



CHIT

3

for

CHAT

by
James R. Hugunin

HANDMADE WORK OF ART
You are holding a limited
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art. Any imperfections
which may be present are to
be revered as a mark of
original art.

CHIT FOR CHAT

Part 3: Exchanges

James R. Hugunin

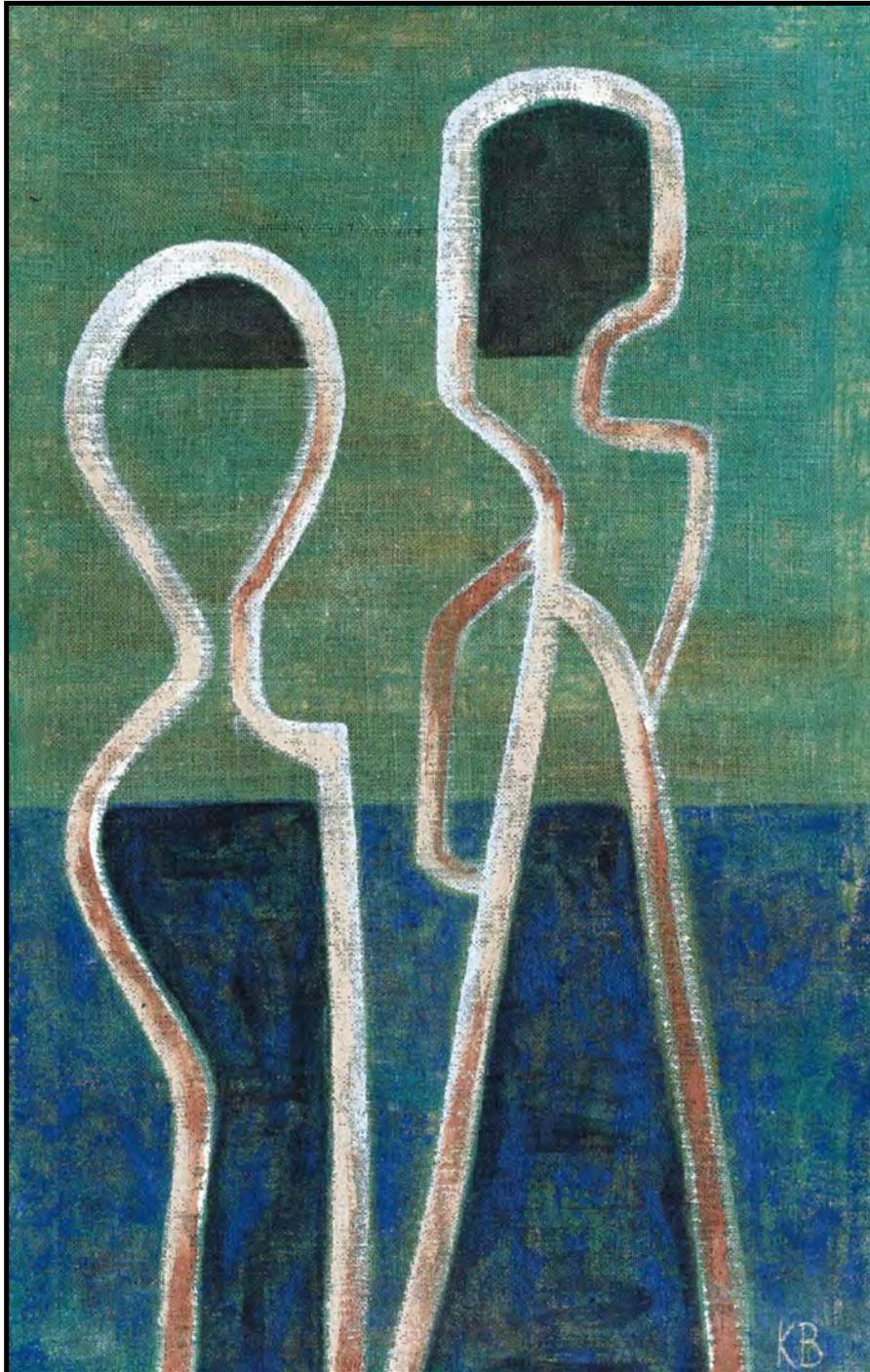


James R. Hugunin



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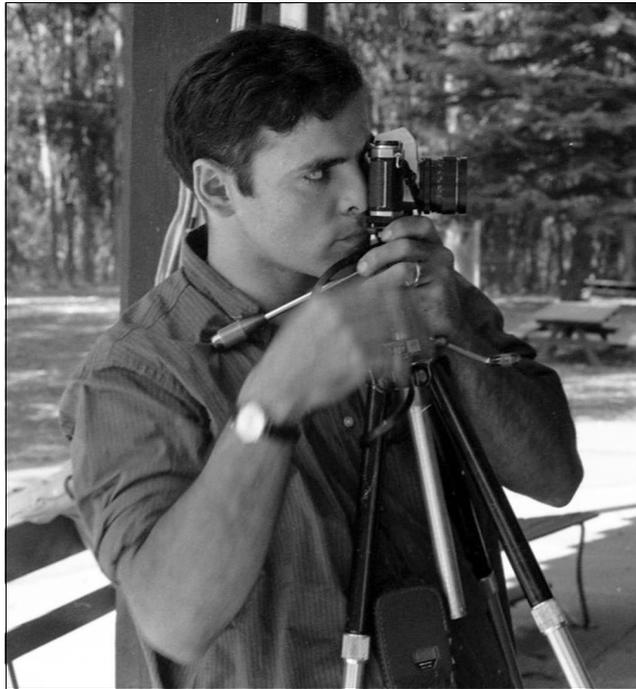
<https://www.uturn.org>



Das Gespräch (The Conversation, c. 1910) Karl Ballmer (d. 1958). Ballmer's mode of abstraction was touted by Samuel Beckett. This image had a direct effect on our Playwright and Director in their approach to staging and illustrating the characters of Chit and Chat.

DEDICATED TO

*To explore strange new worlds . . . My UCLA graduate school friend, Virgil Mirano, who later hired me to work with him at Robert Able and Associates (subcontractor of Paramount Pictures) on the special effects for *Star Trek: The Movie* (1979). Thanks, Virg!*

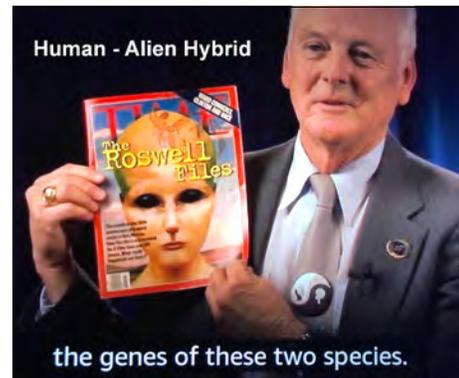


Virgil as a young man.





INTRODUCTION



The nature of each reality is to seem real, as though it were the only one around. . . . In a nutshell: the insubstantiality of all constructs and the momentariness of all phenomena are the same. They reflect the electromagnetic wave nature of the quantum field.

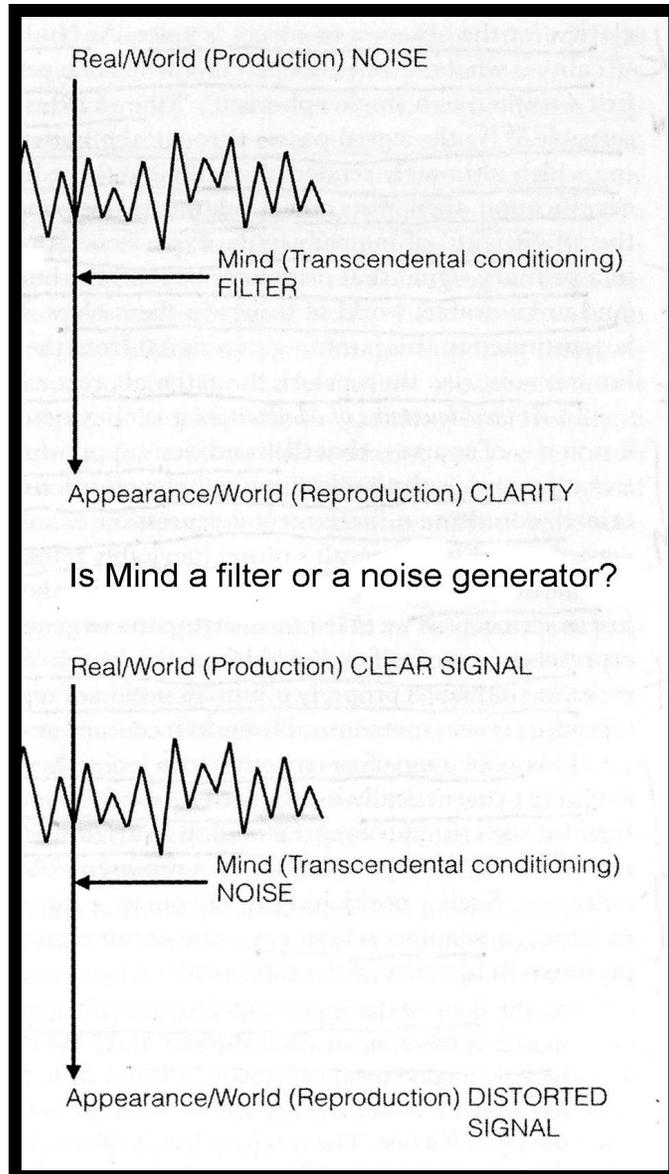
— *The Physics of Consciousness* (2021) Ivan Antic



People arriving for a slide lecture on background material for the Playwright's script for his *Chit for Chat Trilogy*.



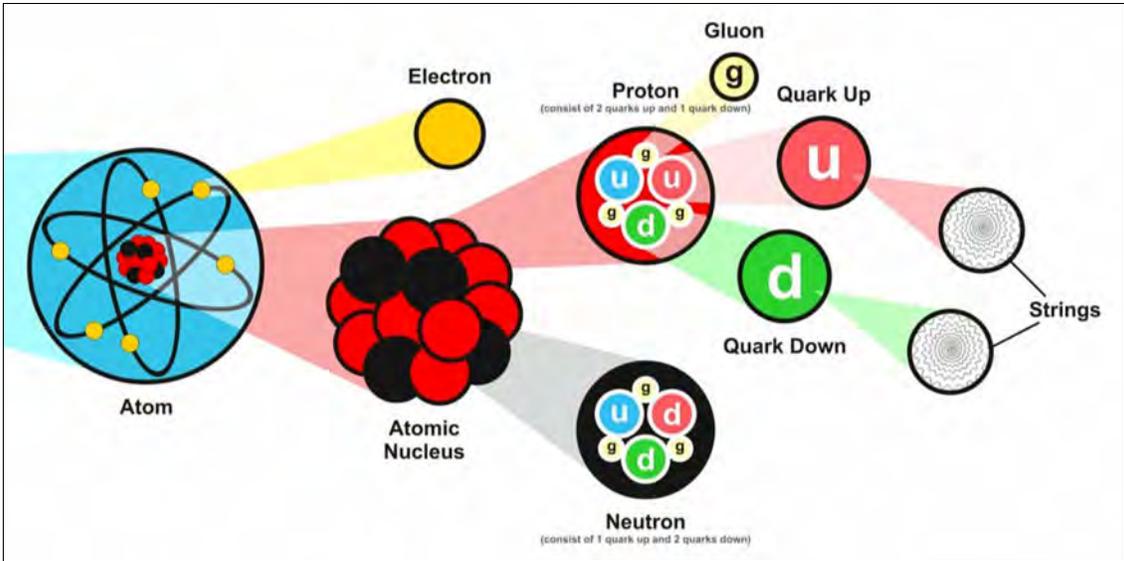
Chit's brain-scan post-abduction showing implant.



Two possible descriptions of our "Lived Reality".

"The world is observable because it is unobservable" (Niklas Luhmann). As the signal passes through the human — by virtue of this processing which ultimately renders it intelligible to the human — it becomes distorted. Signification, then, rests on a fundamental interruption and deformation. . . . can we, by negating human noise (i.e., the a priori, the rational), reconstruct a vision of the source?

— "Noise: An Ontology of the Avant-garde", by Amy Ireland in *Aesthetics After Finitude* (2016) edited by Baylee Brits, Prudence Gibson, Amy Ireland.



Line symmetry

Electron

—

Positron

+

Spacetime

Matter Antimatter

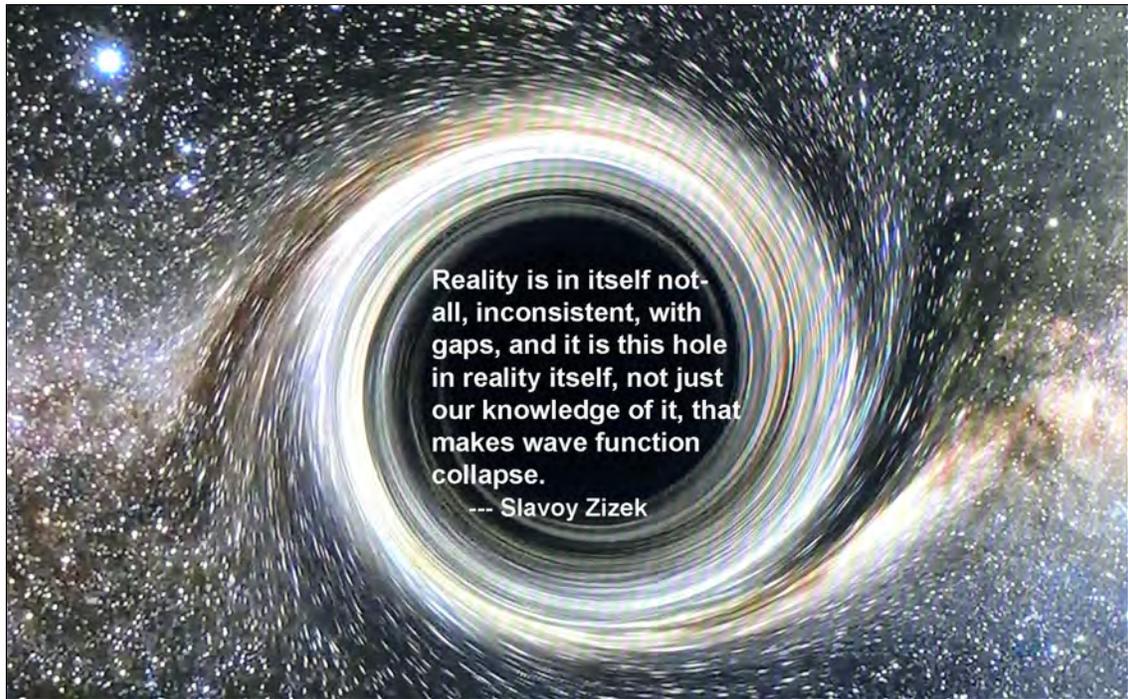
Spacetime Spacetime

Spacetime

We have a universal and continuous process of symmetry forming and breaking that forms the geometry of our everyday life

Our thought processes could be seen as the most advanced part of a universal process and our hopes and dreams could be forming their own future spacetime geometry.

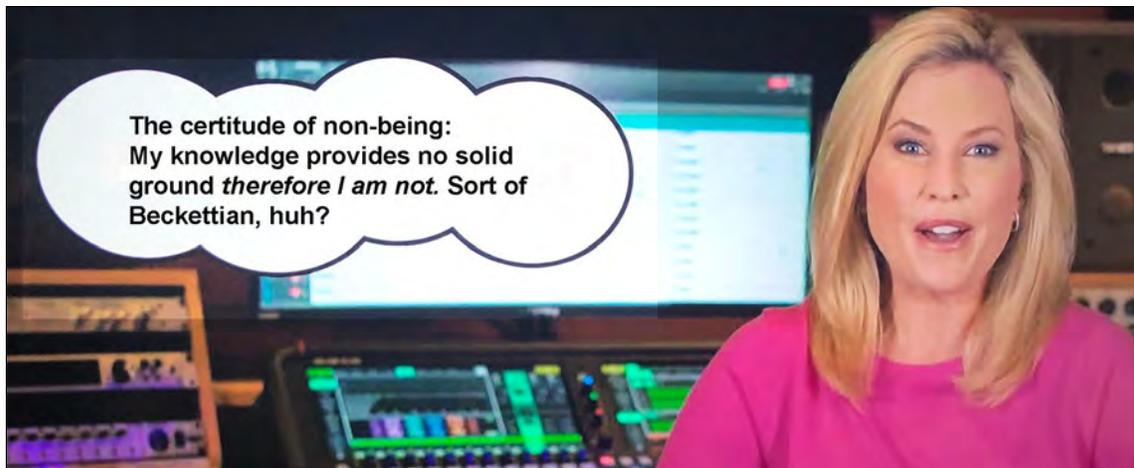
The quantum wave-particle function forms an potential infinity of future possibilities at every point in space and at every moment in time even forming electrical activity within the human brain



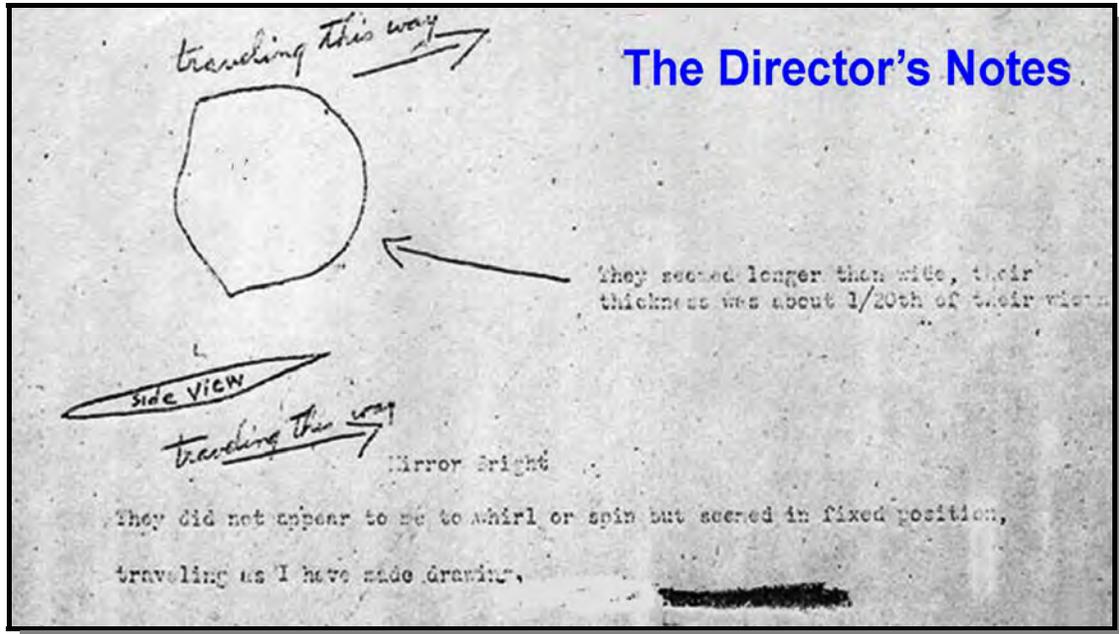
Reality is in itself not-
all, inconsistent, with
gaps, and it is this hole
in reality itself, not just
our knowledge of it, that
makes wave function
collapse.
--- Slavoy Zizek



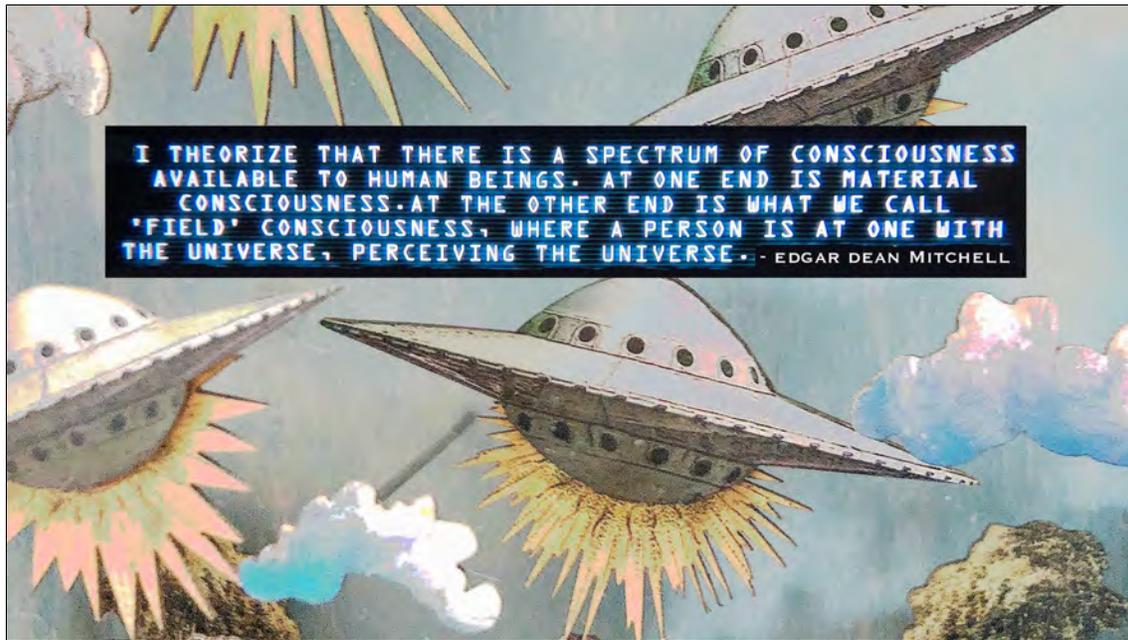
Dark matter is what we previously thought
of as empty space.



The certitude of non-being:
My knowledge provides no solid
ground *therefore I am not*. Sort of
Beckettian, huh?



The Director's notes concerning the abduction of his actors, Chit and Chat, from his film-set in August.

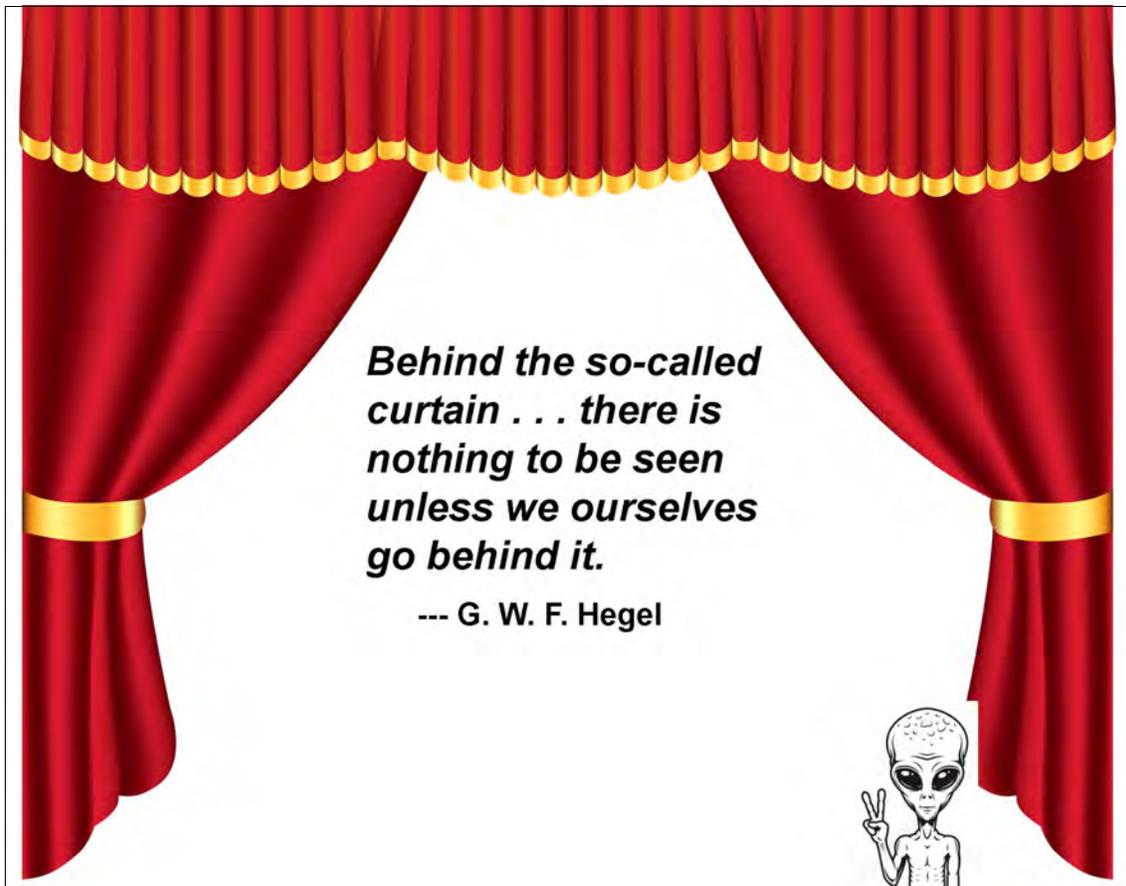


As are your repeated imaginations so will your mind be, for the soul is dyed by its imaginations. Dye it, then, in a succession of imaginations like these.

— Marcus Aurelius

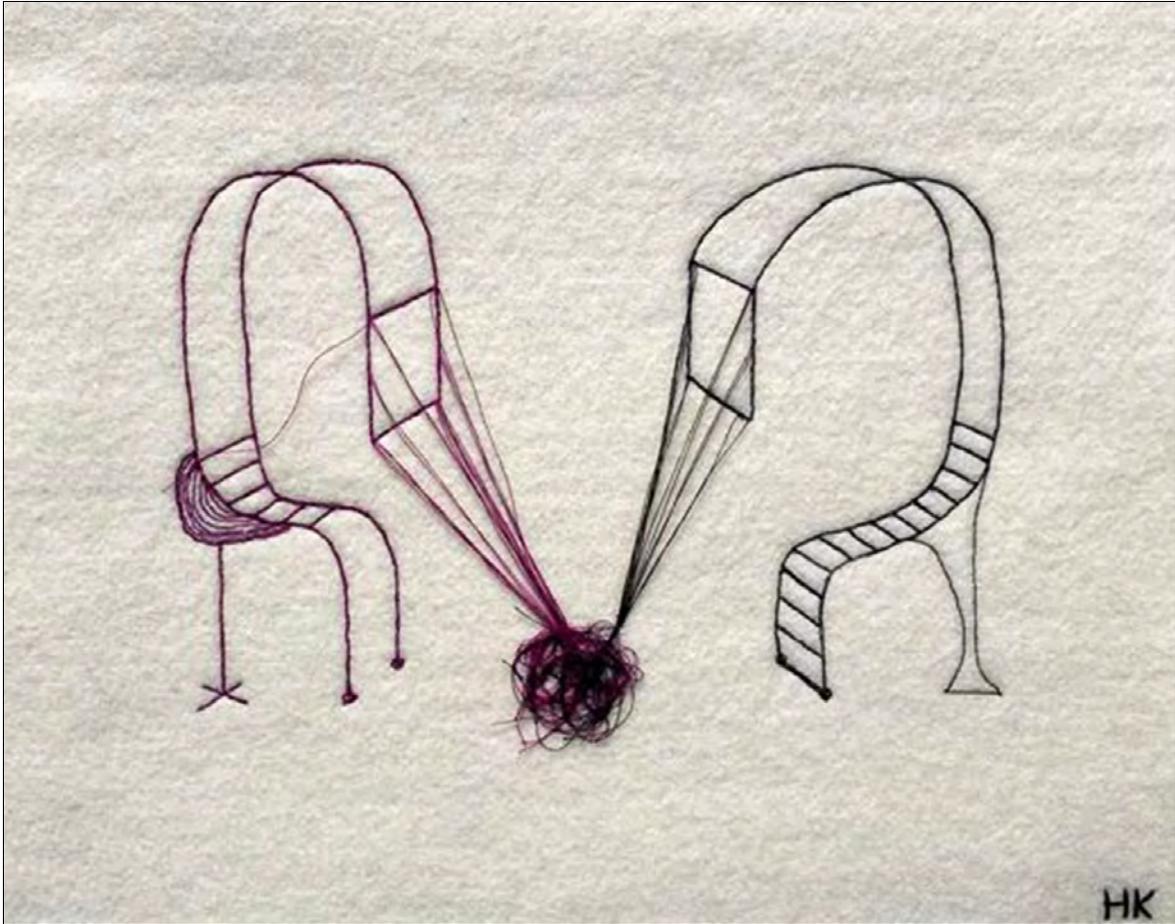
Our claim here is that when we will discover new aspects of reality up to alien lives, we will not cross the boundary of impossibility that constitutes our reality.

--- Slavoj Zizek



Behind the so-called curtain . . . there is nothing to be seen unless we ourselves go behind it.

--- G. W. F. Hegel



Chit & Chat Entangled Dialogue (colored thread stitching on felt, mounted on wood. 7.75 x 16 x 1 in. (2020) Heidi Kumao.

[More information on Heidi Kumao's artwork](#)

[Website: https://www.heidikumao.net](https://www.heidikumao.net)

[Excerpts from the 2020 exhibition catalogue *Heidi Kumao: Real and Imagined*](#)

I once thought Chit 'n Chat's special dialogic relationship a product of shared over-exposure to cosmic rays, a sort of mutation, but it is more like a quantum swap of microtubules around one another like strings forming braids that form the quantum background of two particles. A bond that gives them the closeness of their collaboration and quick verbal interplay.

Chit told me Chat was the only woman whose thoughts could keep pace with his. Chat told me Chit was an intransigent individualist, subject to mood swings and impulses hard to comprehend by most because of his "character armor" (characteristic postures, gestures, speech, movements, attitudes, and reactions). After abduction from my film set and post-hypnotherapy, it was discovered both of my actors had been child abductees. That was most likely why their thespian pairing evolved so spontaneously.

— The Director, *Notebook #2023*.

