaped arena and masturbate. A thousand little rivers of semen would crawl along the arena walls, meeting one by one until they became a torrent. This fountain of youth, once collected at the funnel base, was pumped straight into the mouth of a waiting Peter "Cock Guzzler" Nortton, via a plastic penis which made the ritual, subjectively speaking, "an odyssey of cock sucking".

The video ends with Nortton expressing his frustration that Zymantec, a well-known prosthetics manufacturer, cannot currently sustain the number of employees that would be needed to generate the experience of sucking an ever-replenished, youthful penis indefinitely.

"A consummate slander" Johnson observed to an obviously distraught Peter Nortton at the beginning of the appointment. "They've used all the latest techniques: voice

'fonting' using hours of samples, image manipulation, credibility vampirism. Frankly, I'm a little worried that your onscreen persona is going to whip out a cock and start sucking it in mid-sentence."

"Do you think they're capable of that kind of follow-through? Using a pirate broadcast even in this private consultation?" Nortton asked, face pale.

"Sure. I'd be a great authority to have on the side of the slanderers. The worst part, Mr. Norton, is that if you don't abandon Zymantec, you will probably have to fight ever stronger leanings toward cock sucking yourself."

"What?" was all that Nortton could say.

"I'm sorry, but it's true. Given the wide distribution of this video, by now irreversible, public perception of Zymantec as a fortress of fellatio, if you will, is over 60%. As you know, Zymantec's Zone can exist only so long as it sustains a certain atmosphere. And that atmosphere, for most people, is changing."

"Zymantec's Zone is going to fall apart?"

"More like fall apart and be rebuilt as a new Zone without anyone noticing it was gone. So if you don't want to become part of the sideshow depicted in this video, Mr. Nortton, I suggest you find a new life not tied to your corporate identity. I'm sorry, but I'm not charging you for this session. There's nothing I can do" Johnson said, sighing and shrugging his shoulders.

He didn't know whether to blame pirate broadcasting or a supremely rapid fulfillment of his prophecy when Nortton began fumbling in his pocket for something that probably wasn't a cigar.

8/1/99

## THE DUCK

By Per Christian Malloch

To make their wedding night more special, Bob and Sally swore not to have sex with each other until then. But this set Bob thinking. Surely if the wedding night was so special, it would be a disaster if all did not go smoothly. What if the sex was dull, his performance insipid? What if Sally's claims to virginity turned out to be true, and the evening's pleasure dissipated in a cascade of medical complications? No, there was no way Bob was going to let anything ruin that special event. To his vow of abstinence, Bob silently added a second: that come the wedding night, he would be one of the world's greatest lovers.

Bob traveled to Thailand, where the easy availability of virgin hookers -- or, in some cases, hookers who had undergone surgery in order to be able to simulate virginity -- allowed him to become so comfortable with the blood, numbness and raw terror of virgin sex that he no longer had any worries about the consequences of battering his way into Sally's eighteen years of privacy.

He'd seen it all -- groans, hyperventilation, and cunts of seemingly impenetrable tightness now caused not alarm but amused boredom. But he had to travel to the convents of Europe in order to find whores who were willing to have sex during menstruation. As he pumped and swabbed his way through those sickening nights, his thoughts were always with his beloved Sally. No shock, no nightmarish torrent of virginal blood would turn her wedding night into something to remember with a shudder. No matter how unromantic the circumstances, he would guarantee mind blowing orgasms to them both.

Talking shop with the most worn out hos he could find -- and paying by the hour for the privilege -- Bob became a master of every contraceptive, disinfectant, and sterilization implement that ever came within swabbing distance of human genitals. He studied the symptoms of the major venereal diseases, experiencing some of them firsthand, until he was confident that he could walk into a public restroom and tell whether the last person to piss there was a whore just from the stench.



The strictly medical, crisis management phase of his training over with, Bob embarked on a campaign of self indulgence, promiscuity, and sex tourism the likes of which his puritan parents could never have even imagined -- without thereby obliging themselves to hours of self-flagellation.

Ironically, whipping of self and others was one of the first pleasures Bob experimented with -- and, as he discovered, one of the most mundane. Straps, belts, harnesses, suffocating leather masks, male lingerie, and clothing made of form fitting plastic were all old news in the circles he became part of.

But there were pimps aplenty who were ready to indoctrinate him in the new school: chemical stimulants, electrocution, and costumes. Bob knew that Sally, whatever her demure exterior, might manifest any number of sexual personalities. To make sure she would be satisfied on that crucial first night, Bob tried every role: stern pastor, sobbing baby, ignorant lawn care professional, and everything in between.

Technology had changed the world of epicurean sex. Now it was good for more than just spraying massage oil from the firefighting systems in the homes of the wealthy, during their ballroom orgies, or creating liquid cocaine to be sucked from the nose of a glass dolphin. For at one of those very orgies, Bob met a brilliant inventor who offered to show him inventions that were "guaranteed to satisfy even the most jaded appetites." Her personal favorite was the still living head of a golden retriever, mounted on a box which both supplied it with nutrients and, at the touch of the button, would electrostimulate the head into furious, continuous lapping. The inventor used this furiously lapping head in lieu of sponges and brushes to clean her body...and for pleasure. Similar technology had been used to create a female lower body whose legs kicked and struggled frantically. This contraption allowed a man who would have been a serial rapist to live a relatively normal life.

The invention that interested Bob the most, however, was a six foot long cylindrical shaft or tunnel lined on all sides with rows of disembodied breasts. These breasts had been genetically engineered to secrete oil instead of milk, making artificial lubrication unnecessary, and electrostimulation kept them shifting restlessly. The tunnel was calibrated for Bob's size, and then in he went. Sometimes he would simply lie inside it,

allowing the restless shifting to gradually bring him to screaming orgasm, but other times the inventor's assistants would hang on to his feet and push him in and out of the tube, giving him the sensation of traveling headfirst into a titanic vagina.

Unfortunately, a month before he was to get hitched, Bob encountered a little hitch in his plans. The sexual potency which he had been trying so hard to maximize inexplicably vanished. Not even a dip in the tube lined with disembodied breasts was enough to revive his shrunken, flaccid penis. It seemed that the parade of decadence that his life had become had become a little too much for his brain. When he found out the one thing that would still arouse him, all he could do was swear.

At last the appointed day arrived. Bob had had no sex for the last two weeks, as he needed time to let the marks left by all the whips, buckles, teeth, nails, and ropes that had invaded his flesh in the past months heal completely. In addition, he had hoped -- vainly, as it turned out -- that this break from his past would cure his impotence. It was with a heavy heart that he accompanied his beaming wife to the marital bed. There, he knew, they would have to have THE CONVERSATION. Time slowed down, as if God were letting him savor the last minutes of his life before THE CONVERSATION changed it totally. Then again, maybe his life had begun to change a long time ago. They sat down on the bed, and, as they were removing their shoes, THE CONVERSATION began.

"So, what kind of sex were you planning on having?" Bob said nonchalantly. "What do you mean, what kind? I thought we'd just...do whatever came naturally" Sally said. She didn't even know the word for missionary style.

"Uh huh."

There was a long pause.

"I'm a virgin, Bob" Sally said, face downcast. "I just... if we make love, I'm sure it will be wonderful. We can learn the ropes together. It'll be fun" she continued, beginning to cheer up. How could Bob tell her that there was nothing for him to learn -- that he knew every position, prop, and scenario so well that the thought of rehashing them from the beginning produced only sickening boredom? Not that it mattered. Those positions assumed the presence of a man who wasn't impotent.

"What's the matter, Bob? Why aren't you looking at me?" Sally said, beginning to grow anxious. There was no point in dragging this out any further. Silently, Bob began unpacking the suit. "Sally, if we're going to make love, you'll have to wear this" he said in a colorless voice when he was finished.

"Bob, what is this?"

"A suit."

"It looks like a duck."

"It's a duck suit."

Then there was a very long pause.

"Bob, what..."

"I'm sorry, Sally. I wanted to prepare for our wedding night. Make sure I was a great lover, so I could really sweep you off your feet tonight. But I got into some perverse sex, and something in my mind kinked. If you don't wear the suit...well, that just won't do it for me. I guess it's good that this test of your love comes at the beginning of the marriage rather than at the end. Unless this is both" Bob said, manipulating her and telling himself he would make up for it, for everything. The thought of her in that styrofoam, full body duck suit was really beginning to arouse him. He wished she'd hurry up and make up her mind.

"What are these holes?" Sally said, examining the suit closely for the first time. "Your bare breasts will protrude from those" Bob said as quickly as he could. "The rest of your body will be completely hidden from me, unless I choose to peer into the hole into which I will insert... my penis."

"Does this little hole really have to be labeled 'insert cock here'?"

Sally said, frowning, as if complaining about this little detail would lessen the reality of the suit as a whole. "Oh, I forgot to take the sticker off. You see, there's a model for lesbians with a third hole the size of the others."

Sally struggled with this. "So a woman would put her breast inside it?"

"Or a third breast could protrude."

"What do you mean, a third breast? There isn't room in this suit for two people!"

"Of course, but you could always use a disembodied breast."

"That's absurd."

"The technology for that exists already."

"No it doesn't. They can't even transplant organs correctly, much less keep them alive outside of a human body!" Sally said in exasperation.

"It exists. I've seen it" Bob said, wondering for the first time exactly how the technology he'd seen really worked. "I didn't want to have to say this, but I personally, while playing 'Roman Messenger,' have been ensnared by a bola weighted on either end by disembodied breasts attached to small, nutrient bestowing platforms. And the person who threw them keeps one such breast on his keychain, miniaturized of course. In times of stressful decision making, he used to tell me, he grips it fiercely."

"You're insane" Sally said, half laughing. "Or you're kidding. You're kidding aren't you?"

"Sally, there's one thing I'm not kidding about," Bob said, evading the question until he could answer it himself. "And that's this duck suit. Now put it on, or this evening's over."

As Bob watched Sally put on the duck suit, tears streaming down her face, he reflected that despite his best efforts, his wedding night was not all it could have been.

Sally canceled their honeymoon. "Do you have to even fucking ASK?" Sally said when he asked why. Bob couldn't really afford to travel anyway, what with all the money he'd spent during his training, but it was still a disappointment. Thankfully, Sally never disappointed him in bed -- glumly putting on the duck suit and readying her breasts for another evening of rough groping. It was easier to put up with now that she had installed a little light inside the head of the suit, which was enough to read by.

The marriage retained a semblance of normalcy on the outside. There were, after all, a power couple, and any breakup would have been professionally disastrous for both of them. Besides, Sally would never cry during their lovemaking sessions if she didn't still love him.

Bob had not spoken to the people who had been his constant companions during his training ever since THE CONVERSATION. Any association with them would only remind him of THE CONVERSATION, as if he didn't have reminder enough every time

he fucked his wife in a duck suit. He sometimes wanted to blame them, get even. But he knew who was really to blame. One day he dreamed that he was being dipped in the tube lined with disembodied breasts, only this time the breasts were dead and rotting, their purple nipples oozing not lotion, but pus.

Ironically, Sally seemed to have taken to the suit. At least that's what he had to assume the night he saw her wearing it without him -- wearing it on a streetcorner in the middle of the night. He saw her through the window, illuminated by a streetlamp, and he fancied she saw him, since she raised up a foam wing and pointed right at him. The next day, when he saw Sally at breakfast, he decided it was better not to ask her what she had been doing until he had a better idea himself. He would have ample opportunity to research the subject, he discovered, since Sally began appearing on the street at night regularly, always raising one styrofoam wing to point at him when he peeked out the window. The funny thing was, every night she seemed to be a little closer to the house.

Then one night he realized that the person in the duck suit wasn't Sally, because he was having sex with Sally when he looked up out the window and saw the person across the street, foam wing raised, pointing. He began to feel sick, and he judged that his cock had gone limp, since he could hear Sally saying about divorcing him for real if he couldn't get it up even under these conditions. But he shook off the unease he felt and concentrated on making love to Sally. He couldn't let her down. He loved her. Always had. He wished he could see her face behind the duck head, but he knew that the second it came off, blood would stop flowing to his dick faster than if he'd dipped it in liquid nitrogen.

As if for the first time, he wondered why things had to be this way. Some part of his mind that should have been left alone had been disturbed. And maybe some part of the world had too -- something that only came when called.

Something that had come to him when he was leaning against a glass dolphin filled with liquid cocaine at an orgy where massage oil poured from the roof, and spoken of certain unusual inventions which were guaranteed to satisfy even the most jaded appetites. Now a cocaine-streaked memory came back to him; something about an

agreement. He didn't know what it had been, but he knew that upon the sight of that tunnel lined with disembodied breasts, he would have promised anything to get inside it.

A week after he'd seen the person in the duck suit watching him while he made love to Sally, the doorbell rang in the middle of the night. As the man of the house, Bob was obliged to open it. It turned out he didn't have to, since styrofoam arms burst the door asunder and grabbed him as soon as he put his hand on the knob. The person in the duck suit gripped him with strength of a demon and carried him out of the house.

Even as his muscles stung from the person's bruising grip, he was conscious of her bare breasts protruding from the carefully cut chest holes -- and was ashamed to find himself aroused.

He wouldn't have long to reflect on this last betrayal of Sally, it seemed, as the person in the duck suit was taking him somewhere in a hurry. Unlike Sally, she was really into the part -- waddling to and fro (though faster than any duck could ever waddle) and quacking up a storm (though louder than any duck could ever quack). Bob beat feebly on the duck suit, which was quite firmly packed with what must have been a very fat woman, and demanded an explanation or at least an itinerary. He wasn't expecting an answer, and he didn't get one, unless he was supposed to be able to interpret quacking. A few blocks from the house they came to a large crack or fissure in the ground which emitted a loud, almost deafening hissing sound. Here, to his alarm, the duck wrestled him to the ground with the strength of a demon and held his face up to the crack or fissure in the ground so that he could see into it. It was, in a way, a familiar sight: a tunnel lined on all sides with plumb, disembodied breasts. But they were not the breasts from the tunnel in his training. They were the breasts from his dream, dead and rotting, and they went down, down as far as he could see into the dark. He had a sudden, absurd vision of the person in the duck suit climbing for miles and miles up this tunnel, using the rotting breasts and hand and footholds. He was beginning to remember the exact terms of his bargain when what was not a person in a suit at all shoved him headfirst into the hole. And then he was falling, decaying breasts leaving streaks on his clothing, his face.

And at the end of the tunnel he could see fire.

12/3/99

## THE PIMPAPUPS

By Per Christian Malloch

"Sir.

"...Sir."

"What?"

"Some dudes are here to see you, sir."

"Thank you, Raymond. Show them in. Wait, did you say--"

PYOW! They punched Sidney, my boss, in the face. Then, while he rolled around on the ground, holding together his face, they tussled everything in his office.

They were looking for the pimpapups.

I'm Raymond. The second I saw them, the dudes, I knew exactly what was going to happen. But they pointed guns at me and told me to let them in. Knowing to what lengths my own employer had gone in his frenzy to capture the pimpapups, I had no trouble believing that they were willing to kill me, so I let them in.

Let me back up a minute. The pimpapups, in case you live in a cave or are a mental retard, are the most popular characters ever created. What are they? In a word, puppies. In two, bulldog puppies. And in three, anthropomorphic bulldog puppies. Perhaps I am being excessively coy, but some buildup of anticipation seems appropriate when I am introducing the concept of something as magnificent as the pimpapups. The anthropomorphism of these bulldog puppies consists not only in their upright posture. They wear feathered caps and gator shoes like the pimps of old. And this is the secret to their popularity. Their cute demeanors, which are those of adorable bulldog puppies, appeal to women, while their implicit connection to unlimited sexual adventure appeals to men. They are irresistible.

Just for clarification, while pimpapups "A" and "B" are absolutely (non-numerically) identical, pimpapup "C" has a pink bow on her head, indicating that she is female.

The man who created the pimpapups immediately realized that they were so appealing that he could skip the product and move on to the character merchandizing. Thus, there are no pimpapup dolls or action figures, no pimpapup movies, no pimpapup



story books; and while there is a pimpapup theme song that most children sing in the street, which goes

pimpapimpapimpapups, pimpapimpapimpapups,  
 pup pup pup, pimpapumps,  
 pum-pyum pum pimpapyups

, it is not substantial enough to release as an album which might serve as a core pimpapup product. There are only pimpapup lunch boxes, pimpapup tea sets and T-shirts, pimpapup posters and bumper stickers. I myself regularly eat a generic sweetened corn cereal which is sold in a box labeled "The Pimpapups," out of a porcelain bowl which is plastered with pimpapup pictures. At one point this cereal was called "PimpaPops," but the cereal company that held the coveted pimpapup license realized that the cereal would sell more if its title held out to the consumer the faint hope that the box he was purchasing actually contained the pimpapups.

Perhaps it was this shrewd, albeit cynical, decision on the part of The Pimpapups Cereal Corp that first gave rise to the rumor that the pimpapups existed as living flesh and blood entities. Probably this sort of rumor or urban legend would have arisen anyway due to nothing more than so many people's fervent desire that they, the pimpapups, be real. Whatever the reason, bogus pimpapup sightings soon became so commonplace that they were not even covered in the news.

Until someone obtained live footage of the pimpapups.

They were standing around on a ledge near the top of the Empire State Building, smoking cigarettes and appearing to communicate with each other. They were only about one foot tall, but they could jump many, many times their height, as the world discovered when they gracefully leaped off their ledge and onto another one across the street, as if sensing danger. Seconds later, the SWAT team that had stormed the building in an effort to "secure" them reached the ledge and began shrieking in infantile frustration, groping after the pimpapups in the air.

After this first appearance, the hunt was on. And no one has been more thorough in his search for the pimpapups than my employer Sidney, who is also the man who first invented them and, as such, the wealthiest man on the planet. He has had sex with two

women at once while rolling on ecstasy. He has flown around the world and sampled the delicacies of the world's aristocracies. If he has an idea for a movie, the Spielbergs and Lucases grovel before him for the opportunity to make it. Every whim or desire that comes his way is instantly gratified, as it has been a hundred times before.

Except one.

Sydney has spent an average of one million dollars per day on personnel and equipment in his worldwide hunt for the pimpapups, and millions more on containment facilities. More and more of the budget is being diverted to the latter, for it turns out that the pimpapups aren't that hard to catch when absolutely everyone is looking for them. The hard part is keeping them in captivity.

The first time Sidney captured the pimpapups he made the mistake of leaving them in a locked room alone. They were out within hours. The second time, he rented a cell for them in a maximum security prison. Before a day had passed, they somehow escaped. The third and most recent time he decided not to take any chances. The pimpapups were muzzled, bound hand and foot, and locked inside perforated steel coffins. Then the coffins were lowered into a vault 15 feet beneath the earth, with reinforced concrete walls, dozens of video cameras, lasers blocking the only exit, and an honor guard of unsleeping android ninjas. Tracking devices were also injected into or attached to the pimpapups so that their every movement could be monitored.

They escaped.

I should mention that every time the pimpapups escaped, it was my duty to run up to Sidney in the middle of a conference and say "sir, the pimpapups have escaped."

"WHAT?!" he would shriek. Then his eyes would roll and he would pound his fist and gnash his teeth in an almost comical display of spasmodic fury.

Dudes, as in the beginning of this little testimonial, have ransacked my employer's offices dozens of times, believing that he has spread false rumors of the pimpapups' escape as a ploy to deter thieves. When it becomes obvious that the pimpapups are nowhere to be found, the thieves fall to the ground, flopping like fish, in rage. They are carried out in this condition by the police.

It seems obvious to me that, given the escapes they have already pulled off, the pimpapups will always escape. One can possess a pimpapup mug or a pimpapup cookie, but the pimpapups by their nature can never be possessed. When I point this out to my employer and suggest that perhaps he should pick a more realistic goal to pursue, he only snarls that I do not understand how much he loves the pimpapups. And yet I think I do. I can see the look of debauched pleasure in his eyes when they bulge in fury after I tell him "sir, the pimpapups have escaped." I can see the corner of a smile on the mouth that froths and gnashes with anger. However consuming, however painful his desire for the pimpapups may be, it never fades because it is never fulfilled. He knows that he will never capture the pimpapups and never have to face, beyond them, the gray abyss of boredom.

9/14/00

## Miscellaneous Writings

### THE FIVE STAGES OF A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP: A GUIDE FOR MEN

By Per Christian Malloch

Sex is not free. It must be purchased with wealth and status. Those men who lack both of these may find their romantic lives confusing. Now, they can rest easy, for I have written this guide to let them know what to expect.