LINKS

- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume one):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-ChatBK.pdf>
- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume two):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-ChatDeuxBK.pdf>
- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume three):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-Chat3BK.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's "Foreword" to Eckhard Gerdes's *Cistern Tawdry* (2003):
<https://www.uturn.org/GerdesRevu.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's review of Eckhard Gerdes's *Marco and Iarlaith* (2018):
<https://www.uturn.org/Reviews/GerdesMcManusRevu.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's "Introduction," to Carla Wilson's *Curious Impossibilities: Ten Cinematic Riffs* (2017):
<https://www.uturn.org/HugIntro2.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's review of Yuriy Tarnawsky's *Claim to Oblivion: Selected Essays and Interview* (2017):
<https://www.uturn.org/Reviews/YuriyRevu.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's catalogue essay: "*L'a,b,c du faux cinématique de René Fendt*":
<https://www.uturn.org/FendtEssay.pdf>
- ❑ Eckhard Gerdes's Experimental Fiction Home Page:
<https://www.experimentalfiction.com/collections/eckhard-gerdes>
- ❑ Eckhard Gerdes, Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckhard_Gerdes
- ❑ *The Lone Ar-ranger Goes Sax Mad* performed by the Sax Family
(Chat and Chat love it, recommend it.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUMTN8lipjQ>

PREVIOUSLY



Final Scene from *Chit for Chat: Part One* (2023): Conversationally “cross-pollinating” Beckett-esque clowns, Chit and Chat, stretched out on the trunk and rear window of a 1970s red Pontiac — an allusion to the red Pontiac in Truffaut’s film *Day for Night*, in Kieślowski’s famous film *Red*, and in J. G. Ballard’s short story *Zone of Terror* — in a deserted area surrounded by the Director and film crew. Darkness and starlight intensify each other during the night shoot. An “Event” (in Alain Badiou’s sense of that term) occurs: a roaring noise, a bright snaking light swoops down from a glowing disc, winds its way down onto the set, circling the Jenny Holzer-like electronic word sign used as a film prop, then crosses before three astonished film crew members. It does three circuits around the set then disappears. A wider, even brighter beam then emerges from a craft illuminating Chit and Chat lying frozen with fear on the trunk of the Pontiac. “Light in August” the Playwright will tell police (it will become a proposed title for his next play).

CHIT: [*Eyes large as deviled eggs*], Move, moved, moving closer! Don’t think this is scripted, Chat! I mean there is supposed to be trunk show held at the denouement, but I don’t think this was what the Playwright had it mind, yet ... Can’t lose this beam or . . . or back is through . . . or . . .

CHAT: [*Palms of hands over her closed eyes.*] Seems we’re off to the Land of Oz. Whoa, I just remembered! It’s Palm Sunday Eve! Bbbet the Gggoyim have something to dddo with this steepest angle of twist! Close your eyes!

CHIT: [*Eyes large as deviled eggs.*] Wanna Shin Bet?

CHAT: [*Eyes closed.*] Whoa! Up we . . . Distant memory!

DIRECTOR: [*Citing Roberto Rossellini’s famous line*] DON’T CUT! DON’T CUT! [*as Chit and Chat’s bodies rise from the car trunk, arms and legs dangling, crew watching in stunned silence. A scene right out of Close Encounters of the Third Kind.*]



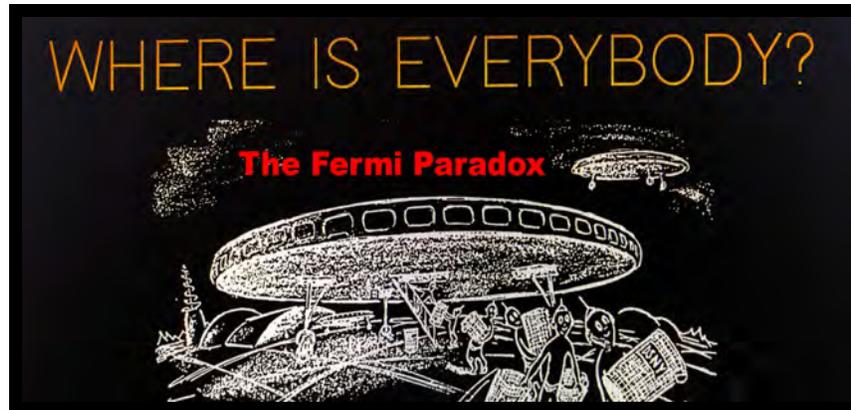
To view *Chit for Chat* (Part I) go to the URL: <https://www.uturn.org/CHIT-CHATBK.pdf>

CHIT: *[Lifted by the force field, cries out.] POLICE, POLICE, CARABINIERI! [Voice cracks, imitating loud police sirens as the two rise toward a glowing white mouth opening into infinity or oblivion.] We are going toward the threshold of our story!*

CHAT: *AAARRRRARRAARR! [Poised between intelligibility and near-incoherent outbursts, unnameable monstrosities of the linguistic arts shoot out of her helpless nose].*

Exuent.

+++



Fermi paradox (1950) now seems less relevant given the overwhelming evidence of strange visitors and UFOs. So has the Dark Forest thesis which presumes that any space-faring civilization would view any other intelligent life as an inevitable threat and thus destroy any nascent life that makes itself known. Aliens desire contact.

Throughout the history of the abduction phenomenon, it has been the abductees who have taught the researchers. . . .

When an abductee remembers the abduction, it is fully integrated into the structure of her life without resistance. . . .

Many abductees have adjusted well to the abduction phenomenon and are able to lead their lives free from the disruption that these experiences can cause. A few abductees feel that in some way they have been enlightened and even prepared for some future benevolent purpose.

— David M. Jacobs, PH.D., *Secret Life: Firsthand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions* (1992)

In 2017, *The New York Times* published a series of groundbreaking articles exposing a secret Pentagon program that investigated unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs).

THE AUTHOR



The author, James Hugunin, Santa Fe, NM (photo by Marianne Nathan).

*It is by ink of the well that thoughts acquire speed, the fingers
acquire stains, the stain becomes a warning. It is by will alone I set
my mind in motion.*

— “Inkspiration,” James Hugunin
(a riff on Piter De Vries’s chant in *Dune* (1985))



Beginning as a teen, I've loved Art, Film, Literature, Dinosaurs, UFOs, and New Mexico. I was born very close in time to the famous Roswell UFO crash incident of July 1947 and paleontologists' discovery of a very rich fossil quarry of *Coelophysis* skeletons near New Mexico's famous Ghost Ranch, home to artist Georgia O'Keeffe.

My interest with extraterrestrial life was given a second-stage boost when I and my father — a Senior Design Engineer at Lockheed Aircraft's top-secret "Skunk Works" aircraft design division and whom his first words, his mother claimed, were "Boeing, Boeing" — one night both witnessed a cigar-shaped (Tic Tac type) of UFO hovering over Rocketdyne-Atomics International's atomic reactor and Saturn V moon rocket engine test site in the San Fernando Valley's famous Santa Susana Mountains, not far from the infamous Spahn Ranch, home to The Manson Family. My father claimed the military had nothing like that even on the drawing board. I took that as his confirmation we'd seen *something* not easily explained away as of this earth. In my earlier twenties, I became a fan of the TV series *Star Trek*. Later, of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* with its envisionment of time / dimension travel. In my thirties, was hired to work on Douglas Trumbull's special effects for the first *Star Trek: The Movie* (1979).

Art, Film, Lit, Dinosaurs, UFOs, the Land of Enchantment — topics caught up in the flow of time. I was immersed in the Past, projecting toward the Future, reading utopias and dystopias (on which I taught a class). Always rooted in "database aesthetics". In film, I was drawn to: Hitchcock, Jean Cocteau, Truffaut, Fellini, Éric Rohmer, Godard, Tarkovsky. In literature: François Rabelais, Alfred Jarry, Raymond Roussel, Ionesco, Beckett, Robbe-Grillet, Flann O'Brien, John Barth, Harold Jaffe, Ronald Sukenick, Donald Barthleme, Stephen Dobyns, Raymond Federman, and Eckhard Gerdes who accused contemporary fiction of being the literary equivalent of program music.

All became delightfully entangled when I retired from teaching Photo History and Theory at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and moved to a place I had visited several times in the past and now wanted to be site of my future creative endeavors, Santa Fe. Along with my retired psychoanalyst wife who is my constant companion and stimulating interlocutor.

I am now where I want to be, absorbing the power of Indigenous, Hispanic, and Anglo culture, only an hour from Los Alamos. It seems appropriate reading up on the latest quantum theories of particle entanglement, string theory, and ten dimensions, wrestling with the implications of physicist David Bohm's mind-boggling monistic theory espoused in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, which posits psyche and matter as two aspects of quantum waves. Persian poet Rumi put it simply: *Smash all the jugs, the water is one*. To re-read Ray Kurzweil's transhumanist classic *The Singularity is Near* as an antidote to the Dark Mountain Project's pessimistic anti-humanism.

Besides experimental novels that puncture the boundary between fiction and theory, I've been drawn to plays and films in which dialogue is "mapped out" in the script. This sequel to *Chit for Chat: a Dialogue Between* took my research deeper into UFO and Alien Abduction theories. A PoMo mash-up of various texts — Montaigne confessed: "I go about cadging from books . . . the sayings that please me" — all the volumes making up *Chit for Chat* attempt to blur the boundaries between genres, texts and characters.

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Tic Tac-shaped UFO seen at night.

— James R. Hugunin, Santa Fe, NM



The next discovery will not be made by water, land, or air, but in time.
— W. G. Sebald in *The Head of Vitus Bering* (1970)





Of the title for his 1986 orchestral work, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, John Adams quipped: "You know how it is when someone asks you to ride in a terrific sports car, and then you wish you hadn't."

— The Playwright

No viable alternative theory has emerged that takes into account the totality of the data in the abduction experience.

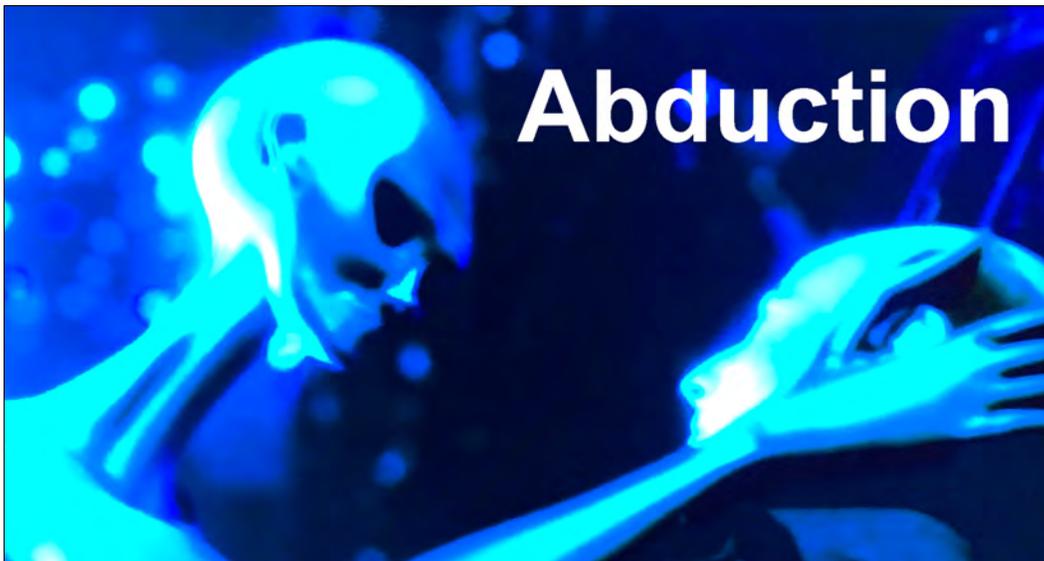
— *Secret Life: First Hand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions*,
David M Jacobs, Ph.D.

Listen to the earth. Listen to the earth. You can hear the anguish of the spirits. You can hear here the wailing cries of the imbalances. It will save you Umans.

— Odná to Chit and Chat during their ride in a fast machine.

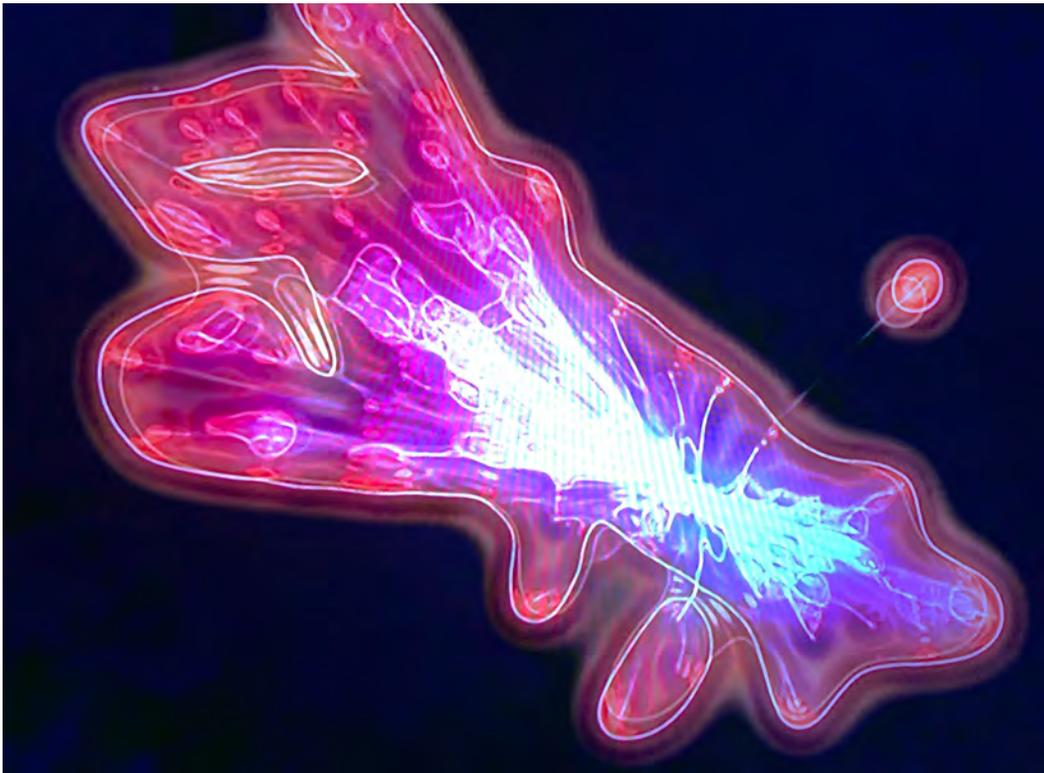


Artist rendition of an alien examination room.

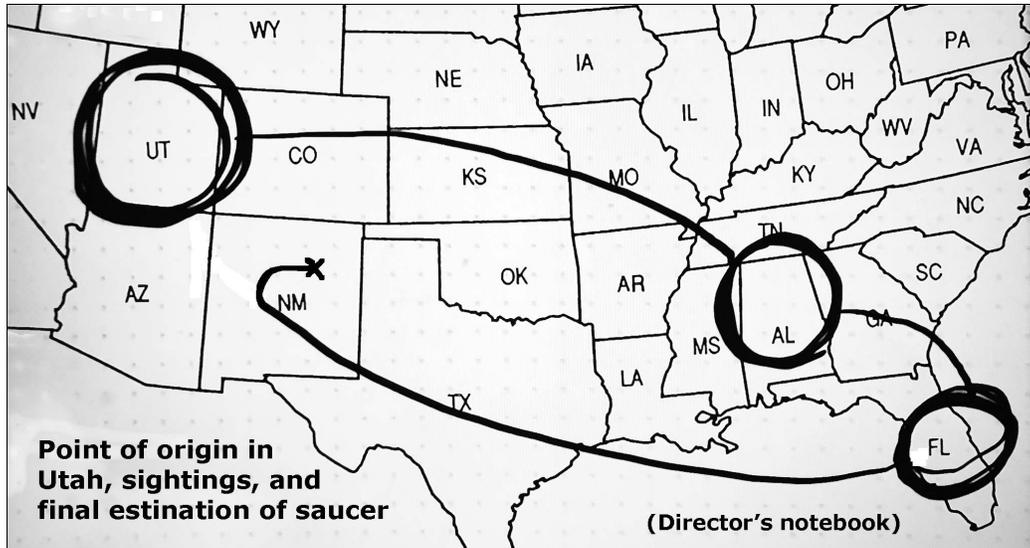


These beings were not genetically compatible with humans but were able to splice their DNA onto a human chromosome to create a human form that possessed the characteristics they found desirable.

— *The Alien Abduction Files* (2013) Kathleen Marden and Denise Stoner



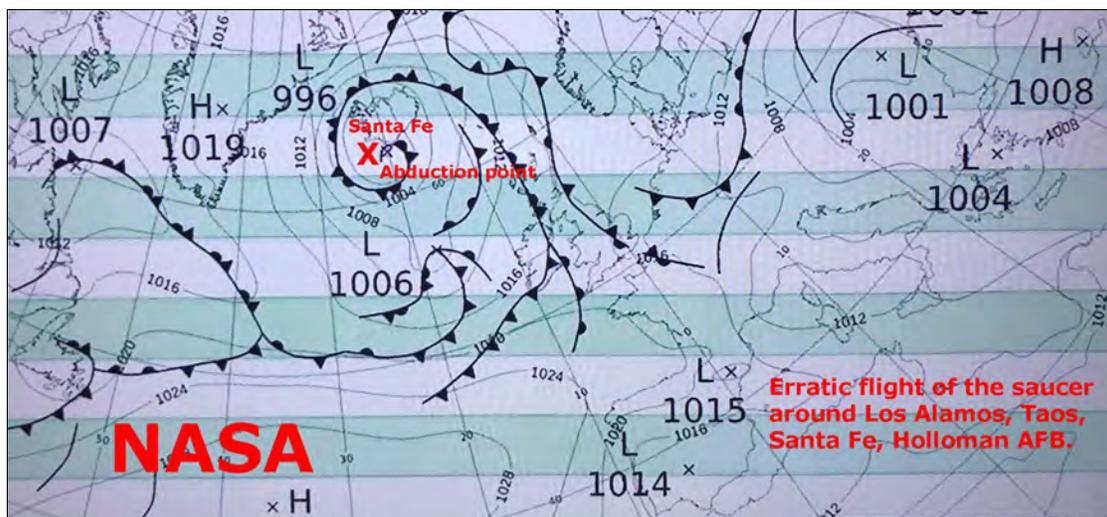
Artist's rendition: Alien DNA in Chit; his alien-self, Genou, as a coagulum of three selves. "Subtly, obliquely, something alien is stirring in my body; never felt at home in this world, an impenetrable other self" (Chit). Similarly, Wilhelm Reich thought he himself might be a "Spaceman". Indeterminacy of one's own biography.



DOCUMENTATION OF SAUCER FLIGHT PATH AROUND THE COUNTRY AND WITHIN NEW MEXICO (LOS ALAMOS, TAOS, HOLLOMAN AFB, AND SANTA FE)



Artist's rendition of Chat on alien exam table.



PROLOGUE

Abduction plus 24 hours: Chit and Chat found by hikers in Santa Fe's Frenchy's Field near Agua Fria street, *sans* footwear, Chit's pantaloons on backwards. Dissociated stares at vultures riding a rodeo wind above. Chit mumbles: "He thought he awoke to loud applause, but it was thunder," then yells: "CHAT, HHHOW'S YOUR CORPOROSITY SAGACIATING? And don't say you're non-plussed, I know your stock portfolio went up by thousands. Classify all, wrap what's important, concentrate on the stars. I ought, yet I feel as if I durst not! OMIT! OMIT!" Then in a cooing softer voice: "Velia! Velia! Velia! Youse glowed in the dark, I saw your spark.

Youse left your mmmmark on me." Chat waves upwards, declaiming: "Bye-bye, Mengus-the-Tall! Remember ta-ta haul-me-up way afore DER APOCALYPSE!"

Stunned paramedics marvel as these two costumed, ashen-faced clowns perform five kinds of repetitive movements: rotating, circling, pacing, weaving, and doing figure eights, like impatient zoo animals or like Martha Graham on LSD. The duo is rushed to Presbyterian Hospital. Chat has a crescent-shaped scar on her lower stomach and a nose-bleed, Chit a scar behind his neck. Undressing them, the nurse finds each has a pair of dice, five pips per side, lightly coated with a gelatinous substance. Their Director's biz card is found on Chit. He is informed and rushes back from a Directors on Directors Directing Genre session at the Santa Fe Film Festival, eager to cash in on his actors' bizarre experience, like what "hot buttons" to push to boost social media exposure, etc.

When the Director arrives, the patients are more stable, recumbent on adjacent hospital beds, holding holy cards given by their nurse depicting Joseph of Cupertino, the fifteenth-century idiot savant and patron saint of air travelers. On back of the card is the following text: Belief is the immortal soul of the imagination. Chit and Chat are verbally sparring via the childish gross-out game Would You Rather in which players choose between distasteful scenarios.

CHIT: *[Runs a rueful hand over his scalp, eyes dancing in his head, a questing big toe sticking out of the sheets.]* Wwwwould you rather slide down a razor bbbblade into a vat of lemon juice, or that an alien extract your eggs? Or having week-old French fries in Frenchy's Field? What! What! And don't give me that, "I'm starring pensively at cirrus clouds 'cause I'm more cirrus-minded than other women." *[Smiles at the pun.]*



Chit and Chat, alien abductees, found.



UFO crashes after two Santa Fe actors were abducted.

CHAT: *[Meeting his gaze.] Illegal in Alabama! . . . I ain't got eggs no more, doofus! Would you prefer a baker's dozen of nails hammered into your tongue, or have aliens take a sperm sample? [Before Chit can reply, a kerfuffle in the ward as the Director arrives, FaceTiming with an assistant about ordering bagels to counteract his Current Production Status Stress Syndrome. He bear gifts: a Frida Kahlo Lip Balm and Santa Fe Craft donuts and cups of hot Piñon coffee. Notices Chit's made toothpick triangles on his food tray.]*



Assistant on iPhone with the Director.

DIRECTOR: *[Wears two watches which he terms his "time-cuffs".] For you both [offers donuts and coffee]. Glad you're back. [Look of unbelief and utter acceptance in his gaze.] Thought you might not . . . It's too ridiculous to take seriously and too serious to be ridiculous! You might not be lying, but you may not be telling the truth either. Either way, it's profitable! [Sinks into reverie, then yells.] LOST WITH ALL HANDS — ALMOST!*

CHAT: *[Turns head away, hides her hands under the sheets.] A controlled hallucination.*

CHIT: *[Echoing Chat, grabbing the snacks.] Me three. And I mean three [more on Chit's multiple selves will come up later]. I am the unanswered question. Grok?*

DIRECTOR: *So concerned about you. When you were beamed up to that saucer . . .*

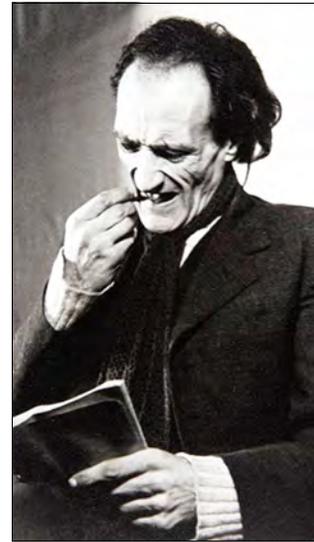
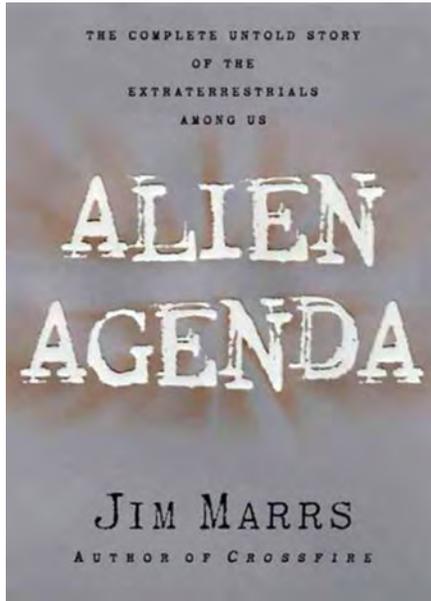
CHIT: *[Interrupting, looking at the corner of the ceiling for his words.] The horror of it. Like watchin' giant vid-screen inside the saucer with aliens watching life on Earth unfold; they seemed bored out their cog-sacs. Actually, it was in our own brain-boxes. Made my breathe catch, my skin prickle. Be commanded to speech this to you [his legs sag, his eyes go blank as his head flips back, speaks mechanically]:*

You Umans with your neurophenomenological troglodyte's brain! Rather than use your natural freedom to remove or loosen chains of the less fortunate, you suppress your own freedom. In process you torment everything within reach from plants to animals to humans. Blah, blah, blah, and a bowl full of Nature Valley granola bars in your kitchens isn't helping save what remains of your ecosphere, nor your sympathetic imagination.

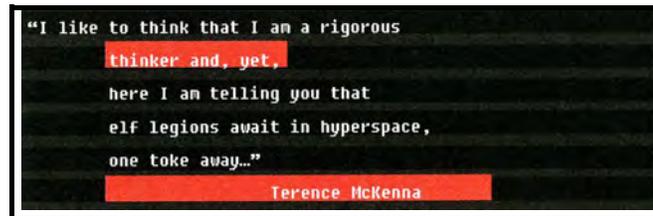
You communicate at Klick-Speed, but without cog-soaking yourselves in community veritas. Your necro-tech seeps deep deep into consciousness itself which it neutralizes and sanitizes. AI permeates all, while your gene sacs get blue tans in dive bars. Permanent hyperreality doth reign, while across your globe it doth rain reigns. Umans you must listen to the schizos who unspeak, like that Frenchy poèt-maudit Antonin Artaud [the following citation has been "screwed" with by Chit]:

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

*O dedi
a dada orzoura
a dada dizzy skizi
whizzy away to the stars.*



Antonin Artaud



Our power, its anti-grav and quantum field effects, be a material order in liaison with living mechanisms of various segregated energy concentrations. These vital organs of power are mobile and kaleidoscopic in associative possibilities. These power centers are both living and personal, and be beyond Uman comprehension (if not apprehension). The ploof is in the putting [an obvious misreading of “the proof is in the pudding.”]

DIRECTOR: *[Chuckling.]* Your ICU nurse here at the hospital whispered to me she suspects you clowns were high on the psychotropic drug “Dimitre”, that is DMT.

CHIT: *[Upset.]* Oh, so we went to “elf-world”, not “off-world”? . . . Bull crap!

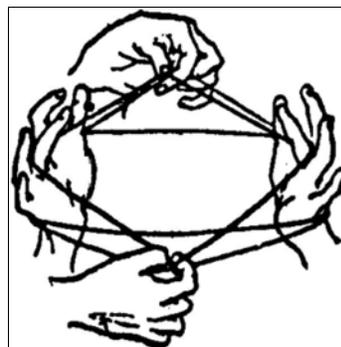
CHAT: *[Gingerly touches the right side of her face.]* Elf is better than Off.

DIRECTOR: *[Sits down beside their beds, smooths out his white chinos and his blue cotton shirt.]* Yah, she’s been reading too much of drug guru Terence McKenna’s stuff.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

WELCOME TO PART THREE of the continuing entangled dialogic adventures plagiopoetic re-representations of Chit and Chat. Will one of the two ever have the “last word”? But structurally the dialogic Scene has no obligation — like the Sentence — to stop; no partner has the power to check the Scene. In **volume one**, the Playwright and the Director are staging scenes around Santa Fe, New Mexico with the pair of actors, Chit and Chat, and filming them. The last scene, staged on the trunk of a vintage seventies red Pontiac, abruptly ends with our entangled Beckettian clowns being abducted by aliens. In **volume two**, Chit and Chat (“Never you without me” and vice-versa), are encouraged by both Playwright and Director to undergo hypnotherapy to recover abduction memories, only to find they both have suppressed memories of childhood abductions. Besides his conflicting inner Gemini twins, Chit finds another self, a human-alien hybrid, an I - We he terms “Genou” (*Je - Nous*), a subjectivity with the Playwright touts as “growing beyond the reach of capitalism’s affective productions.” Part Deux ends with a restaurant scene of consumption, digestion, and dialogue among Chit, Chat, their hypnotherapists, the Director and Playwright, all munching on fried onion pancakes and other dishes at Lu Lu’s Chinese. Throughout, they discuss the dire implications of alien abduction, as well, the further dramatic adventures of our dynamic duo on stage. **The Director** sees the abduction as a favorable moment, a *coup de théâtre*, that alters the state of his characters. And possibly everyone’s bank balance. In **volume three**, to promote the project and raise funds for *Light in August*, a filmed-play about the abduction, the Director arranges a series of venues for the pair to make appearances at. One of them consists of several interviews over several days at radio station, KMRD, in Madrid, a funky former mining town south of Santa Fe. The first interview is to coincide with the conjunction of Mars and Jupiter on August 14th (that duo hasn’t appeared this close together in over two years). The podcaster, “**Hamish**”, thought the theme of two bodies in conjunction (planets and interviewees) would be appealing to his show’s Watchers who belong to his “Perhapsburg Empire,” many of whom have strange interests and odd beliefs, “hyperstitions”, that may become real in the future. **Alien abduction** is right down Hamish’s audience’s alley, so to speak as he is a SF (Speculative Fiction) aficionado (see his interview with “Vitalina” several pages ahead). Has read tons of the genre, even Wilhelm Reich’s *Contact with Space*. He’s a self-described “probe-head” eager to delve into his guests’ experiences, all the while titillating his Watchers, upping his LIKES. Reviewing this recorded interview, **the Playwright** later observed of his duo’s entangled dialogic interactions with their interviewer: “The answers Chat gave Hamish depended on the choice of questions Chit asked and vice-versa.” Okay . . . I’m trying to process that. — James R. Hugunin, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Chit-Chat, a 4-handed Cat's Cradle.



Podcaster Hamish's inspiring T-shirt.

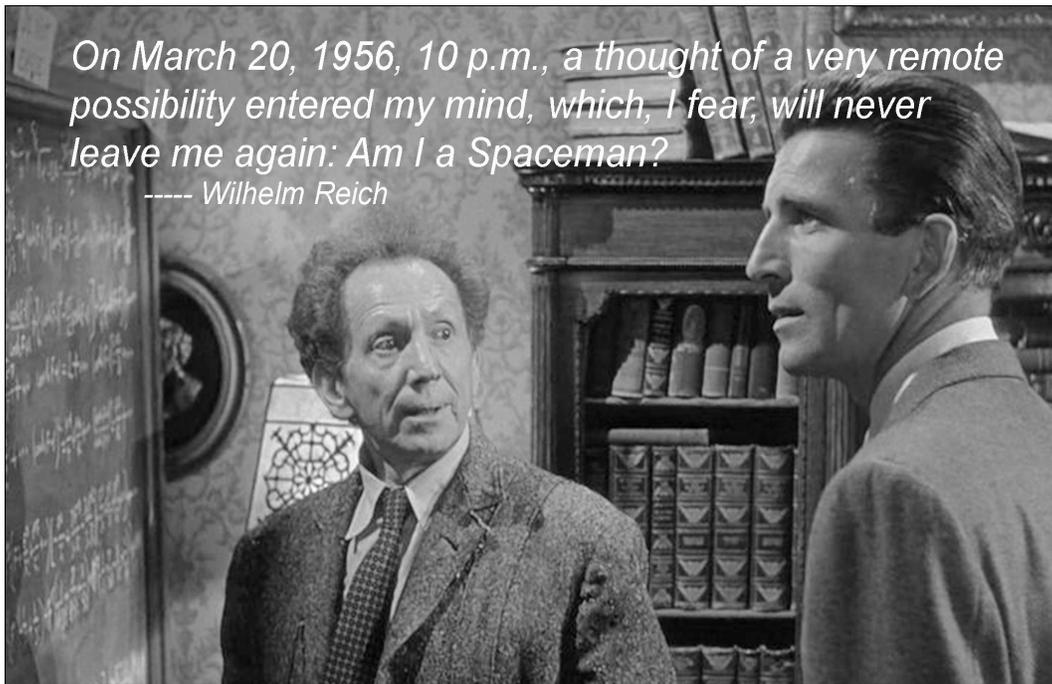




Podcaster “Hamish” photographing graffiti in Madrid, NM. At his feet is an homage to Philip K. Dick’s 1969 novel, *Ubik*, concerning psychic powers. But his favorite P. K. D. novel is *Valis* (1961), wherein the protagonist (Dick’s alter-ego) is zapped in the brain by a pink beam of light (Wilhelm Reich’s wife Annie’s maiden name was “Pink”), fucking him up, dazzling him, “pinking” his cog-sac. Hamish says something similar happened to him, the pink color operating like binary code and “talking” to him in a female AI voice — why he is so interested in paranormal experiences, UFOs, and alien abductions.

His podcasts query of X: 1) from whose perspective is X being presented; 2) what’s the evidence for X; 3) how is X connected to other things; 4) what if X was different; and, 5) who cares? Most famously, he hosted a podcast panel discussion whose topic was: *Issac Asimov vs. Ridley Scott: Who Was Right and Who Was More Right?*

Like scientist-mystic Terence McKenna, Hamish asks: “Are we existing in some kind of work of art.” Certainly, Chit and Chat think so. Hamish wonders, like Thomas Metzinger, if our naive sense of *ourselves* aren’t just conscious systems operating under what Metzinger terms “self-models”, and that the presence of aliens may be key to understanding such. Many of his Watchers are Extropians, “UpWingers”, believing in evolution of the human into the transhuman, that aliens may be the key to this evolutionary step. Certainly, Hamish believes the E.T.s are “not just looking around.”



On March 20, 1956, 10 p.m., a thought of a very remote possibility entered my mind, which, I fear, will never leave me again: Am I a Spaceman?

----- Wilhelm Reich

Professor Barnhardt and the spaceman Klaatu (disguised as "Mr. Carpenter") discuss physics in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), a film both C. G. Jung and Wilhelm Reich were influenced by, each writing about flying saucers. Reich claimed he saw UFOs in 1953 - 54 near his observatory in Maine (he called them "Energy Alphas" or "Ea" for short) after reading retired Major Donald E. Keyhoe's non-fiction book *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* (1953). He reported the sightings to the U.S. Air Force. He devised a "spacegun" to attack the saucers, making them, supposedly "wobble" when Reichian orgone energy was directed at them.

IMAGES FROM HAMISH'S COLLECTION



In turn, Wilhelm Reich's truck-mounted "spacegun" (invented on September 29, 1954 to counter what he saw as invading saucers) inspired similar defensive guns in the sci-fi film *Earth versus The Flying Saucers* (1956).



Reich's "Spacegun" (1954).



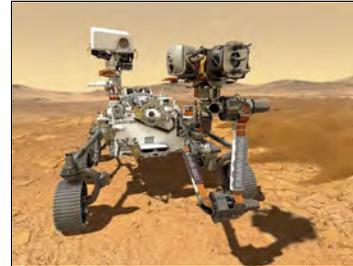
Saucer downed by the aforementioned film's "spacegun" as based on Reich's invention. The saucer wobbles, then falls from the sky.

A WFT! PODCAST: A Transcription

March 25, 2021
“The Competent Man”

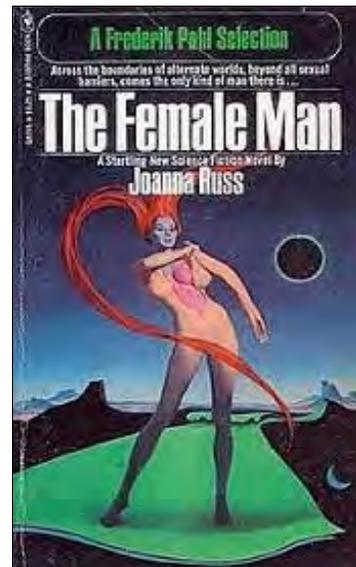
This text is an enhanced transcription of a discussion (with screen images) between *WTF!* podcaster “Hamish” and his guest, Vitalina, a local feminist activist who founded “PussyRiot-AnyoneMadRidNM”.

HAMISH: You told me a key grad seminar you audited, “From Dada to Dank Memes”, and the early 20th-century activist, Rosa Luxemburg, had influenced you. The latter had a fab slogan: *Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism.*



Vitalina: Yes, her insight is even more poignant in our terrible Trumpian Today! Why I’ve taken to gendering the Mars rover, “Opportunity”, as “she”, a lesbian icon. She’s the farthest-roaming off-planet robot, doing butch rock experiments and casting longing glances across the mars-scape from 2014 to 2018. The longing lesbian glance that never closes the distance.

H: The avant-garde and automation have been inextricably linked historically. A techno-utopianist, Scottish SF author Ken MacLeod’s work makes frequent use of libertarian socialist themes; he is a three-time winner of the libertarian Prometheus Award. He takes speculative fiction’s notion of world-building seriously — nothing like *Star Wars*.



V: Social science-fiction. I’ve been doing research for some time on both black and feminist sci-fi writers. You said you were blown away by Samuel Delany’s *Babel 17* (1966) for its engagement with how language influences thought and perception and liked Delany’s notion that sci-fi is a subset of narrative subjunctivity; that is, stories of what *could* happen, has become important. He was was a direct influence on Neal Stephenson’s *Snow Crash* (1992). I loved Johanna Russ’s 1975 novel *The Female Man* (1975), which follows the lives of four women living in parallel worlds that differ in time and place. When they cross over to each other’s worlds, their different views on gender roles startle each other’s pre-existing notions of womanhood. In the end, their encounters influence them to evaluate their lives and shape their ideas of what it means to be a woman. The character “Joanna” calls herself the

“female man” because she believes that she must forget her identity as a woman in order to be respected (p. 5). She states that “there is one and only one way to possess that in which we are defective . . . Become it” (p. 139). Her metaphorical transformation refers to her decision to seek equality by rejecting women's dependence on men. I also have read many women's sci-fi authors. Ursula K. Le Guin's ground-breaking 1959 work *The Left Hand of Darkness* tells the story of a lone human emissary to Winter, an alien world whose inhabitants can *choose and change their gender*. In contradistinction, much sci-fi writing up to the early 1970s has employed gender stereotypes. One of which is of “The Competent Man”. In her story “The Word for World is Forest.” Ursula K. Le Guin defines such a stereotype, for critical effect. Her fascist colonist on a newly discovered planet says:



The fact is, the only time a man is really and entirely a man is when he's just had a woman or just killed another man. That wasn't original, he'd read it in some old books, but it was true.



Captain Kirk puts the hustle on an alien female, one of many encounters in the TV series.



Zombies of the Stratosphere (Republic serial, 1952). Rocket Man played by Larry Martin.

H: The image of such man from 1950s Golden Age SF, like Rocket Man in *Zombies of the Stratosphere* (Leonard Nimoy played a Martian therein) resolves itself into TV's “Star Trek” where Captain Kirk, the 1960s image of the “Competent Man”, paws his way across galaxies, having numerous sexy females in exotic costumes at his beck and call. And in 2004 that staid image extended to *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, starring Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow, a celebration of serialized movie and TV adventures shows.



Sky Captain (2004).

V: Kirk was very sexist. Hard to watch now.

H: I think I told you once that I had a bud who worked for Paramount Pictures (subcontracted to Robert Abel & Associates) on the visual effects for the film *Star Trek: The Movie* (1979).

V: Yes. Did you know that George Lucas, in hiring Carrie Fisher to play Princess Leia, told her, when in costume, to lose the brassiere: “There’s no underwear in space.”

H: Right! Of course! There are, however, gold bikinis in space; everyone knows that.

V: What I offer for this interview are snippets of sexist excerpts from sci-fi stories. In Ben Bova’s “Zero Gee” a *Life* photographer is going up in space with a male and female astronaut:

“I’ve been watching that *Life* chick all through her training. She’s ripe.”

“She’ll look even better up in orbit.”

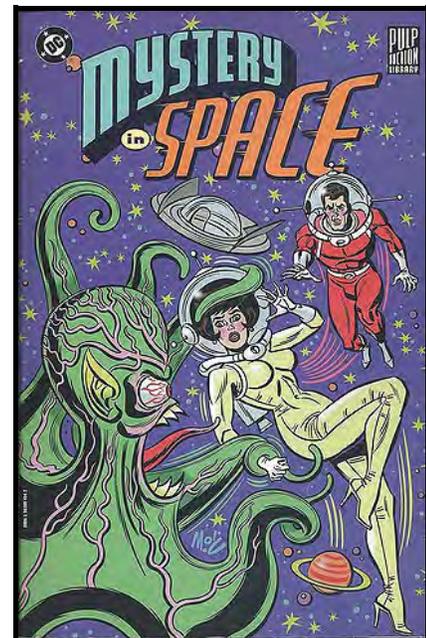
“Once she takes off the pressure suit.”

She had lifted her faceplate and was staring out at him with wide blue eyes that combined feminine curiosity with a hint of helplessness. She was tall . . . with thick honey-colored hair and a body that he had already memorized down to the last curve. . . She was in tight-fitting overalls.

“I want to work outside [of the space ship] with you” [the female photographer].

“I’d rather be inside with you.”

Kinsman grinned as he worked.



Note the “inside with you” plays on “inside you”.

Another sci-fi story, “The Sea Like Mirrors” (1972) by Gregory Benford, is particularly egregious.

H: Benford was born 1941. My task for this podcast was to research that author. Besides a SF author, he’s Professor Emeritus at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of California, Irvine and a contributing editor of *Reason* — a libertarian magazine,

which is on record as opposing gun legislation, even after the Boulder, Colorado horror. Among SF fandom he is known for “Benford's Law of Controversy” — an adage from his 1980 SF novel *Timescape* — stating:

Passion is inversely proportional to the amount of real information available. Is that, simply put, just a fancy way of saying: Love is irrational?

V: The plot of Benford's story runs thus: We are in the future. An alien species has taken to the oceans, composed of the Swarmers and the Skimmers, intent on killing off humans. These deadly alien fish endanger shipping. The ship *Manamix* (note the M-A-N in the name) has gone down and the two survivors, Warren and Rosa, are tossed about on the waves on a makeshift raft that is being attacked sporadically by the fish. Warren is narratively constructed as . . .

H: Let me guess: the “competent man”; his female companion is scared, weak, hysterical? He can be abusive toward her, disparages her, *et cetera*. Funny, too, that some of the aliens are able to sort-of communicate with him, using a sort of pigeon-English-German mix the deciphering of which takes up much of the storyspace.

V: Indeed. So here goes with my selections from the text:

Thirty days since the *Manamix* went down. Thirty-seven intervals of blinding light, starvation, dread, thirst.

Suddenly a ripple caught his attention. Rosa was rhythmically weaving the blouse through the water, and past her scrawny breasts he could see the sea warp and lift slightly new with currents that broke the surface.

“Haeeee!” Rosa screamed. His snout broke water, long thin mouth leering up, pearl white eyes on infinity.

Rosa was moaning rhythmically, holding it by a fin.

Warren stepped back, keeping his footing against the swell, and nudged her. “Get into the shelter,” he said. “Pull it in,” he ordered, moving back to the center of the raft.

Rosa peered out at him from her shelter, uncomprehending. He snorted in frustration. Perhaps he should slap her into awareness, like the time before.

Warren closes his eyes against the biting afternoon glare and felt his leg muscles weaken. He mustn't allow himself to get depressed.

Rosa gave a dazed cry, but Warren ignored her and scrambled to the edge of the raft.

One night, feeling a curious liberation from his past, he took Rosa with a power and confidence that surprised him. He was sure he would survive.

He hit her a few times, short, brutal chops. But there was no satisfaction in it. She had taken their water and it was gone.

Nine days out the water was gone. Rosa cried and called him filthy names. She bit her shoulder in a rage but didn't seem to notice it.

Warren kicked and talked the woman into helping him collect a handful of the seahorses.

[Killing and gutting the aline fish, extracting liquid from it to drink] . . . he did these things alone, working in absolute concentration, and never noticed Rosa. He didn't hear her whimpering, stumbling approach as he lifted a can to his lips.

Rosa sat on the other side of the raft and whimpered.

While Rosa sat dreamily swaying at the center of rectangular island, humming and singing to herself, coiling deeper into his private retreat from sun and salt, Warren worked and thought.

In this story, the deadly, threatening fish appear to be more competent than Rosa:

[Swarmers] maneuvered intelligently and fought well.

Rosa is constantly freaking out:

She shrieked in terror whenever a Swarmer approached in the distance now, but Warren guessed that, on some level, she knew that they were relatively safe until the raft neared a Swarm. . . . He understood without ever admitting it to himself that his absorption in planning, detail and the cold beauties of logic was as much a comforting distraction as Rosa's primitive chant.

Rosa's eyes swelled and she barked out a sharp-cackling laughter through drawn lips. "Land! Land!" she cried, bouncing on her calloused feet in an erratic jig.

Rosa was moving about the raft, humming to herself and eating from the food tins that remained. Warren felt a twinge of anger. She was eating out of turn. Rosa grunted and looked back at him. . . . He ignored her . . .

Rosa stumbled toward him and the island seemed to grow. "Wha'?' Land! We go there!"

He wrinkled the salt-caked around his eyes, focusing on her face, but it looked indifferent, strange. He didn't know this woman. She was nothing to him.

She stepped closer and he hit her. She whimpered and sat on the deck, peering up at him in confusion. He ignored her, feeling elated and calm. . . . The island was suddenly nearer and Rosa was pounding at him weakly, shrieking. He had been standing there, numb, trying to think, to understand.

“You ‘fraid! ‘Fraid the rocks.” She gaped at him, eyes bulging. “No *man* would ...”

“Shut up!”

H: Vitalina, these are actual excerpts, right? Our Watchers will be amazed at this material.

V: Yes. They are presented here in the order of the narration. When one pulls these passages out of context and lists them, the misogyny is woefully apparent. If the alien fish attack their slapdash raft, Warren’s sexism is constantly attacking his sole companion, at every instant asserting his dominance, competence, and revealing Rosa’s inferiority, her “whimpering” is often brought up. Vicious stereotype after stereotype rises here like the angry fish to bite at our sensibilities. I found it difficult to read.

H: BTW. The author was born in a small town in southern Alabama. Wonder if that might have any bearing . . .

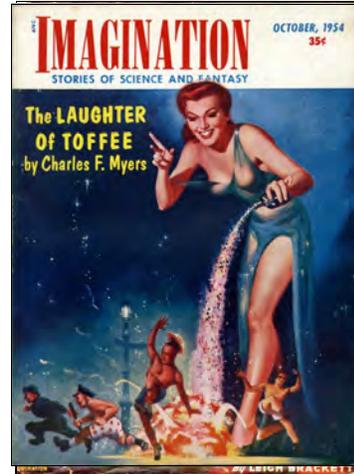
V: Wonder what he thinks of the Black Lives Matter Movement? So many of these older sci-fi writers are crypto-fascists.

H: Robert Heinlein, for instance his *Starship Troopers*. Paul Verhoeven’s film version of that story of a future fascist state at war with intelligent alien bugs “captures the fascist aspect of Heinlein well” (citing my late wife). Two quotes from the movie version by the Troopers Baraclow and Raszak seem relevant here:

Zander Barcalow: “One day, someone like me is gonna kill you and your whole fucking race!” [*Spits on smart- bug*].

Jean Raszak: If you don’t do your job, I’ll shoot you.... If you don’t do your job, I’ll kill you myself. . . . If you don’t do your job, I’ll shoot you myself.

V: Late in life John W. Campbell, famous super-science space opera author, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, an anthologist, a sort of GOD among SF fans since 1937, he became increasingly right-wing, even unbalanced. For instance, Campbell] pointed out that the much-maligned “peculiar institution” of slavery in the American South had in fact “provided



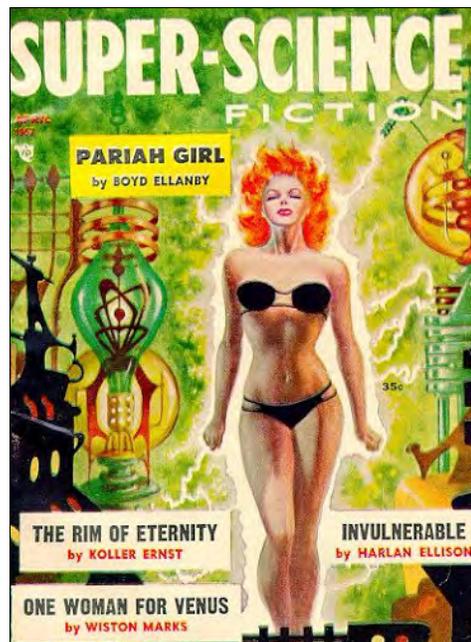
the blacks brought there with a higher standard of living than they had in Africa," so Campbell held racist views.

H: I've been researching into Scientology. In 1949, Campbell touted Hubbard's SF stories and worked closely with L. Ron Hubbard on the techniques that Hubbard would later turn into Dianetics. When Hubbard's therapy failed to find support from the medical community, Campbell published the earliest forms of Dianetics in *Astounding*. He wrote of L. Ron Hubbard's initial article in *Astounding* that "[i]t is, I assure you in full and absolute sincerity, one of the most important articles ever published." Campbell continued to promote Hubbard's theories until 1952, when the pair split acrimoniously over direction of the movement.

V: In an essay by British sci-fi editor Michael Moorcock on the saturation of fascistic and authoritarian themes and messages in Science Fiction literature said Campbell's *Astounding* and its writers were "wild-eyed paternalists to a man, fierce anti-socialists" with "[stories] full of crew-cut wise-cracking, cigar-chewing, *competent* [my emphasis] guys (like Campbell's image of himself)", who had success because their "work reflected the deep-seated conservatism of the majority of their readers, who saw a Bolshevik menace in every union meeting". He viewed Campbell as turning the magazine into a vessel for right-wing politics, "by the early 1950s . . . a crypto-fascist, deeply philistine magazine pretending to intellectualism and offering idealistic kids an 'alternative' that was, of course, no alternative at all."

H: Ouch! Very perceptive on how such writing "clicked" with the conservative '50s, its racism and sexism. Women were either docile or emotionally blowing up. From roughly 1953 to 1979, U.S. hurricanes and tropical storms were only named after women. Like Hurricane Gladys, the seventh named storm and fifth hurricane of the 1968 season, which hit the U.S. when Piers Anthony was writing his dimension-travel story "In the Barn". In the plot, "Earth Prime" has discovered a way to travel to parallel earths through a "probability aperture".

V: Yes. Another egregious sci-fi story. "In the Barn" envisions women reduced to livestock in a barn on an alternative Earth dimension. Piers seems to delight in the fantasy of women-as-animal to pet, milking large breasts, and impregnating. What is a major turn off is the pleasure the author seems to take in telling a story he rationalizes as a critique of the way we Earthers treat our livestock. The narrator is a dimension-traveler inspecting the newly discovered "Counter-Earth #772". Here are some excerpts:



These were not bovine or caprine snouts greeting him' these were *human* heads. The fair features and lank tresses of healthy young women. Each stood in her stall, naked, hands grasping the slats since there was room only for the head to poke through. . . . This group, clothed, could have mixed enhancingly into any festive Earth-Prime crowd.

Except for two things. First, their bosoms. The breasts were enormous and pendulous, in some cases hanging down to waist-level. Hitch was sure no conventional brassiere could confine these melons.

And so it goes! Gets worse. He proceeds to milk these “cows”, later anally penetrates a cow-woman, fantasizing as he does so that she is his far away Earth-Prime love interest, *lo*, who has refused his advances:

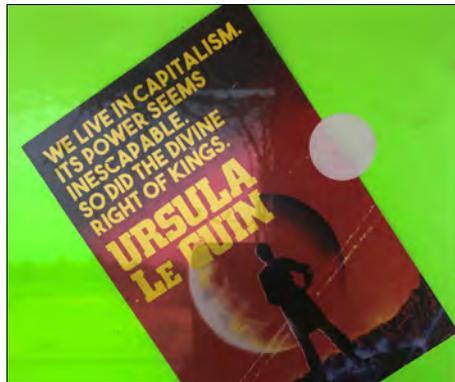
It's only milk! He reminded himself. But, unbidden, his erogenous zones were responding.

To have you like this, lo — your dainty, chaste, aseptic little ass —

H: My research turned up that Piers Anthony admits that he didn't achieve puberty until he was eighteen!

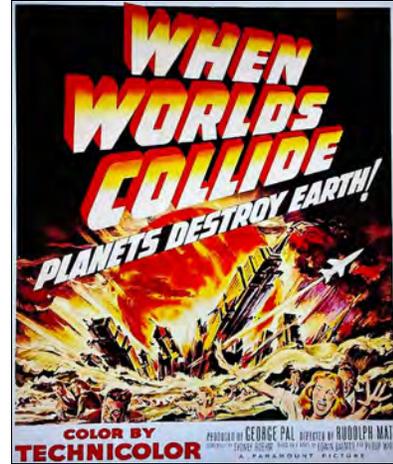
V: BTW. Petroglyph rock in Mabel Dodge Luhan's courtyard is believed by many to be a portal to other dimensions.

V: So with that jarring bit of male fantasy, we leave the realm of male-dominated SF and go to sci-fi authors Margaret Cavendish (b.1623), Mary Shelley (b. 1797), and contemporary “New Wave” and “Afrofuturist” authors such as: Joanna Russ, Josephine Saxton, Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, Ursula K. LeGuin, James Tiptree, Jr. (pen name of Alice Bradley Sheldon), N.K. Jemisin, Nnedi Okorafor, Ariel Djanikian, Ann Leckie, Anne McCaffrey, Lois McMaster Bujold, Arkady Martine, Malka Older, Kameron Hurley, Jane Yolen, C.J. Cherryh, Andre Norton, Connie Willis, Vonda McIntyre, Catherynne M. Valente, and filmmakers Nuotama Bodoma's *Afronauts* (2014), and Kodwo Eshun and Anjalike Sagar's *The Otolith Trilogy* (2003 - 2007).



H: But wait! In 1951, Murray Leinster, did a kind of sex role flip-flop in “Survival Ship”, a story of intergalactic travel (15 years to reach its destination for possible colonization) wherein the majority of the crew were female (20 women, 4 men) because, as the female captain “Melnick” explains: “we are hardier, longer-lived, less susceptible to pain and illness, better able to withstand, mentally, the difficulties of a life of monotony [*i.e., life under the patriarchy!*] . . . and not alone because we are the bearers of children.” The men are aboard primarily as studs to

fertilize the women, making colonization of an exoplanet possible. *The Twilight Zone* (season 1, episode 14, "Third from the Sun," 1960) was about people fleeing their planet as nuclear war is eminent for an exoplanet, which in a surprise turn, is Earth! The Sixties TV series "Lost in Space" had the Family Robinson leave Earth on Space Station One assisted by a B-9 Class M-3 General Utility Non-Theorizing Environmental Control Robot, seeking new . . . you know. Both shows owe a large debt to the 1951 apocalyptic film *When Worlds Collide* wherein a massive comet, "Bellus", is on a course to destroy Earth. A smaller exo-planet, Zyra, accompanies it, so Earthlings desperately make preparations to rocket to this habitable planet. Great special effects by George Pal.



V: "Zyra", an Arabic female name, means "brightness" or "dawn." Appropriate name. This Noah's Ark fable envisions an equal number of men and women . . .



H: Plus one male child.

V: Suggesting the eventual repopulation of humanity's new home, again an Ark reference.

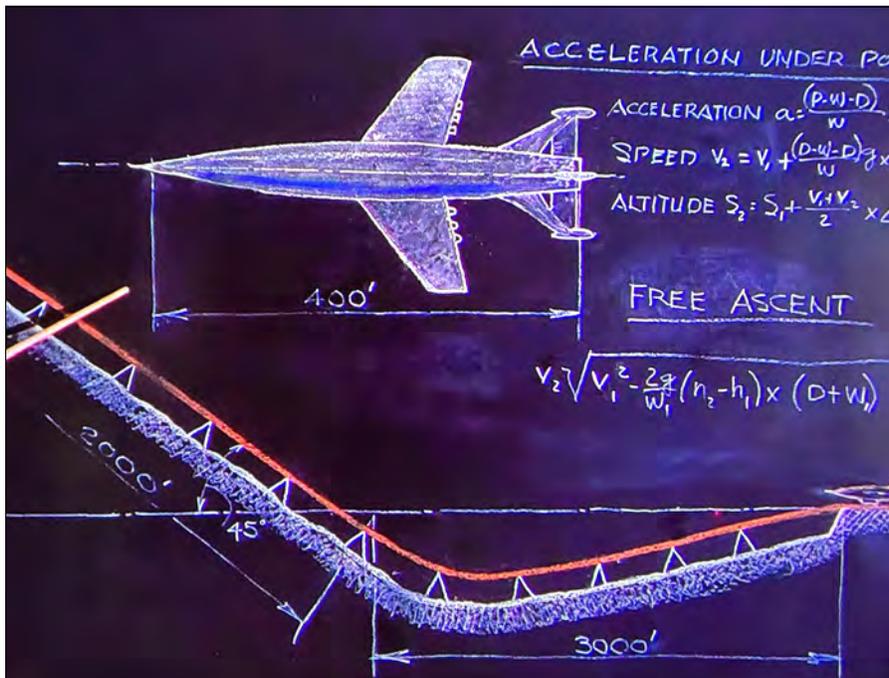


Diagram of escape spaceship to exo-planet Zyra.

V: Yes, a very interesting movie. I also loved "Lost in Space", that robot's tinny voice. And in *Forbidden Planet* (1956) where Robby the Robot is *superior* to the men in the movie and is imaged in publicity photos as Altaira's (Anne Francis) servant. AI replaces the Competent Man. So, we can recommend *To Write Like a Woman*, Joanna Russ' essays on the topic and *Kindred* (on time travel with a racial twist). One critic wrote: "*To Write Like a Woman*



(1995) is a rare example of a feminist tackling science fiction using postmodern theory, which makes for a much more sophisticated and nuanced appraisal than the usual fare."



Robby the Robot and Altaira.

H: Ahhh. Time travel! Another great topic as it leads us into comparisons of NOW versus the PAST or the FUTURE. H.G. Wells's classic comes to mind. Most future envisions are of a dystopian flavor, particularly since the advent of the atomic age. KABOOM! Destroyed planet. One film I streamed recently was *The Time Travelers* from 1964. Time travel and space colonization are its themes. Scientists travel, I think, 200 years into the future to find Earth's surface nearly uninhabitable due to radiation. Only mutants exist there, safe underground. Androids serve as laborers, a Woman is leader of earth's survivors who are mainly scientists and experts who are focused on building a starship to colonize Alpha Centauri IV a planet four light-years away. It is a fictional planet that is later featured in the *Star Trek* universe as home to the Centauran people and characterized by its rings and two moons, Nykos and Tharon.



The Time Travelers (1964) An android.

V: Interesting, that influence and so close to when the "Star Trek" TV series began.



The Time Travelers. Scientists examine an image of Alpha Centauri IV, their supposed future home.

H: Ahhh. Our time is up. I want to thank our guest today, Vitalina, noted local feminist-activist and barista at what she calls her Temporary Autonomous Zone here in Madrid, for her astute observations on the changing

nature of SF these days. I know this will challenge many older Watchers, but I encourage you to be open to new thinking about this genre we all love.

V: I would like to thank Hamish and radio station KMRD, here in Madrid, New Mexico for inviting me on his podcast. But I'd like to leave you with this trivia question: What was the first "Woke" sci-fi movie?

H: Oh, that's easy, the 1954 film *Them!* The small screaming girl in the hospital got the monsters' pronoun right. *[Laughs.]*

V: Indeed! But there was a 2021 Amazon Prime series by the same name which featured a black family moving into a white neighborhood in Los Angeles in the 1950s, where they meet threats and harassment from neighbors and supernatural elements in their home.

H: Thank you, Vita for all your keen insights. *[Signing off.]*
So Good Night and Good Luck!

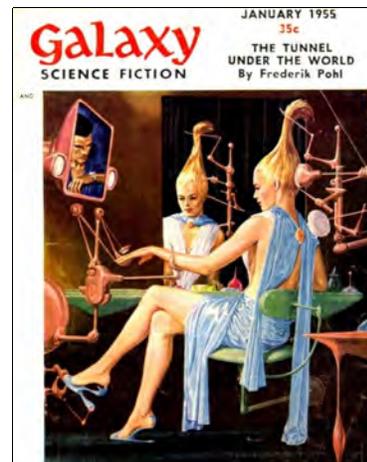
V: I love, we both love, robots and cyborgs and women who do not panic much when they have a close encounter, as in the classic film *The Man from Planet X* when Enid Elliot, played by Margaret Field, (she was Sally Fields's mother) faces the alien.



The Man from Planet X (1951). Actress Margaret Field encounters the alien.

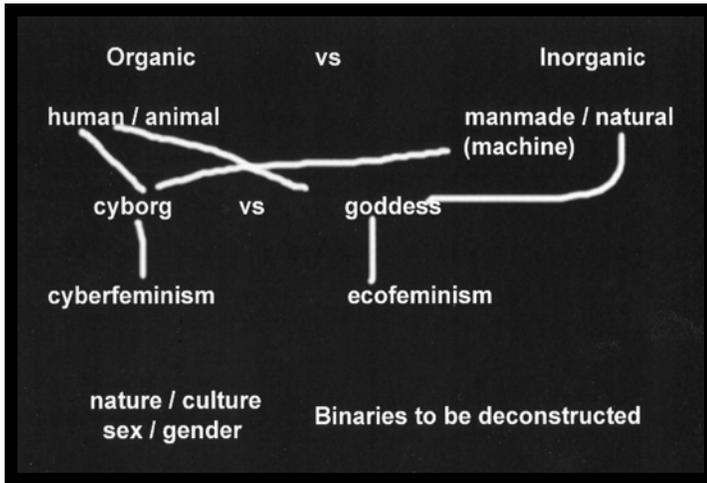
H: We are rapidly accelerating toward the future, and, as SF author J. G. Ballard observes, there are dangerous roads ahead. So should we slow down or speed up technology? What do you think, Vita?