First, some definitions:

Love - Friendship plus rubbing. Slavery to an unwilling master.

Lover (or Beloved) - That person whose privilege it is to dispense rejection.

Lust - That feeling that causes one to forget the value of money.

Romance - A game of tag, whose prize is syphilis.

Poetry - The deranged child-babble of men suffering from an excess of lust.

Madness - That condition in which a man's mind becomes indistinguishable from a woman's, usually brought about by one or more of the former.

In brief, romance consists of five stages:

Stage One - Attraction.

Stage Two - Nothing.

Stage Three - Nothing.

Stage Four - Nothing.

Stage Five - Give up.

Let us consider each stage in more detail.

Stage One. Suddenly a new woman is on the map. A brief consultation with your glands confirms that she conforms to your genetically programmed ideals of beauty.

One of you initiates contact. The air crackles with excitement as you observe numerous behaviors and tropisms which you take to be signs of encouragement.

Stage Two. The woman cooperates in making various plans. Strangely, any plan that would involve the two of you being alone for a significant amount of time always fall apart due to last minute illnesses, sleepiness, homework burdens, etc. You still manage to see her, in situations where the presence of numerous other people or the brevity of your interaction makes the contact meaningless.

Stage Three. Excuses multiply as all possible pretexts for interaction are shot down one after another. You begin to feel guilty for calling, as if you are weighing down an innocent with the burden of your unsated lusts. Face to face contact is reduced to a minimum.

Stage Four. Unwilling to continue in this beggarly fashion, you begin to apply boycotting and filibustering techniques, such as deciding not to call until called. These isolation techniques, as you discover to your dismay, work all too well.

Stage Five. Hope fades, and with it your pain. You no longer care whether your boycott has had any effect (in all likelihood, it was not even noticed). Thank God I'm over that. She might have wanted to have children. Probably, she'd want to go to the fuckn' bahamas every summer. I don't even like the beach. Was she a dancer? A musician? I can't even remember what it was that I was feigning interest in.

At this point a return to stage one is possible, either with the same woman (who is mistakenly thought to have "recovered") or with a new one.

To help you through the process, as you repeat it again and again, keep in mind the following words:

"Hope is a weed that never ceases to struggle into view and make one's placid fields unsatisfying to the eye. But life is the pesticide that eradicates it."

This mantra will serve to remind you that your frustration will not go on forever.

GOOD LUCK!

\*\*\*\*\*

Per Malloch is a student at Columbia University. He is currently pursuing a BA in Random Studies.

11/17/97

THE MORALIST'S BAG OF TRICKS: AN AMORALIST'S GUIDE TO THE FIELD OF JUSTIFICATION BY APPEAL TO NONSENSE

By Per Christian Malloch

Whatever it is, somewhere a moralist is saying that I ought to do it.

He -- so he says -- is not merely commanding me to do it, as is the mother who tells her son that he ought to stay home tonight because she wants him to baby-sit. A command is merely a voicing of one's subjective will, not a genuine ought-statement.

Nor does he mean that it is an act which it has not occurred to me to do, but which I would probably resolve to do it if I gave it a moment's thought, as my friend means when he says that I ought to try orange ice cream since I like the taste of oranges. A counterfactual is-statement describes what would be, but not what should be.

Nor yet does he mean that however unappealing it seems to me, I would be willing to do it if I fully understood how doing it would help me get things I want, as my doctor means when he tells me that I ought to have outrageously painful and expensive shots because (so far as he can tell) I would find having the disease they prevent even more painful and expensive. So-called prudential or conditional ought statements, which say what one ought to do given that one wants to achieve a certain end, are also counterfactual is-statements.

Finally, he does not mean that it looks to him like I will do it, as the sea captain means when he says that it ought to rain tomorrow. Predictions and descriptions of expectations surely do not describe what morally ought to be, but at best what will be. An ought-statement is not merely an imperative like "tie my shoe," not merely a detached report of a brute fact like "2 + 2 = 4." Enough about what an ought statement is not; what is it? When I ask the moralist this question the fun begins: the parade of metaphors taken literally, fakes and imitations treated as genuine, imaginary beings and properties treated as real that is called moral justification. For the secret of moral discourse is that it is conducted in a language whose terms cannot be defined except in terms of each other, a play-language whose only use is deceit.

The Good

What's good? What's bad? "Bad" is a word people use to designate objects and events they wish to avoid. That an agent calls something bad (not morally bad, but simply bad) tells me nothing about the object itself but only how the agent plans to treat it. One day a child puts his hand on a hot stove. Ouch! He calls the feeling that accompanies his hand's being singed a bad feeling. He develops an aversion to things which he thinks will cause a feeling he calls bad, and to things which he associates with the bad feeling due to the one frequently following or accompanying the other; he starts speaking of bad things (or simply bads), bad acts and bad situations in addition to bad feelings, as he has learned to dread these almost as much as the bad feelings themselves.

Things that are instrumental in bringing about other bad things are themselves called bad things -- as for instance a bad idea, which when put into practice leads to disaster; a bad man, who is prone to cruelty; or a bad tool, which by failing to perform the function expected of it leads to the frustration of failure.

Useful as this account may be for helping one understand the conditions in which the word "bad" is used and what to expect when someone uses it, it is not a definition of that word. To define a word is to say what it stands for. But some words stand for things that are not words and hence not literally sayable. Consequently some words cannot be defined. The only way to learn how they are used is to experience or imagine the phenomena they stand for and learn to call those phenomena by that word (sometimes guided by pointing, pictures, charades, and other methods of so-called ostensive definition).

Bad feelings are undefinable. Other bad things are either undefinable or only definable by reference to bad feelings. It is useless to call them (physically or emotionally) "painful," "unpleasant," "abominable," "horrid," or other such words, since these terms are all synonyms for "bad." One might as well try to describe the color red to a blind man by saying that it is sort of between orange and blue. If someone wants to know what a bad feeling is, tell him to cut himself with a razor or be left by a woman he loves; "THAT's a bad feeling." If he still does not understand perhaps he is numb and in need of a towel or an alienist.



In sum: bad feelings are not simply those feelings which someone would rather not have (though they are that too); they are the subjective phenomena they are, things which cannot be spoken but only gestured at. But as long as one understands the way the word "bad" is used, this is as much of a definition of that word as is possible or useful.

All of the above applies to the word "good" as well. Feelings one wants to have are called good, and so are things that cause such feelings or are useful means to the attainment of other goods. Direct experience of a feeling most people call good is most easily achieved with the aid of pornography, which consequently is often called a good.

### The Bag of Tricks

1. Along comes a moralist warning us that pornography is bad. But pornography serves to give me good feelings, I say; are you suggesting that I do not like it?

"Irrespective of whether you like it, pornography is -- morally bad." But what is thus called bad is bad only morally; it need not literally give me bad feelings. Likewise, what is called morally good need not satisfy my desires, it does not pander to my merely personal, selfish interests, but only it is good for the character, the soul, the spirit, the person, or, even better, simply good in and of itself -- not, at any rate, of any use to me! It is therefore a fake good.

2. The moralist thinks that because I am in the habit of saying that bad things are what I seek to avoid, perhaps he can scare me away from something by calling it bad. But this is an attempt to reverse cause and effect. I decide, or my instincts and conditioning determine, what I like; the fact that I want it makes me call it good, it is not its being good, or my recognition of its being good, that makes me seek it. Just calling it bad cannot make me seek to avoid it.

To say that something is "morally good" is not to name some objective feature of it; it is THE SAME THING as saying that there is some situation in which people ought to pursue it, as becomes obvious whenever one probes for a definition of what it is for something to be good. "Good things are desirable." How can they be desirable if

people don't desire them? "Well, they would desire them if they knew what's good for them." And what's that? "What they ought to pursue."

Thus, "X is good" is a RULE masquerading as a statement of fact, not a fact from which rules can be derived. Goodness and badness are fake properties, spoken into existence by moralists, to dupe people who have become so accustomed to using certain words that they have almost entirely forgotten their origin and meaning.

People who make it their business to do things called morally bad are sure to be called morally bad themselves. The reversal of cause and effect is complete when people wonder whether they are bad, and how they can be made good (as if anyone but themselves had the power to decide what to like and dislike)! The bad people are the metaphorically impure, the poor in spirit, and the forces of darkness, whether or not they are literally well-washed, well to do and well lit. Fortunately it is not at all unpleasant to suffer from all of these fake properties, unless one is afraid of being called meaningless insults. Being immoral doesn't hurt except in virtue of things other than one's immorality itself (e.g. raging mobs of moralists who stone immoral people, or the impracticality of the actions that, as immoral, one ends up taking).

3. "You do not understand" the moralist responds. "Good things are what you must pursue, and bad things are what you cannot pursue." Oh really? Then how come I am quite capable of doing what I cannot, and not doing what I must? The moralist's "musts," "cans" and "cannots" do not describe what is in fact my situation. They describe what he would like to be my situation. His imaginary can crumbles before my real can. At a party, for instance, I took a piece of chocolate from a table. "You can't have that" said the hostess. "Oh yes I can" I responded, and I ate it. "You cannot have that" means: you cannot have that with my permission, i.e. if I had my way you wouldn't be able to have it. This appeal to fake necessity gives me no motivation to change my ways as long as I, not a moralist playing God, retain the power to decide what my ways will be.

4. But do I not have morally binding obligations to others, incurred through a hypothetical or implicit social contract? This being a contract that I never read, signed, or negotiated with anyone, but is rather something I allegedly would have signed (even though I refuse to sign it now) or have implicitly (though not in any demonstrable way) consented to. Watch me ignore the obligations stipulated by this fake contract and see whether I am literally obliged to respect them!

A contract that literally obliges me is one which (given my likes and dislikes) I dare not ignore when the time comes for me to discharge my literally agreed-to obligations. I could comply out of terror of the wrath of the parties with whom I negotiated the contract (or that of third parties that stand ready to enforce it). I could comply out of the desire to preserve a reputation for fairness of which I could then take advantage in future bargaining situations. Perhaps, even if it were not in my material interest, I might comply out of irresistible sympathy for those I would harm if I reneged, or because of some other psychologically compelling consideration. Rather than a really obligating contract, all the moralist has is a contract that only metaphorically binds me or that he says morally ought to bind me -- that is to say, that would bind me if I were the moralist's dupe.

5. Now the moralist sings a new song. Morality (the moralist) lays down a number of moral laws which it is my duty to obey. "When it is time to do your duty, you have no choice but to obey." Does that mean these laws are impossible to break? No, for unlike natural laws, moral laws are broken all the time, much to my satisfaction. Does that mean that these laws are enforced so well that (given my likes and dislikes) I have no tolerable option but to obey them? No, because moral laws supposedly retain their status as really existing laws independently of what laws are actually being enforced. Neither God nor nature will actually punish me for breaking them. It is, of course, "bad for the spirit" and might make me a person called morally bad. But these consequences don't hurt, unlike the consequences of breaking positive laws.

In brief, a moral law cannot make me follow it unless I feel like doing so anyway. I stand immune to these fake laws, which are not positive laws but only laws that (as the

moralist says) ought to be positive. Nor am I intimidated by the fake coercion that backs them, which is nothing more than the pretended retribution of imaginary beings, or else spiritual punishments to which I am numb.

6. As one might expect, along with these imaginary obligations and laws go fake rights. If someone says he has a right, there are some things that he will say people are morally obliged not to do to him, and/or some things that he will say people are morally obliged to do for him. Ignoring these obligations is called violating the right. Now a positive legal right is backed up by actually enforced laws that ensure that it will not be violated with any frequency. A moral right on the other hand is just a right on paper. The person who is murdered in a lawless society is neither protected nor consoled by the fact that some say he has a moral right not to be killed. If dispensing justice in the real world is ensuring that each person is treated the way he is legally entitled to be treated, social justice is the justice that the moralist says ought to be dispensed (but which, so long as it is not actually dispensed, is only a fantasy, or if you like an ideal). As for the claim that moral rights cannot be violated -- do you trust that imaginary can to stop me?

7. But, our indefatigable moralist argues, there is a higher authority than human lawmakers and human desires. There are things more important, honorable, sacred than any individual -- the greater good of man, truth, beauty and justice, chickens, and so on. And the ends they have or endorse are more important than human ends. How can something be important if it isn't important to me? "You just don't understand how important truth, beauty and justice are in themselves." But one calls something "important" if one cares about it, pays attention to it, prioritizes it, notices it, treats or reacts to it in certain ways; nothing is important or unimportant in and of itself. So all the moralist means by recognizing what is truly important is -- regarding as important what one ought to regard as important. He insists however that he is talking about importance, another fake property -- as if anything would persist in being important after the last human were dead!

Similarly, how can my own ends not be as important as other ends if my personal ends are the ones at which my actions are directed? “You fail to see that your own ends aren’t really as important at all.” Translation: there are some ends that you ought to rank above your own ends. “You ought to take the ends of man more seriously than your own because man is more important than you.” Translation: you ought to rank above your own ends the ends of beings you ought to treat as important, because they are beings you ought to treat as important and you ought to regard the ends of such beings as more important than your own. Oh!

8. Similar to the claim that some things are intrinsically important and worthy of honor and respect is the claim that certain things (usually called people) morally deserve a certain kind of treatment. Now what someone literally deserves, that is to say the price his services or his company fetches, is nothing other than whatever someone literally gives him in exchange for his services on the spot, as a gift, or as fulfillment of their part of a binding contract with him. Thus we say that the work of a movie star is worth more to a movie studio than the work of a janitor, because movie studios (contract to) give stars more money than janitors. If someone decides to kill a man, he is worth the price on his head, or else the killing is a gift to everyone who despises him, although he does not deserve to be killed unless, like the patients of a doctor much in the news recently, he literally asked for it.

The moralist says I morally owe bums handouts, that people deserve to be treated with dignity and consideration (“people have human dignity,”) or that hard work morally merits high pay. Who agreed to these prices and who pays them? No one, for they are fake prices, a fantasy which the moralist demands we make real. How can an hour of labor be worth ten thousand dollars except at the moment when someone pays ten thousand dollars for it? It can’t, unless you invent the fake property of worth, a metaphorical worth which clings to things between transactions, and woe to those under the moralist’s power who ignore this worth in their trades! How can a person deserve my help if he hasn’t done anything to make me willing to offer it? I am expected to call his very existence, not matter how wretched it is, a good. For what a

moralist says a thing is morally worth is nothing other than what he says people ought to pay for it. Human entitlements -- as if someone does me a favor I would want to repay just by crawling out of a womb!

9. The excitement is far from over. Moralists will stop at nothing to get me to serve them willingly (under the delusion that I am serving my true interests, a higher power, the forces of right and justice, Christ -- in short, something or another which is entitled to command me). The cost of bribing me and the risks of threatening me are too great to those who are used to getting their way by twisting people's brains into pretzels with sophistries. But to return to the subject. There are, so the moralist says, convincing reasons for me to do what ought to be done.

A convincing reason to do something is a consideration or set of considerations that actually convinces me to do it. In other words, convincing reasons are bits of information which, combined with the rest of my knowledge and my desires, are the reason I do what I do. This seemingly obvious point is stridently denied my moralists of all varieties, who insist that the reasons they offer for following the rules they propose are compelling, even if when people hear them they aren't compelled to do what they ought. By calling a reason morally compelling a moralist a moralist means that people ought to be compelled by them, or that they would find them compelling if they had the likes and dislikes they ought to have. "You ought to go pkaw." Why so? "Because if you go pkaw, you'll sound like a chicken. That's a good reason to go pkaw. I mean, there's just no other way to sound like one." But I don't want to sound like a chicken. "Well, you should." What progress! Fake reasons to pursue fake goods! Imagine a man who had no desires, perhaps after an especially bold lobotomy. Could he have a convincing reason to do anything? No. He would simply experience everything passively. In the absence of motivation, information can't make one do anything.

10. Closely related to the idea of having a reason to do something is the idea of offering a justification for doing something. For to try to justify an act to someone is simply to

give potential reasons for taking that act to them, in response to the question “why would I want to do what you suggest?” A potential reason to do something in a given situation is simply a consideration that would motivate a person with certain likes, dislikes and beliefs about his situation to do it. To successfully justify an act is to offer someone compelling reasons to take it -- which one does if one’s interlocutor happens to be the sort of person would be motivated by the considerations you’ve drawn his attention to.

For example, suppose I mention a potential reason to walk across the street to someone, namely the consideration that walking is a feasible method of street-crossing, a bit of information which would motivate someone who wanted to cross the street but just couldn’t figure out how, to start walking. If my interlocutor happens to be someone who really wants to cross the street but hasn’t yet figured out how to do it, then he will start walking, and I will have justified his walking to him with a compelling reason to walk.

Like the mythical wraith that turns people into ghosts with its chill touch, the moralist turns everything he thinks about into fantasies, metaphors and abstractions with no connection to reality. Actually convincing people to do things, by appealing to their own desires, is beneath him. Instead it concerns him to show that some acts are as he puts it morally justified. Someone fails to convince you to jump off a cliff? No matter, he’s still won the argument, if he’s proven that jumping off a cliff is morally justified. Morally justified acts are, I have been told, those that would be justified to a moral person. But “moral person” is what a moralist calls anyone who follows the rules he endorses. What do I care what such a person thinks, what forces impel him, what considerations would move him? He may have real reasons to do what the moralist says he must do, but I don’t; the real reasons that motivate him are fake reasons (unreal reasons which the moralist calls real) to me.

Not only does the moralist offer fake justifications, justifications which work only on people like himself -- and if you’re not convinced, you’re scum! -- he also clutters the world with yet another fake property. We hear of “morally justified” killings, as if abiding his killer’s actions would be justified to nearly anyone! I ask again what makes

an act morally justified? That there are good reasons to do it, as there are to go pkaw like a chicken? Enough of these good reasons!

11. There's no stopping the moralist. This time he will restrict himself to appealing to my ends. Not, of course, the ends I actually have, i.e. those features of the outcome I expect my present action (by itself or in combination with the rest of a chain of actions) to have, which motivate me to perform the action and to hope it succeeds. Far be it from him to talk about anything real or meaningful to me! Rather, the moralist will appeal to my "natural ends." How can something be my end if I don't try to attain it? Where did they get this one?

There are tools which are commonly used for, designed for, and made for the pursuit of certain ends, as for instance a broom is typically used, designed and made for sweeping. Leave it to a moralist to create yet another fake property and make sweeping the purpose of the broom -- as if the broom wants to sweep, or someone who uses the broom for killing spiders does not know what it is for, as distinguished from that for which it is usually used, or for what it might be more effectively used! Even better -- it is obvious that this was the point of this trick all along -- people themselves have moral purposes, inherent functions and natural ends, things they are supposed to do even if they do not feel any inclination to do them. Now the inversion of the relationship between the agent and his ends is complete. The agent's ends are no longer his ends, things he pursues; his natural ends, fake ends he doesn't even have, claim him as the instrument of their fulfillment.

People manifestly do not always actually pursue the so-called natural ends of human beings (whether these ends are set by God, nature, evolution, or whatever authority you like), making such ends quite unlike the actual ends which by definition people always pursue. The moralist's only way to squaring this fact with his theory is to say that some people are not really human beings after all. Some people do not live life in a fully human fashion; some are sub-human, some are in-human, some live in contradiction to their natures, and so on. In fact, everyone who fails to pursue his natural ends is not really or fully alive as human -- as he who is called the fully realized human is none



other than the one who has achieved (or, depending on the moralist you ask, is pursuing) his natural ends!

The moralist menaces me with the prospect that I might not have a fake nature. If I am not really human, so what? Am I to become a predicate? I won't change my ways just to be called a new word. I am already what I am, one hundred percent pure me. No need for talk about realizing or fulfilling my identity, as human, as person, as moralist's servant, as anything at all; the work is already done. No use, either, saying that my actions are unnatural; if they were literally unnatural I wouldn't be able to take them. And if they are only relatively unnatural, that is to say unusual, what does it matter? The moralist might respond that people ought to become fully human. But then natural ends are just defined as the ends that people ought to pursue, so their alleged naturalness loses any justificatory force it might have had. Moralistic pronouncements about natural ends are not about either ends or nature. They simply convey to us that moralists think that some aspects of nature ought to be, and some oughtn't.