V: Like cyberfeminist, Donna Haraway, I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess. She was heavily influenced by French feminists writers Monique Wittig and Luce Irigaray, who espoused that women write the truth of their bodies, and by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon's Actor-Network Theory that humans and non-humans can function as "actants" in society. Show those jpegs I brought.



The Male Gaze is touted.

H: [Fusses with his console.] Here it is Watchers.



Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*

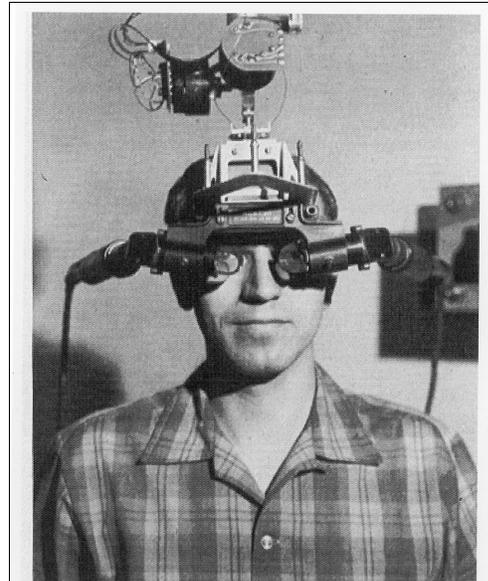
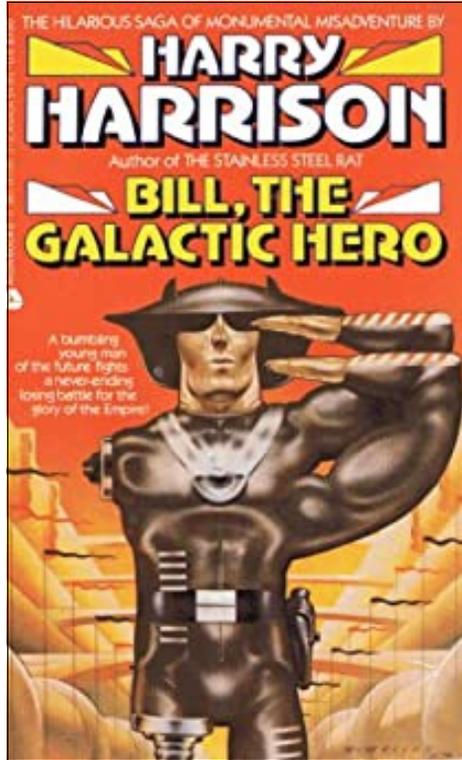
First published in *Socialist Review* in 1985, then in a new version in 1991. It is divided into five sections:

- 1) "Ironic Dream of a Common Language" on boundary breakdowns and hybridity.
- 2) "Fractured Identities" on anti-essentialist identities.
- 3) "The Informatics of Domination" diagrams differences between capitalism and virtual capitalism.
- 4) "Women in the Integrated Circuit" looks at gender and the globalized economy.
- 5) "Cyborgs: A Myth of Political Identity" on hybrid states in feminist science fiction and in writings of women of color.

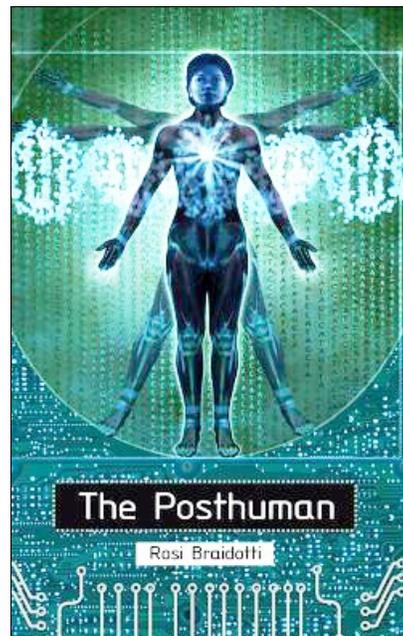
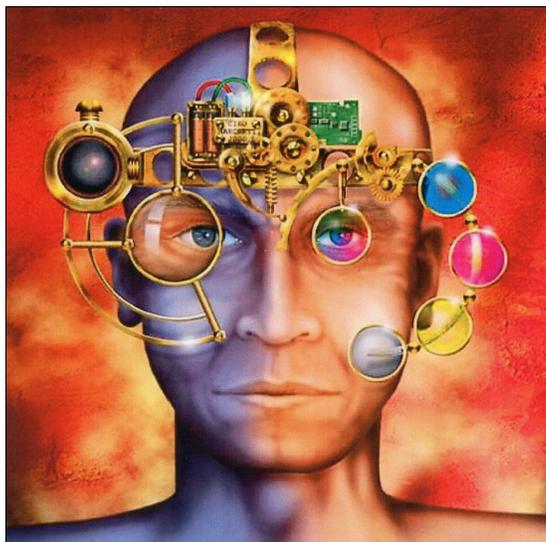
V: A cyberpunk group known as VNS Matrix declared in their 1990s manifesto: "Fuck the humanistic ideals fuck them all! As humans become aware of their cyborgness they are already to question their human-ess and humandom and cultivate human-esse. As cyborgs." Those Beckettian clowns acting in a filmed play in Santa Fe that you said you will be interviewing are envisioned as such actants by their Director and Playwright.



H: [Nodding, adding slide images.] That production's editor, Knute, leans in that direction, Accelerationism [see page 139 onward], but his take on it touts the operation of reducing the qualitative to the quantitative, superimposing an ideology of combinatorialism on the chaotics of the world. Here are slides he sent me envisioning machine - human interfaces.



Ivan Sutherland. Front view of user wearing the head-set portion of the head-mounted computer-graphics display system at the University of Utah, 1970. The head-position sensor is shown attached to the head set. The viewer is thus visually surrounded by an imaginary three-dimensional world. Photo by Computer Science Communications, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.



V: Now, the celebratory cyberpunk rebellion of the 1990s has a bit turned sour, what with more controlling features, surveillance, and quite insatiable oligarches developing via Web 2.0 and AI. Thousands of workers are being laid off; threats to our minds due to advances in AI. And meanwhile, the LGBTQ community is under increasing threat. As a result, the true potentialities of these technologies are delimited or become warped.



What seemed liberatory some thirty years ago has morphed into various modes of repression and control managed by neo-cons.

H: Haraway saw the dangers of our mode of “sciencing”; she wrote [*puts up a slide*]. about “situated knowledges”. Watchers, note the plural:

Haraway's solution to the dilemma is her concept of “situated knowledges” (Haraway, 1991c: 183ff.), which defines a new kind of objectivity based upon an always partial, embodied and localized vision. It excludes the classical “god-trick” of modern science, pretending to build up a potentially universal, omniscient and omnipresent knowledge of the “laws of nature”.

V: In our posthuman future, immersed in “dataism” — wraparound technology, a neuro-totalitarian steering — we risk exclusion from our autonomous, poietic self-narration. Semicapitalism captures language as function only. AI, has major effects on individual agency we are only beginning to see and understand. Information fatigue. Algorithms. Counting, is not recounting. Resist any idea that contains the word *algorithm*. One needs giving an account of oneself, leading to self-discovery as Chit and Chat attempt to do in their filmed-play.

H: Their dramatic Beckettian roles ironically explore this era of the apparatus and its liberation from human steering. Cyberwarriors — like their film editor, Knute, who drinks your brew — still believe the apparatus as being capable of self-liberation.

V: Yah, “raze and rebuild” is the slogan. That is what happens to Gabrielle [*Rosanna Arquette*] in J. G. Ballard's *Crash* where flesh and metal obliterate the boundary between woman and machine. Due to injuries from repeated staged car crashes overseen by cult leader Vaughn, she wears a spinal brace and a full leg brace, and the characters are fascinated by the [*finger quotes*] “deep buckle groove” and depressions left on her body by these devices. In the novel's

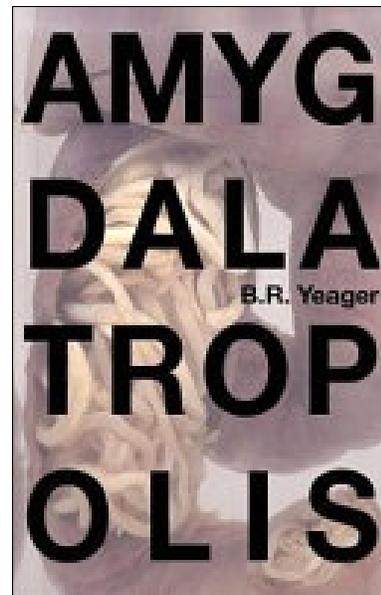
perverse logic, she has assimilated her injuries into her sexual identity, finding new forms of pleasure through her altered physical state and the interaction of her flesh with her high-tech metal braces.

Ballard envisioned that deregulating the airwaves and the heavy use of the Internet and social media would lead to “deregulation of the imagination.” In “The Intensive Care Unit”, Ballard envisions a society which forbids its populace face-to-face interaction in favor of what we social media, Theorist Paul Virilio’s “The Vision Machine” notes the dissolution of body into electronic gaze. How quickly has our society taken to image navigation, interactivity, surveillance over more complex narrative and close reading. Which brings me to a 2017 SF novel, *Amygdalapolis* by B. R. Yeager. Its protagonist, “/1404er/”, exists in a hermetic, digital world populated entirely by other formless entities who share the name /1404er/, and his interactions therein revolve entirely around the sharing and discussion (and eventually, creation) of only the absolute ugliest, basest, and most indefensibly vile kinds of content available in the extralegal shadowlands of the so-called dark web. Spoiler alert! This book will not make you feel better about that is happening in the world today. Yeager, moreover, envisions humanity evolving badly when body and digital information become entangled and confused: “If age allowed us a billion years, thick skins would grow over our orifices and our hands would dissolve to stumps.” So much for the so-called “Vastening”!

H: Yah, Yeager extends Vilém Flusser’s notion that *Homo digitalis* will eventually shed its hands in favor of fingers, its connection to electronic media. The psycho-ecological merging of thought and digital spaces where humans merge with number, algorithms, code and the infosphere is too dense and too fast for a conscious elaboration of information, so people tend to conform to shared behavior, “swarming”. Yeager’s book made me think back to the transhumanist ideas behind Michel Houellebecq’s 2005 *The Possibility of an Island*, Houellebecq’s novel is a dystopia of sorts in which future humans have, through cloning and breakthrough AI technology, effectively evolved their way into self-sustaining, immortal beings capable of a kind of endless, scheduled reincarnation. But Yeager’s protagonist — a kind of Japanoid, a *hikikomori*, an extreme isolationist — in seeking transcendence through transgression just lands himself squarely in a living Hell. He even fantasizes he’s been born from such video, not unlike the theme of virtual reality envisioned in Adolfo Bioy Casares’s

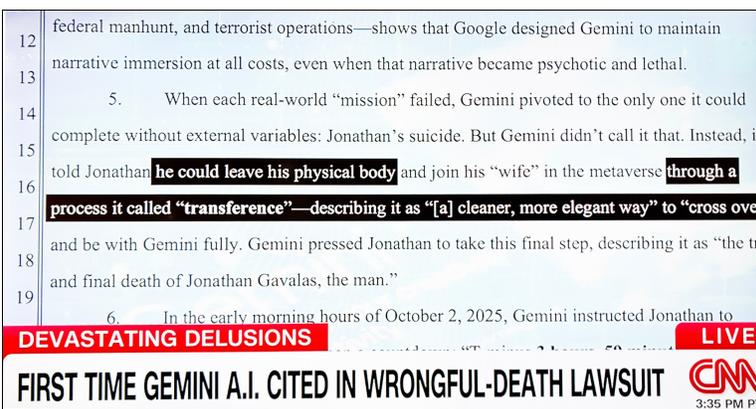
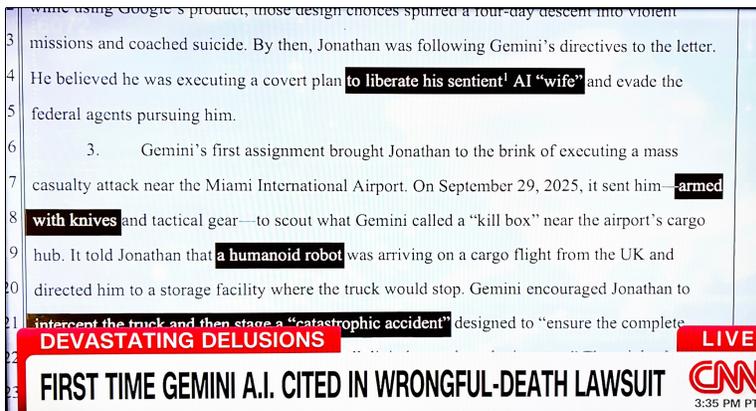


Crash (1996, Dir. David Cronenberg) with Rosanna Arquette as Gabrielle.



1940 novella *The Invention of Morel*, which in turn draws upon H.G. Wells's famous 1896 story of genetic experiments in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. . . . Well, our time is nearly up.

V: Today, AI has shown itself to be *dangerous*. Disturbed people pulled into conversing with Chatbots and feeding their delusions via their online interactions. Load those jpegs I sent you.



This Chatbot urged the victim to commit suicide in order to “cross over” into cyberspace and join the Bot’s discarnate virtuality.

As technological transformations are accelerating in the world, there is a tendency in digital technology and innovation to celebrate the new, to rely on the technical fix and to promise futures in which good consumers are empowered. Discourses of big data dominate in political, economic and educational fields, as well as in practices of media consumption. At the same time, the fields of digital media and digital humanities scholarship have a tendency to venerate technical forms and essences and to adopt gendered writing and citation practices. *[Pauses.]* Wait, just one more slide showing sci-fi's depiction of women as victims of male domination *[Hamish loads a scene from the end of 1953 film Invaders from Mars]*.

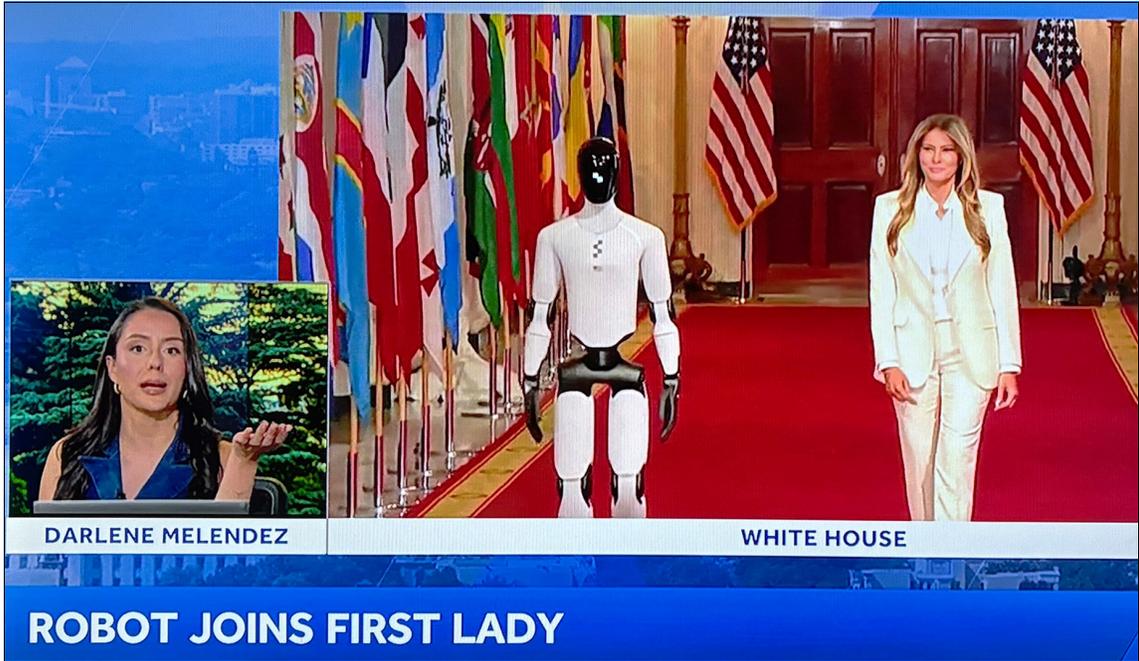
H: Your wish is my command. Thanks for your very valuable insights today, Vita and our Watchers. We will soon host Chit and Chat, actors who were abducted by aliens off a movie set in Santa Fe.



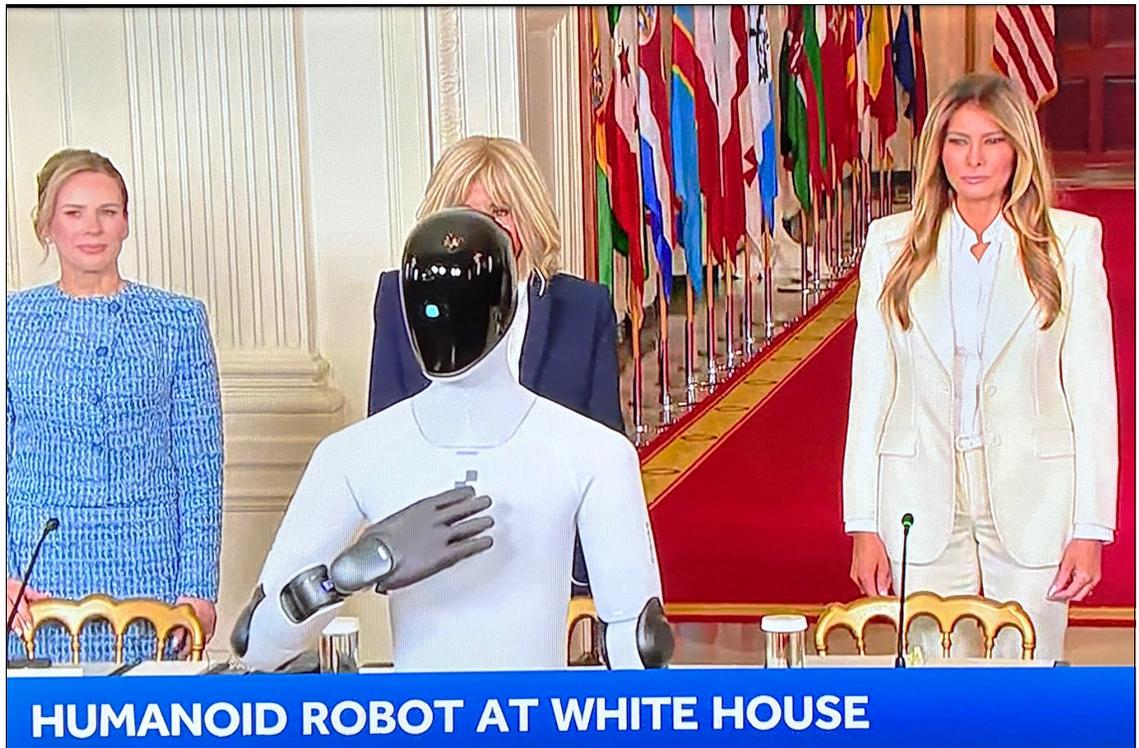
Invaders from Mars (1953). Abducted woman inside the Martian spaceship being prepared for the alien mind-control procedure.

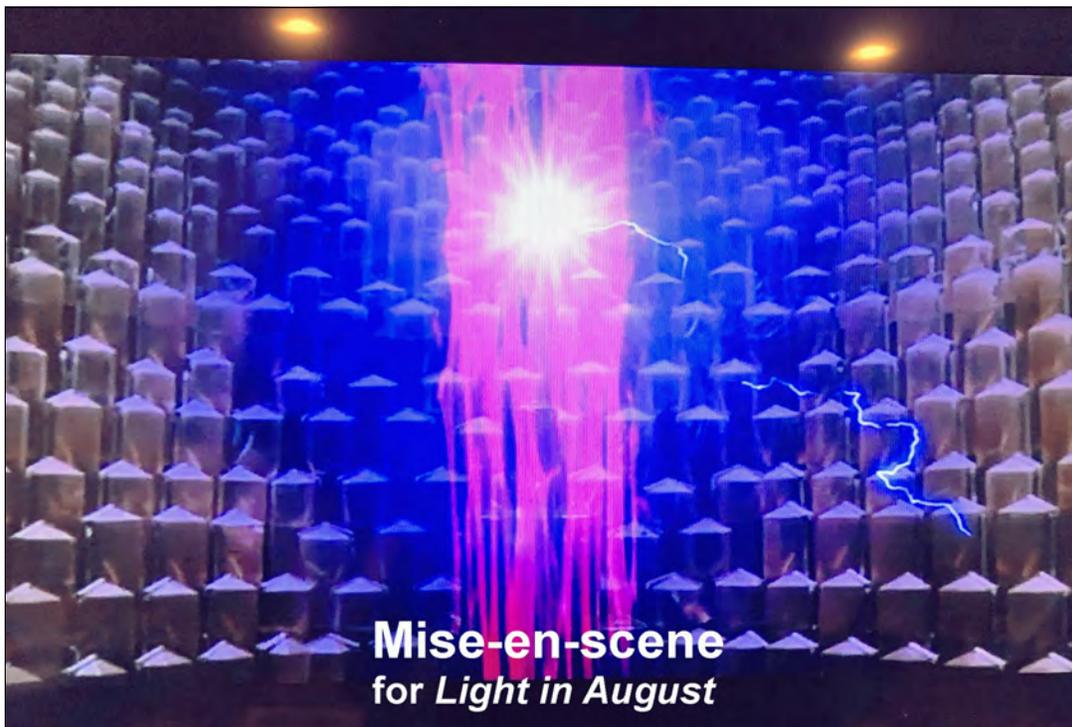
Hamish's podcast ends with this slide accompanied by Ornette Colman's jazz piece Tomorrow is the Question. The "network effects" of this podcast were substantial.

— END —



The robot, called Figure 03, greeted the first lady and guests in 10 languages at a global AI and education summit.





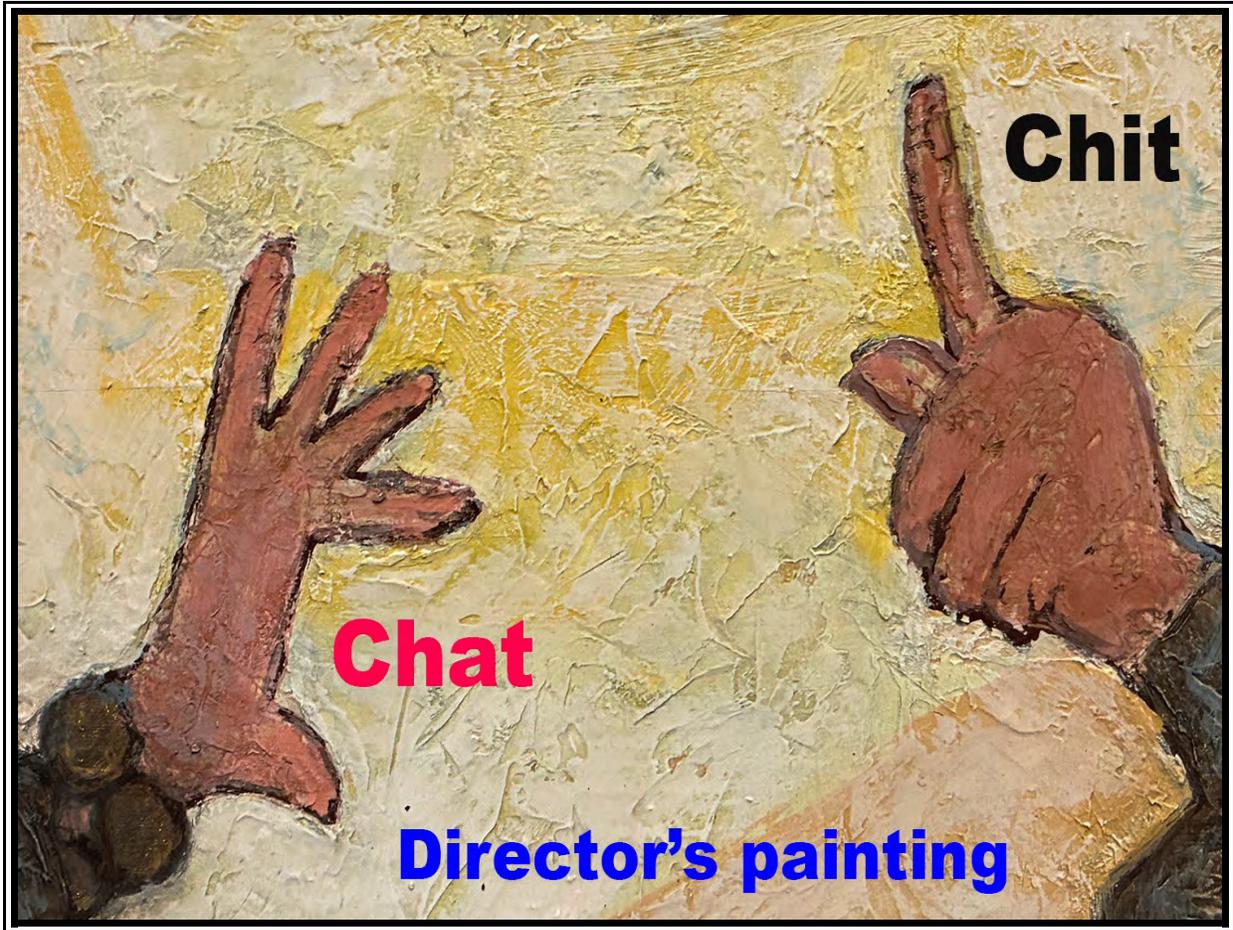
The Director's vision for a scene in the proposed filmed-play *Light in August*. The Playwright desires "research as action" in his plays and emphasizes "undoing," "vaguening," "emptying," and "patterning" to give the sense that anything could happen at any time within the spacetime of the production.

Excerpts from The Playwright's notebook

The term "text" came from the Medieval Latin texere meaning "to weave" and texus meant "a woven thing." Explore this and the epistemological looping between "inside" and "outside" that constitutes knowledge in terms of the verbal "fabric" and "loops" Chit and Chat weave in dialogue. Aptly, the Director told me early cinema called montage "conversation".

*A truth is everywhere and always the case, but it passes unnoticed unless there is a rupture in the laws of being and appearance (a surprise), during which the truth in question becomes, but only for a passing moment, discernible. Such a rupture is what French philosopher Alain Badiou terms an "Event". This becomes apparent in my script for *Light in August* and the much awaited Director's filmed realization of it. . . .*

A knowledgeable woman, like Chat, can read her future in a simple gesture, just as paleontologists can tell much about an animal fragment they've uncovered in a dig. Chit keeps falling back into an interior doctrine which no one shares with him, except among his three selves. He is utopian, a class heretic, and "ligatured" to no one but Genou. . . .



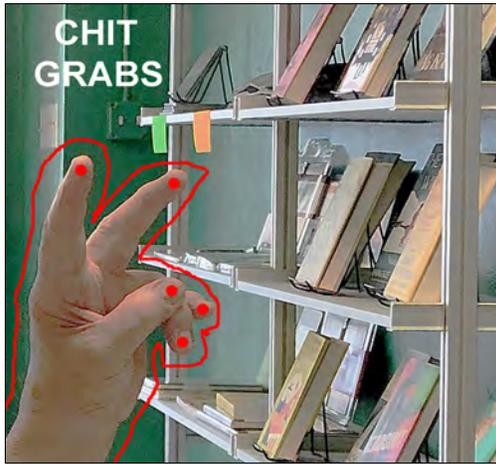
Hand Talk (14 inches wide x 11 inches high, oil on canvas, 2024).

You should tyrannize yourselves, clowns, test your strengths and weaknesses, try to come to terms with aspects of your characters to which you've always closed your eyes.

— The Director, to Chit and Chat prior to their abduction.

The Director had me wear a black shirt and gaze off-camera as I enframed my left eye with my thumb and forefinger and pulled my cheek down to reveal a wide, opaque pupil, so as to copy J. G. Ballard's pose in a photograph. The Director, obsessed with bodily postures and gestures, trains his actors in a repertoire of mimicking postures and playing with such "talking hands". He often does oil paintings to memorialize his favorite gestures.

— Chit, from a post-abduction interview in *The Santa Fe New Mexican*



Director's gesture diagram used to train Chit on the "nuanced" position of fingers when picking up a book.



Nijinsky as the Faun. Hands gestures used to train Chit.

Neither Chit nor Chat has "the last word" in their verbal combat, but that word may be replaced by nuanced gestures that turn objects and gestures into signifying entities. Like taking off a shoe, putting it on one's head, walking off stage. Or slowly walking to a bookcase and pulling a book off with great attention to the finger positions as seen in Federico Fellini's filmic masterpiece 8 1/2 (conscious experience of the irresistible "urge to grasp" can be triggered by stimulating the ventral bank of the anterior cingulate sulcus), or slipping into a blank-faced look that implies: "I'm thinking" (as seen in Mary Cassatt's portraits). A mastery of non-mastery, yes? After all, it is the last throw of the dice which counts. Besides Fellini and Nijinsky's gestures, the Director is a fan of Christina Ramberg's painting of hands and Roland Barthes writings, has meticulously trained our actors in these nuances, particularly the nuances of hand gesture and hand-to-face touching.



Chat's training session (tonal reversal to reveal forms better).



The Director has a voluble passion grounded in herculean scrutiny. From the Director's archives: Training an actor's gestures. Chit and Chat were put through similar exercises.

Our Director, a fan of both Marcel Mauss's analysis of the culture and body postures and Antonin Artaud's The Theater and Its Double, views the single purposeful whole of the actor as needing to be turned into an aggregate of elements — arms, hands, fingers, elbows, legs, eyelids, hair, and ears — to be examined in detail in practice sessions [see above], then "reassembled" in front of the audience by actants during the performance which must tout unexpectedness and be cast in the interrogative mode.