Some claim that the process by which a seed grows into a tree shows that there are oughts built-in to nature (in this case, that a seed naturally ought to grow into a tree). But the moralist is the one who builds oughts into his descriptions of natural phenomena, thereby rendering them nearly incomprehensible. Nature doesn't give a damn what happens to seeds, except perhaps for that part of nature that consists of moralists (by their own estimation, by far the largest and most vocal part)! At bottom, nature is just a bunch of stuff.

12. But moralists discover (make up) built-in oughts in more than just descriptions of nature. Amoralism itself, they claim, is a moral position.

"Amoralism says you should not be motivated by moral beliefs, and is thus self-contradictory." The amoralist doesn't say people should or should not do anything. He simply refuses to do anything just because someone says he should, as part of his method of pursuing good feelings. To say that this amounts to a moral position is like claiming that how-to books on carpentry outline moral theories because they claim to offer effective methods of installing shelving. Basically, telling the amoralist to do

something merely because it would benefit someone else that he doesn't care about is like telling him to lie down on the ground so you can stamp on his face. He wouldn't call obeying this command wrong, but it would strike him as stupid. If he's going to act so as to facilitate the realization of ends, they might as well be his own ends rather than someone else's. After all, accomplishing one's own ends usually leads to good feelings, but realizing someone else's ends gives them good feelings that one cannot feel at all. "What? Murder isn't wrong? So that means you can't object if I murder you, because you think my doing so would be perfectly justified. Or your position is self-contradictory relativism, because it requires you to maintain that murder is both wrong and not wrong." Of course I can object. I can even object on moral grounds if I think that will stop you; I just won't believe what I'm saying. I can object just because I have some shopping I want to get done. Not believing murder is wrong doesn't somehow paralyze me, as if it's impossible to do something unless one thinks it is morally justified! As if there being no moral basis on which to object to murder means that there is no consideration that could convince me to act so as to prevent it! At any rate, as an amoralist I not believe that murder or anything else is morally justified, morally unjustified, or both morally justified and morally unjustified. If I did, I would be a moralist.

This doesn't mean that you could justify to me my putting up with any action you please; whether it would, would depend on my personal tastes and interests. The objection proves nothing except that moralists cannot even grasp positions they don't agree with. They cannot grasp the difference between an action's not being justified and its being unjustified. They cannot imagine that people might be motivated by non-moral considerations -- as if the fact that amoralism doesn't morally rule out eating babies means that widespread amoralism would prompt McDonald's to vend Baby McNuggets, leaving those amoralists who didn't want babies to be eaten paralyzed in the very armchairs in which they thought of their philosophy, unable to interfere because they didn't have a moral justification for doing so!

13. It's not over yet. The last-ditch defenses of the moralist include some truly bizarre arguments. You wouldn't think that just by doing anything at all you thereby establish that you are a moralist. But a moralist would.

The first of the arguments moralists deploy to establish this conclusion is that to decide to pursue X is to decide that X is morally good (that there are some circumstances in which one ought to pursue X); otherwise, one would not act to gain X. Clearly this amounts to equating an agent's end with what he calls morally good. If the words in this argument are taken to mean what they conventionally mean, it seems to be nothing other than the arbitrary claim that everyone is a moralist. But the argument can be also understood as a proposal to collapse the distinction between an end and what one says is morally good, and as such I will address it.

The word "end" is used to designate whatever it is that an agent wants strongly enough to attempt to get it. The word tells us nothing about the things that it stands for, except that some agent is trying to get them. It doesn't tell us, for instance, whether the agent would want anyone else in his position to do the same thing as he; whether he wants anyone else to pursue the same sort of things he is pursuing; whether he thinks there is any reason for what he is doing other than that he wants to do it. If what an agent seeks is what he would say he thinks is morally good, this would leave open the possibility of the agent's saying that something was good only for himself, only at the moment of his action in his exact, historically unique circumstances, and only because he wanted it, with no bearing on or implications for what anyone else might do. But morality, as objective, prescribes for more than one person, so what kind of moralist would he be? A new kind who only prescribes for himself, utterly unlike the people everyone calls moralists today.

I shall put the whole point another way. Ordinarily moralists claim to know what is good for people other than themselves (hence their oxymoronic talk of objective values). If someone says he thinks that X is morally good in a certain context, one can be sure he would say that there are morally compelling reasons that should motivate people other than himself to pursue X -- or, if X is unique, X-like things -- in similar situations, and that he would want them to do what he said they ought. But from a person's

committing an act Y one cannot infer anything about what he wants or would want other people (or even his past and future selves) to do. People often do something without giving a damn what other people do in virtually the same situation. If desires regarding other people's actions always accompany believing that they ought to do this or that, and such desires cannot be attributed to someone merely in virtue of his having done one thing or another, then neither can moral beliefs about other people's actions. In sum, substituting the phrase "what an agent thinks is morally good" for "an agent's end" drains away the meaning the phrase "morally good" currently has. New phrases, say "subjective moral belief" and "objective moral belief," would have to be invented to distinguish what we now call "ends" on the one hand, and "things one thinks ought to be pursued" on the other. Nothing would be changed except words. The same thing would happen if an enthusiastic but stupid amoralist were to argue that no one is really a moralist because what someone says is morally good is merely what he wants.

14. The fact that someone takes an action, so the next and virtually identical argument of this kind runs, shows that he thinks that he morally ought to take it and/or thinks that he has some moral justification for taking it. To achieve at least a partial understanding of this argument it is necessary to understand the moralist's model of deliberation. According to this model, if you printed out the thoughts of a person making a decision you would get the following chain of practical reasoning:

1. I want X.
2. Y is an act that would bring about X.
3. I ought to do what will bring about what I want most to get.
4. Therefore, I ought to do Y...here I go...

Much is made of the third step in the above sequence of propositions, the instrumental principle. Surely everyone accepts THIS ought-judgment as true? And if it is, might not there be others?

Now to pursue or attempt to gain an end is to employ means in the hopes of attaining it. One cannot pursue an end which one does not know how to pursue. Moreover, it is obvious that one's end at the moment of any given action is the thing that one has the

strongest desire to pursue at that moment -- otherwise, one would pursue something else. This follows from the definition of an end, plus the uncontroversial assumption that desires lead to action, and consequently that a desire that is stronger than another desire is more likely to be acted on. Pursuing (employing means to gain) what one wants most to pursue, in short, just IS action, not a special kind of action.

A principle of conduct, such as the instrumental principle claims to be, manifestly cannot be followed except in action; it doesn't apply to non-agents. So it turns out that it is impossible not to follow this so-called principle. To say that an agent ought to use means to gain ends is like saying that an orange thing ought to be orange. And to say that an agent thinks that he ought to follow the instrumental principle is like saying that an agent thinks that he ought to follow the laws of gravity and thermodynamics. Who has ever heard of a moral rule that it is impossible to break? The notion is contradictory; to say that one ought to do X implies both that he can do X and that he can do non-X. If he cannot do non-X, telling him he ought to is like commanding the sun to rise in the morning.

Moreover, it is clearly possible for an agent to take an act without giving a thought to whether he ought to take it. It is not even true that the instrumental principle is a rule which he arbitrarily prefers to follow, as to prefer to do something involves regarding doing it as more appealing than doing something else one might do, while there is no alternative to following the instrumental principle.

It is pointless and misleading to say that every actor follows the rule "you act" when he is an actor in virtue of the fact that he acts. And since every act can be described as if it were an act of obedience to the rule that says to act that way, it is impossible for an agent to not follow rules, and the rule "you follow rules" is likewise not a rule at all but rather a statement of fact when addressed to rule-following beings. All this talk of the instrumental principle establishes nothing other than that agents act.

In sum, the assumption behind the moralist model of deliberation is that one cannot decide to do something without thinking that one morally ought to do it. This assumption is really the same as the earlier one, as "one ought to pursue X in certain circumstances" is an utterance that means the same thing as "X is morally good." It is a

true assumption only if one defines what an agent pursues as what he thinks ought to be pursued, but, as above, this simply leads to changing the terms in which meta-ethical discussions take place without eradicating the difference between what we now call desires and moral beliefs, ends and things called morally good.

15. Moralists call deliberation practical reasoning. Really deliberation is not a form of reasoning at all. It isn't the performance of logical operations or inductive inferences. Instead, it is simply a period of inactivity brought about not by the desire for leisure but by a conflict of incompatible desires and impulses no one of which is strong or clear enough to dominate the others. It is analogous to the stillness of two hands pushing against each other with equal force, which is due to the inability of one force to overpower the other rather than the absence of any force. The tension and frustration produced by this condition is a bad feeling, which one attempts to remove by reasoning.

The object of such reasoning is to make clear to oneself what pursuing each potential end under consideration would entail (as clearly one cannot pursue an end without an idea of what the means to that end are), what the likely consequences of attaining the end would be (as one will be unlikely to want to take an action whose likely aftermath is unknown), and what good or bad feelings would accompany those consequences (as one will be unlikely to aim at an outcome which one does not know whether one would enjoy). Once such clarity is achieved, one is naturally drawn to pursue that potential end (out of all the ends under consideration) which one knows best how to pursue; whose fulfillment (and the aftermath of same) one can picture most fully and distinctly; and whose fulfillment (and the aftermath of same) promises the strongest good feelings. A sample printout from the mind of a deliberator on this model of deliberation would be:

"Okay, sports car or van?

"The sports car can drive fast. It costs a lot of money. I'd have to take out a loan. I won't be able to take advantage of its speed most of the time since I only drive on

clogged highways. Besides, thinking about high speed driving, it doesn't sound too great. I could get killed.

"The van costs less. I have the cash for it now. I want to go to the Bahamas a lot, which I couldn't do if I bought the sports car. More people can fit in it, like my family. My wife has to drive the kids to school. That's what the new car would be used for most of the time since I already have a car. If my wife had to drive the kids to school in a sports car other people would think she was a show-off and she'd have to have a kid riding shotgun with her. Just picturing that makes me think how unhappy I'd be if she had to go through that. I love my wife.

"The van, then."

The deliberator in this example is unable at first to decide between the two vehicles because he has only a vague notion of what buying and owning each of them would involve, and consequently cannot form a picture of how he would feel in either of the two possible futures ahead of him. In short, he does not know what he is getting into or what he is doing. So he uses deductive reasoning applied to hypothetical situations to determine what getting each car would entail (e.g. taking money out of the bank) and to develop a picture of what life would be like with each car (e.g. what the consequences of taking each one of his options might be). Then, by imagining himself in each of these alternate futures (empathizing with his possible future selves, so to speak), he gets some idea of how he would feel in each of them. Armed with a clearer picture of the alternative he is facing, he no longer needs to agonize over which choice to make and the tension of indecision is resolved.

However, there is no logical relationship between the propositions describing his beliefs and expectations and the propositions describing his desires. The deliberator could figure out all sorts of things about vans and his likely reactions to different actions of his without being engaged in deliberation, purely to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. The reasoning he uses is just plain reasoning, not a special kind of moral or practical reasoning. If this sounds incredible, consider whether the following is a chain of reasoning, or simply a series of thoughts:

1. I want X.

2. Y is the only possible means to attaining X.
3. I want Y.

It is true that an outside observer can make the following deduction: if an agent wants X enough for X to be his end in a particular action, and Y is the only means of getting it, then he will attempt to use Y to gain X. If an agent said that he wanted X, but that he just couldn't bring himself to use Y, one would have to conclude that he didn't want X, at least not enough to actually pursue it, or that he didn't really understand the connection between using Y and attaining X. It is NOT true that wanting Y or the resolution to want Y logically follows from the first two propositions in the list except in the sense I have just explained.

Given knowledge of Y's usefulness as a means to attaining X and assuming Y is not wanted for some other reason, wanting X and wanting Y are two aspects of the same thing, viz. the will to obtain X by means of Y, so the will to use Y cannot be derived from the will to obtain X, i.e. from itself. This truth is captured in the expression "one cannot know how much one wants something until one knows what one would be willing to suffer to get it," and is implicitly understood by lovers who say that they would crawl over broken glass to reach each other.

Inductive practical reasoning is the discovery of nonexistent moral properties such as goodness and the property of an action that it ought to be taken. "From observing a number of murders I have induced that murder ought not to be done" is a meaningless sentence whose only significance lies in that one can infer that the person who utters it opposes murder. Deductive practical reasoning is performing logical operations on propositions which include meaningless predicates. "Wealth ought to be pursued by the available means, I can obtain wealth by getting a job, therefore I ought to get a job" is a meaningless sentence that tells us (and this indirectly) only that the person who utters it may be looking for work. Practical reasoning or moral reasoning is fake reasoning, nonsense which masquerades as reasoning by imitating the grammatical structure of inductive and deductive arguments and inferences.



16. Some may object that I am ruling out the possibility of the meaningfulness of moral propositions. Well, of course I am. Here's why.

A genuine ought statement is supposed to combine descriptive and prescriptive elements. But I say descriptive statements, also called is-statements, assertions, and claims about matters of fact, are completely different from and irreconcilable with prescriptive statements, also called rules, directions, suggestions and commands. There is no possible hybrid statement which is "kind of like both" that can be understood as hybrid and cannot be simply broken back down into descriptive and prescriptive elements.

Let us, to prove the above in detail, consider the difference between prescriptive and descriptive statements in more detail. Following a rule is a way of treating the world; believing an is-statement is having a model of what the world is like (reflected in one's expectations). Proving a proposition to someone is getting them to believe it, thus changing their world view; justifying a rule to someone is getting them to follow it, thus changing the way they act given the same world view as they had before. If I come to believe that ducks explode when you get too close to them, what I expect to happen when I'm around a duck changes; if I come to accept the rule that ducks ought to be blown up, what I want to happen when I'm around a duck changes.

Propositions can be thought true or false (believed or not believed), according to whether observed reality turns out to be the way they would lead one to expect it to be; rules can be justified or unjustified (followed or not followed), depending on whether one has convincing reasons to follow them. But rules cannot be true or false; prove to me the rules of chess! Is it true that "no running by the pool"? And assertions cannot be justified or unjustified -- why would I want to " $2 + 2 = 4$ "? We are simply talking about two completely different kinds of statements, since they refer to two different kinds of things: the world as one thinks it is, and the way one can treat it.

This difference cannot be eradicated by claiming that to prove a proposition is to justify believing in it. A belief is not an desire; to consciously act presupposes that one has some model of the world about which one has desires. Action aims at change, so to act one must have an idea of what it is one is changing. Nor can the difference be swept

under the rug by saying that to prove an assertion is to justify acting as if it were true, since in order to know how one would act differently if an assertion were true, one must first understand how it would change one's beliefs. In both cases the difference between having a belief or an expectation on the one hand, and having a desire or an impulse to act on the other, is preserved.

It is absurd to suggest that these two utterly unlike things could be combined into a third thing. Instead, ought-statements must be a third type of statement which cannot be understood as prescriptive, descriptive or hybrid. Now it is time to see whether such statements can mean anything.

What, according to these moralists that claim that I am cheaply defining moral truths out of existence, does it mean to for it to be true that one ought to pursue X? "That X is good." I see. "That those who do not pursue X are immoral and unreasonable." Of course, the definition of an immoral and unreasonable person is: a person who doesn't do what he ought. "That those who do not recognize X's desirability are blind." That is, morally blind -- not blind to any empirical fact! And the way to determine who is morally blind is by determining who doesn't do what he ought.

No matter what, the moralist cannot say what he means when he says X is good except by using other words and phrases that amount to or depend on an understanding of the proposition that X is good. Every time you ask for a definition of a word you are given more words, and when you want those words defined you get even more words, in a never ending wild goose chase where you keep ending up where you started. Moralism talk is part of a self-contained language in which every word has a (non-ostensive) definition, a language which begins and ends in words.

Normal language is based on a foundation of words that simply designate observed concretes and experiences, and can thus be imagined as a planet whose layers are held together by a massive core of non-verbal experiences which the words merely point to. Moral language is best imagined as a bubble whose surface is made of words which cling to each other but have nothing beyond words to anchor them. It is a bubble which bursts on contact with reality -- yes, a fake language. One doesn't have to be much of a linguist to see that a word which does not stand for anything except other words (who

themselves stand for other words, ad infinitum) is meaningless, as there is nothing in reality, which after all is not made of words, that it stands for, means, signifies, designates, etc.

17. The moral intuitionist responds that what moral truths are, and which ones are true, is self-evident; he experiences the moral properties of actions directly in the same way that he experiences the physical properties of a tree. Other people experience these properties too, he continues; they just deny it to win an argument. Why else would people be able to follow the rules laid out by moralists and understand their pronouncements?

People's obedience to moral rules is not a problematic fact for an amoralist. Since there are manifestly non-moral rules, laws and commandments, and people obey those, one can simply explain people's obedience to moral rules by saying that they treat these rules as if they were non-moral rules. They mistake the moralist's metaphorical rights, laws, etc. for literal ones, instead of understanding that his expressions as moralist all boil down to propositions in moral language which don't mean anything. It is easy to infer from a moral commandment or an endorsement of a moral rule that its speaker wants one to do something, after all; it is the speaker's fault if he interprets compliance to mean intellectual agreement. Just as the fact that people discuss and act on their beliefs about God doesn't mean that God exists or even that God is an intelligible concept, the fact that people discuss and act on their beliefs about "moral truths" proves nothing except that people are capable of believing all kinds of horse shit.

Moral intuitionists are unable to describe moral properties by reference to the five senses. Instead they have some kind of sixth sense, a "moral sense" -- in short, a fake sense organ. Unfortunately they cannot provide evidence for the existence of this sense organ that someone who was restricted to the use of the conventional senses would accept. They are in the same position as the prophet who claims to have the unique ability to hear the voice of God, but who cannot get anyone else to hear that voice. One can't disprove that he hears these voices or that the moralist senses these properties, but in the absence of any reason to believe him one might as well believe something else.

Belief or disbelief in what can be neither proven nor disproven is arbitrary, and impractical as long as beliefs for which there is some evidence are available; non-belief (which usually has the same practical implications of disbelief) suffices. Since desires can explain people's actions (including the actions and utterances of moralists), and there is plenty of behavioristic and introspective evidence that people have desires, there is no point in believing that beliefs about moral goodness are what lead to actions in addition to or independently of desires as long as there is no evidence that such goodness exists.

Many people do not find the meaning of moral propositions self-evidently clear, or even clear in the slightest. Moral intuitionists themselves rarely agree on what specifically is self-evidently morally good or bad, a truism which becomes a cause for concern when one realizes that they can offer each other no criterion for what determines what is morally good or bad, except their own feelings, in the event of a disagreement. Of course, an amoralist does not object to appealing to people's feelings to convince them to do things (i.e. the act of justification), but as the moralist gives himself the task of deciding what is good irrespective of people's feelings on the matter, a retreat to feelings seems a cop-out.

18. Moralists, for the sake of the good, will storm the gates of truth itself. The idea of truth is inherently ought-ridden, the moralist claims, because to say that something is true is to say that everyone ought to believe it.

First off, it is not true that if I believe that an idea is true, then I think that I ought to believe it. I cannot choose whether to believe an idea once I think that it is true, because the ideas that one calls true are the ones that one believes. "It is true, but I don't believe it." "I believe it, but it is false." Outrageous nonsense! As with the so-called instrumental principle, the moralist attributes this principle to people, who of course cannot help but follow it just as they cannot help but follow the rule that they must be made mainly of carbon-based molecules. He then points to people's acceptance of this principle as evidence that everyone is a moralist.

Secondly, it is commonly understood that if a moralist truthfully says that he thinks one ought to do something, whatever else his statement may communicate (as I see it, nothing), it is clear in context that he wants one to do it. So the implication of this proposed method of determining when to designate things as true is that lying is impossible. For if I believe that X is true, and that everyone ought to believe X, it follows that I want everyone to believe it -- consequently, I literally can not lie, lying involving a desire that someone believe what one believes to be false. Since lying is manifestly possible, ought-statements are built in, not to the idea of truth (or every possible criterion of truth) itself, but rather into the particular truth-determining method used by certain moralists.

Why want others to be amoralists?

Moralists warn us that lapses in idealism lead to widespread murder and mayhem. "After all, amoralists don't think that such vile actions are wrong." But who are you really safer with, a hard-core moralist that doesn't like you, or a hard-core amoralist that doesn't like you?

The moralist cannot be paid to leave you alone; he is above money and material things. He cannot be threatened or intimidated; his is willing to die for "his" beliefs -- what good is a life without honor? He will not negotiate or compromise -- to compromise with evil is, in his view, to endorse it (by granting it that all-important moral sanction). He is not practical, will not listen to common sense, will not stop bothering you even if you can show him that he is destroying himself -- self sacrifice for his god (his higher ends) is noble anyway, and since when is making money or convenience an excuse for injustice? If what you are doing is immoral he will not cease to antagonize you even if your actions do not materially affect him in any way; he will travel across the ocean and live in tents merely for the satisfaction of harassing you. He will kill and torture people who are harmless to him even when it isn't at all in his interest to do so. He is as beyond peaceful persuasion as a serial killer. Either you accept his way, or it's time to fight. The only way to shut him up is to shoot him.

Nazi Germany is supposedly an example of the consequences of amorality. But what good did it do Hitler or the Germans to exterminate however many Jews they actually exterminated? Who is really to blame for World War II -- the politicians and arms merchants who were among the few to profit from it, or the hordes of starry-eyed sheeple who were stupid enough to give up their lives for their country, the State, their ideals, and other such rubbish? What amoralist would have consented to be a foot soldier in any of history's holy wars?

The amoralist is your friend when you please or are useful to him, your foe when you oppose him; otherwise he leaves you be as long as you do the same for him, not out of tolerance but out of sheer indifference. He trades when you have something to give him, listens when you have something to tell him, supports peace as long as he is away from the reins of power (which, knowing the human rapacity he does not deny exists in himself, he tries to keep out of the hands of everyone else). Of course, if killing people is his thing, he will not be stopped by moral qualms -- but neither is anyone else aberrant enough to kill for fun.

The most dangerous amoralist is one who is willing to manipulate moralists for his own advantage. By spreading the knowledge that morality is a confidence game, I take away from these dangerous creatures their best tools and weapons -- the fools who obey them while thinking that they are doing the world a favor. When everyone is unwilling to perform services except for rewards meaningful to them, we will no longer have to fear religious wars, race wars, and the other activities of armed fanatics. For this boon, dealing with the organized crime amorality might encourage would be a small price.

None of this is meant to be a proof that a world of amoralists would be better than a world of moralists. I have no idea what a world of amoralists would be like. I only wish to point out that the moralist belief that the amoralist is a brutal criminal is simply a part of his belief system that stands or falls with it, just as the old Christian's belief that heathens and Satanists are baby-killin', beer swiggn' silver blooded maniacs is part of the Christian belief system that isn't necessarily any more based on experience than the rest of it, and the statist's belief that anarchists are bomb tossing coke heads is a

product of his own statist assumptions. Regardless of the consequences, I am writing this mainly for the intellectual pleasure of destroying ideas others have spent lifetimes creating and elaborating.

Where next?

Is there a specifically amoralist political philosophy or personal ethic?

Amoralism tends to go hand in hand with egoism, as once the absence of any “higher reason” to do something is apparent, one falls back on the desires one happens to have. Amoralism is not quite the same thing as egoism, however, because the egoist consciously seeks to avoid seeking good feelings his capacity to feel which is merely a product of his conditioning by moralists prior to his adoption of amoralism. He has an idea of his “interests” (the things that will lead to the greatest good feelings when attained) as distinguished from what he happens to want, and so different conceptions of one’s interests lead to slightly different forms of egoism, e.g. Epicurean egoism, Stirnerian egoism, Hedonistic egoism.

As for convincing an amoralist which form of egoism to adopt, one must (if one is to be successful) keep in mind that the only way to get an amoralist to act a certain way is to show him that acting that way would lead to more good feelings than the alternative(s). Real, not fake, justifications will be in order.

In political philosophy, there appear to be only three feasible approaches:

contractarianism, utilitarianism, and rationalism. Contractarianism, as for instance the theories of Thomas Hobbes and Jan Narveson, can be used to show an amoralist that he would consent to certain social arrangements given a certain initial situation. Utilitarian or simply “economistic” reasoning, as in the work of David Friedman and Ludwig von Mises, could be used to show that some social arrangements make everyone better off than they would be in other social arrangements, including the amoralist and his friends. Rationalism, as in the work of Hans Hoppe and Stephan Kinsella, can be used to show what social arrangement-underlying norms agents who met certain fairly broad criteria of reasonableness (which most people want to meet) would advocate. None of these approaches, or at least the variants of them in the work

of these authors, attempt to show the amoralist that there are values that he must pursue irrespective of his own desires and interests, so they are not moral theories. Thus, while amoralism does declare moral discourse inane, and while it does not in principle rule out any kind of activity, given human nature and the laws of sociology and economics there are a number of political and practical positions into which amoralists can be expected to fall with regularity. Widespread acceptance of amoralism would not necessarily lead to either political or theoretical free-for-alls, contrary to widespread assumptions.

The End

This then is the moralist's bag of tricks: fake goods detected with fake sense organs, fake properties, fake necessity, fake laws, fake rights, fake prices, fake contracts with fake obligations, fake coercion, fake principles, fake reasons to act, fake justifications, fake ends internal to fake natures, fake reasoning in a fake language. Ultimately the moralist can communicate nothing intelligible except that he wants us to act in a certain way. He weaves word traps which ensnare only those who, failing to keep their wits about them, mistake his metaphors and fantasies for the real thing merely because he describes them in words which are often spelled, pronounced and fit into sentences the same way as those which designate actual objects and relationships. Meanwhile, the world is ruled by force.

Appendix: A Moralist Tower of Babble

Suppose you are in a situation where X is a possible end for you and Y is both the only act that can bring X about, and an act which can only bring about X. If a moralist wants you to do Y rather than anything else in this situation, he will utter one of the following propositions, all of which mean nothing except each other (negative phrasings are left to the reader):



You ought to do Y (in this situation.)

You are morally required to do Y.

You are morally forbidden not to do Y.

You morally must do Y.

You have no moral alternative but to do Y.

Only doing Y is morally justified.

I have a moral right which you would violate by not doing Y.

You may not do anything but Y.

It is the natural moral law that you do Y.

It is your moral duty to do Y.

You are morally obligated to do Y.

Doing Y would fulfill or be an expression of your proper natural function.

Doing Y would be just.

It is in your proper nature to do Y.

There are convincing moral reasons to do Y.

Y is the right thing to do.

A morally reasonable person would do Y.

Y is morally to be done.

Y is what your better part wants to do.

Right reason says to do Y.

The terms of the social contract require you to do Y.

Your doing Y is the will of God, the community, the State, or some other entity whose ends are more morally worth pursuing than your own.

Not doing Y would be a sin.

Someone morally deserves that you do Y for him.

X is the most morally good thing that can be pursued here.

X is the greatest moral good you could pursue right now.

X is the most important end you can pursue currently.

X is your natural end, or that among your natural ends which is most worth pursuing here.

X is the most morally desirable thing in this situation.

If you don't do Y, you'll be an immoral person, morally abominable, morally nasty, dirty and icky, morally blind, morally unnatural, morally mistaken, morally subhuman, morally cannibalistic, morally unspeakable, morally bad, morally weak, morally ugly, morally fat and lazy, and Christ in his kingdom knows what-all else.

12/9/97

## MISCONCEPTION: A SATANIC RITUAL MUST INCLUDE STEREOTYPICALLY SATANIC IMAGERY

By Per Christian Malloch

As far as a ritual is concerned, what is "Satanic" is anything that brings about the desired inner state. This may be pentagrams, devil heads, and large weapons. But it could just as well be man-sized statues of Popeye, papier-mâché chickens and pine needles. What is effective - and therefore Satanic as far as the ritual goes -- depends on the idiosyncrasies of the magician. It is most un-Satanic to let others define what symbols are genuinely Satanic. You are the one who has to muster enthusiasm; anything that frees your imagination is "in".

Most Satanists like stereotypically Satanic imagery. Such imagery, therefore, always appears in group rituals, where there must be agreement beforehand on the imagery to be used. The devil is an excellent symbol of rebellion, carnality, independence and so on. But he is not the only symbol. What is and isn't a good symbol depends completely on one's subjective associations.

In sum, what makes a ritual Satanic is not that it includes stereotypically Satanic imagery but rather that it includes imagery selected to assist the participants in fantasizing and attaining emotional release. Therefore, a ritual in which a magician orders an army of rubber dinosaurs to trample his enemies is more Satanic than a pentagram-fest put on by Setians or Hollywood Satanists who actually believe in the devil.

3/28/98

## US GOVERNMENT ABOLISHES ITSELF/ CLINTON: "I WAS WRONG"

By Per Christian Malloch

The association known as the United States of America abolished itself earlier today, according to sources within Washington, D.C.

The move came as a surprise to members of the Democratic and Republican parties, who had expected the organization to exist at least until the year 2000.

William Clinton, head executive officer of United States of America up until its abolition, claims that the act was "pretty much my idea."

Clinton's troubles with the organization he was entrusted to lead began when FBI agents began reporting that a mysterious agency, known only as "the Constitution," was interfering with their activities. "Grown men came to me in tears," Clinton said at the press conference in which he later announced the United States' decision to cease existing. "They would set up a wiretap, and then -- bang! Their equipment would blow up in their faces."

Some of the agents involved in the botched wire-tappings reported hearing a booming voice over the explosion, which told them to obtain a search warrant.

Suspecting religious fanatics to be behind the incident, Clinton ordered that several religious communes be burned to the ground. This, however, failed to turn up any leads.

Meanwhile, "the Constitution" continued to interfere in the operations of various branches of the United States. Alan Greenspan reported that it was no longer possible to obtain soda at Federal Reserve banks, because the soda machines refused to accept U.S. currency. "We'd pop in quarters, dimes, dollar bills -- nothing worked. It just kept giving back the money with the message 'NOT BACKED BY GOLD.'"

At the IRS, consternation resulted when it was discovered that every IRS database had been erased. The "year 2000 bug" was publicly blamed for the disaster, which had members of the Libertarian Party dancing jubilantly in the streets. Former LP presidential candidate Harry Browne was, however, nonplussed, reportedly

commenting "anyone who has actually been paying taxes this whole time is, to put it bluntly, a sucka."

Clinton's concern grew once reports of exploding narcotics officers began to reach the White House. "Police officers attempting to enforce federal drug control laws started exploding coast to coast, scattering their drug-free innards on their intended victims," Clinton related. "It was at this time that we began to seriously consider the possibility that 'the Constitution' was not the terrorist front we initially suspected it to be, but an autonomous, sovereign Entity."

Perplexed by the puzzle, Clinton turned to the writings of noted Constitutional scholars Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard to look for clues as to how to defeat this menace. But his scholarly enthusiasm quickly turned to despair when he discovered that there was, indeed, no hope of resistance.

"Each person has a special energy field around him called a 'natural right,'" said Clinton, reporting the findings that eventually motivated his call for the abolition of the United States. "This right sets barriers which no one else can breach, protecting his enjoyment of his life, liberty and property, and establishing a system of absolute Natural Law." Clinton also revealed that "the Constitution" was a creation of a group of freemasons called "the Founding Fathers," who used it to prevent society as a whole from tampering with each individual's energy field.

Unfortunately, it turned out that most of the functions of the United States cannot be carried out without interfering with these "rights," leading Clinton to demand that its efforts be abandoned. "We simply had no choice. There was no point in continuing. I put down the books, said 'guess I was wrong,' and called a joint session of Congress to get it all over with."

Several disgruntled Congressmen ordered their bodyguards to shoot Clinton on the spot when he announced his resolution. The bullets were, however, deflected by the energy field, or "right," which surrounds Clinton and every single human being. In the wake of the United States' action, the remaining states have already begun preparations to abolish themselves. Control over the former government's holdings is being sold to Microsoft, which has announced plans to turn all currently existing public

highways into conveyer belts, freeing the American consumer from his environmentally pernicious dependence on automobiles.

Bill Gates, who recently accepted the title "God-Emperor of Microsoft" in preparation for the computer corporation's expansion into the transportation, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, product labeling and health care industries, expressed satisfaction with Clinton's decision. "I look forward to the day when we will be able to announce Microsoft America '99" he said. "In the newly unregulated service industries, consumers like you and me will finally be able to pay other people to worship us. Finally we'll get the respect American intellectuals have refused to grant us on their own."

3/30/98

## SATANIC MATERIALS

By Per Christian Malloch

\*\*\*

### PIECES SUITABLE FOR THE SATANISM FAQ OR OTHERWISE THEORETICAL SECTIONS

These were "written" by Arthur Connely, a bookish man who has simply read too much.

#### MISCONCEPTION: IDEALLY, SATANISTS WOULD LIVE TOGETHER IN SEPARATE, PHYSICALLY ISOLATED COMMUNITIES; SUCH IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF SATANIC ELITISM

Arthur Connely

Satanists are above or apart from the herd first in a psychological or intellectual sense, second in a social sense, and only third in any literal physical sense. The Satanist who believes that normal people are preventing him from living his life the way he would like to live it, and that this problem can only be rectified by his isolating himself in a community of like minded people, evades his own responsibility to free himself from the demoralizing influence of the herd. His utopianism instills a comfortable hopelessness that prevents him from seeing that moral beliefs, marriage, family ties, friendships, business connections, and financial obligations -- things which can be jettisoned at surprisingly low cost -- do more to constrain one's actions than government regulations or the invisible hand. Harry Browne's excellent book *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World* gives this thesis an elaboration and defense which it would not be feasible to offer here.

The point to emphasize is only this: it is easy to voluntarily isolate oneself socially from people who are enervating or parasitical. It is easy to step outside of the influence of

advertising, peer pressure, and other forms of mind control. Consequently, the existence of large numbers of psychic vampires, slaves to fashion, Official People and other lumber is simply not a problem as far as everyday living goes. It is not necessary to deal with them. Indeed, such people, no matter how awe-inspiring is their intrinsic uninspiringness, are fair game for manipulation and economic exchange to the enterprising Satanist.

Owing to Satanism's tendency to ferment individual idiosyncrasies which would otherwise remain repressed, there is little reason to expect Satanists to enjoy living with each other merely because they are Satanists. This is not to buy into the myth that egoists are untrustworthy, hard to deal with, inconsiderate, and otherwise refractory, a myth perpetuated by moralists to preserve the belief that doltish servility is the only attitude compatible with social coexistence. However, it does not take all that much for others to be good neighbors. To secure peaceful living one need only physically remove oneself from the presence of racial and socioeconomic subgroups which display high crime rates, low time preference, and the other indicia of a rambunctious incivility. If this is fiscally unfeasible for the nonce, their very presence will provide one a powerful incentive to find a way to increase one's earnings.

In sum, prospects for Satanic living would not be significantly improved by removing oneself to a Satanic community. The conditions necessary for a Satanic life -- which, in concrete detail, will be different for each person anyway -- can and should be created by the Satanist out of the materials that confront him in his daily life.

#### A COMMENT ON THE ROLE OF FANTASIZING IN A SATANIC LIFE

Arthur Connely

In the course of a ritual's performance the Satanist immerses himself in an environment whose every element has been selected for its capacity to evoke a certain mood or atmosphere. There is an element of role-playing and pretending in all of this, since if the experience aimed at were of something wholly real and not something partly imagined, the careful filtration of environmental influences would not be necessary.



One need only think of the origins of the phrase “make believe” to fully grasp this point. Satanism liberates fantasy as a vehicle for creating satisfying experiences in the face of what can only be termed the prejudice for reality. The scientist frowns on the child who is elated at beating a video game because his triumph is only pretend. But the egoist understands that what matters is the sensation or experience of winning. The statement that one should not be satisfied with only an imaginary victory, with making-believe, is a moralizing statement; it suggests that one should be ashamed to enjoy oneself without making tangible contributions to society, that one’s happiness requires some kind of justification in terms of achievements which others recognize as “productive” -- it must be a bought-and-paid-for happiness. Woe to he that takes short cuts in seizing enjoyment out of it, an unearned happiness! But there is another side to this. Even on a purely experientialist view, actual accomplishment produces on average more intense pleasure than surrogate accomplishment. The latter should not be used only to make bearable an existence devoid of the former. After all, we distinguish our sensations and emotions from our imaginings and memories because the former are more intense and vivid. It is Satanic to use the power of fantasy to enhance one’s enjoyment of life, but most un-Satanic to attempt to deal with life’s unresolved conflicts by giving them a substitute resolution -- unless the substitute resolution is so emotionally authentic that one comes to no longer care about the problem at all, in effect resolving it. Thus, to use what has somewhat embarrassingly become the prime example in discussions of this kind, masturbation is no solution to the problem of finding a sexual partner, unless one can make it so satisfying that the wish for a partner vanishes. Unfortunately for certain romantic idealisms, it typically does.

\*\*\*

### SPY EQUIPMENT

These reports are the work of Agent #240. I assume that your own entries will be descriptions of actual pieces of equipment (little cameras, bionic ears, etc). My idea is to have one or more of the insane reports sprinkled in amongst the real entries to make the

meaning of the entire section unclear. The point is not to be silly, which would make EO a humor zine and therefore a competitor of The Raven. The point is to produce a feeling of unease and ambiguity produced by the indiscriminate mixture of fact, falsehood and fantasy, nonsense demanding to be recognized and accepted as sense. Such a mixture is the meat and drink of paranoia. I imagine having one of Agent #240's reports for every four or five real reports from other agents. If you would prefer that each entry be attributed to a different "person", I suggest the names Yigbo and Mr. Sleep.

NARCOTIC POLES - Orange and white striped cylinders which protrude from public streets, emitting an endless trail of steam. These are assumed to be necessary for construction or road work. Unfortunately, the chemical-laced steam that issues from them continually produces an inebriating narcosis.

PIGEONS - Surveillance devices thought by city dwellers to be "birds", despite any evidence of their ability to reproduce or their need for nutrition (lack of nests, eggs, young pigeons; habitual consumption of gum wrappers and cigarette butts). The pigeon's internal power supply is said to make a cooing sound during audio recording. Pigeons represent a significant advance in biotechnology. However, during the process of tissue synthesis, many inferior copies of the pigeon prototype are generated. The collected failures are packaged and sold as "marshmallow chicks" at major consumer centers. Many of these "chicks" (or "peeps") still contain the miniature transistor radios left in their bodies by careless laboratory technicians. As a result, not only are "marshmallow chicks" a notorious source of indigestion, but monitoring technicians are obliged to waste several working hours per month listening to the sound made by intestines.

IDEAS - Microscopic, self-replicating devices which, when implanted in a subject's brain tissue, generate rule-following behavior through interference with chemical secretion and brain wave patterns. After brain colonization, the ideas migrate to the

respiratory tract, from which they are expelled during speech. The crushed bodies of millions of ideas form a dark paste which forms the main ingredient of printer's ink. Accidental contact with the fingertips during reading introduces ideas into the bloodstream, where they revive and make their way to the brain. Ideas are programmed to invade, co-opt and reconfigure incompatible ideas. However, in this process, mutations occasionally arise, creating erratic behavior. Despite this failing, ideas remain among the most popular developments in the new science of "nanotechnology", with applications in both local and international politics.

\*\*\*

## SATANIC CLUBBING IN NEW YORK #1

By Per Christian Malloch

To appreciate the work that goes into designing a club it is necessary to have an eye for all of the things that are missing, all the things that have been filtered out because they would spoil the effect created by the combination of the elements that are present. A single cowboy hat or pair of jeans can disrupt a club's ambiance fatally, no matter how many one-zipper suits are in evidence.

A club manager can decide what decorations people will encounter, what music will be playing, what forms of intoxication will be encouraged, how old the patrons are, how they dress, how much money they probably have, whether they will stand or sit, whether they will be able to dance, what the lighting conditions will be, whether there will be entertainment or any group activities, and countless other things which will affect the mindset of those involved. A well-regulated club could theoretically be as much of a total environment as a ritual chamber.

A good example of a club that tries and fails to mix incompatible atmospheres is Andromeda (Saturdays starting at 10pm at blank, XX blank street, \$10). Swing is downstairs, techno is upstairs. The swing section is reasonably well put together. The people know to dress in period clothes and dance the old way; there is a pool table;

there are (not very good) live bands; there are squishy couches; there is a lot of drinking, but without uproar.

The techno section is, on the other hand, lacking. There is no lighting to speak of, not even the occasional strobe, so you can barely see the dancers; the room is tiny and has horrible acoustics (so that no matter how much they turn up the sound you can still hear people's wallet-chains slapping their thighs); there is hardly any smoke. As far as I'm concerned the main thing is to have a fat sound, dazzling lights, and the sight of dancers who are either impressive or attractive; the needed sensory overload simply is not present here. In its defense, Andromeda is one of the few places in the city where you can hear ultra-hard, no vocals, mechanistic techno (or "industrial house") to your heart's content.