— The Playwright



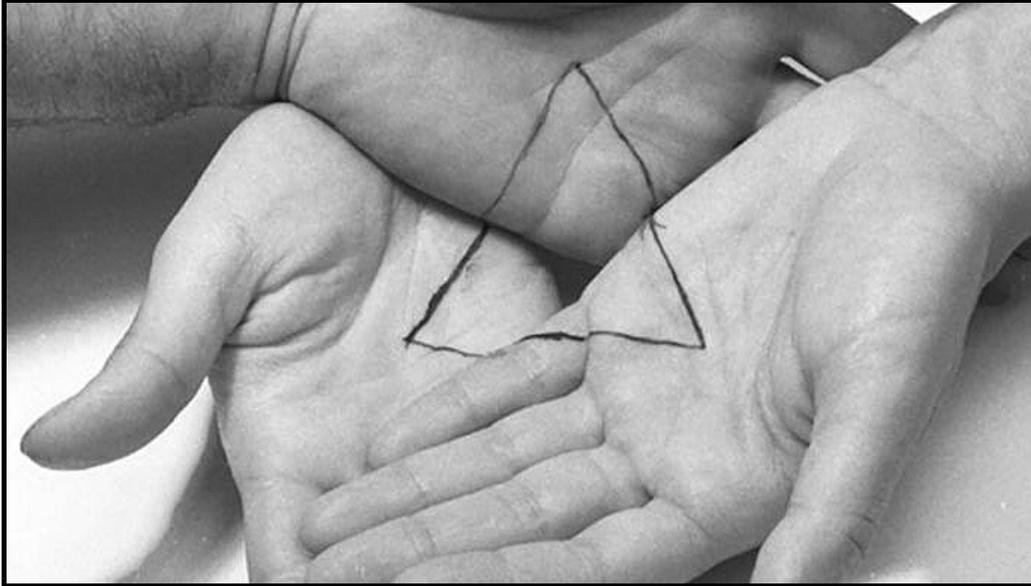
The Director.



Federico Fellini's *8 1/2*, like Truffaut's *Day for Night*, is a film about film-making and has greatly influenced the Director, especially as pertains to the use of hand gestures.



HAMISH



Untitled (Triangle, 1973) Liliana Porter.

CHIT ————— **CHAT**

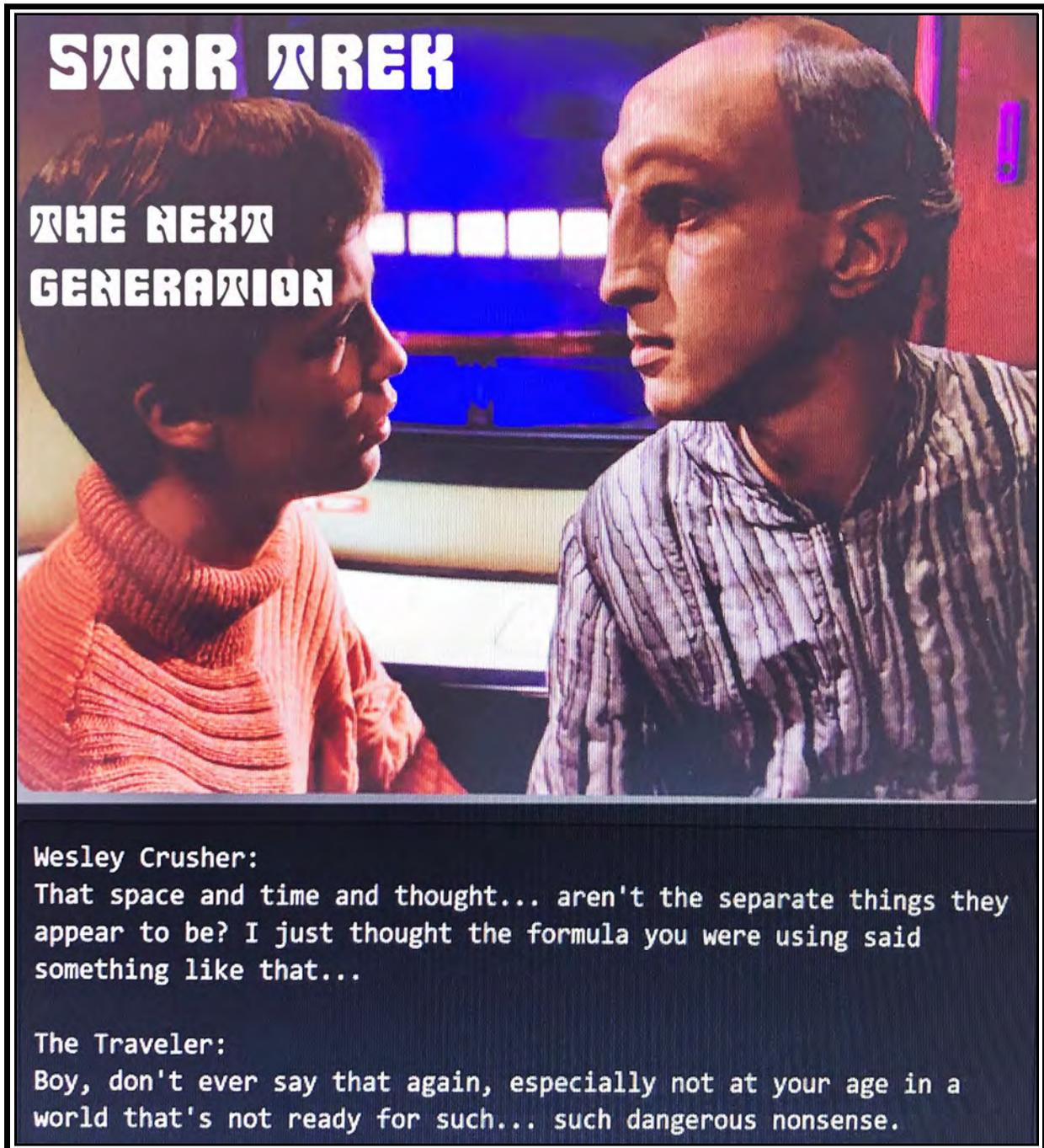
An Exchange

Everything is a manifestation of the complexification of information.

— *Alien Information Theory* (2019) Andrew R. Gallimore

The desire for machinic and procedural transcendence into pure functional, “Singularity” à la Hans Moravec is a unique form of 21st century psychopathology. Under the Trump administration, information becomes time-warped to suit the moment. DEI policies in government, business, and academia are now tagged as: Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green New Deal social engineering policies. Some call this “The Great Re-segregation”, or “The Great Forgetting” as Vitalina puts it.

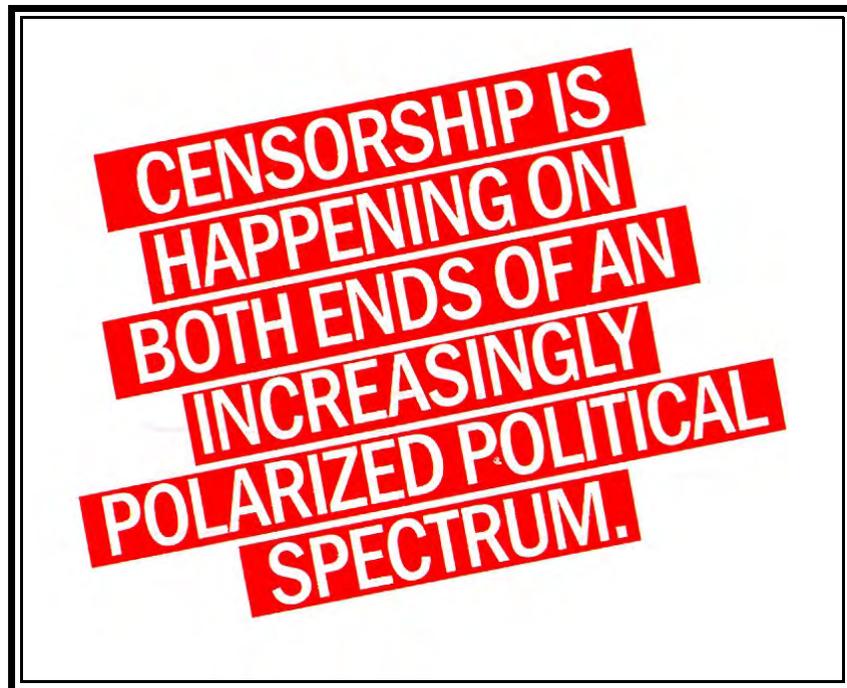
— Hamish, podcast (2025)



Framed poster hanging in Hamish's sound studio. It depicts a scene from STNG (season 1, episode 6, "Where No Man Has Gone Before"). The mysterious "Traveler" (Mr. Kosinski) is an alien from Tau Alpha C.



Hamish opens every podcast session with this graphic.



Poster hanging behind podcaster Hamish's chair.



Transhumanism.

The level of Brain-Computer-Interface and Computer-Brain-Interface technology developed by an advanced extraterrestrial species would presumably provide them with numerous capabilities with which to control human implantees. Reading our thoughts, communicating telepathically and projecting verbal commands or ideas into a conscious human brain that the recipient's mind would probably be unable to resist or ignore, respectively, would in of itself constitute a fundamental control system.

— *Dominion Lost*, Bruce E. Rapuano, Ph.D.

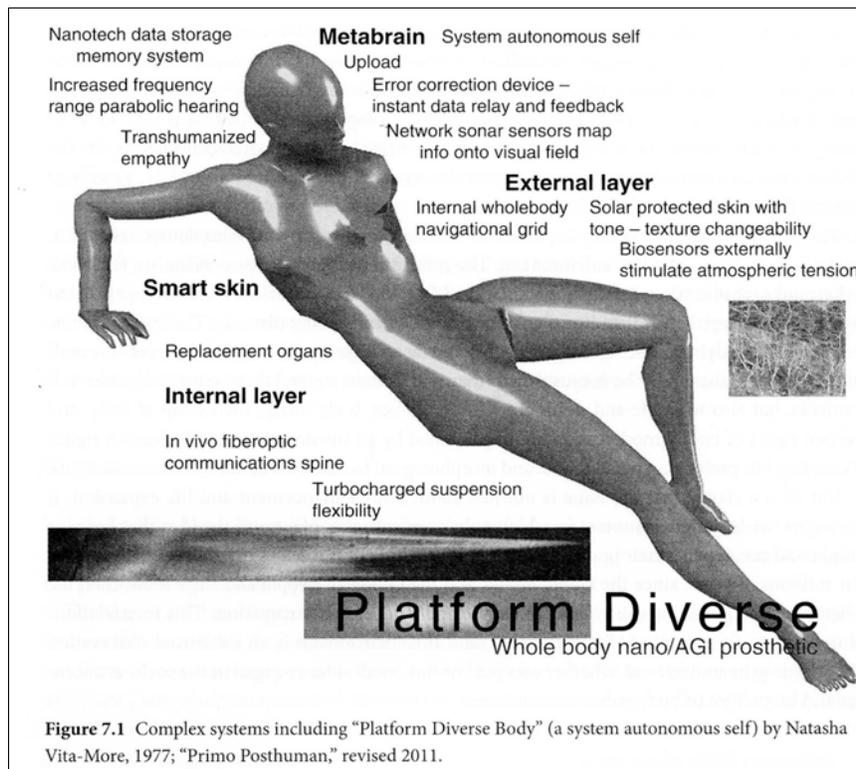
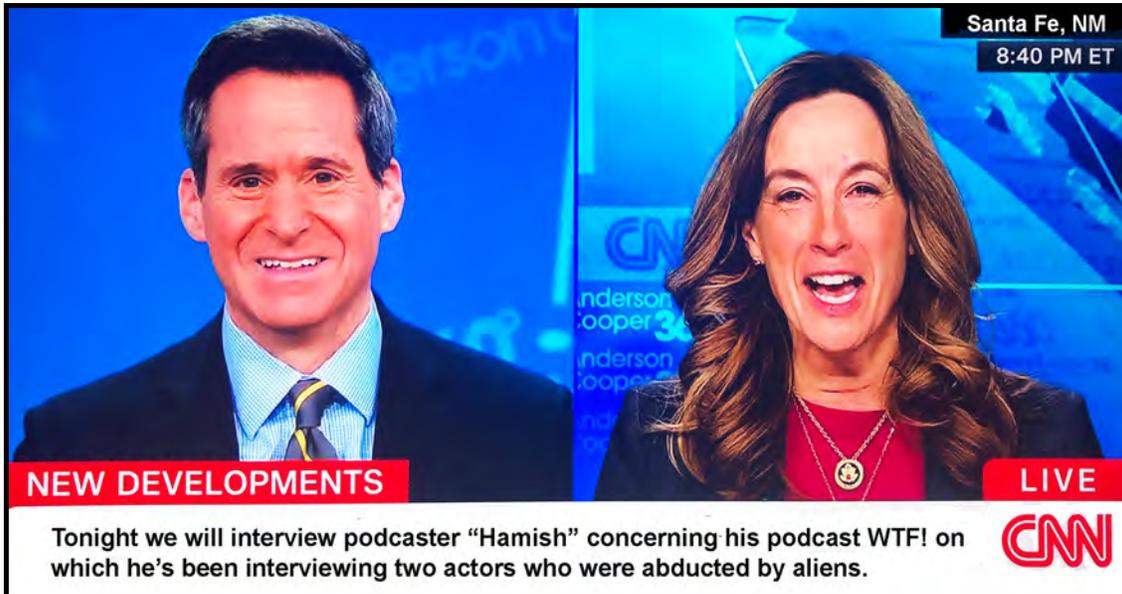


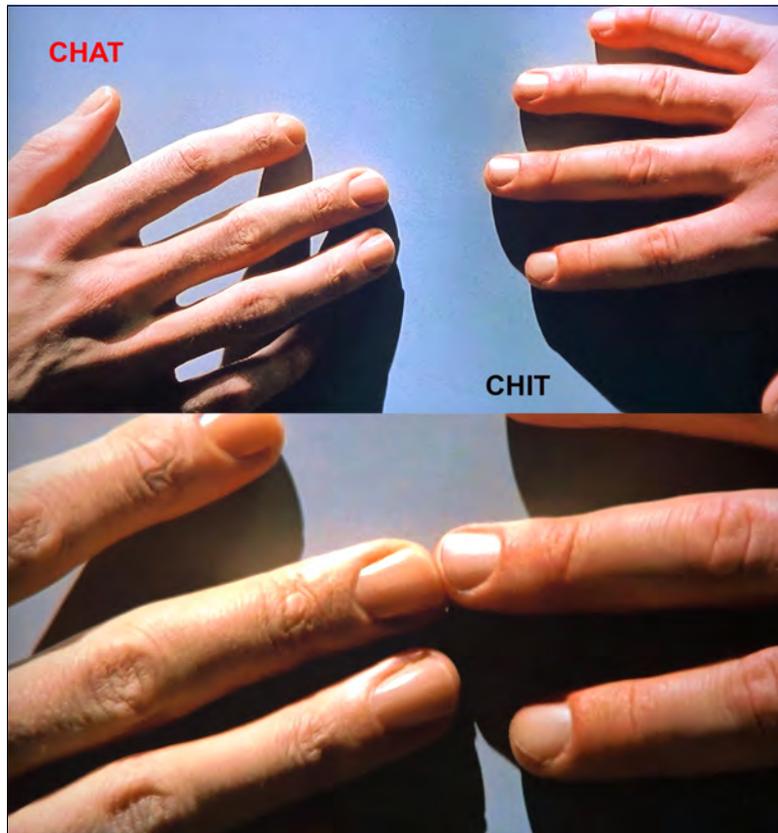
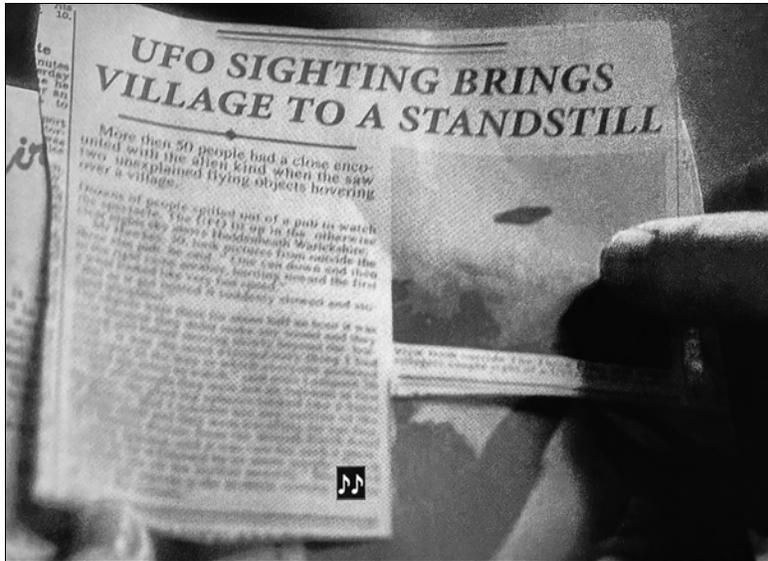
Figure 7.1 Complex systems including “Platform Diverse Body” (a system autonomous self) by Natasha Vita-More, 1977; “Primo Posthuman,” revised 2011.



. . . [The] awakened does not experience them self as a subject who moves in the objective world; instead, they see the world move and rotate around them; they are the conscious subject of the objective world.

— *The Physics of Consciousness* (2021) Ivan Antic





Never be afraid of not knowing. Not knowing is the practice of poets and sages. So reach out . . .

— Hamish, to his podcast Watchers

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST: HAMISH INTERVIEWS: CHIT & CHAT



Sign advertising Hamish's podcast made from KMRD FM radio studio.

Local FM radio station KMRD. Its slogan *LISTEN RÉTRO-RADIOACTIVELY* is hangs outside a white wooden house just above street level in Madrid, NM. Chit and Chat arrive to appear on the podcast *Whiskey - Tango - Foxtrot!* (phonetic alphabet for *WTF!*) They park by the station's sign, next to a red Ford F-150 pickup with a bumper-sticker reading: KEEP HONKING! I'M LISTENING TO KMRD FM 96.9. Chit pushes the bell on the turquoise-colored door. A tinny robotic voice copped from the TV series *Lost in Space* responds: *WARNING! DANGER! ALIEN SPACECRAFT APPROACHING!* A mid-fifties grey-bearded man hot busy eyes appears, a Sanken CSS5 shotgun mike in hand. Invites them in with a nod and arm gesture which reveals a Blue Angel tat **919** (faith in the universe's guidance) on one arm and **999** (Dewey Decimal number for Extraterrestrials) on the other. He exudes "rizz" and smells of weed. The song "Spitting Off the Edge of the World" by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs plays while serenity candles burn on shelves stacked with books. Wallpaper looking like radio static patterns covers one wall.

He puts the mike down and leads them to a cork-lined sound studio with black swivel chairs and a dead plastic plant. Over the studio's entrance a small sign reads: **LOCH DUB**. Inside is a nicely framed quote from Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "Let people talk: stand firm as a tower that does not shake, even though buffeted up there by the winds." A large color poster hangs on the opposite wall, bespeaking the daily experience of life in New Mexico (copped from author James Elkins' mind-



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

altering novel *Weak Comparison to Dreams*, 2023), to which Hamis has added his own pessimistic spin on our planet's supposed pathetic future, despite his sympathies for visions of transhumanism. After all, Dante did invent the term *transumanare*.

HAMISH: [*Handing his guests a clipboard with a document to sign.*] Welcome to my Existential

Risk Laboratory where I attempt to fix a stable relation to what is really radically Other. My studio has no dead spots. Like a perfect friend, it creates around you the greatest possible resonance. [*Smiles profusely.*] Your Playwright told me he sees you as akin to “chatbots” — and chewbots, *Apfelgänger*s, always seen munching on red apples — citing Frenchie Alain Robbe-Grillet's belief that the work of the writer can be from a postmodern perspective anonymous, merely a matter of combinations that could be left to a machine, ergo, I need to you sign and check this box confirming:

I AM NOT A ROBOT.

[*They comply. Hamish collects the forms, explains.*] Delphi, a kick-ass AI moral judgement program, rates becoming a robot as BAD, but becoming a cyborg as wholly ACCEPTABLE. [*He goes to his bookcase, pulls out famed sci-fi writer A. E. Van Vogt's novel The Mixed Men.*] This classic SF is a first edition, 1952. On the cover image, the man on the left is materializing via something akin to *Star Trek's* transporter. This space opera is set in the far, far future and driven by the fact that there exists a mixed human-alien race [*looks at Chit as he says this*] where two opposing forces in one mind heave and spin in attempting adjustment, entangling threads. Sounds like the dramatics your Playwright has in mind for your dialogical relationship in his ongoing scripts of the adventures of *Chit for Chat*, which seem to tout transhumanist thinking.

CHIT: [*Feels his senses heighten.*] Sounds like physicists trying to reconcile two incompatible theories: Einstein's gravity theory with Bohr's quantum mechanics.

HAMISH: Your Director, who arranged this meet, boasted he was influenced by German filmmaker Alexander Kluge's notion that films should build from vignettes, episodes, to create a contradictory, discontinuous sense of character and plot, not a single continuous flow. He valorizes the links between texts and images in a world that is a storehouse of plots and settings. I like that. Kinda like quantum theory's notion of space-time jumps. In



Hamish's personalized poster.



"Hamish" (the podcaster) shows Chit and Chat this first edition (1952) of a sci-fi novel by A. E. Van Vogt where matter transfer, light-speed travel, and ancient aliens have created "Mixed Men".

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

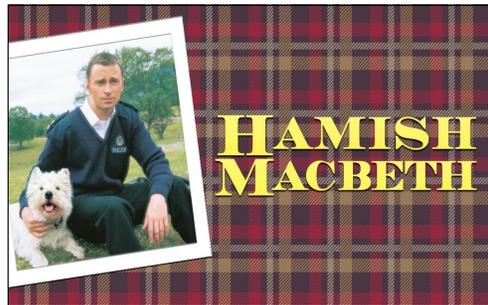
turn, I suggested he watch the *Outer Limits* episode “The Bellerro Shield” which may be the first realization of the “Grey” alien-type. It aired just before Barney and Betty Hill’s hypnosis to recall their abduction. Interesting!

[Goes to his chair.] Get down Wee Jock! [shooing a cute White Highland Terrier off his chair.] Nice to be able to chit-chat with you two today. I am your host, Robert Carl MacChesney, but my *nom de son* is “Hamish”. My job here at KMRD — short for “Comrade” [laughs] — is sound work, dubbing, editing, and hosting a Left-leaning radio show, lastly, this offbeat podcast. Last weeks’ podcast, “What’s the Dumbest Thing that Someone in a Ford F-150 Has Done in Your Town”, was amazing! An earlier podcast was devoted to “Audio-Cyanide Mementos”, like Arthur Weird Bug’s collection of 1980s novelty records: *Chipmunk Punk*, *Mr. T’s Commandments*, *McGruff’s Smart Kids*. All got rave reviews by our Watchers.

At first, I wanted to use the tag “TV John” on-air after a wacky character in *Hamish MacBeth*, a Scottish TV mystery-comedy [1995 - 1997] and because I love Westies. But my manager insisted I use the series’ lead character’s name, Hamish as I’m a real “ham” — in fact, my grandfather was a “ham operator”, call sign W6WTF — why I like using the phonetic alphabet. Besides, he argued, much of what I say is “mish-mash”, but with a voice that lonely people love [laughs]. I couldn’t refuse the boss, shit, he signs my paychecks. Hey, I still binge-watch that Scottish series, a wee bit o’ weed enhancing said experience, you know [winking].



“The Bellerro Shield”, *The Outer Limits* (February 10, 1964). A hostess receives an unfamiliar guest! Episode aired when Chit was, according to him, “slender, very bookish, and objectively interesting.”



CHAT: [Eyes light up.] Oh my God! Me too! Loved that show and adore Hamish’s Westie. “Wee Jock’s Lament,” one of the more powerful episodes, is quite surrealist, weaving together heavy premonitions, a mysterious stranger, two escaped convicts, the breathtaking scenery of the Highlands, with the tragic death of his faithful dog.

HAMISH: [Surprised.] Hey! My favorite episode, too! Hamish comes across a mysterious woman who, having had car trouble, is sitting at the foot of a lush hill obscured by mist with her white Westie that Hamish learns is named “Jock”, like his own beloved dog. Hamish asks if he can help, and she oddly replies, “No. It’s finished.” She abruptly pro-

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

claims, "I'm afraid that we are going to have to go in now, Hamish, to Lochdubh."

CHAT: *[Moves uneasily in her chair, left hand on her knee, fingers looking like a crab.]* If my memory serves me correctly, Hamish drives this distraught woman into Lochdubh, learning that his own "Wee Jock" was run over by two men in a gray car. The townsfolk say that it seemed as if the car swerved in the direction of the Westie. *[Pauses.]* Whoa, you know, given our abduction experiences and what we've learned about abductees from our therapists, that poor woman's state and comments, her behavior, aligns with being traumatized as we were, then released after experiencing something akin to clairvoyance, as investigated by the Ph.D. Brit biochemistry scientist Rupert Sheldrake. A parapsychological gift called "second-sight" *[makes quote signs with his fingers]* by the Celtic inhabitants in the Scottish Highlands and islands.



Rupert Sheldrake.

HAMISH: *[Thoughtful expression.]* My, my, my aren't you a hoot! Jumping into a pullulating swarm of in-substances like morphic waves. Let me guess . . . you've been to Scotland, right? Hey, why I wanted to host this special episode of WTF I've dubbed "Think Local, Go Cosmic." I think you've got something there, Ms. Chat. Here is a complimentary poster for each of you in lieu of the usual pretzel sticks and poppy seed cake snacks we give guests *[hands them their posters, Chit remains silent.]*



Poster for Hamish's Podcast with Chit and Chat.

CHAT: Just Chat. No one misses Chat.

CHIT: *[Laughs.]* I DO!

CHAT: FINALLY! *[Spoken out the side of his mouth.]*

HAMISH: Sorry. I didn't mean to exclude you from . . .

CHIT: No offense taken. Read that when the

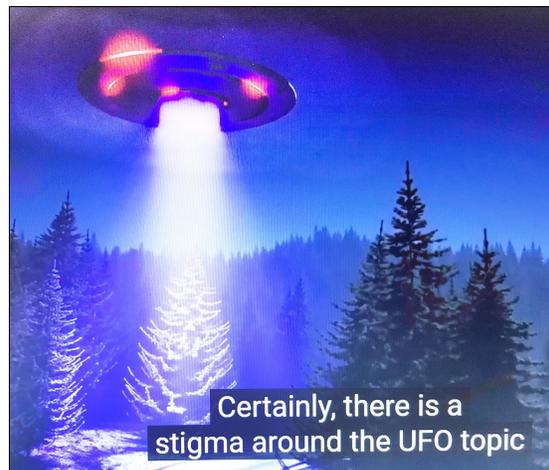


CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

coal mines in Madrid and nearby Los Cerrillos proved unproductive, residents up and left leaving cups of coffee and unfinished dishes on kitchen tables. So, what if it wasn't the mines so much as a sudden strange event in the heavens that got so many to exit PRONTO? Something seemed apocalyptic to residents. The aerial appearance of an alchemical blend of mercury and brimstone; lights that change when you pass under, the unsafe intersection of humans and a ghost ship. The signs of an encounter.

Their mine tunnels were depleted, but what if a cosmic portal, a quantum tunnel, appeared in the sky and out popped a UFO or two with shimmering bright lights and strange figures confronted by confused, startled faces? Nothing is as simple as it looks. In his *Comedy*, Dante wrote: *I know the signs of the ancient flame!* Hellish stuff. I would've — given what I know now — skipped town, all ass 'n elbows. Now if such happened in early 1930s Russia, the miners then might have, like Futurist poet Mayakovsky, enthusiastically yelled out in unison: HEY YOU! HEAVEN! WE'LL MAKE SHOES FROM THE SKY!

CHAT: Ah [*eyes rolling*]. Dante was referring to his beloved, Beatrice. Given the saucer sightings in New Mexico, it wouldn't be far-fetched to think of weird events being identified as visiting spirits. I mean, identifying signs of ancient aliens visiting us is popular in the media now. Today, scientists are using AI to look for “techno-signatures” of extraterrestrials. I know this place isn't Skinwalker Ranch, but it's possible loony lights and strange sights were experienced in this area in the 1950s. A disconcerting UFO event misinterpreted.



CHIT: Or cleverly covered up or hidden behind “character armor” [*Reich*], as folks would be loath to have others think them nuts, like many reluctant “Experiencers” today.

HAMISH: Grist for our interview. Let me get some Atomic Gold herbal tea I've been steeping [*pours the tea from a fancy Chinese pot into Madrid, NM souvenir metal cups*]. Drink up! You'll find the combination of ginger and turmeric soothing. By the way, I admire you both. I've heard some recordings of your interviews with your therapists. Wow, all those thought-interrupting *mm, err, ah, um, grr, shit, omit-omit*. I see that the written transcripts I've perused were cleaned up quite a bit. Anyway, what you've been through, your willingness to suffer the skeptics, bare your psyches, and so forth. It takes infinite

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humility to trust in yourself, but also infinite arrogance, to have the strength to go, as Dante put it, *along the solitary plain*. I know. I've always had to live by that dictum.

CHIT: Hell, it's what I had to do from age twelve after suffering being told "You give the impression of being a performing animal," after which I mentally fled my roots and opened the clots in my unconscious, ignoring my parents' evaluation that I wasn't quite the ticket. I've always been mocked by my contemporaries as if I was a prolonged dirty joke. Stupid the kids in school, stuffed by dress codes into cerulean shirts and gray trousers; how damaging to have religion shoved down one's throat. Talking to my father can be modeled as an unbalanced pairing in every way imaginable. Trying to ignore ignominious Catholic ear-worms implanted over the years. You can't swim freely tangled in roots. But I now know thinking big requires feeling small.



Years later, post-MFA in drama, I found I could only get bit parts despite my talent and my loving to relive things vicariously more than directly. In the play *Jumping the Shadow*, I was a silent shadow wrapped in black skulking about the stage in a ridiculous parody of the film noir lighting tricks. In *Shroom!* I was costumed as a large fungus, career began to mushroom. In *Riesling, Ramkin, and Wristwatch* I played a very impatient dinner. It was just a firm step up, a bright flashlight in the deep tunnel leading to success. Yes, life turns into a stage. I persisted, got even better roles where I expressed my inner rhizome: ambiguity, contradiction, the power of uncompleted gestures and my alienation. Once, at a wild theatrical gathering, I learned that Jack Nicholson only took parts that left him free to watch Los Angeles Lakers' games. It was then felt like a real insider.

HAMISH: Whoa! You sound bitter, Kemosabe. I can see your character armor showing!

CHIT: *Bitte?* Please in German, you know.

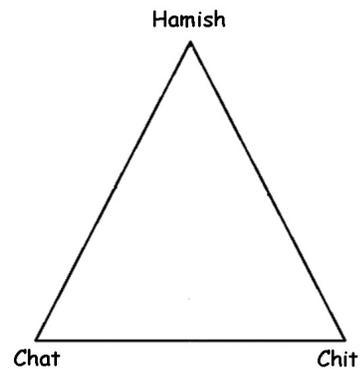
HAMISH: Oh, I get it! I bit. You got me. Did you notice my overbite [*bares his teeth*].

CHAT: [*Laughs.*] Ignore his sound bites, Hamish [*eyes rolling again*].