The thing that really ruins high school dances is the presence of the school faculty, who stand on the sidelines scoffing, or (even worse) pollute the dance floor with the palsied and insincere palpitations of their decrepit bodies. The problem is the intrusion of an alien perspective, of people who are not-with-it. At Andromeda, the swing people -- who are generally what the newly twenty would describe as old' -- would come up and gawk at those crazy young techno-kids (although, disappointingly enough, hardly anyone really looked techno -- wool was more common than plastic or vinyl).

Exhausted dancers, meanwhile, would come downstairs and sit by the pool table, no doubt ruining things for the swingers. Cultural cross-fertilization may be a laudable source of novelty, but there seemed to be no hope of it here, with not only a generation gap, but the antimony between nostalgia and futurism to be negotiated.

At Oxygen (Wednesdays Vain XXX Ave A, no cover) one encounters an art-gallery atmosphere (white walls, clean floors, large geometric shapes uselessly present above and around the seating) on the upper floor, which is dominated by an extensive bar that curves along two walls. The lower floor has no discernable purpose. It consists of a single, narrow, passage-like room with seats recessed into the walls. There is a smaller bar, and a DJ spins trance, techno and big beats. However, one does not feel welcome to dance, since the room is steadily lit and there is practically no space. The patrons are in their late twenties and are generally dressed like art-people, though as I was unable

to overhear their conversations I do not know what demographic they represent. I guess you can tell that I'm not good at meeting people in public places.

On Saturday nights it's time for "click and drag" at Mother (423 W 14th St., \$10), a combination dance club and costume party. The dress code requires you to wear all black or else something kinky. This is certainly the club to go to if you like cross dressers. For the straight, there are corsets and little leather dresses in welcome numbers. There are two lounges that look like there were taken from some stately old haunted house, as well as a medium size dance floor with adequate lights and smoke, where hard house, industrial and irritating Kraftwerk-ish electro-pop play continually. There is energetic dancing, some of it by horrible men with long beards who are permitted to enter wearing cheesy metal-biker garb, taking advantage of the management's unfortunate decision to allow "post-apocalyptic" clothing. You are also treated to some kind of stage show. A friend of mine reported watching live blood drinking. I was treated to the more appetizing sight of titillating fashions. The atmosphere is very gothic, even stereotypically Satanic. I enjoyed myself dancing the first time, but the second time I went it was all a bit too gay for my taste.

This time's winner in the provision-of-a-total-environment contest is Mother, with Andromeda's swing section a distant second.

\*\*\*

(Some passages in the following are deliberately made to be so theoretical that hardly anyone will understand them. The "author" is so familiar with these concepts that he is unaware that he is being obscure.)

## INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CONSPIRACIES

A member of the Federal Reserve Board, who has asked to remain nameless, answers your questions.

It is too late for you to do anything about it, so I might as well tell you what we have been doing.

Gold used to be money. Bank notes, pieces of paper with numbers on them, used to be claims to gold, i.e. gold-substitutes. Things are different now. Today we do not even pretend to be willing to redeem (in gold, or anything else) the currency we issue. This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private, says your dollar. What does that mean? It is meant to mean that you will regard our money as valuable because we order you to do so. However, we cannot in practice force each of you individually to accept our money. The best thing would be to simply show up at your house, take whatever we need, and leave some pieces of loose-leaf paper with ones and zeroes written on them as payment, saying "we have decided your property is worth such-and-such, and if you defy our legal tender law you shall be put to death." That would be the ultimate fiat currency, a currency backed by death instead of gold. But, as I said, we couldn't handle a whole population of people who didn't want to accept our currency. The real situation, as it is with every form of money, is: the money is valuable as long as people think it's valuable.

The layman may ask "Since the economic value of an object is ultimately arbitrary anyway, why not have people trade with government currencies?" The problem is not that government currency has an arbitrary value put on it. The problem, for you people -- obviously we don't consider it to be a problem, quite the opposite! -- is that we can manipulate the quantity of money in circulation at will, just by printing more bills or adding zeroes to numbers in electronic checking accounts. You have to dig gold out of the ground for there to be more of it, but it's easy to simply write an unlimited amount of money into existence.

Because money is a medium of exchange with no inherent usefulness to speak of, the value of each money unit depends on the ratio of commodities to money units in the economy. Every time we increase the amount of money, it takes time for the market to adjust all prices upward to reflect the newly established proportion between the quantity of money and that of the available commodities. Until that adjustment period is over the amount of purchasing power in our hands will be higher than it was before.

Suppose that suddenly the amount of money doubles. Eventually people will realize that the amount of money in the economy has changed (when there is a shortage), and the price of each commodity will be bidded up. But why will this shortage occur? Because we who have created the money will be buying more commodities than before. Meanwhile other people whose incomes have not yet gone up will find themselves paying higher prices for the goods in the industry where there is a shortage. Their quality of life will go down while ours goes up. I own several penguins and a gumball machine that distributes individually wrapped hits of cocaine in exchange for a Susan B. Anthony. Did you know that?

We want to be the only ones to benefit from this entire process, naturally enough. For the system to work there has to be one main agency deciding how much money there should be. We punish the private production of dollars (counterfeiting) as well as their destruction -- that is, punish anyone other than ourselves who tries to change the quantity of money in the economy. We have recently issued an exceptionally ugly one hundred dollar bill. Ben Franklin's visage, unsymmetrically present on one side of the bill, fixes the viewer with a dead, fishy stare. An indestructible face. Dare you tear it asunder?

Our religious predecessors tried to obtain riches without the effort of production or the risk of conquest by manipulating people's beliefs about moral value. They told people that there was something important called virtue, which entitles you to various things, and that they had a lot of it. However we think our own method gets right to the point. As money is unquestionably useful, we only need to make sure that ours is the only money people have the option of using. Then, so long as we don't inflate the currency so quickly that people lose faith in it, we don't have to do any special work convincing people that money is valuable and that we have enough of it to deserve various products. Money -- what we can create out of thin air! Can you imagine? We can have anything another human being has to offer without lifting a finger. I personally am largely to blame for the continued existence of taxidermy. My "African Safari" room is filled with stuffed lions, zebras and Negro tribesmen, frozen forever in dynamic poses -- terribly expensive to maintain but I can afford it, or should I say YOU can afford it,

afford it for me... I am also partial to showering in carbonated water. We have, of course, special nicknames for ourselves and our activities which help us, in some small way, to express our satisfaction with our situation. "LD systapimp" is my own favorite term for "expansion of the money supply, with the understanding that the new money will fall into the hands of the government and of banking elites" -- long distance systematic pimping.

Currently our position is not yet entirely secure, owing to the competition between different government currencies. People notice that one currency is more stable than another, and stock up on the currency that is likely to retain its purchasing power longer. Now what is good for the masses is certainly not good for us -- leaving aside the consideration that we may be necessary for the masses' very survival, because frankly we no longer care whether we are or not. We long ago did away with gold, oxen and other forms of commodity money because their physical reality made it impossible for us to generate them out of thin air. But competing foreign currencies set another limit on our creation of money by allowing people to turn away an unstable currency the way they would have turned away "gold coins" made of foil-wrapped chocolate or plush oxen in the old days. If, however, there were only one currency, everyone would, so long as they wanted to use money instead of bartering, which as everyone knows is infinitely less efficient, be obliged to continue using it while we inflated to our hearts' content. "Pimps, pimp slaps and pimpmania," inscribed in Latin on the facade of every Federal Reserve Bank -- the moment we have a world currency, that is what you will see, as our way of thanking the children of the slums for all of the purchasing power they have unwittingly surrendered to us.

We have done our best to limit the pernicious effects of multiple currencies by forcing other countries to use American dollars as a reserve currency. This means that foreigners get issued their government's currency, but they can redeem the currency in American dollars. More people are in effect using the dollar as money, with the consequence that we can inflate it more than we otherwise would (the losses inflicted on the public being more thinly spread). Another promising sign is the European



monetary union, no doubt a preface to a European political union (to see why, look back at my comments on counterfeiting).

I have already written the article that will appear on the front page of the New York Times when the world currency is finally launched. I certainly plan to include Alan Greenspan saying “you are now officially our bitches” at a press conference, and the obligatory photograph of copulating canines with some kind of smartass caption relating this image to the reader. I realize that some of you will find all of this vulgar. This, sad to say, only goes to show how little you have been in touch. Members of our organization have been using black American slang – largely in newspaper and magazine articles, but more recently in music videos – to communicate messages to each other for almost fifty years. Yes, unbeknownst to them, the humblest members of our society have had the privilege of playing a part, if only a tiny, trivial, and ultimately forgettable part, in the establishment of our hegemony.

4/13/98

## THE KEY TO COLLAPSING ALL ABSOLUTE MORAL SYSTEMS (1ST ED.)

By Per Christian Malloch

### Introduction: The Nature of Absolute Morality

I define an absolute moral system as a hierarchical system of commands phrased as facts. By linguistically treating their commands like facts, moralists -- those that promulgate and benefit from other people's adherence to absolute moral systems -- manipulate others into believing that these commands can in themselves compel obedience. When they distort language like this, moralists take advantage of the fact that everyone who participates in an argument over a matter of fact agrees on the same objective -- obtaining reliable beliefs. Because of this implicit agreement, argument naturally operates conflict-free. By contrast, making commands always implies the existence of a potential conflict of wills between the speaker and the spoken-to. The commanded can always demand that the commander offer an incentive to adjust his values or change his plans. Then, to achieve a peaceful resolution to their conflict of wills, both parties have to bargain. But moralizing language smoothes over any conflict of interest by making all disputes over what to do sound like levelheaded, scientific discussions of "truth". Thus, through sidestepping the bargaining process, the moralist can enjoy the benefits that flow from others' obedience to his suggestions, without offering them anything in return for the values they give up to him.

By accepting the premise that discussions of the moralist's commands don't differ in any fundamental way from scientific or philosophical discussions of fact, a person surrenders himself to the eventual control of one moralizer or another. For, the "facts" of morality exist only in the mind-created reality made possible by the moralist's misuse of language. As a consequence, the moralist himself can set any criteria he chooses for evaluating his and other moralists' theories. And, the average moralist's do-nothing, non-productive lifestyle gives him plenty of time to hone his skills at mental gymnastics, making the ordinary productive person unable to negotiate his Socratic traps. Ultimately, arguing against a particular absolute moral system on moralist terms, e.g. criticizing the internal logical consistency of a theory, only reinforces the delusion

that anything exists to argue about. After all, who cares whether one can find any logical relations between arbitrary, meaningless statements?

Luckily, one need not penetrate the intricate webs of various moral theories in order to free oneself of their influence. Indeed, as mentioned above, such an approach will only strengthen the hold of absolute morality over one's mind, diminishing one's ability to function competently by closing off the parts of the mind that generate "unacceptable" thoughts and actions which conflict with the moralist's interests. Instead, one can use a simple, two-step procedure to see straight through every system and person that claims "authority" over one's life:

First, convert the moral system's major statements into commands.

Second, identify the real or alleged source of those commands, translate them into factual reports of that sources' desires, and imaginarily confront that source to demand that it offer a real-world incentive to act in accordance with those desires.

Upon one's taking just these two steps, the entire edifice of the absolute moral system in question collapses like an old husk. The first step robs moralizing "claims" of their comfortable aura of factuality, revealing the naked conflict of wills behind those buttered-up statements. And the second step vanishes external "authority" by the very act of demanding something of it rather than automatically obeying it. For, by demanding an incentive meaningful to oneself, one re-asserts the fact that one has the power to control one's own actions, and that normally one can only give away this power voluntarily.

### **Implementing step one**

The moralist fills his vocabulary with terms like should, ought, moral, immoral, must, have to, just, fair, proper, abominable, right, wicked, shameful, sinful, virtuous, desirable, natural, good, evil, rights, need, duties, duty, obligation, law, imperative, shall, and may. Each of these terms has non-moralistic meanings in ordinary language. For instance, one can have a legally enforceable obligation to deliver a certain good by a certain date. This obligation can exist independently of any "moral obligation" to deliver these same goods created by some special entity called a "moral law." Likewise, a friend might say to one, "you really ought to go on a diet," meaning only to identify a

course of action he thinks would bring more enjoyment to one's life. This same friend may deny that overeating and/or fatness have a special property called "badness". For one last example, one might describe a voluntary trade as a transfer of legal ownership without implying the existence of a special event called a "transfer of moral rights". Even moralists themselves distinguish between, e.g. moral and non-moral senses of "ought". For example, they often complain that the conditional ought "isn't a genuine ought," because it basically amounts to a cause and effect judgment. When someone says "you ought to go on a diet," generally he means the same thing as "I bet you would enjoy yourself more after you dieted." Not exactly Moses coming down from the mountain!

But, notice a key difference between the moral and non-moral senses of any of the words above. Unlike the non-moral senses, the moral senses of those words have no definition except in terms of other words also used in their moral sense. For example, if I have a right to X, that means a natural moral law assigns ownership of X to me, which means someone has a duty to provide me with X, which means he ought to provide me with X, which means that if he doesn't provide X he counts as immoral, which means his actions morally deserve disapproval as sinful, which means... absolutely nothing more than that I have a right to X. Thus, to a person accustomed only to ordinary language, moralistic language would seem to refer to various entities, qualities and events which not only do not exist, but which the moralist himself cannot even define in non-circular fashion. In fact, these entities, qualities and events would seem to belong only in a hazily imagined, mind-created reality of no relevance to that person's life. This does not mean that one cannot understand how to react when someone says, e.g. that he has a right to a good X. One can infer that he probably will ostracize or disapprove of people who don't give him X. But, one could infer much the same thing about a gorilla who growled loudly at people who withheld bananas from him. So, while both moralists and gorillas can manage to vocalize their desires predictably enough for intelligent people to figure out what they want, this does not prove that they use language consistently or fittingly.

Of course, many a moralist, especially of the intuitionist persuasion, claims that the meaning of moral terms and the existence of the reality they allegedly describe "is self-evident," so one need not even try to define the moral sense of words in non-moral terms. But, if belief in moral entities, qualities and events, coupled with the ability to understand language that refers to them, has such a basic and vital role in everyday life that one can reasonably call this belief and its accompanying language "self-evidently true and clear," how come many people seem able to live their entire lives without having any absolute moral beliefs?

After all, when we call beliefs such as belief in an external world, belief in cause and effect relations, and belief in one's own existence, together with their accompanying language, "self-evidently true and clear," we can say we have reality on our side. For, anyone who literally did not believe in his own existence, in an external world, or in cause and effect, and who literally could not possibly tell what other people meant when speaking about those things, would behave in an absurd manner, either lying still like a corpse or acting completely at random with no beliefs about the future. This behavior would prove totally incompatible with day-to-day living or even survival, like the actions of religious fanatics or drug users whose addictions have made them unable to perceive reality. Thus, when the skeptic says "the existence of an external world may seem self-evident to you, but it doesn't to me," one can point to the skeptic's own purpose-oriented actions to prove that the skeptic, himself, holds the disputed belief. By contrast, the moralist certainly cannot prove that living without absolute moral beliefs leads to bizarre, suicidal behavior. Many people have lived happy, prosperous lives while remaining completely amoral. In fact, across history, moralists have displayed much more absurd behavior than non-moralists. In World War Two, for instance, various moralists idealistically ignored their own obvious financial self-interest and physical health to become suicide bombers, exterminate millions of innocent, productive Jews and peasants in their own countries, and fight to the death against countries that hadn't even attacked them. Consequently the moralist has no real answer for the skeptic who says that "the meaning of moral terms, and the existence of what they allegedly designate, doesn't seem self-evident to ME."

To summarize the above passage, as concerns a truly self-evident (not just true-by-definition) belief, one who denies it will normally soon die even if no one penalizes him for holding the belief. But as concerns absolute morality, one who denies it will prosper! Because, to the extent that one allows others to dictate one's own beliefs and actions, one sabotages one's own capacity for integrated thinking -- the root of successful adjustment to reality. Truly self-evident beliefs amount to the presuppositions of all thought. But moralism amounts to the presupposition of non-thought -- of inert, slavish mental complacency.

On seeing the ultimate circularity of all definitions of moral terms, and rejecting specious claims concerning their "self evident" nature, one can easily discern their true nature as camouflaged commands. For, even though the moralist uses factual sounding language to lower the anti-suggestion defenses of his listeners, he uses it with the intent of changing others' behavior. He becomes frustrated and discouraged when others refuse to behave the "right" way. When asked, he will even precisely describe the "right" way of acting, i.e. the behavior he wants to see in others, which "follows" from the moral "truths" his theories illuminate. Thus, replacing the empty verbal meaning of moral terms with their real, in-practice meaning (viz. the moralist's wishes), one can convert all moralizing statements into their command equivalents. For example:

"I have a right to that apple, and you ought to return it to its rightful owner" = "give that apple to me"

"Killing animals is wrong, thus you may not kill them" = "don't kill animals"

"Worshipping God is right" = "worship my god"

Once one has stripped down all moralizing statements to their only real, definite content, i.e. their embedded commands, one can move on to step two.

### **Implementing step two**

All absolute moral systems issue from some "authority"-- ultimately, some other person that wants to control you and claims the "moral right" to do so. But, the "theorems" of the moralist, as shown above, do not describe facts or reality. They incoherently refer to a mind-created reality. The moralist's utterances, then, only have relevance to reality when interpreted as commands (usually addressed to everyone in the universe).

A command amounts to no more than a mere expression of someone's will. No one would honestly command someone else to bring about X unless he wanted X to happen, or wanted the event of "that someone's trying to bring about X" to happen, or the like. So, one can easily take the commands distilled out of an absolute moral system in step one and convert them into factual statements about the desires and objectives of some "authority" -- and then say "so what?" in the face of those desires.

This "authority" may take the form of God, society, the nation, the race, a reified Reason, a reified Nature, a reified History, a reified Cosmos, or anything else made to seem big and impressive. But, like the wizard of Oz hiding behind the curtain, behind the awesome face of the "authority" lurks the humble, portly moralist -- a normal, if unbelievably presumptuous, human being like you and I. And to this fellow human, one can address the simple, obvious questions that arise when others report their desires: so what if you want that from me? Why would I want to help you? What will you offer me in return for my help? How would my co-operating with or following you serve both our objectives? How can we BOTH be of use to each other? The moralist does all of his work to avoid reaching these questions. A famous moralist once said "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." For, like the moralist responsible for that ridiculous slogan, the average moralist can generally offer no reason meaningful to others as to why they had better work for his benefit. If he could, he would not devote his energy to thinking of ways to mentally coerce people into helping him.

The instant one asks these fundamental bargaining questions, one finally unmasks the moralistic, pseudo-factual discussion's true nature as a bargaining situation generated by a conflict of interest. One perceives that one may have absolutely no material need or incentive to act according to a given moralist's definition of "good behavior". Once one no longer fears other people's calling one "immoral" and other guilt-inducing tactics, the moralist qua moralist loses all power to penalize one for "bad" actions. Of course, a given moralist may have other tools of persuasion -- money and guns, for example. But, such tools of persuasion work equally well on moralists and non-

moralists alike. So the moralist "stoops to the level of an amoralist" when he uses such real-world incentives rather than appealing to the goodness in people's hearts.

### **Summary**

Many people allow others to control them by yielding to their commands, disguised as factual statements by moralizing terms like should, ought, good and evil. But, these terms do not refer to facts at all. Indeed, one cannot even define them in a non-circular way, or find a basis for supposing that their meaning must seem self-evident to all people. And to the extent that one can understand them at all, they seem to refer to a mind-created reality. "Moral laws," for instance, supposedly exist even if no one ever obeys or enforces them -- remarkable laws indeed!

One can extract little meaning from a moralist's utterances, but they do allow one to get a picture of what the moralist, either by himself or hidden behind the guise of an external "authority," commands and desires. And once one can see the concrete urges and demands behind every towering theoretical edifice, no matter how beautiful their structure or internal logic, one need never again feel intimidated into becoming its servant. Of course, as unafraid of morality itself as one might make oneself, absolute moralists themselves remain to pose a substantial threat to one's prosperity and happiness. But, the worldly power of moralists, which depends largely on others' voluntarily serving them, will decline the more people openly check, challenge and laugh away moralism itself. Thus, one can make inroads on the moralist empire merely by refusing to do anything unpaid and disagreeable for a moralist, except when such action seems necessary to avoid physical coercion and other real world disvalues.