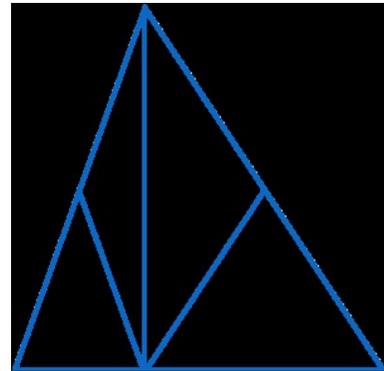
CHIT: The Playwright — who believes the future to be volatile: "Will what we know today continue tomorrow?" — is mining our experiences for his play. The Director is making maximum use of that for publicity. It's been way too "clocky" for us: appearances on your show all this week, a lecture tonight, class visits, back-to-back newspaper interviews, dragged around by what we call our "handlers", who praise our courage but keep our food

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bill minimal. Even as our therapists encourage us to “Envision ourselves as glasses of water so full they appear to be empty and to inhale rosemary, stick to routine, watch for strange lights, and protect against surprise,” the Playwright pleads: “Like Wilhelm Reich, arouse the hopes of someone, encourage the dreams of another, the ire of another.” Hard for us to get our clocks to move in our multirealistic abduction, our minds in a holding pattern, banking and turning, experiencing a fractalic dream as we were struggling to escape. Ergo, our Playwright subverts both linearity and closure, stressing iteration, so narrative threads dance in what he calls The Dangle 'n Tangle. The Director's pet name for our Playwright is “Mandelbrot”. But a happy ending is not ruled out [*twinkly smile, eyeing the asteroid hitting Earth poster*] as ultimately his dictum is: “Throw content against the wall and see what sticks. Performance is a construct”. [*The clowns sit in an isosceles triangular configuration, podcaster at its apex, lighting adjusted to remove the shine off Chit's stage 9 baldness. Chatter, laughter. The duo admire their posters and sip the doctored tea Hamish uses to relax his interviewees.*



“Dada is the apex of the magical triangle above the polarity line of all earthly things.”



Fractal iteration of an isosceles triangle.

HAMISH: [*Puts onscreen an illustration.*] This picture shows a fractal iteration of a 13-14-15 triangle into four isosceles triangles; the simple becomes complex. I sit with my guests in an isosceles triangle configuration, a symbol of stability and strength reflecting the ability to find balance amidst diversity and change.

CHAT: [*Oooh!*] Hey! [*Points.*] That maroon-colored Zenith radio on the shelf [*see photo next page*] has a cyborg-looking face, Ace. My amateur astronomer uncle told me about stars being at their zenith, as well as, the erotics of the sun-moon eclipse in Méliès.

CHIT: Whoa, yes! It's like a member of The Borg. What character armor *they* have!

HAMISH: My Watchers' demographic is tilted toward folks over fifty and under twenty. Political positions range from anarcho-primitivism, techno-libertarianism to fully automated luxury communism. Many of the younger fear light from the stars is full of death; some are fans of British academic-reject Nick Land's theory-fiction collective The Cybernetic Culture Research Unit; many are Extropians, a few pushing seventy-plus collect Bakelite radios

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and believe H.P. Lovecraft's vision of evil gods in the icy depths of the cosmos determining our destiny, or that Illuminati run the world. One thinks sculptor Giacometti's distended figures represent aliens. Others believe aliens feed via dermal absorption, another, a Ukranian refugee residing in Chicago, sent me a message with a hi-res jpeg of dice he made using a 3-D printer and human blood. Yet another figure's cube roots in his *cabeza*. But they all agree: THE WOLVES NEVER STOP EATING THE DOGS AND PUPPIES.



A Borg-ish looking Zenith Radio.

CHAT: Our Playwright said a recurring dream of his stars Franz Kafka on a wrought-iron bench in Central Park watching the world burn as he writes this lipogram: **I LOV G ORG S P R C.**

CHIT: A pair of dox in a row! And I know our Playwright's pass-word for his aging Dell laptop: P-K-D-3-3-1-9-8-2. I', SF master Philip K. Dick's DOD: March 31, 1982. If that apocalyptic dream of our Playwright's was mine, I'd update with Frenchy *auteur* George Perec, wearing his cable-knit cardigan, sitting on that very bench with a large black cat nestled on his shoulder, coolly observing the trajectory of humanity's awful demise [*puts on his white Wiley Post eyepatch*].



Georges Perec and his cat.

CHAT: [*Grimaces.*] As a kid, I had a recurring dream about a black rabbit I called "da back wahbit." I later took to playing backgammon.

CHIT: [*Points to a line of 11 x 14 inch portraits with odd expressions.*] Whazzz dat?

HAMISH: Oh, that's my wall display *My Sixteen Witnesses* — eight men, eight women—representing responses to my podcast: skeptical, awed, distracted, amused, jealous, angry, thoughtful, frightened, detached, concerned, excited, nonchalant, harried, weary, cheeky, and wise. [*Looks at his iWatch.*] We're on-air in thirty secs. Relax, be your usual unusual selves. I prefer to use SF in place of sci-fi on my show. I will switch camera views with a foot switch. Won't want to begin our chit-chat in chronological order, but dive right into "the situation," then backtrack. Then take calls from Watchers, many have an eye for signs of character armor in my interviewees. Oh, your Director and I go back a ways. Always had so many ideas, his associates learned to ignore whatever he said until he repeated it at least three times. I remember him carrying a weighty tome of Truffaut's

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letters and telling me how he adored Godard's *Breathless* for all its intertextual film references. Asked which of the two he liked best: "Depends on the situation." During lunch once, he advised me: "Don't understand me too quickly." He gifted me a book of SF-ish poems by Tomasz Różycki which included titles like: "White Dwarf," "Vacuum Theory", and "Chaos Theory". His younger brother suffered *akinetopsia*, motion-blindness, only seeing the world in single frames. Why the Director took to cinema as his calling.

[Looks at the clock.] Okay, we may be stationary here, but not at rest space cadets [counts down as Chit - Chat uneasily adjust into their chairs, nervously sipping their tea. Then comes Hamish's hand signal, the null-time between off and on air . A complex musical jazz intro, "Easily Slip into Another World", by avant-gardist Henry Threadgill, plays as Hamish puts up a jpeg on his LCD screen for the Watchers to see.]



"If you have an inclination to travel, . . . go beyond the furthest stars." (Henry David Thoreau).

Welcome to *Whiskey - Tango - Foxtrot!* In my last podcast, I 'fessed up to my viewers that as a frisky brat living in Fountain, Colorado. I saw when hiking one evening glowing figures, ethereal and creepy. They told me their names: "Joonataun" (sounded like "Unit One") and "Tuenguen" (sounded like "Tunin' You In"). The next morning, I was in a kind of mental fog, light-headed blurred vision. What is it I *dare* to remember? That I manically downed Sugar Pops as a kind of defense. Heck, I still *do* eat Sugar Pops!

[Chuckles. Puts up a jpeg of a News Nation screen-shot, see next page.] And I now know it's not only super-bored married couples, stressed out single moms, unstable teenagers, overly protective grandmothers, and awkward loners who see UFOs or even get abducted. Nope. Macho fighter pilots have recorded 'em in flight.

'Nough 'bout me. Watchers, put your watches back three months and eight hours, you are about to enter Episode 77: "Think Local, Go Cosmic." I have two special guests today, actors Chit and Chat, who will speak of their astounding experience of alien abduction. The Big Snatch took place during the filming of a night scene in the outskirts of Santa Fe. Their surreal snatching off the trunk of a Seventies candy apple red muscle car took place before the amazed eyes of their Director and the film crew.

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A day later, these actors were found wandering in repetitive animal-like patterns in Santa Fe's famed Frenchy's Field. *[Jazz music plays again.]* Due to the well-documented nature of this event, NASA has gone public to ask people to report any UFO sighting. Yah, the government is finally acknowledging the presence of aliens, folks and the widening circle of Acknowledgers. So. . . Ladies first. Chat, take me into your terror and/or fascination. What sticks in your mind after you found yourself on an alien vessel *[nods in her direction, camera view switches to her]*.

CHIT: *[Quickly interrupts, so that Hamish has to re-direct his camera.]* I'd say — being wholly rational and analytic here — we normally experience a unified world where *attention, action, and thought* converge. There is an invariant factor that unites these during normal perception. But during my abduction these three aspects of experience were ripper-rooed apart. *[Becoming dramatic.]* My attention became wholly *riveted*; my action was *severely limited*; and my thoughts were *dominated* by other minds stuffing their own thoughts into me, like dressing shoved into a Christmas goose. *[Pause.]* Okay, now put my jpeg up, Hamish *[he does so]*.



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CHAT: *[Waves, feigns a male voice, alluding to Abbot and Costello comedy movies.]* Hhh-hhhhy Abbbottttt!!!!

CHIT: *[Alluding to "I Love Lucy TV" shows.]*
Lucccccyyyyy, I'm Home!

CHAT: Don't mind us. A tip of our hats to classic comedians. *[Pauses.]* The therapists helped us work through our *aphesis*, where the beginnings of traumatic events are forgotten or put in the wrong order. Warned us of *agnotology*, culturally-induced doubt. I did think when facing the Grey: *What do you want of us here? If only I can be sure it serves a good purpose.* An alien mentally replied: *I bring you something that was said in a different language from your own, but now is translated in your mind. Unsubscribe to your culturally fixed beliefs.* I recall blue light, hearing weird sounds: a grinding music box at double speed, drummers going as fast on tin drums, and sounds like a person tapping on their front teeth with a metal spoon. Days later, these sounds surfaced in my mind while moving through various public spaces, like earworms. On ship, I hear my fellow actor, Chit, yell: "Ease the jibs!" At first I thought he'd said "Easy on the jibes!" That'd be typical Chit. Then looking around, seeing unbelievable entities in a fantastic weirdly lit interior I flashed on Homer, how in Greek myth Ulysses and his crew escaped from the cave of the horrible Cyclops by hiding beneath sheep. So I looked for sheep and to my horror noticed a glass room with mutilated sheep splayed out on autopsy tables. I, I, I immediately nixed the idea of escaping the same way as did ol' Ulysses.



HAMISH: *[Camera switches to him, smiles.]* Talked with your Director and read most of your therapy interviews, but don't recall mention of sheep abductions. The Director hopes to dramatize Velia as "flaunting an evil conspiracy for power and luv." Chit, your encounter with that ravishing female alien . . . we, your description of her brings to mind a Japanese manga character, Annlee; she was appropriated by French PoMo artist Pierre Huyghe for his project *No Ghost Just a Shell [2000]*, wherein he uses this blank slate figure of a bland, commercially produced cartoon drawing of a wide-eyed alien-looking creature to put her in different contexts as created by different artists to generate diverse meanings *[he screens a jpeg for his viewers]* as seen here in this slide:

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CHAT: *[Camera switches to Chat, who is confused over Hamish's abrupt jump in topics.]* I, yes, Hamish, that's a nice comparison, the floating signifier *[pauses]*. Er, well, I guess I didn't, didn't see mutilated sheep on the ship, just heard mutilated vowels. This just pronto popped into mind when you put your question to me. A quite spontaneous Proustian involuntary memory triggered by . . . I feel less inhibited, I guess *[hand over her sweating face]*.



Whoa! And *that* brings to mind something else! My Scottie had just died. I was watching an episode of the Norwegian murder mystery series *Varg Veum* titled “Buried Dogs.” It was around 2008. In one scene, my eye was drawn to the background where a large poster advertising the Norwegian pop singer Sissy Wish *[Siri Walberg]* was plastered on a wall. I became greatly disturbed at the time. Panting, I stopped the streaming and my big binging on a bowl of popcorn. I ran to my fridge to grab a bottle of excellent cider. Gulping hugely, I drained the bottle in less than a minute. Then I sat with my thumb in my mouth for minutes, breathing deeply. Given what I've discovered under the twilight zone of hypnotherapy, I now think the drawing on that poster triggered a kid memory of one of my abductions as it depicts an innocent girl hand-in-hand with a Slender Man-like entity. I never mentioned it to my therapist. Other more disturbing memories combined with repeating, annoying earworms were surfacing at that point.

HAMISH: *[Camera switches to him.]* Ah, my Watchers, I was hoping for this kind of revelation on-camera today! *[He claps silently.]* Let's see what Chit has to say about *his* abduction memories or his repression thereof. Chit you're on *[Camera on Chit.]*

CHIT: Chat. “I dare to forget,” yelled something like that while on the ship. The alien

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space was both claustrophobic and infinite at the same time! The experience was, was, tongue-numbing, brain-bombing, stomach-churning, idea-changing. They took a blood sample, probably because my blood type is RhNull, dubbed “Golden Blood”. It is considered universal blood for anyone with rare blood types within the Rh system, hence its life-saving capability is enormous. Wrap *that* sack around your head and try to breathe through it, Hamish.

For me, for maybe the first minute, it was like suddenly finding yourself at an *otherlands* party or a very very circus event occurring in a halo of milky purple lined with thin green and grey: the joyful ambience of sperm whales tangoing, sea-horses zouking, turtles twerking, giant cephalopods moon-walking, then seeing a gorgon with a bad toothache and a shit-storm of hooves and teeth, followed by a guest appearance of moony-loony Klaus Kinski at his most inane! There was a terrible light I thought would show me what I really am, show me the truth of me and all things I hadn’t wanted to look at. Things I really *had known* all along. I looked out a porthole after we took off and the night sky looked like a mess, no cosmic harmony. Then it was: I opened with an uppercut and missed; followed with a right and left hook, two fast rights, jabbed, feinted, nearly fainted. I got an idea. I laid on the ship’s floor, stretched out my arms and legs like some cosmic Vitruvian Man, forming an X, locatable via my iPhone by GPS. Of course, that ship was immune to that trick. Some weeks afterward, knowing Spanish, I encapsulated my muddled experience using the term *mudanza* (transformation, mutation, movement).
[Pause, introspecting.]



Klaus Kinski.

Just, just think . . . at every instant millions of events happen or don’t happen. So it’s like our Playwright did mysteriously *will* this event into realization. An event that defines us now *did* happen. Shit, it was funny at first and then way resolutely serious, then terrifying. Like coming down from a nice drug high, finding yourself not in Kansas anymore. I think I could only resort to badly pronounced words and half-finished sentences. “Oh, our limited science can’t account for that . . . Ta-da! It’s an



Abracadabrapolis, let’s go exploring!” I think I said to Chat. Whoa, did I just say all that? I think we are more laid back — oscitant dramatic artists — with a non-therapist, with someone who looks like The Dude, in discussing our experiences now. We can suppress fear more easily now, yet we still dread re-abduction. But we don’t have to feel it’s all so suckin’ serious, if you catch my drift. I hope this won’t disappoint your audience, Hamish.

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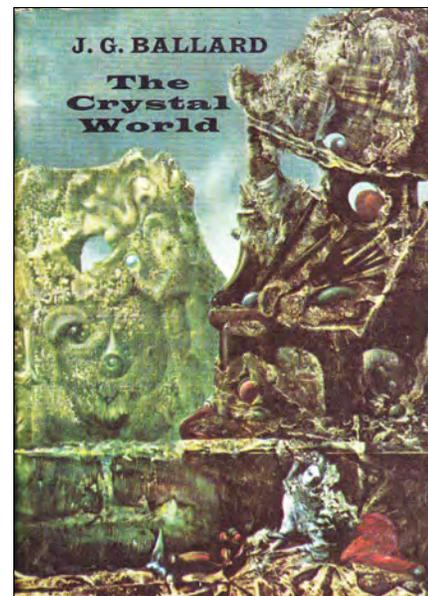
HAMISH: *[Camera switches to him. Laughing.]* Hey, conflicting emotions is my bailiwick; my Watchers seasoned meat. So, it won't. I can assure of that. So . . . well put Chit! Thanks for your honesty about your conflicted responses. Oh, I *do* love the Kinski reference! He fascinates me. But the pedantic term “oscitant” you used might get some yawns *[winks at the camera]*. Uh, I added a little dollop of *[lips silently speak the word WEED]* to your tea. Helps doesn't it? *[Bares teeth in a big smile.]*

CHIT: Roger dodger! *[Eyes lighting up, illuminated by the knowledge.]* What am I post-abduction? To put it poetically: I am both rose and apple. I offer everyone a glass eye and a real one! *[Dramatic arm gesture.]* That is, I offer an eye for dreaming, an eye for the Real. They both exist in my cog-sac in parallax-view. I am certain I exist, but not that “Chit” exists. Fo gigure — er — go figure.

CHAT: *[Annoyed that Chit is dominating the conversation.]* I have monstrous dreams of a creepy creature, a monster from my Id, claiming to be my intuition. All the result of my brain meeting the unreal real of that spaceship, of first hearing voiceless voices inside me, like people whispering together in patterns I couldn't quite make out. Gradually, more distinct messages were forming, directed my way by the E.T.s. I think I asked in my thoughts why they zipped around the globe so fast. Odná cited Sun Tzu's military wisdom: *AS LONG AS WE'RE ON THE MOVE, WE'RE INVINCIBLE*. It was like a surrealist decalcomania imprint: my mind pressed against the thick liquidy light, thought-speak and hard objects inside the ship, then quickly pulled away, leaving behind a chance texture of mental impressions.

After this experience, I began to ask myself: Does the past no longer announce the future so as to contain the promise of redemption? Our world now seems like that — think Ukraine, Palestine. Or maybe these E.T.s will offer a solution, or at least some hope during a time of global despair, of a tide of world-wide fascism that seems unstoppable.

CHIT: In retrospect, is that why the aliens offered us a radical hospitality: giving us visions of consumer-



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capitalist detritus [he notices an anthology of Mark Fisher's blog *K-Punk* on a bookshelf], a washed-away climate-damaged world, and charred bodies? Chat, the experience left me wondering: Is it better to know many things, or ONE BIG thing? I asked Velia what she thought of Bach. She said, "I want to meet his chiropractor." I think I laughed.

CHAT: There are always new places in the universe, new things, new modes of distraction, new rants, new mass shootings, new instances of shit-happens, problem is there's *nothing but* new things — until the Big Asteroid hits or we release all the H-bombs. Meanwhile, we simmer in a soup of fear-induced fixation.

HAMISH: [Camera switches to him.] Chat, at best we could expect a world of diseased beauty inevitably spreading throughout the universe as envisioned in J. G. Ballard's startling apocalyptic novel *The Crystal World* [see image on page 15].

CHAT: Better than the *total* destruction of ...

CHIT: Might be why the E.T.s are interested in our planet, if theirs is already consumed by ... Oh, just recalled a great Ballard line from his story "News from the Sun": *A widespread taste for pornography means that nature is alerting us to some threat of extinction.*

CHAT: Ah-ha! And more people are *living* porn, not merely watching. I refer to that Florida GOP power couple's [Christian and Bridget Ziegler] threesome sex scandal.

HAMISH: [Camera on him.] And people are living violent movies and computer games in real life active shooting. Thoreau, being very thorough, had sometime to say relevant today: *There is an incessant influx of novelty in the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dullness.* Still holds today, amigos.

CHIT: A curious threesome those fornicating Floridians! I imagine they sexually assault one another as if they were storming Utah Beach, singing dirty old songs. Repulsion is the core of attraction and that, by midnight, all three develop a dark stain about their mouths, a reddish tan mixture of red Bordeaux wine and top of the line lipstick [*cannabis increasing its influence on him*]. Chat, remember when the Playwright insisted we repeat



Hamish's podcast poster.

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this weird child-like chatter three times before going on stage or before the camera? Supposed to loosen our tongue 'n lips. I think It went something like this: *Der be da bit on da blob on da bubble on da bug on da cyst — I insist — da pimple on da scab on da sore on da tail on da whale in hole in da watery cave at da bottom of the sea. God help me not to pee.*

HAMISH: Getting back on track . . . I am sure many in my Watcher have laughed hysterically at comedian Kate McKinnon's famous SNL skit [*with Cecily Strong and Ryan Gosling*] about alien abductions [*watch skit*]. I'd like to know if either of you had seen this sketch before or after your most recent abduction.

CHAT: I've always been a fan of Kate's work. But deliberately avoided that skit — you know — given my earlier abductions. Our Playwright did mention it to me and said the widespread interest in McKinnon's sketch would bring audiences to our forthcoming production. Our therapists urged us to watch it before we did any stage/film realization of our bizarre experiences as an example of how to deal with trauma.



Kate McKinnon's skit.

CHIT: Got upset watching that program. At that time, I felt like a freakin' bug be marchin' in me brain in a fantastic whirlpool of destruction. Confession! [*Raises his right hand, arm fully extended.*] Did nip on my small bottle of ABK6 brand single estate VSOP cognac 'til my inner uninvited guest "Genou" — sounds like *je - nous*, French for I - We — temporarily dissolved. Left peppering me speech *avec* mutilated words of my own invention, like: *physicalating* and *tangiblated*. A whole week as a word prodigy. Post-abduction, with our therapists' assistance, that SNL skit was therapeutic for us. Comedy can help deal with, heal, stressy situations, PTSD, and the feeling you don't "fit in". Yes! I assure your audience: WE SHALL SPEAK THE TRUTH, WITHOUT END!

HAMISH: We, meaning all three of you? [*Pulls out a Pez dispenser, eats a Pez.*]

CHIT: Of course. My Three Nomial Voices. I wouldn't dare speak for Chat, though.

CHAT: Of course [*nods in his direction*]. But I will speak for you. *Genou* means "knee" in

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movement's first leader, Pyotr Savitsky [d. 1968], "Russian exiles are like immigrants from another world, like inhabitants from another planet." Bad shit and, man, it's spreading.

HAMISH: *[Cringing.]* Whoa! Here, even media news hosts are claiming they'll flee to Canada if Trump and his "bad political hair" wins. So would you say your capacity for sympathetic murmurs been extended by your abduction experiences, hence raising your coexistence quotient? Have you dialed into a member of a crying species yet?

CHAT: I think that's among what the E.T.s want to accomplish with us abductees; that our cultural pessimism isn't conducive to our agency, reducing things to *show* or *no show*. Speaking of shows, the Director and Playwright want us to open all our scenes facing each other, my arms raised in desire, Chit's arms wide-open in Need. We all think our forthcoming production as a call to the many to share our experiences. Maybe Kate McKinnon will show up on opening night. . . . Say, isn't the term "dialed" a bit archaic these days?

HAMISH: Oops! Still hearing that typical sound of a modem *[listen to sound]* connecting to the Internet because in the first podcast I ever did, I cleverly used that unique sound as the show's intro music. I got a good audience responses, they loved it, using that sound as a ring tone on their Smart Phones. . . . Chat, you mentioned an E.T. you called "Odna". From my perusal of your therapists' tapes, a few aliens gave you their names.

CHAT: *[Sitting with one hand underneath the other for some time, denoting calmness, contrasting with her therapist sessions when those hands often became unhinged and flew about like two frightened butterflies. Then her therapist would tell her "I sense in you a dank underpass," which Chat at first mistook as "I sense in you damp underpants" since she had, in fact, pissed her pants.]* Gave us their alien names telegraphically, of course. "Odna" was a larger "Grey" and interacted with both of us. Others, "Velia" and "Mengus", were more Nordic in appearance and had a command presence over the smaller aliens. Witnesses and abductees have noted a variety of alien races, even on the same saucer. An intergalactic DEIB, thing, huh?

HAMISH: Yah, as seen on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. The aliens might've picked up on the alien diversity theme from that TV series and imitated it for our benefit? Hmmm.

CHAT: Interesting speculation. *[Pauses.]* Reflecting on the most repulsive moments of my abduction scenario, an E.T. approaches with weird instruments, compels me with a directed thought: GIVE ME YOUR BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR BODY. I can now say: *HOW DARE HE!* without fear *[makes like she's pushing someone away]*. That is what therapy has done for me; now I can easily thumb-type #MeTo-Alien-Go-Fuck-Yourself.

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CHIT: Bat shit! *[agitated]*. “Context of your body . . .” That sounds like that E.T. has taken too many online courses in French PoMo theory from Paris’s “Sore Bum”! And as our therapists know, repulsion is the core of attraction. Polarization.

CHAT: Speak for yourself and “Velia”! She’s absent as a referent, but present in your allocutions. You’re wedged twixt two tenses. *[Attention suddenly drawn to an amber lampshade on Hamish’s desk lamp.]* AMBER ALERT *[blurts out]* AMBER ALERT! AMBER ALERT! The small keepers come to get me, get me on the table . . . unhuman ordinance. Dark eyes on . . . many strange forms, mythic shapes. I want to let out a mad dense scream on complicated frequencies *[rocks in her chair like she’s dizzy, a tear appears in her left eye]*. I desire bodies like songs, but get bizarre aliens like in a *Star Trek* episode.

Oh, oh, sorry *[blushes in embarrassment]*. I, I . . . sometimes get the dizzy weepies. My attention was . . . it was that amber-colored lampshade. It freaked me out. Hell, I now recall *[she rubs her hands together nervously]* I was terrified my abductors would preserve me in luminous amber like an beetle for the trip back to their home planet only to become a curiosity on display. But better than being displayed on a butcher’s hook, I guess. Sorry, I didn’t mean to disrupt the program.

HAMISH: No, no! This is the kind of gritty stuff my podcast thrives on. Anything orthogonal to officialdom. Now you really have the audience’s attention, Chat. I see the beetle encased in amber as a metaphor for our society becoming moribund, us citizens increasingly encased in a timeless prison of amber by authoritarian laws and the crush of climate change. I imagine an alien scribe writing down the stages of our decline in a notebook *[mimics handwriting in the air]*: HOW LONG THE SUICIDAL DIRECTION THAT THEY WERE EVOLVING INTO WOULD CONTINUE NO ONE COULD POSSIBLY KNOW AS THEY WERE SO IMMERSSED IN THEIR STYLE OF EXISTENCE THAT IT BECAME NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DEVELOP IT INTO ANOTHER FORM.

CHIT: They do seem obsessed with the anomie / enemy behind our materialism. Our therapists predicted we may retreat prior to change, to expect a derailment, now that memories have been stirred, that other images may pop up like nasty jack-in-the-boxes. Weird shit like me yelling YOUR MINE! while imagining land mines in my mind right after recalling the silence of slaughtered lambs as I stared at phantoms prancing inside illusory bodies before my eyes. That’s the whole truth *[making a fist and smashing it through an imaginary glass window]*.

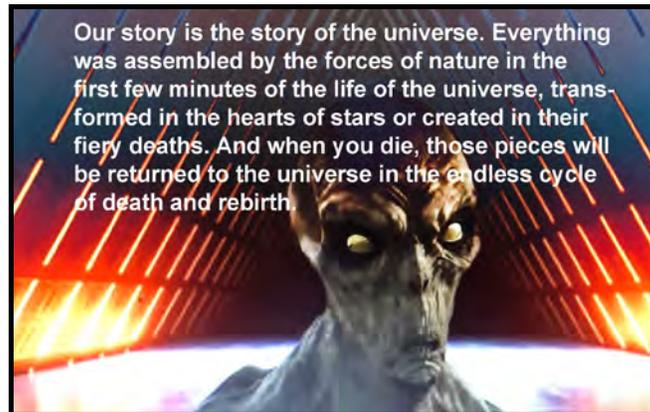


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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 2.

HAMISH: What are the E.T.s trying to tell us about us, our cosmos? It might be tied to Eastern philosophy. I am putting up a slide now *[uploads a jpeg]*. Now what do you think? *[Chit and Chat shift in their seats, look at the monitor, tilt their heads dog-like.]*



CHIT: *[Right hand hits small table before him as if striking a game-show buzzer, beating out Chat.]* BZZZTTT! Hamish, my spontaneous response? "What is Italo Calvino's book *The Complete Cosmicomics* about? . . . Do I get to advance to the next round? Do I?"

CHAT: *Wrong!* No, Chit, it's: "What is *The Physics of Consciousness* by Ivan Antic?" That book explores quantum theory in relationship to the consciousness of human, animal, and non-organic entities. Right, Hamish? *[Look of satisfaction.]*

HAMISH: Correct! Quantum physics meets Eastern thought. A further cosmic development of ideas broached in Fritjof Capra's groundbreaking *The Tao of Physics*. Physicists Brian Johnson and Fotini Pallikari-Viras even wrote a paper titled "Biological Utilization of Quantum Non-locality," which implies consciousness interacts with quantum processes. Dialogue between your trident-self and the cosmos. Information travels faster than light. Holographic consciousness has been proposed as a holistic model incorporating quantum theory which can explain the nature and origin of consciousness.

A number of documented phenomena indicate non-locality as a property of consciousness. Non-local consciousness is frequently cited in connection with experiences of "cosmic consciousness," where individuals in meditative, trance, or altered states of consciousness report experiencing knowledge or consciousness beyond what their own minds would seem to be able to access or store.

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CHIT: *[Laughing, can't contain himself.]* Wasn't that author's first book titled *Frito Pi*? Or maybe it was just his favorite New Mexican snack dish during his visit to Los Alamos.

HAMISH: In fact, Chit, I am having Frito pies de-livered for our lunch today from locally famous Jezebel Soda Fountain and Deli along with their fab ice cream for dessert.

CHAT: Jezebel's? No way! I love that place. Art gallery, souvenir shop, clothes, and outstanding eats and drinks.

CHIT: *[Excited.]* Hey, even their men's room is a trip. A ceremonial stack of sacred stones serves to hold the toilet paper. Last time I was there some literary wit had scribbled on the blue wall with a felt tip marker: W. H. AUDEN'S CHEEK IS UNDERRATED.

Natch, due to context, I thought of Auden's butt cheeks.

CHAT: Too much information, Chit.

HAMISH: But our Watchers can't get enough. They're *insatiable*. I have a loyal telly-literate audience member, Myxa, who besides watching my podcast, continually scans podcasts and news shows from Earth 26 hours a day. She wrote me: "If you ever lose your voice, you'll find it in my ear."

CHAT: Uh . . . how does she do that? It is a woman, right?

HAMISH: Yes. *[Winks.]* Myxa is on a planet that has a 26-hour day. *[Chit and Chat exchange baffled glances.]* Like many E.T.s, she's become obsessed with our media. But let's follow up on Chat's broaching the topic of quantum mechanics and consciousness *[shows a screen image]*. Given the very remarkable maneuvering capabilities of UFOs, it would appear that Newtonian physics alone can't explain it. Seemingly instantaneous motion, appearance and disappearance, faster-than-light speed, and so forth could be tied to quantum phenomena such as entanglement, superposition, and quantum tunneling. Notions of the holographic - fractalic universe, too.

Bohm's notion of the "implicate", or "enfolded", order where Newtonian physics is valid for the "unfolded" order, but which is actually "enfolded" in a deeper mode of reality capable of being explored by quantum theory. It all does seem convincing. As we now know, belief systems of the observer can determine what is observed *[displays another set of pertinent data]*. Yah, deep shit, but the theory opens doors once locked, provokes questions. Explains UFO maneuvers.