In conclusion: A sample full conversion of a moralistic statement into its practical meaning, carried out in an imaginary conversation between a Stirnerite and a moralist  
 "Everyone ought to have enough to eat, because eating is a fundamental human right."  
 Meaning what?

"That prosperous people like you should pay to feed poor people."

I see a poor person right over there. What do you suggest I do?



"You morally must hand him a five dollar bill, enough to eat on for a day. If you let him starve in your presence, that's murder."

I don't really feel like it. I feel a little hungry myself.

"Give him that money!"

You want me to feed that man?

"That's right."

Well, if you give me a five-dollar bill, and pay me for my time, I'll deliver it to him for you.

"You shouldn't do it for money. You should do it because that man has a right to eat."

So, how would you describe the difference between that man's right to eat and your desire that I feed him?

"I can't use my desires in a clever-sounding argument."

6/7/98

This is for anyone who finds himself in SK's position...

- > Per, I was trying to (briefly) explain Satanism to a friend, and was
- > floundering. Can you give me or point me to a very brief explanation of
- > it? Surely there must be a web site. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you
- > yourself are pretty much atheist, right? and don't believe in God or Satan.
- > The Satanism thing is a way to challenge prevailing morality plus a way to
- > focus on ritualistic ways of living. That was my brief explanation and
- > this girl was not comprehending. SK

It's funny you bring this up, because Anton LaVey's final book just came out and I recently appeared on a cheesy VH1 show talking about Satanism. I'm somewhat reluctant to recommend a website because many sites have links to other sites whose content is only superficially related to Satanism as I understand it, and quite a turn-off (e.g. skinhead groups, heavy metal websites). But, on the condition that the rest of the site it appears on be ignored, I recommend she read "Satanism: the Feared Religion" by Peter Gilmore, which provides a very good overview. I don't frequent any Satanic websites but I'm sure the article can be easily found with a search engine.

Here is my capsule summary, which you can simply forward if it seems clear to you, and your friend lacks the motivation to dig up the article:

1. For reasons pretty much outlined in George Smith's "Atheism: the Case Against God," no God or valid moral or epistemic moral authority exists.
2. But, some people obviously believe in God and authority, and even have intense experiences when they honor them ceremonially. And this faith even can sustain them and strengthen their will to live, even though the irrational beliefs it supports tend to reduce it in the long run.
3. The only way to reconcile 1 and 2 is to say that every person has the power to create his own Gods and authorities in his head; and the main way the reality of these imaginary beings is felt is through symbolic things, i.e. rituals, ceremonies, and art of all

forms. That is, the feeling that life is meaningful or worth living is manufactured by each individual.

4. An atheist and amoralist can help himself to the fun and excitement of symbolism without subscribing to any religious or absolute-moralistic doctrines. Just as the religious person creates his own god, so does the "Satanist" - only his "god" is nothing other than his own symbolized self and personal values. An example everyone is familiar with is a birthday party, which has no purpose other than celebrating one's own existence. Cake and presents symbolize plentitude and friendship, in an explosion of raw, unrefined egoism.

5. In a Judeo-Christian socialized society, Satan is the most universal symbol/archetype of the godless, amoral egoist. He is said to have rebelled against God's authority and made earth his kingdom, devoted to the pleasures of the flesh -- the original Ayn Rand hero, you might say. Therefore, most Satanists take pentagrams, etc. as symbols of themselves, just as an Objectivist might identify with dollar signs or whatever. But, it is completely up to the individual what he will identify with -- Popeye, chickens, Dirty Harry -- and any stimulating representation of himself and his values counts as Satanic in the broad sense. All that Satanists have in common is that they use symbolism meaningful to themselves (and often only to themselves) in order to produce invigorating feelings of "faith," the sense that life has a point, and the other values that religions offer, even as they also offer the disvalues of their nonsensical metaphysical doctrines.

In short, Satanism as Anton LaVey conceived it is amoral egoism combined with recreational pseudo-religious activity, admixed with a number of LaVey's personal interests and preferences (which can be easily identified and abstracted from the general idea). The whole enterprise is completely Nietzschean, and can be interpreted as one way of completing his "transvaluation of values".

Another way of looking at it: an act is Satanic not just because it reflects amoral egoism, but because it mythologizes and symbolizes the ego of the agent. A LaVeyan Satanist is

just someone who takes Satanic acts deliberately and frequently (but, as the birthday party example shows, you can take Satanic acts without being a Satanist).

-Per Malloch

10/16/98

In response to a leftist piece Sami sent me...

Funny writing. Of course, the piece contains no argument whatsoever, so anyone who doesn't already share the same empirical beliefs and value judgments reflected in the text won't accept it. Take a look at these value judgments and empirical beliefs, and you'll see what I mean. I hope you find them as entertaining as I found your own...

- I wish "che" had never been born, but if he can be used to sell soda, that's a fitting fate. At least now, he's contributing in some small way to society.

- Government money manipulation, not the market, is mainly to blame for the Asian crashes and the coming American crash. People wouldn't speculate so much if there weren't so much easy credit, in turn made possible by government counterfeiting ("increase of the money supply") and lying guarantees such as those of the FDIC.

- If governments stopped providing "social services", prices of gas, protection, etc. would go down, not up. Government run "businesses" are notoriously inefficient. Why compete when you can just force people to pay you? Anyway, the idea that the globalist IMF wants to downsize governments is absurd. The IMF's purpose is to tie small countries to larger ones with debt in order to eventually force to accept a one world currency.

- What do "Aryan knights" have to do with all the corporations dominated by Jews and Asians?

- What revolution? Communist? Fascist? The poorest countries are already fascist and communist.

- The U.S. supports dictatorships in the third world because third world countries have such unruly populations it's the only way to get at the resources in the terrain they inhabit. We would all be richer if they were civilized enough to support more capitalistic systems.

- Western wealth is mainly due to western productivity, not "exploitation" of the Third World. What have they, third world populations, have to offer? They're less valuable than the dirt they live on (see the above). They should be thankful they can at least work in sweatshops -- at jobs that pay better than anything they could provide for

themselves. Asian countries were colonized, and were once all totalitarian, too -- why did THEY manage to achieve wealth and independence?

-Per Malloch

10/23/98

## HOT AND COLD DESIRES

By Per Christian Malloch

You may think philosophy can't in any way benefit you unless your sole goal in life is talking. And for the most part, you'd be right in thinking this. But here's ONE philosophical distinction that can put you on the road to getting more of what life's all about: pleasure.

You can divide your desires into hot desires or cold desires; what David Hume called agitated passions and calm passions. Hot desires are more immediately intense. They invade your consciousness, demanding that you satisfy them. Some examples: a crush or whirlwind romance, a sudden impulse to buy something, the urge to eat and eat and eat when you've got tasty food in front of you.

Cold desires, on the other hand, are desires that you continue to have day in, day out, irrespective of the stimuli and temptations of the moment. For example: the desire to have a lot of money, the desire to be healthy, the desire to avoid contact with people below a certain income level.

Now, cold desires may not pack the punch of hot desires. They're comparatively bland, even banal. But there's one thing they've got that hot desires can't even touch: rock-solid reliability. You see, like the pampered little starlets that they are, hot desires have a way of leaving just as quickly as they came. Let me tell you a story.

I once invited a girl to have some french fries with me, pretty much on a whim. We had a nice little date and even made tentative plans to go to Magic Mountain. The next class day, I took a look at her and you know what I felt? Absolutely nothing. One minute, burning urges were prancing on stage, and another, the stage was empty. If she had dropped dead that second, it would have made no difference whatsoever to me.

There's rarely any point in satisfying hot desires because whether you do it or not, they will completely vanish, leaving you no better off than you were before. But when you achieve a cold desire, or some of the intermediate steps needed to achieve it, it's like money in the bank. That desire's just not going away. Today, tomorrow, and the day

after that, you'll be reaping the profits in the form of a steady stream of satisfaction. You can sit back, relax, and gloat whenever you need a happiness injection.

But cold desires' ability to deliver lasting satisfaction isn't the only reason to see them as better than hot desires. For, cold desires are ultimately the champion prize-fighter desires after all.

You often manage to resist a hot desire (like the desire to buy an overpriced art book) because you know it can't outlast a conflicting cold desire (like the desire to have enough money to eat all month). And where do you get the power to do this? Presumably from cold desires themselves. So, not only can cold desires outlast hot ones, they can also overpower them.

Don't ask me which desires of your own are relatively hot or cold. YOU know. The coldest desires are the ones which you have had for so long that you can't even imagine what it would be like not to have them, because they have become part of your self. Achieving them, then, is the purest form of self-expression. You in effect use the desires to put your own stamp on the world, rather than them using you. And isn't that the best thing of all? Absolute freedom for oneself, control and domination for the world? I think so.

Stay tuned for lectures on the following happiness tips:

- having as few beliefs as you possibly can
- discipline, thought and then control
- spotting and eliminating blood sucking parasites

10/25/98



## MILL, MORAL IRRELEVANCY, AND ANTI-REALISM

By Per Christian Malloch

"What do you do?"

"I'm a producer."

"What do you produce?"

"Values."

"Values?"

"Moral values - things that no one wants, but should. Kind of like me."

---overheard at a singles bar

"If you press that button, a thousand innocent people will die."

"Good, I hate innocent people."

---overheard at the Capitol

"You realize you're a bad person."

"Funny, I feel pretty good."

---overheard at the pit of Abominations

Chapter five of John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* is an attempt to prove that talk of moral rights can be converted into talk of the moral value of punishing certain acts, or that of the ends such punishment is meant to achieve. If the difference between moral rights and moral values is indeed only grammatical, a matter of expressing the same idea in different ways, then Mill becomes immune to any criticism of his doctrine of utilitarianism based on a claimed incompatibility between maximizing utility and respecting rights. Any critic who claimed that people's sacrosanct rights, as she defined

them, must not be violated for the sake of utility, would simply be guilty of regarding her own unstated (non-utilitarian) moral values as beyond question or scrutiny. In the utopia that would be the aftermath of the universal acceptance of Utilitarianism chapter five, every participant in moral debate, unable to hide behind 'rights' and 'justice', would have to straightforwardly propose and defend his order of rank of the world's possible values. Under such conditions, Mill presumably believed, utilitarianism would sweep the stakes - perhaps because, to employ the same fallacious reasoning used in his notorious "proof" of the Greatest Happiness Principle, "everyone" would surely agree to aim for the happiness of "everyone" once they saw that happiness was at the top of everyone's value scale.

Suppose (though Mill's argument will be reconstructed shortly) that Mill succeeds in defending what I will call the Convertibility Thesis, which is the claim that there is a procedure by which one can convert any claim about rights and other moral phenomena into an equivalent claim about moral values. Suppose too (though an argument borrowed from Hume will be presented in due course) the truth of what if it were not already known as Hume's Law should be called the Inconvertibility Thesis: that statements about moral values (such as, it turns out, all claims about rights and justice) don't analytically imply, and thus can't be converted into, statements of empirical fact. Then the stage is set for a novel form of moral skepticism - one which counters moral realism not by denying the existence of moral values or the intelligibility of talk about them, about which it can now be agnostic, but rather by denying that facts about moral values have any relevance to what empirical facts exist, have existed, or will exist. This denial can be called the Irrelevancy Thesis.

In the triumphant future engendered by the Irrelevancy Thesis, the world of absolute moral values is increasingly seen as, not necessarily illusory, but profoundly irrelevant. For it is ludicrous to expect the man in the street to want to do the right thing if it is clear to him that whether his actions are right or wrong will make absolutely no measurable difference in his life - just as, in the eyes of Epicurus, there is no point in expecting people to worry about celestial phenomena when they have no measurable impact on their lives. Moralists will have to go back to the drawing board with

contractarian, constructivist, emotivist, and other non-realist approaches to advocating their respective orders of rank.

With all the spoilers out of the way, let us trace the ascent of the Irrelevancy Thesis (of whose own probable irrelevancy the author is painfully though undauntedly aware) in greater detail.

#### CONVERTIBILITY THESIS PART ONE: MILL

As stated, Mill wishes to show that rights talk can be decomposed right into moral value judgments. He coyly begins his investigation into the meaning of the terms just, unjust, and the like with an obvious non-starter: "it is mostly considered unjust to deprive anyone of... anything which belongs to him by law" (Mill, 316). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Mill is unwilling to leave the determination of right and wrong in the hands of the government, commenting that "it seems to be universally admitted that there may be unjust laws" (317), this fact being the result of a historical process in which "the sentiment of injustice came to be attached, not to all violations of law, but only to violations of such laws as ought to exist" (320). Now, existence for laws here clearly means enforcement. So it comes as no surprise that Mill goes on to say "we call any conduct wrong... according as we think that the person ought... to be punished for it" (322). And whatever interest, expectation or possession of an agent such punishment is meant to defend is called that agent's "right," or, to close the argument with Mill once again, "to have a right is... to have something that society ought to defend me in the possession of." Rights, then, are what get assigned to one by a law that may not exist (be enforced), but should, just as moral values in the opening dialogue are defined as things which people may not want (pursue), but should. But, as enforcement of law is itself potentially moral action, talk of rights becomes a roundabout way of talking about (certain) moral values.

#### CONVERTIBILITY THESIS PART TWO: THE AUTHOR

To supplement Mill and expand his conclusion, we shall consider the claim that not only can people convert talk of rights, and of other moral phenomena other than moral values, into talk of values (specifically, definite rankings of moral values), they must (a practical and not a moral must!) do so if they are to act according to morals at all. If this is true, most ways of talking about morality, whether in terms of good, values, duties, rights, obligations, laws, rules, imperatives, essences, musts, necessities, debts, accounts payable, etc. are basically interchangeable ways of proposing one way or another of ranking moral values, or, what is the same thing, assigning different levels of moral desirability to various objects of action.

The moral agent can be conceived of as converting his assent to the statement that "X (in this situation) is a moral value (to some degree)" into a desire that, if expressed in words, would be "(in this situation) I want X (to that degree)". Thus, moral preferences are (at least) the subjective preferences a moral agent somehow commands himself to have. To a moral agent, an identification of X as a moral value amounts in practice to a command to pursue it that he will obey. For it is often noticed that, not having any empirical content, moral value judgments cannot be demonstrably assented to in any other way than by acting on the preferences they exalt. This explains why, as is also commonly noted, the saying "X is a moral value" is equivalent to "one ought to pursue X" or "X is that which a morally good agent would pursue" - equivalent in the sense that assent to any one of these sayings would issue the same actions, actions being the only hard evidence one can have of another's moral beliefs.

This is not to say that agents always consciously break statements about rights down into concrete value judgments before acting. However, if an agent claims to have acted morally in a particular case, he will have to produce the concrete value judgment he acted upon in order for others to grasp what (he claims) drove him. For instance, if an agent says that she rescued a baby from a burning building because she believes all beings have a right to be alive, it isn't clear just what morals she believes in, or what she might do in the future. The principle behind her action could be "whenever a life is in peril, one should do one's utmost to save it" just as well as "one should not ever kill others even to save one's own life, and, if it's a nice day, one may even rescue them from

burning buildings" or any number of less extreme principles that would in some cases recommend acts of heroic baby recovery. So, even if the conversion of moral statements doesn't always take place in the agent's conscious awareness before an act, it must be used in order to reconstruct that act in moral terms.

Since all conscious action seems to involve preferring one end and setting aside others, a moral claim not interpretable as a claim about the order of rank of values couldn't be acted on, or at least, as above, be claimed in a reconstruction of an act in moral terms to have been acted upon. That is, it couldn't be converted, by whatever amazing process that takes place in the mind of a moral agent, into definite subjective preference rankings.

For instance, if someone, like the unfortunate Dr. Whewell, says that we must do what is right, to even know what is being asked of one one must ask various questions such as "what, specifically, is right?" "how do I act rightly in situations X, Y... N?" "what determines what is right in each case?" Otherwise, no matter how eager to do what is right one may be, one simply won't have any idea of what to do. And, to speak of the matter at hand, claims about moral rights are typically too abstract to be acted on until they are hatched out as particular claims about the rightness of various rights respecting, rights violating and rights-violation punishing acts, as in the baby example above.

As far as the overall aim of the paper is concerned, the sole value of the Convertibility Thesis, which has now enjoyed as much attention as it could possibly deserve, is to reduce the often bewildering variety of different moral (realist) theories down to a single manageable unit - the claim that, for whatever reason, "X is good" or "one ought to pursue X" - which can be single-mindedly targeted by Hume's Law and the Irrelevancy Thesis, hopefully killing not two, but whole species of birds with one stone.

## HUME'S LAW

Hume's law: no ought from an is. Arguments composed of is-judgments cannot yield conclusions that include ought-judgments. Why accept it? Hume took his law to be

obvious on examination of particular cases. That aside, moralists themselves will tell one that what in moral fact ought to be the case, ought to be irrespective of whether it is the case. So the truth of ought judgments (statements about moral values, prescriptive judgments, etc.) isn't wholly dependent on the state of empirical reality, but mainly on what is true in moral fact (which is itself independent of empirical fact, thus the existence of war doesn't show that war is good, and so forth). Ought judgments are much like desires, which concern or have as content a state of affairs that may or may not exist. But, obviously the truth of empirical statements is completely dependent on the state of empirical reality. If is and ought judgments have different kinds of truth conditions, they can hardly be interchangeable, which they would have to be for analytical logical relationships to obtain between them. There simply is no equivalent for "one ought to do X" in empirical language; that one will, won't, may or would do X just isn't the same thing. So too the other way around.

A duo of seeming counterexamples could stand a look. A consequentialist (admittedly, not a well read one) might object that the consequences of an action are an empirical matter, and since whether an action is good depends on its consequences in the consequentialist system, surely that shows that is statements can hatch out ought statements. However, when one gets down to actual arguments, as Hume would explain, the goodness of certain consequences must be taken as a premise before one can argue from a description of an action's consequences anything about its goodness. And this goodness of certain empirical consequences exists in moral fact regardless of how often those consequences are realized. Finally, such goodness must have its whole origin and existence in nothing but the realm of moral fact since, if is statements can't by themselves be used to argue for the truth of any ought statement, assuming some fidelity between language and reality, empirical facts can't by themselves give rise to moral facts (which were before made independent of them anyway).

Then there is the claim that ought statements are just is statements about moral properties. When pressed, the hard-line moral realist who advances this position will admit that such is statements represent a "special kind" of is-statement. Just how special they are is revealed when one asks for a definition of a moral property like

"goodness" and is led, as per the Convertibility Thesis, into the word-wheel of X is good, X morally demands to be obtained, X is that in the pursuit of which moral man finds his fullness and completion, etc. Relentlessly phrasing ought statements as is statements seems more a mark of desperation than of fidelity to truth.

#### THE IRRELEVANCY THESIS

One can picture the body of moral realist doctrines as a possibly noxious gas, which the Convertibility Thesis gathers into a single large balloon. Hume's law makes the balloon self-sufficient, no longer tethered to the earth. Perhaps the Irrelevancy Thesis can send that balloon up, up, away...

$$S + M1 = W \text{ and } S + M2 = W$$

Here, S stands for a set of empirical facts (the referents of true empirical claims), M1 for a set of moral facts (the referents of true moral claims), and W for the empirically detectable world that consists of or issues from those facts. Part of S is people's moral beliefs. M2 is a set of moral facts that are the opposite of the facts in M1. When M2 is substituted for M1, what happens? Nothing. W is still the result. Of course, who is mistaken about the rightness of his actions is reversed (exactly who is right still can't be determined by empirical methods, naturally). If up to now an agent has happened to do what is right, now his actions will be wrong. But, this mistakenness will have no observable consequence, no effect on what the mistaken agent actually does.

If tomorrow everything that is now good became evil and vice versa, one would have no way of knowing this from the day's events. If Hitler had been right to kill millions of Jews, no greater or smaller number of the Jews would have been killed than were actually killed (as we think in defiance of their right to life, which did so much to protect them). If he thought he was right, popular opinion thinks him mistaken; but his belief, not whether it was true, determined what he did. If one holds a mistaken empirical belief, this will eventually bear fruit in the form of unsuccessful actions based

on inaccurate expectations. No such consequence is to be expected for one who holds a mistaken moral belief. Indeed, people often feel just fine while engaging in acts that others consider abominations. Of course, many acts now considered wrong do have unpleasant consequences (e.g. promiscuous sex often leads to disease), but if those acts were right they would still have those consequences. Anyway, even more diseases are probably contracted working at soup kitchens, an allegedly good form of activity. Conceivable counterexample: an agent who had infallible knowledge of right and wrong, who was incapable of acting on mistaken moral beliefs, would act differently in a world where M2 replaced M1, since he would instantly sense the change. But to claim that one knew of such an agent would be to claim infallible knowledge about morality - who but such an agent could recognize another? - and there is no point in arguing with infallible people because they are, well, infallible.