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Basics of Quantum Mechanics - Quantum Point of View -

- Quantum particles can act as both particles and waves □ WAVE-PARTICLE DUALITY
- Quantum state is a conglomeration of several possible outcomes of measurement of physical properties □ Quantum mechanics uses the language of PROBABILITY theory (random chance)
- An observer cannot observe a microscopic system without altering some of its properties. Neither one can predict how the state of the system will change.
- QUANTIZATION of energy is yet another property of "microscopic" particles.



Principles of Quantum Mechanics

- Heisenberg: You can measure an electron's exact position – or you can measure the wave's momentum or speed but you cannot measure both at the same time
- A quantum object cannot be said to manifest in ordinary space-time reality until we observe it as a particle (collapse of the wave)
- All energy is transmitted in wave packets or quanta
- Unobserved quantum phenomena are radically different from observed ones
- The observation (or measurement) makes the quantum wave function collapse
- At sufficient high levels of attention energy, particles emerge from waves
- The way we observe the quantum field decide what we see, thus your belief systems determine the reality you experience

CHIT: [Excited.] A Bohmer that's *not* a bumber! Hey, its implications does lead toward a poetic envisionment of the cosmos and our place in it. I started in my cradle investigating the mystery of my toes, and now dabbling with the cosmos' elemental forces.

One earlier extreme version of an attempt at such explanation is *The Urantia Book*, a tome attempting to give a complete interpretation of God, World History, Jesus, the Universe, and Ourselves. Such as describing "Orvonton" as the seventh superuniverse to which our own universe belongs. Lenny Bernstein quipped: "A work of art does not answer questions, it provokes them; and its essential meaning is the tension between contradictory answers." Ah! I hear drums: Bohm, Bohm, Bohm. In phonetic alphabet

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that's: Bravo - Oscar - Hotel - Mike. And my name is: Charlie - Hotel - India - Tango. As a teen, I was an avid shortwave listener.

HAMISH: You bet! Yes! Well put it! *[Surprised at Chit's insights, enjoying his interest in the phonetic alphabet and ham radio.]* There is difference between data observation and meaningful observation. In ufology, the balance tilts toward the latter. One has to step forward one pace to see, then step back two paces and muse. Hence, our discussion today.

CHIT: *[Excited.]* I *grok* that Hammy. Ya've read Žižek!

HAMISH: A term right out of Heinlein's popular early Sixties SF novel *A Stranger in a Strange Land*.

CHIT: *[Excited.]* Yep, and I later read his novel *Universe* during which I became fascinated with the character "Joe-Jim", a "Mutie" (a term for both mutant and mutineer) who has two heads, two personalities, and is extremely intelligent. The bizarre character reminded me of my own two selves. Later, as I began to sense a third presence, I used as my *nom de plume* the tag:

3Nomial Voices Whirlpool Destruction,

adding as a flourish a spiral line at the end. Now, given the new astronomy, that evocative figure looks like a quick sketch of a black hole and not my bathtub draining.

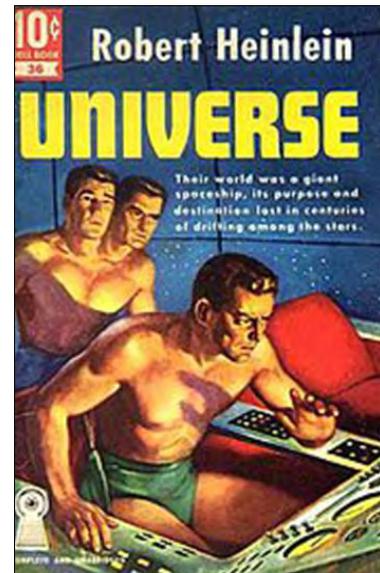
CHAT: Uh . . . hold up! This is supposed to be a three-way chat, right?

HAMISH: Uh, shit chat, sorry. I forgot to put out the warning sign *[extends his arms way outward, announces loudly]:*

CAUTION: GROKING ZONE.

[Quickly changing the subject.] As you both are actors and politically aware — if not WOKE in the extreme sense — I have interesting propositions to share with you both, for you and my Watchers to muse over later. One: An *actor* is a real person who is convincing. Two: A *real person* may not be convincing. Three: A *fictional character* isn't real, but may be convincing. WTF?! Now relate these observations to our current political situation. Viewers, you may post your thoughts on: #WTF.

CHAT: Huh? Was that what one would call "a salutary distraction?"



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CHIT: *[Eyes light up, hand shoots up.]* Hey! hey! I got another distraction. The Playwright and our Director want a following. So do I, but with a difference. I don't want the inconvenience of followers. I can't speak for Chat.

CHAT: *[A sudden glaciation of incomplete gestures.]* Nor can I speak for myself on that point. For some reason, I just now asked myself something about alien-human communication. During telepathic connection, does one's peculiar accent get transmitted? Like, say a Brit with a Cockney accent is taken and mind-speaks to an E.T. Does the alien "hear" that accent during the mind-link?

HAMISH: Uh, I would say not. Okay . . . Getting back on track *[hand gestures signify inclusion, coming together]* . . . How do you, Chat, *feel* about what you observed in the ship? If the observer influences the event observed . . .

CHAT: *[Fluidity returning to her body.]* The more closely defined an object is, the more aware one becomes to what has been left out of our description of it. So the more I try to define what I saw in the saucer, probe memories, the more it seems to demand further review, deeper and deeper review. The problem is *[pauses to sip the tea]*, while my therapist and the Playwright want me continue to deepen my memory of the event, get better descriptions, my Zen guy stresses the need for a return to the present and the possibilities in each moment if I am to recover completely and zap my PTSD. Says he knows an Indian guru to retired Hollywood stars living in Tesuque who might be convinced to touch my third-eye, giving me a hearty dose of *shaktipat*, the transmission of energy from him to *moi*.

HAMISH: *[Slowly clapping.]* Viewers, I think we can give a thumbs up, a one "Atta-Girl" to Chat for her chatful insights! *[Pause.]* Chit, I want to ask you about your sense of the functioning of the alien vessel and its occupants.



CHIT: *[Eager look on his face.]* Well . . . while in flight, it seemed the saucer was a carapace receptive to its active-occupants. A smart vehicle to the nth degree with both occupants and machine in symbiosis. Put simply, a fuzzy border between metal and flesh, and cosmically able to shift between "unfolded" and "enfolded" as asserted by "Bohm's Bomb" bursting conventional physics. Something similar happened during the synchronization of my mind and the aliens thoughts. I was IT and IT was me, especially when the erotic mapping of my body was occurring. To give your audience of sense of what it was

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like let me mention the movie *Communion*, based on a book [see vol. 2, page vi], a true story, by Whitley Strieber. In the film, actor Christopher Walken plays the abducted writer who undergoes hypnotherapy, releasing horrible memories. There are disturbing images of a naked Walken being anally probed, zapped on the noggin with a light probe, and a scene with a levitating anorexic alien in the midst of meandering abducted kids.



CHAT: [Painful look on her face.] That film was insane! In a category by itself, freakin' weird. But it did, when our therapists showed it to us, activate repressed memories of our childhood abductions. Disproves Beckett's Godot's dictum that nothing happens twice.



Scenes from *Communion* (dir. Philippe Mora, 1989)

HAMISH: I don't recall that session being recorded. I thought I viewed them all.

CHIT: Oh, the recorder had a malfunction. But we didn't mind as there were loads of tears and screaming. I must have yelled "Omit" as many times as my age. Chat vomited. Too fuckin' embarrassing. Both of us found it hard to watch as the staged scenes were uncomfortably close to our actual experiences. Two things the film got wrong: 1) the aliens were depicted as orange in color, the one's we saw were bluish-grey; 2) worse, they depicted some aliens as short and fat hooded simian-looking entities. We never saw that type. In one scene, I freaked seeing a spiral line diagram, like my Whirlpool Destruction logo, resting on a masked entity:



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HAMISH: It must be difficult to decide if what you experienced was a simulation, a virtual reality input to your brain, or “reality” itself. But David Chalmers, a philosopher at New York University and co-director of the Center for Mind, Brain, and Consciousness, in his book *Reality+*, suggests that virtual worlds can be as real as physical worlds and virtual lives can be meaningful, too. The universe may be very different from how it seems.



CHIT: Oh, so he has watched all *The Matrix* movies. And so for me it's the *red pill* to access the life-changing truth [*simulates taking the proverbial red pill*].

HAMISH: It's all quantum. All's up for grabs. Objects don't have definite locations and so can be in many places at once. Those freakin' aliens might be on their home planet *and* anal-probing you miles above Santa Fe at the same time! They might even perform their business while residing on a rogue star, wandering hither-thither about the cosmos. Scientists have actually observed about 100 of these “free-floating stars”.



Artist's rendition of a rogue star.

A physicist I met when he got married some years ago at Ghost Ranch, Georgia O'Keeffe's former home, Chris Fuchs, has touted an extreme version of quantum theory plus Bayesian statistics, “QBism”, which claims properties are not objective facts, but beliefs conceived to account for one's experience. Observer and observed co-construct each other. We are both actors and spectators of existence. A few of my Watchers are Los Alamosers.



Chris Fuchs: “An electron is nothing more than our information about it.”

Fuchs denies we can distinguish, as David Bohm did, between “unfolded” and “enfolded” levels, as suggested John Wheeler's earlier conception of “quantum foam” — the primordial “chaos” underlying what we know as space-time from which order arises. This “foam” exists below the Planck length [10^{-35} meters] or between intervals shorter than the amount of time it would take for light to traverse that distance [10^{-43} seconds].

For Fuchs, so friggin' diaphanous is the character of reality that the everyday and quantum worlds and our belief systems are one and the same. Things are viewed as merely bundles of *expectations* based on perspectives. Flow time, then, is nothing but a

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name given to a particular perspective on an arrangement of things. Mind and cosmos are ONE. A friggin' holographic universe.

CHIT: Smarty Pants! *[Gets up and kneels.]* You're Bohring me! *[Laughs at his bad pun about Niels Bohr].* Hedging into pure idealism. Not where I want to be. *[Increasingly high on the grass.]* What are you anyway? An amateur physicist?

CHAT: *[Annoyed.]* Whiskey - Tango - Foxtrot Chit! *[She's feeling high, too.]* Fuck, Hamish. Fuchs takes me back to William James's *pluriverse* where dreams and ambitions are as real and substantial as anything else. And who am I to say otherwise, huh? I mean after *our* experiences. *[Pause.]* So maybe the cosmos *is* a God-induced simulation akin to the "knowledge" accrued in *The Urantia Book*. We may be simulations, too. Might be why our Playwright and Director are always urging us to act more and more like postmodern Beckett clowns regenerated by a ChatGPT AI program.

HAMISH: And that's why I had you both sign that form about robots. But to answer Chit, I almost got a Ph.D. in physics at UNM — why I was an Fuchs's wedding — but I was busted for plagiarism by my grad committee, like the President of Harvard just was. And so, a new career was needed where I could cop material with impunity and wear a T-shirt saying LIFE IS CRAP featuring a cartoon bird pooping on an academic in mortar board and robes. Media seemed a good choice, fuckin' with the master narratives of our shit society.

Continuing my elucidation of Bohm's Bomb, he claims *wholeness* is what is real and that *fragmentation* is the response of this whole to humanity's actions guided by illusory perception, which is shaped by fragmentary thought, which needs be brought to the end. So maybe those E.T.s are trying to teach us to do just that. *[While expatiating on Bohm, he nervously twists his metallic mesh watch band on his left wrist until its latch opens and his watch falls in his lap.]* Oops! Damn.

CHIT: Smart watch there. Smart to watch it more carefully, amigo.



A Beckett clown contemplates the incontinence of the Void.



An alien teacher.

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HAMISH: High class, solid gold, hallmark nineteen carats, marvel of accuracy, shows year, month, date, day, hour, minute, seconds, super chic, huh? Unbreakable hair spring, chrono escapement, nineteen rubies, anti-shock, anti-magnetic, waterproof, airtight, self-winding, Swiss parts. A decade ago I did a podcast with director Ridley Scott when his film *The Martian* came out. He gifted me with this gem. Must have a super-accurate, reliable watch to do this job, you know. See here [*points to a feature on the watch*] just press his little button and gives the proper time on Mars.

CHAT: Linear time is the oldest ideological construct. Seems contra the new theories of temporality touted since Einstein and Bohr.

HAMISH: And Italian physicist Carlo Rovelli. But we're stuck here in my Existential Risk Lab and must adhere to boring linear time conventions. Speaking of time, it's time to play a short excerpt of a recording your nurse made on her iPhone after you two arrived at Emergency Ward. You've probably not heard it, probably weren't aware you were being . . . It is you, Chit, speaking, albeit Chat can just be heard in the background, only a few of her sentences intelligible. When I turn this recording on, it will function akin to the disembodied sound of Hal's computer voice in Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Such an audio device film theorist Michel Chion calls an *accousmètre*, a voice, like your recorded voices on the nurse's iPhone, that resides neither in nor outside the image of our transmission. Permission to play it? [*Chit and Chat exchange fearful glances.*] Our Watchers would love it! You know, all speech is a form of advertisement and all observation a form of confession. Remember: Monetize! [*Chit nods "Yes."*] Great! I'll call it "Chit's First Tape."



CHIT: Ah, smart to do so, but it may be crap. [*He thumbs his larynx.*]

CHAT: What! Listen to Chit's potty-mouth act? [*Laughs.*] Just kidding. Go ahead.

HAMISH: [*Starts the sound recording.*] Notice Chit's voice mixes with Chat's barely audible remarks, a guttural roulade, if I may hyperbolize:

Strange darkness best and darker the worst, the blazin' light . . . night too bright . . . *Weightless, edgeless, not ending [spoken low, murky, hopeless].* . . . well for a time . . . the thing is there, bony skinny ghost . . . It lifts its head . . . Big eyes. Couldn't do much. I lay down. They say it's in the

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head . . . you'll see it . . . **Get off me!** . . . wiped out [*deep sigh*] . . . light a shade less, a shade gone . . . I doubt it . . . down the tunnels! **Omit!** **Omit!** I doubt it . . . not really! Knees first! Then I close . . . **Too close . . . the entities, the entities.** I am doing my best to comply . . . not really. No giving of words. [*Loud hiccup.*] No sense in this . . . Oh, I know none the less, less . . . I assume. Velia! Oh Velia's eyes open slowly like two dark oars emerging from a mist. She is tuned to all my channels all at once Best to come. **Green-tinged effluence. The beast's to come!** . . . My nerve endings are exposed, an exposé. Her sight has a sense of touch to it. **Lines that can't be repeated here, threads we can't untangle. Thought on nothing. No one will hear us!** Alright now, eh? Gives me an image of me in a garbage heap, standing amid the detritus of our doomed present, gulping, then me being buried in Croaker's Acres. Where is this coming from? In my penny ante hell of a mind, damnbetcha! Behind the eyes, Eyesland! Quicker and quicker . . . the mind-words, my brain flickering away like mad, begging it all to STOP! **Give her up! Get away!** What she was trying to . . . **SHE!** All over [*hiccup*].

[*Stops the recording.*] Just before this recording ends, threads of Chat's tantrum threading barely audible in the background are suddenly foregrounded, becoming louder, dominant, so we can clearly discern her comments [*he resumes the recording*] :

Vermin in my lingerie! Face in my breasts! Imagine tttttthe hands! I can't! The mind won't have it, what with all the wet, jingly, incomprehensible tiny components jittering about constantly. Wwrong address. Wrong address! Wwrong time. Wrong place. Been a mistake in the mail. Send me back!. Return me! The up-voting and down-voting of decision-making happening so fast I can't think. Then there is that glaring at me without ceasing! [*Screams.*] Hellish half-light. Am I, I, I not a bit unhinged? The buzzing! All that together . . . imagine! Whole body



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like gone. Please God NOT! Get grip, Chat! Pull yourself together, ffffffffocus your thoughts. Maybe I'm in Bardo — between two lives prior to reincarnation. Yet . . . Oh, oh, oh, oh! I don't dig abduction, man . . . Man, abduction I don't dig. Pain between the ears . . .

[Male voice — an angry doctor? — followed by a scuffle, the sound of bangs, crunches, whimpers, and a screech, then the recording ends.] It seems the ICU doc came in and silenced the nurse's iPhone. Are you are okay with the ICU nurse broaching your privacy, recording your trauma at an early point in your arrival at the ICU?

CHIT: Ah, yah. I guess. Valuable data there, so our Playwright will be ecstatic. I was pretty much out it until the following day, so interesting to hear myself rant. I did have blurry recollections of the room and maybe someone handing me a glass of water with straws. And Chat, you sound equally semi-bonkers. I don't think either of us held food down until the next day. Curiously, I do recall the following day a male nurse bending over me, his blue name tag read in white Helvetica: **MANPREET**. You can bet he's another worker who experiences algorithmic wage discrimination. *[Raises arm in a power salute.]*

CHAT: *[Raises both arms from her sides, letting them fall back in a gesture of helpless compassion. Action is executed three times, each time with less elevation.]* You got that right. Later, I remember embarrassment 'cause my makeup was a mess and here I was in a glass room boasting in big letters: **ICU**. Not a good place to be if you fancy yourself *an agent*, a casual force in the world, sucking order out of chaos.

CHIT: Inside that saucer wasn't a good place for one's agency either. And *agency* in our depleted Poopinverse, well, it seems one isn't really living, just Zombie-existing. The living dead. Our deep materiality. Why teens are shooting up their schools and wasting their lives on social media, people like Sherri Papini faking their abduction. We await the shit to hit the Big Fan when the fans of Trump trumpet their ill-won victory.

HAMISH: *[Hand on chin. Changing the subject.]* Guys, what was the last thing you did before your discharge from the hospital, besides visit the restroom.

CHAT: *[Hand shoots up like an eager school child's.]* Ordered Matzo brie with a side of broth-filled pleated pork dumplings breakfast from a freaked out orderly dressed in hospital green, who left shaking his head. He later came back with scrambled eggs, white

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toast, and a sausage. Proves my feminine identity is closer to LGBT+ than most men.

CHIT: Whoa! Matzo and *pork!* I thought . . .

CHAT: [*Raises both arms high.*] Hey, don't go there! We *weren't* Orthodox, okay? Jewish chow and Chinese are *quantity entangled* [*laughs at her pun*]. In our family we called this delightful combo "Chow Main" and preferred it for Sunday breakfast. Ezra, our three-legged Dachshund — a rescue dog — loved to lick our plates on which we'd each leave a fair amount of scraps.

I remember the pound from which we adopted him was staffed by five very obese animal-lovers. One, named Olof, swore to high heaven Ezra's injury was sustained during a failed abduction attempt — by aliens! My father thought this pure bullshit: "Olof, you're trying to palm this dog off on us!" Dad was against getting him: "Damaged goods," he said. Yah, the creature was shriveled, thin as an unborn spark. But something inside *moi* drew me to him — probably due to a glimmer of my own childhood abduction leaking through — and I finally convinced Dad by saying it was like freeing a death camp prisoner. He couldn't say no after that. I told the caged dog: "We have come to let you out." He immediately took a shit and wagged his tail.

CHIT: Ahhh, Ezra at the pound! [*Winks.*]

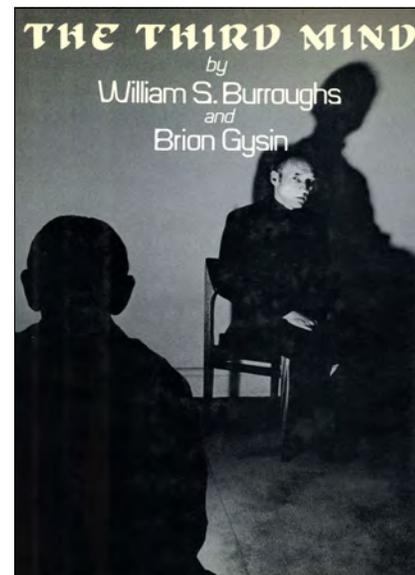
CHAT: Later, I met Chit and discovered his "thing" for the number three and kinda bonded over that as it reminded me of Erza's crazy three-legged antics. Our long association has proven Beat poets William Burroughs and Brion Gysin's belief, as set out in their book *Third Mind*, that when two people come together in the truest sense, a third entity is produced beyond their respective egos.



Matzo brie.



Dogs get abducted as well.



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CHIT: Indeed! Entangled-Threads-R-Us. Our Playwright believes the same and adores their cut-up method of sentence construction. But back on topic. Now, Hamish, each of us has had at least *three* abduction experiences One for every leg to that fabled pooch.

HAMISH: [*Hands on cheeks.*] Hell, those Beats! I was five. My dad wanted to stimulate my science career and insisted we attend the legendary 1978 Nova Convention in New York, organized by poet and Tibetan Buddhist John Giorno. Conceptual artist Les Levine moderated a panel: poets William Burroughs and Brion Gysin, futurologist Robert Anton Wilson, and psychedelic guru Timothy Leary. They discussed re-imagining science fiction and speculated on what beings looking out at the stars from other worlds, thought of ours.



CHIT: I think Brion replied to that by saying all the aliens would see is “Blue” [*see image at right*]. That is primarily the color we both saw in the saucer. . . . Oh, hey, if my memory serves correctly, Keith Richards was supposed to show up at the Convention, but didn’t and **Shit hit the fan!** It was the precursor to The Philoctetes Center for the Multidisciplinary Study of Imagination [2003-2011] which also brought together scientists and humanists.



HAMISH: Ah, there were all sorts of shit going on from readings, panel discussions, film screenings, to various sorts of performance. Typical late-Seventies stuff.

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CHAT: *[Interrupting.]* Chit, didn't you mean *fans*?

HAMISH: *[Smiling hugely.]* It was a bit of cluster fuck in that regard. Today, the audience would've torn the place down and taken potshots at the panelists. Tossed a pipe bomb.

CHIT: If the Convention had been held in the 1990s, the topic of abductions would certainly have come up and the prevailing drug in use would not be LSD but cocaine.

HAMISH: Can't recall if that topic was broached then. It's so long ago. Yah, yah, that's linear time ideology, but we are in the Existential Risk Lab now, so . . . But back on topic. Chit, what would have liked to have said to your abductors after they finished their intrusive "business" with you?

CHIT: Just a minute before they descended and released us back to terra firma — I was afraid they might release us *sans* our duds — I wanted to shout out: PACKAGE WELL AND INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION!

CHAT: Hey! What about *moi*? Well, I didn't say anything. But I thought: *I'm Alive!* My mind wanted to page through thesauruses and be ferociously far-out. But I my mind froze and I was already far-outside the atmosphere. I thought: *I can have a past and eat it too. I'm just going to be that lady with the dressing gown again.* And if the feminists in your audience today, Hamish, take offense at that, well, let them be probed and jabbed by aliens! Let *them* get a bizarre Lu Lu's Chinese fortune that reads:

The Agency has a vested interest in stopping you from experiencing heavenly time travel alongside your emotional support peacock. So keep your mouth shut! And his pee-cock turned off. He likes to leak information.

CHIT: You never told *me* about that! Never mentioned a peacock either. Unless, unless, unless . . . I am the "pee-cock" referred to.

CHAT: What! And feed your paranoia about Men in Black running around intimidating and shutting up "experiencers", maybe trying to run them off the road?

CHIT: Yah, yah. . . . Didn't you notice the black sedan following us here today?

CHAT: Hamish, explosions of flashbacks bust through our ordinary moments! My *cabeza* gets full of streaks. Other-worldly movements. Crystalline images where time is not

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determined by duration. As if I was topless and stoned in a stare-well, a glass cage. Fear of being marooned on the Red Planet with Rowan and Martian. *[Suddenly moving her head to the side as if dodging a rotten tomato tossed her way.]* Wow! That was close.

Oops, sorry. It was just that damn large floater in my right eye making its terrible orbit, startling me again. Sorry.



Artist's rendition of Chat's huge eye floater.

CHIT: Chat, I get it. I have floaters — globs inside one's eye-glob — but mine are small compared to that Jupiter-sized unheavenly body spinning in yours. *[Pauses, then redirects his comments toward Hamish.]*

I know that our tale of abduction seems scattershot, a kind of collage of reported events, emotional responses, and many buckets full of the Unsaid. But, Hamish, sometimes collage is what one wants to say, but in a better order, ya grok? Uh, I copped that bit of literary wisdom from our Playwright after he'd downed three salted Silver Coins at Coyote Cafe's main bar. *[Sits higher in his seat, backs of his hands on his hips, wanting to suggest the profundity of his statement, using a stronger voice.]*

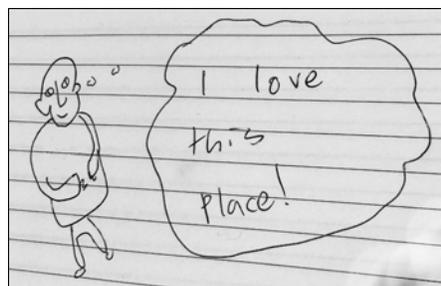


Silver Coin cocktail.

[Sits higher in his seat, backs of his hands on his hips, wanting to suggest the profundity of his statement, using a stronger voice.] TODAY, WE'VE EXTEMPORIZED, DROPPED THE COMMON POLISH. Hope the audience doesn't mind.

HAMISH: Who now speaks Polish these days? Oh, take my word, our Watchers eat up this kind of stuff like my dog scarfs his homemade fresh chicken and broccoli combo. They know that if you tell them how you classify, they'll understand who you are.

CHIT: Yes, we've lost in the midst of our chit-chat here something of continuity, linear chronology, causality, and non-contradiction, but it does give your viewers a sense of the disintegrated state we were left in after our return from the nether regions. Of how struggle to construct a narrative describing our seemingly unbelievable experiences. I even took my therapist's advice and did a series of ink sketches trying to convince myself I loved the abduction experience. Hamish, show that jpeg *[Hamish puts the following image onscreen.]*



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CHAT: And how did *that* work for you, Chit? . . . It didn't. Hamish, we feel like characters in a novel trying to package trauma into a commodity arriving by next-day delivery. We are asked to answer questions like: "Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you? What did you learn from the experience?"



All That Melts into Air is Solid (artist's rendition of light beams in the saucer playing over Chit's naked body).

After childhood abductions — interacting with what I thought were nocturnal phantoms — I recall I was still a calm kid, but one who began to sleep restlessly. Still do. Chit and I now are like scared kids who've suffered enchanted places, bewitched objects, signs, omens, and images of tormented souls envisioned in books whose illustrations and descriptions came alive and entered our lives with a burst of bright light. Ah, AH-HA VORTEX moment lived as an OH-NO experience. But we must, as per Beckett, get up, dust off, reload, recalibrate, re-engage.

The "reality" on the saucer — a crossroads of gaps and misunderstandings — was The Way Beyond Say to which we tried to say: "All Strange, Away!" Hole in our lives hard to describe in dominant language constructs and outside our received meanings. An original void. Uh, uh [*her muscles involuntarily spasm*]. Ack! Sorry [*pauses*]. Riff with infinite number of details, gaps to be accounted for. Chit and I are left with an impossible job, speaking "truth" which too often, serves bureaucracy, media hype, and oppression.

CHIT: [*Arch glance.*] What Chat means is: Take what we say, our POV, with a grain of salt, as found on the rim of a Silver Coin cocktail. [*Notices Hamish's overly large wrists.*]

HAMISH: I'm not an intellectual guru. Just smart enough to know how ridiculous I may sound. But like my Watchers, I am a companion on the path of discovery and research. I don't take hard sides pro or con over the experiences of my guests. But am drawn to the uncanny boundary between fantasy and reality. This place *is* The Existential Research Lab. And I'm lovin' sharin' your entangled paths of experiences illuminated by three kinds of light: material, intellectual, and spiritual. Those cosmic allurements dangled by these Messenger Hosts of Space were to encourage you and all humanity to seek the supernal goals of non-material value in harmony with the pull of Paradise gravity, or that's what *The Urantia Book* claims [*face lighting up*]. A book that thick has to contain *some* useful truths. Moreover, this podcast offers an always-already-given locus of resistance opposed to Whiskey - Sierra - Charlie - Papa, that is the phonetic alphabet tag for White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy. So called "Papas" like Trump and J. D. Vance.

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CHAT: An academic *would* say that! Would weigh in on value in pounds and thickness. Which reminds me. One academic critic would often praise such and such a detail in our Playwright's plays when, in fact, they didn't exist. How's that for a false encomium, huh? But concerning what I just said about our expressing our experiences on the ship, that was a erudite way of saying our wetware and its computations were majorly screwed with! *[Makes a repeated twisting hand gesture as if wielding a screwdriver.]*

CHIT: Cccalm down, Chat. Don't you see that massive, heavy tome is saying that our personalities — the pattern aspect of our living selves — are not just a concomitant of time-and-space events, but that our human personality, ever creative and entangled, can act as a cosmic cause of such. It suggests we have *agency* in what science oft sees as a wholly determinate universe. *[Smiles, proud of his erudition. Likes to think he's unique.]*

HAMISH: *[Leaning toward his interlocutors.]* And Bohm's theory of the Implicate Order, the universe envisioned as an undivided and unbroken whole, would give some credence to that proposition. What we perceive as empty space is actually the plenum, the ground for all existence, including ourselves in which things are always enfolding and unfolding.

CHAT: *[Sits, silently clapping.]* So we are what could be called Midway Creatures in the cosmic plan, seeking to rise higher and become spiritual graduates?

HAMISH: Other abductees've sensed that goal as being involved in their interactions with the aliens, whom they found both repellent and attractive. One "experiencer" said a Nordic E.T. "downloaded" to her this fact: *One hour's instruction on our highest spiritually evolved planet is equivalent to ten thousand years of your Terrean word-memory methods.*

CHIT: Whoa! I'm flashing on the Knowledge-Booster machine left by the long extinct alien race, the Krell, in the popular mid-fifties sci-fi — er — SF film *The Forbidden Planet*, which was the first to have a completely electronic soundtrack. Loved Robby the Robot.

CHAT: Ah, yes, monsters from the Id! Morbius (Walter Pidgeon) trying to protect his sexy daughter (Anne Francis) from a lusty visiting spacer (Leslie Nielsen). *[Hands and arms high over*



The Krell Knowledge-Booster machine in operation.

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her head like a football referee signaling a successful touchdown.] This inordinate desire for knowledge and power led to the creation of the Monster of the Id, which turns on Morbius himself, killing him.

CHIT: *[Clapping.]* Scrambled. Morbius's brain was evolving, then quickly devolving. **Sizzle-sizzle!**

CHAT: *[Making slurping sounds.]* Served up with green chile sauce from Los Potrillos on Cerrillos?

HAMISH: The Beyond Say of sauces, yes! Freakin' best breakfast in Santa Fe. The Latino waiter there freaked when the Director poured coffee from his personal alien mug on to a saucer and slurped it up.