An intuitionist might claim that people need not have infallible knowledge of right and wrong to act differently given M2 and not M1, as long as they had at least some ability to directly grasp moral facts. However, this can be countered with a burden of proof argument. No account of the process by which one grasps moral facts exists, to the author's knowledge, that is at all different from a naturalistic account of the process by which one comes to pass a value judgment after thinking about a topic. That is, a man contemplating abortion and then intuitively grasping its wrongness is empirically indistinguishable from a man thinking about abortion and then getting riled up because he doesn't like it. The rightness or wrongness of abortion simply isn't required to explain such a man's experience. How can one tell whether one's feelings on a topic are intuitions beamed from the moral dimension or just one's own arbitrary preferences, inculcated by genes, conditioning, celestial movements, or whatever? One can't, unless one has infallible a priori knowledge of right and wrong that would rule out the more economical explanation of the determinist. Only someone with such knowledge would be in a position to deny that people in a situation where M2 obtained would have the exact same experiences and feelings as in the situation where M1 obtained - including whatever epiphanies led them to their moral beliefs.



Moving on to the implications of all this, what actions one can take and what their consequences are an empirical matter. Thus, moral statements have nothing predictive or informative to say about them. Yet ought statements are expected to motivate. Why would a rational agent be motivated by facts about the rightness or wrongness of his acts if those facts, in fact, had no influence whatsoever on the results his actions obtained? Right, wrong, it doesn't matter: the Irrelevancy Thesis in a nutshell. This Thesis should not be confused with the motto of the gangster ("right, wrong, I don't care") insofar as that motto appears to admit the possibility of an action's moral status having some impact on the life of the agent. Is the empirical world the only real world? As far as action is concerned, yes.

#### ADVANTAGES OF IRRELEVANCY THESIS BASED SKEPTICISM AND CONCLUSION

Two more common forms of moral skepticism are what I will call the metaphysical and the linguistic. Metaphysical moral skepticism, characteristic of crypto-Hegelian anarchist Max Stirner, is the denial that moral values exist anywhere except people's heads. Linguistic moral skepticism, represented by L. A. Rollins and, in more polite company, to some extent by Bernard Williams, is agnostic about the metaphysical status of moral values but denies that moralists have as of yet said anything intelligible about them. Moralists, on this view, use so many circular definitions (of good in terms of right, etc.) and floating analogies (to government and natural laws, to desires, to necessities, etc.) that talk of morality is simply gibberish.

Irrelevancy Thesis based skepticism is agnostic about both the metaphysical existence of moral values and the intelligibility of moral discourse (though in all fairness it must be admitted that the author denies both of these as well). Instead it claims that even if moral values exist and people can intelligently discuss them, such existence and discussion are completely pointless because moral facts have no impact one way or another on what empirical facts obtain. If everyone believes X is good, in practice one will have to take that into account whether or not one thinks X is good or whether it

actually is good. Everyone who has the power can force others to abide by his views of right and wrong - at just which point it becomes practically irrelevant whether or not he is in fact right or wrong. Likewise, in order to convince another person to accept one's own values, one must appeal to values they already hold (else there will be nothing to motivate the switch) no matter what they are.

The Irrelevancy Thesis does its best to avoid making many metaphysical and epistemic commitments (though it finds it necessary to deny certain epistemic claims of intuitionism). It is potentially superior to any Thesis of the metaphysical or linguistic skeptic since there is less that can go wrong with it. Metaphysics is a complicated topic; epistemology and linguistics, doubly so. The Irrelevancy Thesis, by contrast, is simple - almost moronic in comparison. On the authority of Mill: morality is not many things, but one. On the authority of Hume: this one thing is independent of the empirical world. And finally, since action takes place only in the empirical world as far as, of course empirically, anyone can tell, one needn't bother with moral facts and moral truths, since they don't bother with us. Now, this brave, disingenuous little Thesis must, all alone, face a calculating and subtle world that will seek to strip it of its rosy cheeked, innocent amorality and corrupt it with a thousand absolute shoulds and oughts.

12/29/98

These are some thoughts I wrote down. I was thinking about some stuff, apparently. These probably won't appear anywhere because frankly they aren't well enough written, but I thought you three would find them sufficiently interesting to read. I am interested in thoughts on adulthood from you, if you have any. I find the topic alternately exciting and depressing.

## HAPPINESS THOUGHTS

By Per Christian Malloch

## THE WILDERNESS

What is so appealing about stories of hardy men who last for months in an environment in which merely staying alive for a day is an awe inspiring achievement, or else a case of miraculous luck? Perhaps because the spectacle of a man surviving in such an environment drives home the point that in order to live, one must fight - that, consequently, life is little more than fighting. Physically, trekking through Arctic wilderness must be little different from actual combat - requiring the same deliberate refusal to give up to pain and fatigue, the same constant, intensely focused awareness of a world in which danger may be hidden anywhere, the same unending, grinding effort just to force oneself to continue - even the same ruthlessness that makes the feelings of oneself or others irrelevant in the calculation of what is needed for the goal at hand. And, by a kind of analogical leap all we sedentary lovers of wilderness tales must make if we are to draw any connection between the experiences of which those tales tell and our own, in order to have MORE life, one must fight MORE.

If everything boils down to that one alternative - fight or die - on a literal level, in the harshest circumstances, then in less harsh circumstances, surely that same alternative presents itself as metaphorical fighting versus metaphorical dying, where "dying" is privation, failure, inability to impress oneself on the world and thus, partial nonexistence. For, empirically, nothing exists if it does not occasion some effect - science laughs away nonsensible, intangible "essences" which fail to influence the world one way or another by their presence, as it will "good" and "evil" "in themselves" - and

so the less one's existence makes any difference, the more ineffectual and interchangeable one becomes, the less, psychologically speaking, one exists or perceives any point to one's existence. "Fighting" becomes applying the needed concentration, writing off the costs, and bearing the pain of removing all barriers to one's success - in short, doing something one doesn't feel like doing, overcoming one's self. The enemy one must fight is the self that settles for less - that is, the self that is content to die.

The self that is content to die often takes the form of the self that is placidly content with the old ways. For, even though for an adult everything novel is in fact just a new take on the same old things, novelty within this newly narrowed horizon remains the source of the most invigorating stimulation. With lack of stimulation comes sleep - the nearsighted, who only fully wake up when their lenses are in place, will surely understand this - and what is sleep? Temporary death.

The wilderness survival tale presents the spectacle of endless, heart-breaking struggle. In a harsh environment, one must engage in such struggle merely to remain alive. In a mild environment, one must engage in such struggle to achieve maximum life - memorable experiences, time dilation, fitness, total security, and similar desiderata. We love the Jack London hero because he presents the image of what we must be to fully take advantage of our one chance.

#### POISON IDEAS AND KILLING THOUGHTS

Just as ingesting certain substances leads to death, so too does believing certain ideas lead to - death. Actual, literal death, not just metaphorical "spirit death", though low spirits of course can proceed to death as much as precede it. No matter how good a poison tastes or whatever else may recommend it, no one in their right mind will knowingly ingest it, much less regard it as their salvation. But this is just what people do with poison ideas - they embrace notions that make it more likely that they will die than competing notions, often fully aware and even proud of this fact. Any egoist, common practice be damned, will refuse to entertain a poison idea even for a moment - no matter what its merits, truth not excluded. The bottom line is that one has no interest in believing any idea that unnecessarily increases one's odds of dying.

Most mistaken factual beliefs are poisonous - they lead to errors in judgment that continually attract failure and untimely death. However, such beliefs are generally recognized as such, being immediately dropped once more reliable beliefs become available. It bears pointing out, lest all unsupported beliefs be dismissed as poisonous, that certain delusions or arbitrary beliefs, such as the belief that one is destined to succeed, are either harmless or actually demonstrably beneficial, and hence it is reasonable to believe them irrespective of whether they are "true". Indeed, the fact that such beliefs would be ruled out by any definition of believability that demanded truth of every belief worth believing, shows such a definition would itself be a poison idea. But the truly deadly, because unrecognized and unresisted, poisonous, killing thoughts are moral claims (not, of course, all moral claims, but the great majority). Consider the claim that one should do something to relieve suffering in all who suffer. One could spend - or expend - one's whole life relieving the suffering of others and not even scratch the paint on the edifice of suffering that is the Third World. One might as well regard as an ideal draining the ocean with an eyedropper. Obedience to this idea would consume one completely - and for what return? None, none whatsoever. Anyone who accepts this idea suffers from a disease. The new age quacks, old time pope whores and academic cock-bangers who spread this idea, this contagion, are genocidal Typhoid Marys who ought to be isolated like lepers. Anyone who attempts to defend this idea in one's house ought to be thrown out, bodily if necessary - in any case immediately, and with, with some exceptions, no hope of ever returning. For, such a person is an assassin - a slow working, plotting, plodding murderer whose ideas, sprinkled into conversation, bring enfeeblement and degeneration, just as surely as do the drops of poison more conventional killers sprinkle into one's food. Examples of poison ideas, ideas which obviously bring their holders nothing but worse prospects for living, include:

The idea that one should refrain from hurting others when this appears to be in one's long term best interest (thus, one should tolerate parasites in one's life just to avoid being "rude"!)

The idea that there are "rights," when observance of such "rights" would not be in one's long term best interest (thus, one should lie down and let oneself be trampled because it is the "right" of others to do the trampling!)

The idea that one should be nice to people in exchange for nothing, even if one doesn't like the people involved in a particular case (thus, that one should become others' abject servant and prisoner of war - voluntarily!)

The idea that any external authority knows what is best for one's self (thus, that one can be ordered to do things against one's apparent long term best interest for no apparent reason!)

The idea that other people's desires - or indeed, any things at all in the entire universe - have any inherent relevance or importance which can compete with the importance one voluntarily (not to say free willed-ly) assigns them (thus, that one has to run around catering to the whims of others instead of getting ahead like them!)

The idea that one "can't" do anything not literally impossible according to the laws of physics (thus, that one might as well not even try to get what one wants, because one "can't.")

The idea that one has any fate other than to get what one wishes for and earns (thus, that one might as well just sit back and get fucked up the ass by people who think they have better fates!)

The above mentioned idea that one must believe something just because it's been shown "true" by some procedure - and in general the idea that one "must" believe certain ideas for any reason other than that such belief is in one's interest (thus, that one must die for one's convictions - as if one's convictions intend to repay one for the favor!)

Analogously, the idea that one must do something just because it has been shown "right" by some procedure (thus, that one must do what is right, even when it is fatal, not to mention idiotic!)

The idea that there is a pleasant afterlife one can only reach by not being a complete, heartless egoist (thus, that one need not succeed in real life!)

The idea that poverty and failure are morally edifying, spiritually uplifting, or in any way a net gain (thus, that one can drop to one's knees - and stay there!)

"But why be so obsessed with preserving life? Maybe oblivion is just as good" an objector says. And what does the egoist say in response? Nothing - because he hasn't even heard them. As an egoist he has already segregated himself from anyone who would make it their business to inject him with poisonous, killing thoughts. Like Odysseus' men stopping their ears with wax to avoid hearing the beautiful but deadly song of the sirens, he deliberately blacks out all transmissions that would bring such thoughts to his mind.

Of course, with his life as his property, he can in fact throw it away whenever he wishes - but why would he give up his only asset (ignoring the usual 'painful terminal disease' and 'god-mighty dictatorship' scenarios)? You won't be able to tell him any "reasons" - unless you fancy getting punched in the face. If your opinion is that he should give up, you are not entitled to share it without encountering severe retaliation for your temerity. The egoist knows that, for a quite different reason than that offered by idealists, ideas are literally a matter of life and death.

## MENTAL TOXINS

The preceding remarks may encourage one or both of the following misinterpretations:

- that only ideas can be poisonous mental contents
- that maximization of mere lifespan should guide one's choice, so far as anyone has one, of what mental contents to have

To cover the second misinterpretation first, 'life' is here used as a shorthand for getting all of life's good things: wealth, sex and love, power, control, accomplishment, friendship, pleasant memories, etc. Striving for maximum self-ing entails taking risks that may in rare cases diminish one's chances of living to old age. So, egoists would avoid not only ideas that tended to kill their owners (except in the rare cases mentioned just now), but ideas that even slowed them down or lowered their spirits unnecessarily at all.

Memories of certain experiences can be as poisonous as bad ideas. Here, however, one must tread lightly, since the meaning of an experience is wholly created by the experiencer and thus various from person to person in a way that makes it impossible

to predict what experiences will prove poisonous with the accuracy with which one can predict the impact of accepting certain beliefs. Moreover, since what meaning one creates for a given experience is often influenced by one's beliefs, avoiding poison ideas appears to be more efficient than avoiding the experiences that give rise to poison memories. Still, by and large one can identify the following kinds of experiences as harmful:

- witnessing failure, be it one's own or that of others
- witnessing defeat (without seeing the compensating triumph of the victor)
- witnessing sickness, suffering and death (when not inflicted by some heroic figure)
- spending time around stupid or reprehensible people, and especially their speech

Emotions, too, can be classified as generally good or bad for oneself. One must be even more careful here, however, since one's beliefs and experiences play such a large role in determining one's reactions. Attempts to repress or directly control emotions famously end in failure. Indeed, it seems doubtful that emotions can be chosen at all, since they seem to pop up automatically in response to certain stimuli. The prudent course seems to be to influence one's emotions through control over the circumstances and attitudes that produce them. That said, it is often helpful when one is in the planning stage of a venture to target a certain emotion for removal or enhancement. Consider that, for instance:

- pity, which seems to do no material good for either the sufferer or the pitier, which outrages eye for an eye justice, and, when indulged, yields little pleasure, looks wholly disposable whenever it comes in conflict with other desires or emotions
- generalized loathing of the world or human beings seems to stifle rather than engender action, and so should be sublimated into more energizing feelings such as the "pathos of distance" or intense competitiveness
- self hatred, and guilt (rather than regret, frustration, etc.) in response to one's errors, no matter how "just," simply prevent one from becoming better
- desire for revenge, while legitimate, usually isn't worth satisfying as long as ways of avoiding further contact with an enemy are available



-- obsessiveness, while unjustly maligned and generally A-OK, leads to unbearable frustration when it concerns a truly unattainable goal

How much control do we really have over our thoughts, beliefs, goals, actions, feelings and experiences? Even if an answer were available, why not just assume that the answer is "a lot"? Even if one has control, lacking faith in one's power will prevent one from exercising it. And if one doesn't have much control, what difference does it make if one thinks one does? Perhaps struggling to overcome oneself when one truly couldn't change would be more pain than it was worth (Harry Browne's "identity trap.") But in the case of the more virulent poison ideas and demoralizing experiences, nearly any amount of pain would be better than the alternative, i.e. just giving in. If you deny that, I don't want to hear it!

#### DOGMATISM OF ADULTHOOD

All this smacks of the dogmatism of adulthood - of the mind that narrows in order to narrow the focus of its energy, so that, unlike a child, one might actually accomplish something. It feels strange to be so newly set in stone; in my case, my stone housing is just poured, still warm. I wake up, wonder what I will do - too late, I am already... someone! I have already decided! Already I am starting not to miss my old malleability, am beginning to think that I was someone all along, I just didn't know it (something I would think no matter what childhood I in fact had, presumably). I have my god, my trades, my pet theories, my mythos, my feminine ideal, my ideal of friendship - once all kitted up, my thoughts are more of conquest than introspection. My goal now is nothing other than honing, sharpening, intensifying, aggrandizing the thing I already have become, for good or bad, it scarcely matters, as no alternative is left to me. I don't mourn the people I could have become; they are so different from me, I doubt I would like them...

12/29/98

Here's an article from my upcoming mini-project, "Follower" magazine.

Happy new year.

## MAN USES CHICKENS TO PLAN LIFE

By Per Christian Malloch

Until recently, Bob Simby was like all of us: confused, floundering, desperate for guidance or a commanding voice to turn to. But that was before he discovered the art of alectreomancy: divining the future by means of studying the order in which a chicken pecks at a number of seeds laid out before it.

"I'll admit it, I was hopeless," Simby says, holding one of the chickens he now uses to predict his destiny. "I thought I'd never find a higher power capable of steering me through life. But when I heard that famous scientist Carl Sagan relies on alectreomancy, my ears perked up. Now, just like Carl Sagan, I let the chickens make all the tough decisions."

Simby first discovered the power of alectreomancy when he was faced with the option of accepting a promotion or remaining in the job he has held for over twenty years.

"The money was tempting, but the job involved making, and taking responsibility for, all kinds of decisions - to the point of orchestrating entire advertising campaigns, and taking the rap if they failed! That sounded like a hell of a lot of stress to ask an employee to take on.

"I felt betrayed that my company would try to exploit me with such a high-stress job. What about loyalty? What about faithfulness to the company? Aren't those worth money, too? Still, I couldn't stop thinking about the money, ashamed as I am now to admit that I was once so materialistic.

"So I scattered the feed on the alectreomantic board as the book instructed and set one of my chickens down right in front of it. I asked what would happen if I took the new job. And you know what the first seed it pecked was? The seed on top of the picture of Thanatos, the god of death. The chicken had moved with surety, confidence - gone right for that seed. I called up the office right then and there and turned down the

promotion. Sure enough, a week later I heard that the guy who had gotten the promotion intended for me had been killed in a car crash. After that, I started using alectreomancy a lot more, as you can imagine."

In a startling number of cultures across history, chickens have symbolized the farmer's planning ahead, planting autumn seeds for spring harvests - thus, the future. The crest of a chicken is represented in ancient Sumerian alchemical diagrams as the "crest" of a wave - bring to mind today's expression "the wave of the future"? That's no coincidence. The root of the word "wave" in English means "to greet". So, with chickens, Simby is able to "wave hello" to the future of which chickens are the omnibenevolent plenipotentiaries.

Holding up Bertha, one of the many chickens that now make his every choice for him, he adds "this chicken saved my life. I'll never again have to face the pain and aloneness of not knowing what to do."

Though it still lags well behind astrology and numerology in popularity, alectreomancy has recently attracted renewed interest, largely due to the hot, widespread new belief that renowned scientist Carl Sagan consults chickens before making decisions of any consequence.

Follower asked respected occult scholar and expert James Peacham about the alectreomancy megatrend, and got the following response: "Infinite Intelligence communicates its plans in ways that may vary depending on the seeker.

Alectreomancy, though its procedures will be unfamiliar to many for some time to come, is as valid and truehearted an approach to making it through life as consulting runes or last night's dreams. All three rely on the same basic method: closely examining random, senseless everyday events over which one has no control, for clues about how to deal with the major challenges and opportunities of life, as if they were equally causeless, unpredictable and insanely arbitrary.

"Don't worry if you aren't sure why one form of occultism seems more appealing to you than another. Just go with your gut feeling - there's probably an unseen hand behind it. As long as you're suspending all rational thought in favor of the uncritically accepted commands of a higher power, be it symbols carved on rocks, stars millions of miles

away, or in this case, mindless chickens, you know you're on the right track to enlightenment."

We here at Follower couldn't agree more.

1/3/99

Yes, you raise chickens. You make a living off of them.

Perhaps even, deep down, love them.

But have you ever wondered what it would be like for chickens to have their own musical? A pop music musical in which chickens are worshipped and even transformed into?

Come to [www.thechickenmusical.com](http://www.thechickenmusical.com) to have all of your questions answered. The chickens are standing by.

2/1/99

smokettes - just like regular smokies, only with their ears tied down with a pink ribbon to indicate that they are female. Refer to "time smokettes" when you want to emphasize how petty and avoidable a delay or inefficiency is, as if upbraiding yourself for allowing even weak, female smokies to trip you up with their scampering.

smokikis - tiny smokies which live in your intestines. these parasites cause you to hallucinate a need for sugar.

2/26/99

Dear Yigbo -

I'm sure you're already aware of the recent uncover in Antarctica of the Worshipper Scrolls, possibly dating back as early as 4000 BC. Well, the more the scientists and scholars look at those scrolls, the more it seems like we are meant to worship wild turkeys instead of chickens, as we all were apparently misled to believe by yourself. Do you admit that you could have misunderstood the imperative? And what can we do to atone for the terrible atrocities committed against the worship-starved turkeys?

Penitent West-Coast Worshipper

Dear Penitent -

Those scrolls should be called "a shuddersome reminder of ancient days of barbarity, promiscuity, and wretched, buck-toothed ignorance". Fact is, people back then bowed before just about anything because they were so bow-legged. And as for chickens and turkeys, they could hardly tell those puppies apart, so deteriorated was their vision as a result of syphilis, inbreeding, and squinting in black-magic ritual grimaces. Yigbo's law is intuitively obvious; its validation comes from nature, not a collection of fancy-pants scrolls written by people on a brief vacation from mindlessly dancing around rocks. Worship turkeys instead of chickens? That's an abomination point right there, penitent. You'll have to live up to your name - indeed, achieve levels of self-mortification that make it a tenderstepping euphemism - before you're restored to your former eminence in the world of... chicken worship.

Yigbo

3/26/99

Name: Itchy Smokey

Habitat: body

Behavior: Underfed cousin of Sex smokey. Constantly scratches self, rubs face, and taps foot rather than working. Head bursts like a rotten pumpkin when stomped on, enabling brain to be shot directly with baby flintlock pistol.

Method of extermination: Keep hands on work at all times. Ignore bodily sensations other than sharp pain or exhaustion.

4/5/99

As a rule, one's salary doesn't increase in a linear relationship to one's productivity, so the highest paid people are in fact, relative to what they produce for society, the lowest paid. This was the thesis of my "underpaid executives" article - a thesis freshman Dylan Stillwood neglected to refute or even address in his haste to attack my work. Instead, in his letter, he presents a number of lies, distortions and inaccuracies about my article, which it is the purpose of this letter to point out:

I am not guilty of plagiarism simply because Stillwood is capable of drawing an analogy between my views and those of Ayn Rand, anymore than Stillwood is guilty of plagiarism because his views resemble those of a mildly retarded child.

I did not say that executives "do not like money". I said that executives use most of their available money to expand their business rather than for personal consumption, thus benefiting society by increasing the production of values. In saying this, I did not imply that Bill Gates "wants to use his 90 billion dollars to feed starving children". Giving Microsoft's funds to starving children would in fact be a complete waste of money, since it would produce more starving children, rather than more of the computers that will eventually make starvation a distant memory for all other than those who deserve it.

Finally, I neither hate nor regard as "leeches" ordinary working people. I respect anyone to the extent that they make a living producing for others. The real leeches are people that live off the government. If you don't live off the government, you're OK. If you do live off the government, die.

4/8/99



I thought you'd like this fragment of a book I'm writing on how to play Japanese imports.

## THE STORY OF THE LITTLE BOY WHO GOT BLOWN UP BY DYNAMITE

By Per Christian Malloch

Once there was a little boy who came across a stick of dynamite. He asked a local sharecropper what the stick was for. Whereupon, the sharecropper, whose sombrero was festooned with lead weights so heavy, he could barely hold up his head, replied: "My son, that is a stick of dynamite. If you light the cord coming out of it with a match, the cord will sparkle." Now, this boy's parents were idiots. They had a habit of going to sleazy bars, and every time they hit a new bar, even more sleazy than the last one, they picked up a new matchbook with the bar's logo on it. Then they'd put that matchbook, along with dozens of others stinking of cigarettes and spilled liquor, in a crystal dish on their living room table, just so everyone who visited would know how sleazy they were. Unfortunately for all involved, as will soon be made clear, this boy was as light fingered as a gypsy, and had "gypped" his parents of more than a few matchbooks earlier in the day. So, eager to see the cord light up, the little boy lit a match and held it to the fuse. The sharecropper couldn't even see him do it because his incredibly heavy sombrero practically had him kissing the earth that provided his livelihood. You can bet that when that little boy lit the fuse, he sure didn't expect to be blown the hell up all over the place, bang! But that's what happened. And since the boy's parents successfully sued the sharecropper with the help of a book-tossing lawyer, he couldn't afford any new clothes, and had to come to work splattered with gore. There's a good side to the ending, though, because a Capcom talent scout ended up seeing him and hiring him to do motion capture for Resident Evil 3.

The moral of this story, once you've sifted through all the junk like you should be doing with your RPG, is that sometimes a little information is more dangerous than no information at all. (If you thought this was a story about a sombrero, you'd better read the story again after reading "How to Read a Book" by Mortimer Adler.) You can waste

hours sounding out Katakana words, leafing through Japanese dictionaries, and peering at funky little pictures when all you need to do is try talking to everybody again. In fact, like the little boy who got blown up by dynamite, your author learned his lesson the hard way.

When stuck in the middle of Brave Fencer Musashi, your author busted out the Japanese dictionary and tried to figure out what some of the townspeople were saying. Special attention was paid to the words of this chick at a bakery who seemed to be talking about an event that would take place at a certain time. Well, to make a long story short, it was found out that if you went to this store an hour before closing time, you could buy rotten food. But, if you kept this rotten food in your inventory long enough, it would inexplicably metamorphose into a "Super Burrito" (as spelled in Katakana) which restored a lot of hp. The action sections of the game are so easy, those burritos had time to start rotting again before there was any use for them. Great, huh? And, of course, completely irrelevant to beating the game. What was needed was a story event, not burritos, super or otherwise. Randomly talking to people and attacking/picking up objects would have advanced the story in half the time it ended up taking with the "help" of a Japanese dictionary.

If you use Japanese, therefore, use it sparingly. It's usually more than enough to sound out all the Katakana you come across and know to recognize the compass directions.

4/25/99

Congratulations. You have lived to see this day.

The chicken musical just arrived from Singapore. One copy in a handsome chicken-orange carrying case is just ten dollars for on campus worshippers, fifteen by mail. Negotiation possible on larger quantities. After all, the chicken musical is a gift your friends and family will never forget. Do away with the 'same old' syndrome, with the 'gift' of chickens!

Call 853-5730 to arrange pick up or (on orders of 3 or more) delivery to your door. Then call your friends to let them know that the wait for chickens is over.

Don't let fat chickens pass you by - a pkaw unheard is a pkaw unheard forever.

5/7/99

I'm forwarding this to all who have expressed interest in NT or my philosophical ideas. I hope it ends up bringing you advantages. I would not want to lay my own trip on others. But it wouldn't be fair to keep you ignorant of something that has made me so happy. If you are interested, the best place to start is [www.neo-tech.com/therapy](http://www.neo-tech.com/therapy).

My life was OK. But now, it's good enough to make me want to live forever. I can no longer let the author of this change go unacknowledged.

-- I've removed all external sources of "happiness" which provide instantaneous pleasure at the cost of long term losses, such as caffeine, refined sugar, alcohol, candy (including "diet" candy), gourmandizing, oversleep, pornography, television, newspapers, the radio, drugs, emotional outbursts (e.g. hitting things), lying, lying down on the job, swearing (still working on that), repetitive speech patterns, and excessive video gaming. Instead, I focus on the real source of happiness: productive work, followed by reflecting on that work with others... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I perform 30 minutes of hard exercise per day, including one hundred and eighty push-ups, to maintain a healthy, sexy body... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I eat an optimally balanced sludge of shredded wheat, oat bran flakes, protein powder, nutrient supplements, fruit, and raw carrots/broccoli for every single meal every day... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I've eliminated most of the parasitical, time-wasting people in my life (including family members and long standing "friends") and am targeting the remainder for extermination... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- My room is so neatly organized that I can draw it from memory and almost never have to spend time looking for anything... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I've implemented a system of rules and controls to force me to make progress every day on my moneymaking essence. I easily spot and smash rationalizations using total self-honesty... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I used to finish projects, then leave them on the shelf to gather dust. Now, I am working to elevate them into commercial products. I've withdrawn from college in

order to work for months on a video game, and when I return, I'm going to take nothing but hard core programming courses... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I've purged all overt mysticism from my mind (including religion, absolute moralism, political loyalties) and know to hunt and kill the more subtle forms whenever they pop up... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

-- I used to think I had "enough" money. Now I know that happiness comes more from making money than spending it. And since I want to be biologically immortal, there's no end to the amount of money I should try to make, since I can at least use it to form a research corporation dedicated to developing profitable life extending technologies... Thanks to Neo-Tech!

These are the results of just a few months of going Neo-Tech. I could take my self of a year ago and run rings around him, pimp him, and sell him into white slavery, even while encumbered by a solid gold sombrero. I hope that a year from now some of you will be able to say the same.

Just what is Neo-Tech? In a phrase: systematic honesty used to smash rationalized laziness. Today's world is full of rationalized laziness (mysticism) and hidden failure. Thus, applying the ideal of total honesty to its full logical implications yields a lifestyle alien to that of the average person. Very alien. Very much harder. And very much better.

6/6/99

This is a public message to those associated with me in some capacity.

I wrote a computer program called "Engram Hunter". It searches a document and returns the number of occurrences of every word or phrase in it. I ran it on a book I had written and subsequently judged to be a piece of "good writing". I was shocked; the book was infested with overused constructions and broken-record speech patterns.

Borrowing from the field of plant biology, I call these patterns "tropisms". A tropism is any word or string of words which one uses because doing so produces an unconscious pleasure that is independent of its communicative function. Tropisms are examples of NON-CONSCIOUS SPEECH, purposeless noises which scratch a phantom itch.

The sound of a tropism is a hideous sound. It is the sound of your brain turning into a plant. For years, I sought to note and delete the things people would euphemistically call "my word of the day" or "Per's phrase". I have always felt nauseated by the sight of those who feel the need to say "like", "sort of", "profound", etc. every other sentence. To me, they are not fully human.

Swearing is the classic example of a tropism. A woman who could not speak, because the speech centers of her brain had been destroyed by disease, would swear upon stubbing her toe. This according to Dr. so and so.

Popular tropisms of today, in addition to those cited, include "so...", "but...", "basically", ";well...", "actually", "kind of", "right?", "fucking", and "unfortunately". Tropisms can be longer, sometimes comprising entire sentences.

Tropisms are linguistic mysticism. One uses particular words because one gets a kick out of saying them or as a lazy resort to habit... even when they aren't suited to communicating one's thought. And, one dishonestly represents oneself as making conversation or saying something, when in fact one is mentally masturbating.

Unpruned, they will destroy one's ability to speak coherently, much like mysticism eventually shuts down the integrating mechanism of the brain. My teacher of psychology at Columbia, Eugene Galanter, does not believe that many public school children are capable of speech, as opposed to conditioned behavior. Their parents

never made the effort to clear the jungle of tropisms that flourishes in their pre-literate brains.

As you might imagine, I am against poetry.

I thought my regimen of catching and squeezing tropisms had cleared my speech. But running Engram Hunter revealed subtle levels on which my mind still runs in circles.

Look at these statistics:

#### ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

total word count: 28630

number of different words used: 3829

average number of times any given word used (rounded to nearest tenth): 7.5

#### REVISED DOCUMENT (after 45 hours of editing using Engram Hunter)

total word count: 11305

number of different words used: 3061

average number of times any given word used (rounded to nearest tenth): 3.7

It's hard for you to imagine what it means to reduce the average occurrence of any word in a document by 3.8. It requires virtually eliminating regularities in style. The end result is a document that is faster and less fatiguing to read. I would like to thank J. S. Bach for his B Minor Mass, my only companion over these last few days.

This is not meant to sell Engram Hunter, although obviously I am boasting. The C++ code is available to anyone who wants it from me, but there is no stand-alone app.

What this story illustrates is that, assuming you are anything like me, 1) you have many tropisms that you don't think you do, and 2) self editing can both reveal and destroy them.

I know many of you take care of your bodies. But it is equally important to keep your mind clean and healthy. If you tolerate tropisms, you are NOT PAYING ATTENTION.

It's absurd to get locked into one way of saying anything, much less everything. As

your words rigidify, so will your thoughts, until they become detached from reality. So I send you this message hoping that it will lead you to become more healthy.

6/27/99



Michael Marshal Smith - Only Forward

\*\*\*\*\*Weirder than Lovecraft, but with living characters

This is my favorite novel because it is so beautifully sad. I can't explain how this sadness is conveyed, however, so I will just point out its other merits. It is narrated by a character who, the reader gradually discovers, cannot be trusted. The meaning of entire portions of the novel is flip-flopped several times in light of previously withheld information suddenly dispensed by the protagonist. His story is too painful to him to tell all at once, and the consequences of this fact are manifested in the plot itself as its events steadily grow more bizarre and grotesque. Leaving aside the amusement provided by this post-modern presentation, there is the lure of a surreal anarcho-capitalistic setting and writing which can convincingly move to being funny, to horrifying, to just plain depressing. Saying any more might spoil the many surprises. A completely original book.

9/14/99

Richard Klein - Eat Fat

\* - - - A repulsive testament to man's capacity to rationalize

Sick of being fat and unattractive? Rather than developing the self discipline to become a strong, healthy person, why not console yourself with R. Klein's masterfully constructed, pseudo-academic rationalizations for continued fatness? It's all here - how other, grander cultures considered fatness desirable, how today's health conscious society is run by those who are both cruel and skinny, and how REALLY enjoying life requires relentless gourmandizing because me... want... eat... food! Bravo, Mr. Klein. I look forward to your books on alcoholism, crack addiction, and self-mutilation.

10/8/99

## THE POSTMAN

A Review By Per Christian Malloch

*Il Postino*: Doltish Postman turned Communist reads Stolen Poetry to win Island Bumpkin's Heart

*Il Postino* - *The Postman* - is an award-winning Italian film about a dim postman who receives the aid of a famous poet in his efforts to snare the most attractive woman on his island. This much I knew beforehand. How appropriate that I ran across an outdoor showing of the film purely by accident. There, I was ignored by a marginally attractive woman. If only such magical moments of romance and mystery had existed in the film. The promised famous poet in the film is Pablo Neruda, who is staying on an island in Italy after having been exiled from his native Cuba for writing pro-Communist poetry. There he befriends the local postman, Mario Ruopollo, who pesters him for autographs, asks him illiterate questions about poetry - "What is a metaphor?" - and finally asks him to assist him in winning the heart of a local barmaid. The postman recites some of Neruda's poems to this wench, who capitulates with pathetic quickness; they have a Catholic wedding. Neruda then leaves, and there follows an inexplicably long sequence where it gradually occurs to Ruopollo that he is not coming back. Years later, Neruda returns to discover that Ruopollo was killed at a Communist rally, which he had attended under the influence of Neruda's poems and the local Communist postmaster. The film ends with presumably fabricated footage of the rally.

The topics of the film are that of Neruda's works; love, poetry and Communism. Each theme is treated with the same crude sentimentality. The principal women in the film (Neruda's and Ruopollo's wives) have virtually no lines; they smile when poetry is spoken at them, submit to sexual advances, and clean house. Ruopollo declares his love after having spoken five words to his future wife, while the embraces of Neruda's wife seem no different from the embraces he receives from female fans at the train station when he first arrives. Just as in Neruda's poems, in *Il Postino* love is a mixture of well-proportioned genitalia and eloquent words.

"Sublime ideas sound silly when repeated," Neruda remarks during one of his discourses on the theory of poetry. To judge from these speeches, the scriptwriter drew the inference that silly ideas sound sublime when repeated. "If poetry is explained it becomes banal," he explains elsewhere, revealing one of the tricks of the trade. True poets, not to say scriptwriters, know quite well that their work is already banal; fine language becomes the fine art of concealing this fact. Towards the end of the film, the utility of Neruda's teachings becomes apparent. Trying to quiet Ruopollo during one of his fits of depression, his wife says, "I don't think you're a bad poet." He responds: "What? Have I ever written any poems?"

Ruopollo, taking his cues from the "poet of the people," proudly announces he's voting Communist, although at the rate at which he reads a letter in the beginning of the film, it would take him his entire life just to get through the Communist Manifesto. His sound grasp of Marxian principles is demonstrated in a scene where he berates a well-to-do man for buying fish at a discount, explaining that the fishermen are being "exploited". Later, he confronts a politician who has broken a campaign promise after being elected; apparently it is his first confrontation with democracy. Finally, he is beaten to death at a Communist rally; a pity, since he would have read his first poem there.

The aching pointlessness of the film is felt most strongly in the last half hour. Neruda has left, so the slightly interesting conversations between him and Ruopollo no longer exist. Instead, we see Roupollo moping about the island, reminiscing about Neruda's visit, losing money on his business (at least he isn't "exploiting" anyone!) and in general despondently Waiting for Pablo. When Neruda finally returns, the director cruelly forces the audience to watch his reminiscing about Ruopollo. The conclusion is inescapable; whether or not he ever hung around a Famous Poet, no one gives a damn about someone in a backward fishing village in Italy, not even the poet himself, who promised to write to the postman and never did.

By the end of the movie, I was begging it to end not only for aesthetic reasons but because I was freezing my ass off sitting on a lawn at Barnard. These feelings of

physical and spiritual discomfort mixed to produce - what shall I call it? A feeling, an experience, something like the antithesis of sex.

In this case, the postman most certainly did not deliver.

## HOW TO TELL IF YOUR GIRLFRIEND IS INSANE

By Per Christian Malloch

If you are a hardcore video gamer, there's a higher chance than normal that you're shy. But shyness, I've found, is a dangerous policy. If you don't pursue women, the only women you're going to end up with are the ones that pursue you. And while some women pursue men out of healthy self confidence, most of them do it because they've gone through the following three step program:

- 1) go (or be driven) insane
- 2) drive away all aggressive men with constant kooky behavior
- 3) become abjectly lonely and latch on to the first man who seems passive enough to be incapable of rejecting a woman.

Oh, it looks like an easy deal at first. An attractive girl comes along, wants to hook up (or at least seems willing to hang out) - what's the problem? You probably won't discover the problem - the many, many problems - until it's too late... unless you learn to recognize tip-offs like the following:

### TEN SIGNS THAT YOUR GIRLFRIEND MAY BE INSANE

1. Her diary, which she lets you read, is filled with stream of consciousness poetry with an ever-present theme of suicide.
2. She says or writes to you that she'll love you forever - after a couple of dates.
3. All of her previous boyfriends were (or became?) gay.
4. She calls you in the middle of the night to ask, in a fake little girl voice, when you first started to believe in monsters.
5. She almost never leaves her house because she's afraid of being given the evil eye.
6. She attempts to stab you with a kitchen knife, while speaking a kind of verbal collage of television cliché's.
7. She's 30 years older than you.
8. She's had sex with more than 40 different people.

9. Without warning or subsequent explanation, she runs in a circle around the room, alternately squawking like a chicken and going "doooooot! dooooooot!"
10. She regularly visits a psychotherapist and/or has been diagnosed with a clinical "mental illness".

Guys, I'm not making this up. All of this is from real firsthand accounts - too many of them my own. And there's no sexism here. Most women are sane, even reasonable. It's as if crazy girlfriends are a punishment sent from God to punish timid men. Now, it's pretty hard to believe that someone else is actually bona fide bonzo bonkers. It's a lot easier, if you're sane yourself, to come up with complicated reasons for their seemingly absurd actions. But in reality, that's what they are: random, absurd actions with no explanation. So here are a couple rules about crazy ladies that will help you deal with them when common sense seems to stop working:

1. Once a crazy lady, always a crazy lady. Don't think that any amount of counseling, tender loving care, or reforming will make her a normal person again. It's already far, far too late for that by the time you've met her. And the only change that can possibly happen is that she will become even more incorrigibly, infuriatingly crazy.
2. At the slightest sign of craziness, to paraphrase Atari Teenage Riot, GET OUT WHILE YOU CAN! Any craziness you see is just the tip of the iceberg - an iceberg made of sewage, whose most revolting depths will only be revealed to you once she feels you're safely in her confidence. E.g. does she sometimes agree to meet you somewhere, not show up, and then deny that you ever agreed to meet there or even talked about doing so? Alarm koo-koo clocks should be sounding in your head. That kind of behavior isn't just obnoxious. It's downright nutty.

In short, if you insist on being shy, you had better maintain a "zero craziness tolerance" policy. Don't let wholesome, sane girls die as old maids because you were too shy to tell them you liked them. Because one day, the crazy ladies will come for you. And if you aren't prepared, they'll getcha.

**Best Regards,**

**Per Christian Malloch**

**Co-President, Gamethought Productions**

**Acting Regent, The Chicken Foundation**

**The End**