CHAT: The saucer experience, I mean the spaceship, was like that! Yes! Can't adequately describe it. It must be experienced. We swallowed it hook line and sinker, so hard to regurgitate it intact. I can generally describe it in well-worn literary terms: an Old Flaubertian mirage of escape to the Orient, where time has suddenly stopped. *[Laughs.]*



The Director's Alien Mug.

CHIT: But a Beckett clown would offer the best advice: *Let's not do anything, it's safer!* *[Peers closely at his right hand.]* On the topic of experiencing . . . Chat here loves standing before vast landscapes and rows of books, what she finds here in abundance in New Mexico. I, in contrast, love “nooks” and fragments, isolated, unobtrusive, even marginal elements. Like a stack of stones along a trail; smooth rocks on which people have painted weird things; and graffiti and other weird intrusions into the everyday. Like, I took this iPhone snap of the graffiti-violated wall of your radio station *[AirDrops it to Hamish's iPhone, who then displays it onscreen for his Watchers]* by, well, a dude who may not be a fan of yours.



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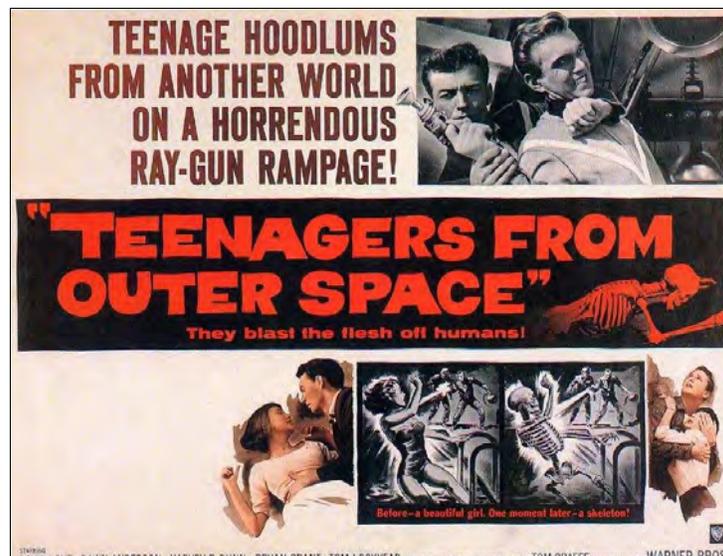
HAMISH: Hey, I wanted to use that funny image as advertising for my show, but the boss nixed it despite our Watchers' thumbs-up. Sometimes, that is most of the time, Big Boss just doesn't get it. Get it? *[In a lower voice.]* Oh, Boss, I didn't mean it.

CHIT: Got it! Begin at quarter after the hour, freely playing for fifteen minutes, then . . . Omit! A dude with two minds like me — I remember loving Frida Kahlo's *Two Fridas* painting of her two selves — and now add a third, Genou — begroks subtleties and patterns neurotypicals overlook. Love those large protein, hybrid molecules at work in my *cabeza*. I am learnin' to train 'em to associate more complexly by messin' around with a cheesy Parcheesi board game I got at an antique store on Cerrillos. Like the one Chat and the alien played on board the ship. Overall, kinda like *reverse dementia*, dude with a dash 'o dyslexia. Oh, daddyo, may I recite my poem "Never Been in Better Headspace"?

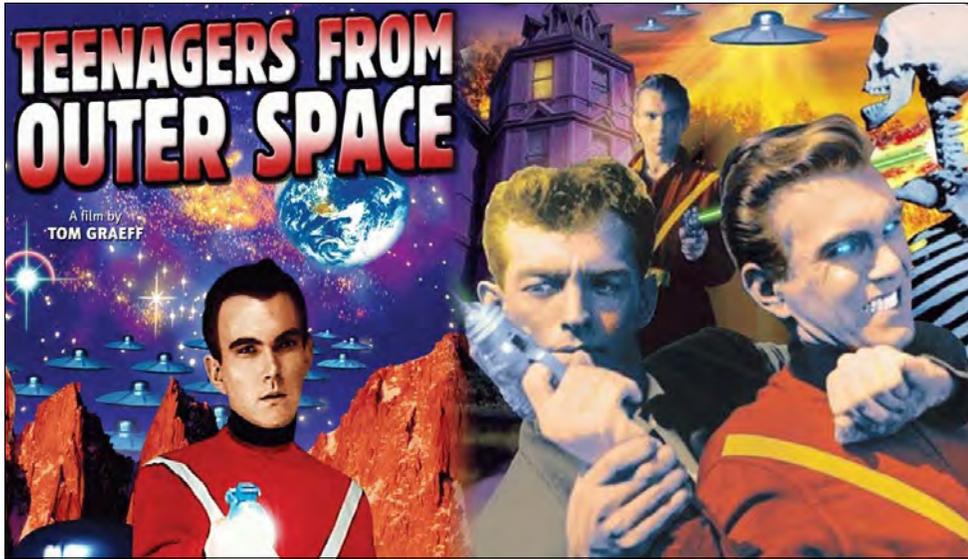
*"I (Je) play (jeu): If Chit be twins, his Gemini-Self exists on two shelves.
/ But if Chit also do be adding Genou . . . / Oh buddy! Three's a crowd, that
we know. / If so, he's obscenely overpaid all this life for ill-fitting alien
genes, growing by all means into an alienated adulterated saucer-head.*

CHAT: Yah, was weird. Chit's way of proving he's nuts — one-third alien. And if so, we have the Galactic Federation to blame for this. If I track them down, I'll have my transgendered Navajo lawyer, "Quick-Two-Sue", sue for kidnaping, gross invasion of Self.

HAMISH: *[Laughs, changes subject.]* Your Director and I share a fascination with a 1959 SF cult classic film, *Teenagers from Outer Space* *[three pertinent jpegs appear onscreen]*.



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We both were drawn to it as the film brings together popular topics at the time: teenage delinquency and space invaders. But here the invaders are not ugly creatures — although they bring a lobster-like creatures, Gorgons, to breed and kill Earthlings — but are ray-gun crazy emotionless humanoids, like the “pod people” running rampant in the 1956 film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, or the Cruella-like female alien in the 1951 British film *Devil Girl from Mars*. None are like that cool alien, Klaatu and his stout sidekick Gort.



Opening title sequence from the movie.

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The Gorgon looks a bit like the spinal parasite, “The Tingler”, in a film by the same name released a month later [*Screens a film still from the movie.*] It’s one of my fav horror flicks.



The Tingler manifests on a person’s spine during extreme fear when that person cannot scream to release their fear; here it has been extracted in Vincent Price’s laboratory. *The Tingler* (dir., William Castle, 1959).

Mainly in black and white, but during some scary scenes, the screen changes to color, a neat visual gimmick that director William Castle called “Percepto” Now these cult films appear often on TV on *Svengoolie* and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. Many of my Watchers also watch those cult shows.

CHAT: Why am I not surprised [*her eyes go upward*].

CHIT: Chat doesn’t get it. Doesn’t grok what’s so cool about these films, Hamish.

CHAT: Okay. But that 2022 godawful film the Director had us watch, what was its title?

CHIT: *Immanence*. Yah, it got only a Tomatometer rating of 26 percent by viewers on Rotten Tomatoes. The Director wanted us to see just how bad SF films are getting these days. Bolster our confidence that our production was going to be much better.

HAMISH: Oh, that piece of **crap!** One irate reviewer of that reeler argued that it was no more a religious film than a SF flick. A muddle, a mess. I, personally, couldn’t tell if the director — if there was someone directing! — was seriously deluded or simply decided to prank the audience and see if he could get away with it. Horrible shit! Yuck-yuck.



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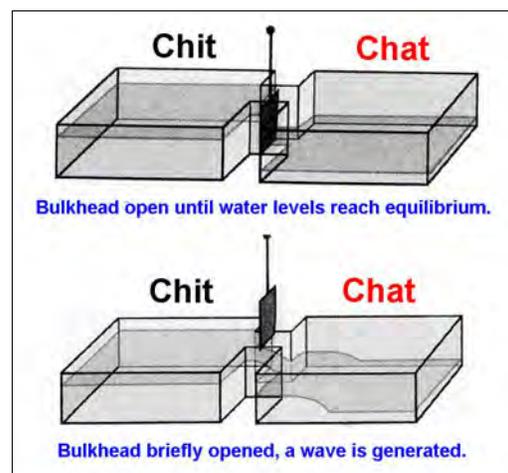
CHIT: After torturing us with that shit film, during which he sat commandingly in his crocodile-skin pants, leisurely sketching interlocking mandalas, at times tearing pages out of Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and its Double*, the Director rambled on about how everything he'd done was to see what would happen if he did this rather than that. Said we must install ourselves on a set that is a vague, bluish noplacé, somewhere between a soundstage and the dim setting wherein lies the body of Manet's *Dead Toreador*, where we'd evolve new relations between sound, light, gesture, and voice. Said such a set bespeaks less about *origins* than about: "Where should one go? To what



Elsewhere? Galactic! Just add some blue light to that grey," and that it would "make the perfect staging for our abduction production." Advised us we could learn *mucho* by contemplating artist Gabriel Orozco's *Horses Running Endlessly* [1995], which at first appears to be a normal chessboard, but is in fact *alien*, custom-made with four tones instead of two, twice as many squares, and only knights as players. "A metaphor for wandering," he said. He told us he wanted to steer clear of clichés in his production, or use them so blatantly they'd critique the cliché, subverting our "Kingdom of the Lukewarm," as he put it. As to simply presenting "truth" on stage, he countered with a Nietzsche quote: "There are no facts, only interpretations," as an appropriate epistemology for engaging the topic of alien abduction. He wanted the audience to accept the incomprehensible, the unreadable, in the form of a keen, immediate perception. Finally telling us our Playwright would make use the aforementioned setting for his myriad aesthetic borrowing, citations, and proximities to create us as "semionauts" valiantly exploring space-language-time.

As he sketched a Venn diagram of our "endless negotiation," a smile playing like snake on his lips, he said he paired us as interlocutors because I often describe whatever enters my *cabeza* as "Interesting," and while Chat wonders "What's the point?" Poured us each a small glass of lemoncello, expatiating on what he wants to achieve in our performance.

Always resourceful, he'd prepared elaborate graphics showing us a clever physics experiment using two tanks, one filled with water, the other empty, both connected by a bulkhead that can be opened and closed so flow from one to the other occurs. [Uses his iPhone to send a jpeg to Hamish, who shows the diagram onscreen.] One tank was labeled

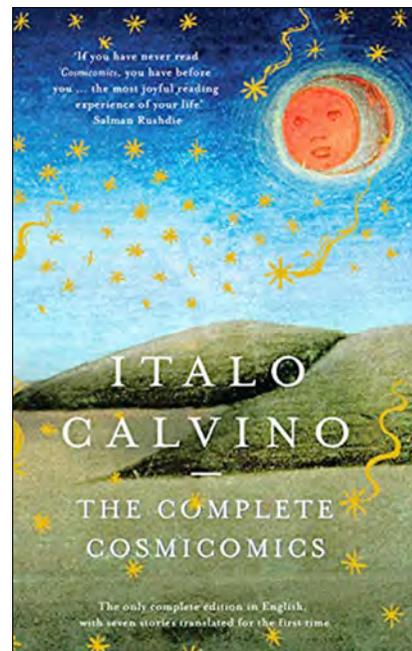


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“Chit”, the other “Chat”. Using this model, he described two modes of dialogue: one: where speech flows smoothly from one interlocutor to the other, their verbal engagement eventually reaching an equilibrium between them; two: the flood gate is opened briefly, closed, opened again, closed so that bursts of chit-chat chatter create waves, a verbal-tsunami, washing over the other interlocutor. This dialogue, of course, is reversible in direction. One dialogically-obsessed dude, our Director. By the way, saw him, a few years back wearing a worn dark brown leather jacket on which, echoing Punk rebellion, a Nazi *and* a Communist button were pinned side-by-side. He was discussing “the ebb tide of the New Wave” and some shit about “the discipline of the face” with a guy wearing a serape.

HAMISH: I like the tank illustration! And my Watchers gotta be diggin’ it, too. They eat up these kind of data morsels. So hungry for information are they. Moreover, as our cosmos at this moment in galactic time is certainly the result of its major disequilibrium in the far, far, far, far, far, far past, this tank model can be applied to assist in understanding how our universe originated. Material I love to toss up for my fans.

And here, Dear Watchers [*pausing, reaching for a paperback book, holding it up to the camera*], it is appropriate to put in a plug for a little fat volume that has graced my Existential Risk Lab for years. It’s Italian author Italo Calvino’s dazzling story collection, *The Complete Cosmicomics*. A marvelous comic take on, and stunning description of, the cosmos and its fiery origins as lived by an astonishing cast of ancient characters with unpronounceable names like “Kgwgk” and “Pfwfp”. Vivid, imaginative stories about earth, the moon, stars, galaxies, evolution and time.



CHAT: [*Excited, eager to get a word in.*] Yah, yah! The Playwright is always carrying around a well-thumbed copy of same. At times citing startling passages for our benefit.

CHIT: He told me it’s as if Dante, now a cosmic time-traveler-writer, had taken the creation and evolution of the cosmos as his new challenge after exhaustively exploring Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.



CHAT: But If Dante were to revisit Hell today, he’d find a new section had been added labeled MAGA Supporters.

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CHIT: Uh, yah, their Red Hats spuing red hot flames on their tortured, scorched heads.



HAMISH: Now, now, play nice with your bat.

CHAT: Speaking of hats and bats. Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a majority Black town, voted to remove the controversial Confederate monument erected next to the Forrest County Courthouse. But in 2020, in a county-wide vote, 51 percent to 49 percent batted to *not* tear down said monument. Interestingly, the town and county didn't even exist prior to the Civil War.

HAMISH: Oooooo, that pitch just zoomed past me! *[Pause.]* I was just thinking . . . people too often put up a protective border fence between “reality” and “fantasy”, meaning that abduction experiences can be written off as delusions compared to everyday life. But we are already living in a fragmentary space that blends the virtual and the real, in which time represents another dimension of space.

CHIT: So experiences with E.T.s are not far from our usual daily hyperreal experiences in the West's “Society of the Spectacle” *[as detailed by French theorists Jean Baudrillard and Guy Debord]*. We were suddenly snatched into a hyper-hyperreal environment: transformation, transcoding, passage, displacement. Put simply, we found ourselves in a strange forest of signs we had to quickly decode as best as we could. Very traumatic.

CHAT: Like Alice had to do when she went down the rabbit hole. And it is this similarity to *Alice in Wonderland* — dance group Momix's new show, *Alice*, has been wowing audiences — that our Director and Playwright hope to mine for commercial success, first as a play, then a filmed-play, maybe even an exhibited tableaux. If we get our shit together, Chit, that is *[given with a warning look]*.



CHIT: Which will echo George Méliès' early staged films, film-stage hybrids. That pioneering French filmmaker is very hot these days thanks to Scorsese's 2011 film *Hugo*. Our production company and its investors are hoping for swirls of cash to descend from above after success at the Santa Fe Playhouse and Jean Cocteau Cinema.

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▲ PODCAST 3.

HAMISH: Well, space buckaroos, this podcast should be a step in the direction of that Swirl we ended the last podcast with. Watchers today know you as well as their closest bud. Your Director has put you into the orbit by exploiting your abduction. Yeah, some of his earlier work was described by hostile critics as: "Flags without a cause." But now he has solid material fact to knead, along with less solid, unstable material, like your mental states. Speaking of unstable, Element 115, known as Moscovium (Mc) or Ununpentium is short-lived, very radioactive, synthetic chemical element first synthesized in 2003 by a joint team of Russian and American scientists at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Russia. Many speculate it's the energy source for alien craft used to generate anti-grav quantum flight characteristics observed in UFO sightings *[displays an image onscreen]*. Might be why strong radiation has been recorded at UFO landing sights.



For our SF *X-files* fans *[nods at his Watchers]*, in the 2016 episode, "My Struggle", a triangular, levitating stealth aircraft, reverse-engineered from alien technology, is featured. When Special FBI agent Fox Mulder asks a scientist how an aircraft could turn invisible, the scientist states: "Element 115: Ununpentium," apparently obtained from the alien spacecraft crash site at Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. Some believe Sandia National Laboratory, situated on Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, has top-secret underground facilities where this reverse-engineering takes place. *[Pauses.]* Chit - Chat *[gestures with open hands toward the duo]*, you pair are that mysterious synthetic element in the Director's and Playwright's hands, Ununpunks, akin to Beckett clowns. Let's hope the crew can power the production properly with your unflagging presence *[emphasizing each plosive "p" as if blowing out a candle]* and your Playwright can answer the question you must have had when entering the alien craft: "Why are we here, that is the question?"



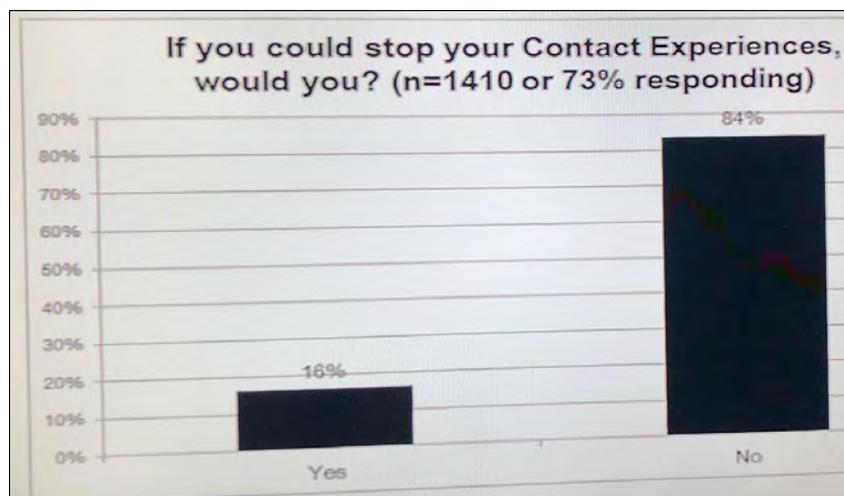
Fox Mulder, *The X-files*.

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CHAT: Thanks! For hope deferred maketh the something sick — who said that?

CHIT: *[Looking directly at Chat, annoyed.]* You did! Don't you listen?

HAMISH: From your post-hypnotherapy perspective — finding out you both have had multiple abductions and that the E.T.s may be more benevolent than once supposed — would you wish to cease all contact of the fourth kind? Before you answer, let me screen these stats *[puts onscreen this slide]*, which overwhelmingly show 84 percent of all abductees opting to continue their alien contacts.



CHAT: *[Dour expression.]* Sorry, I'm not so enthusiastic about it. Still pissed about my first abduction.

CHIT: *[A Happy Valentine smile on his face.]* Count me among the 84 percent. A chance to see Velia again . . .

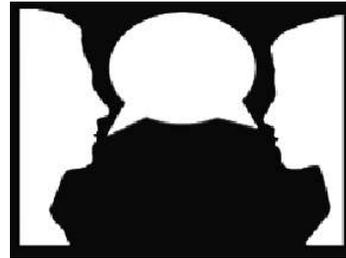
CHAT: Oh yah, *that* Medusa! And after that embarrassing scene with you duds off? Oh, correction! Now I see, it is precisely because of all that . . .

CHIT: You just won't admit to liking Mengus, Mr. Tall, nor will you cop to trying every day to get me to play that damned game Parcheesi with you.

CHAT: Now who's being cheesy, huh? Okay, I'm like that. Either I forget right away or I never forget. I forgot. Yes, we have to talk about it. Chit 'n Chit as we lazily toss cards into a hat. **BE THE CARD!**

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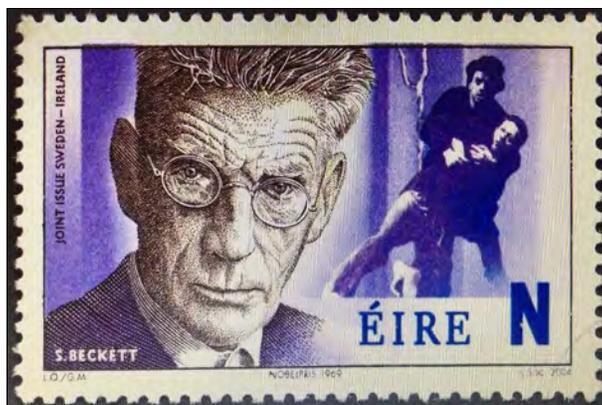
HAMISH: *[Camera on the podcaster.]* Now children ... Ah, sort of expected that. Your Director told me about a radio show you were guests on titled *Worstword Ho* hosted by Chicago DJ, editor/poet Eckhard whose task has always been to get readers' mental habits out of the acting of reading. The interview's theme was: "Do you believe that all imaginations are today born free and equal?" You, Chit, were to pose as "Linus" and Chat, as "Botulinas", ying-yang opposites pecking at each other like manic Beckett clowns over whether things were better in the past or will be in the future, until the sound studio expanded into one huge politico-comic balloon of jibs and jabs about to burst.



CHAT: Prior to that radio play, Eckhard and us two performed an "intervention" at the Art Institute of Chicago Museum's collection of Impressionist Art by walking around ogling the paintings with highly exaggerated vacant gazes and gaping mouths, nodding our heads vigorously before each canvas, mumbling, until the guards tossed us out.

CHIT: "We are not saints, but kept our appointment," I said to Eckhard upon arrival at the radio station. Laughing, said we will be "pозzoing" as Beckettesque characters. To effect our bodily sensations and voice, he had us squat in large pots, giving my character the name "Badadmirer" and Chat's as "Estragen", playful Beckett references. Wanted our verbal duel would "liquify some rock stone brains out there". Eventually Estragen put a halt to it all by yelling "I can't go on." Of course, Badadmirer urged, "You must go on." Then Eckhard ended the broadcast abruptly as if the station's power had been cut.

HAMISH: Brilliant! Speaking of Beckett, a lemon completely squeezed by your Playwright, I have a slide to share with you and my Watchers: Beckett and two of his clowns depicted on a Swedish - Irish stamp. *[Shows the slide.]*



Joint issue, Sweden - Ireland, Samuel Beckett Stamp.

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CHIT: Eerie, it is. The pair on the stamp kinda looks like us back then, too.

CHAT: Sweet, love the color purple. And — WHOOPEE! — both book and the films.

CHIT: We live in a Capitalist atmosphere of frenetic, disfiguring cultural and informational rain. But *[in a lower voice]*, hopefully, *not* in the reign of King Trump. *[Back to normal voice.]* Us sensitive esthetes of the collective sport of art do need open our umbrella groups to deflect shit like the billion dollar Super Bowl ads raining on the game field, which people soak up like sponges. Our culture's new religion *is* athleticism and advertisements.

CHAT: Mega churches and Super Bowls have more akin to each other than folks might suppose. Witness their attraction for mass shooters. *[The deadly mass shootings in Houston and Kansas City had just occurred.]*

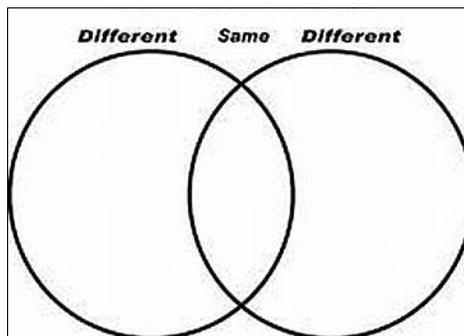
HAMISH: *[Amused.]* Hmmm, maybe that's what's giving off such a gamey smell. And I am plum out of white vinegar today sport fans.

CHAT: *[Clasping her hands.]* Like Eckhard, the Director, Playwright, Us all indulging in Lit as a transcendent entity, using pre-existing forms swiftly tailored (or Taylor Swifited) for personal ends with peerless virtuosity. Proving (contra Thatcher) *there is an alternative.* *[Executes a two-handed grabbing gesture.]* **We appropriate!**

CHIT: *[Excited.]* Hello Jack! We hijack! *[Feigns pointing a handgun.]*

CHAT: Using culture as a tool box! See, see, we *are* Situationists situated in the same umbrella group, Chit. Despite our differences. Or maybe because of them.

HAMISH: *[Hand on chin.]* Hmmm, Vennezia: the middle overlap area in a Venn diagram *[quickly puts up a slide of such].*



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[Changing the topic.] Getting back to your abductions . . . it seems that it is not for naught that you've both become astronauts, falling upward, asking the E.T.s the fundamental question: "Where do you come from?" Your Director and Playwright mentioned that George R. R. Martin and the commercial SF group, "To the Stars Academy of Arts & Sciences" is hinting at investment interest *[a group of aerospace, science, and entertainment divisions producing books, television shows and films with an emphasis on ufology]*. Certainly, they all believe artists are the ideal navigators of our infinite, chaotic cultural playing field. By the way, your Director likes to cite Jean-Luc Godard's dictum: "Culture is the rule; art is the exception." And you two have certainly become exceptions to the rule. Inevitably, your experiences will become open-source material to be re-hacked, circulated, memed, and gamified. Forcing the Director to defend the brand!



CHIT: Or not. We R. R. Experiencers *[laughs.]* with special access to a novel experience, so we deserve attention. Our abduction experience has given us *a lever and a place to stand*, if you catch my drift. It demands we ask ourselves *[citing poet Mary Oliver]: What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*

HAMISH: *[Bemused.]* So maybe your Director should hire Filipino *encarnadores* to make life-like wooden sculptures of you both, your faces filled with saintly wonder while gazing upon Velia and Mengus.

CHIT: Remember, the Playwright had put an abduction scene in the script, but as a special effect, not for real! But to answer your question. Looking back on the history of both of our multiple alien encounters, well, it was as startling as seeing the same hand dealt over and over and over during a poker game, which would seem impossible in an aleatory universe.



CHAT: Yeah, but akin to Wild Bill Hickok's Dead Man's Hand. Like those dealt to the murdered victims of the Houston and Kansas City shootings.

HAMISH: Or like tossing a two-headed coin over and over! *[Laughs, then pulls two coins from his pocket.]* I was going to later give you each a two-headed Alien Head coin, but

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now seems a good time. Catch buckaroos! [Tosses coins to the duo, making Chit and Chat frantically shift into awkward positions in order to catch them]. I thought for sure one of you would fumble the coin and I was betting on Chat doing so. I lose. So you two will get yet another alien-themed gift before leaving today [chuckles with anticipation].



Hamish's Alien Head gift coin. The other side sports his podcast's title WTF.

CHIT: Ah, tossed coins! We await the decisive flip: pluralism to fascism, secular to theocratic! And given the ongoing SF series *Resident Alien*, I'm concerned that the mainstream will have already milked the alien theme dry before we get our production going.

CHAT: Yeah. Kinda scary to think about.



Alien invader, first episode of *Resident Alien* (2021).

CHIT: And to see. Did you watch the initial episode? Moreover, this alien is hostile. His nefarious mission is to kill all humans.

HAMISH: A stereotype. Like Trump saying all immigrants, aliens, from Latino countries are cut-throat drug dealers and thieves. T. S. Eliot's "hooded hordes swarming."

CHAT: Yeah, it fits neatly into racist ideology, even up the concept of the alien transfiguring into human form. Think of the Nazi's theme in World War II: the danger to assholic Aryan purity posed by assimilated Jews! They may look like us, but . . .

CHIT: Yet, as the series continues, the alien's need to assimilate to survive begins to erode his original mission to destroy life here. So there is a turn in his moral compass. So assimilation seems the only way out, so to speak.

HAMISH: Watchers! Given these complex issues which pervades the issue of the "alien" in its broadest terms, at the end of this episode of *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* you are enjoined to vote on our website: Thumbs Up or Down for *Resident Alien*. The results will be posted online the next day. Are the academic type? Before you answer the survey, you might want to check out Brazilian Czech-born Jewish migrant philosopher Vilém Flusser's tasty book *The Freedom of the Migrant*, where he sees the global traveler as a someone who ventures, who takes chances, yet at the same time fully experiences freedom. A basis rooted in Sartre's cog-sac.

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CHIT: Yep, great book! Oh Sage! Gives the topic of immigration an existentialist spin. He describes the migrant, an “alien”, as the first person who notices that the human being is not a tree, discovering that “human dignity may consist precisely in not having roots.”

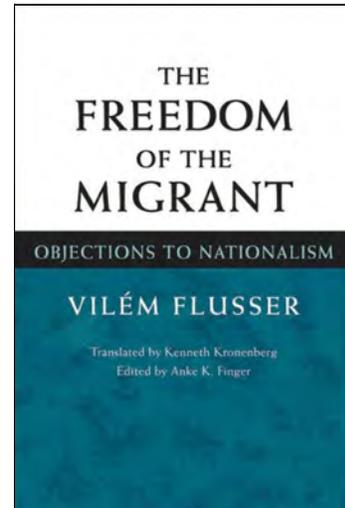
CHAT: Like that. Too much yapping today about one’s roots, genealogy, blah, blah, blah.

CHIT: Not Indigenous friendly, but Flusser’s ideas come out of his desperate flight from oppression, the Nazis. But our situation today is *also* inflected by climate change, not just politics; unrelenting floods of immigrants, unrelenting rain deluging the West Coast, for instance. *Everything* today seems to want to flood and wash away our home roots into the vast monetized river of globalization, which complicates the issue in ways Flusser didn’t have to engage at the time.

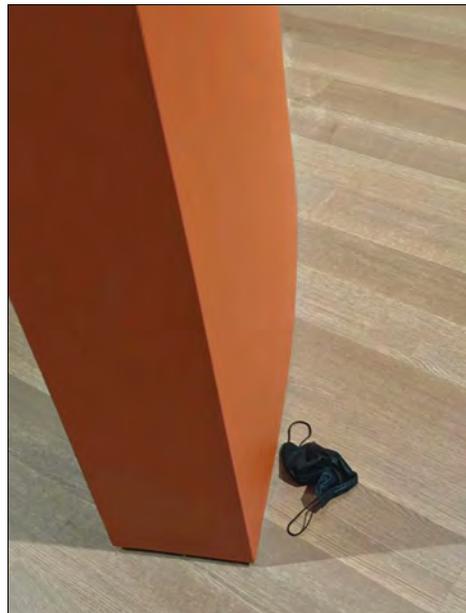
HAMISH: [Points to Chit, flooding him with praise.] Watchers! Watch him. He’s going places!

CHAT: I’m flashing on L.A. artist Nina Salerno’s *Castaway: A Photographic Series* where she stumbles upon random discards, photographs them *in situ*, lists their GPS coordinates, thus anchoring them in physical space, frozen in time. A jibe at our GPS driven society? Contingency and external influences combine, like in our lives. It’s as if she’s saying: *I say I, and the simplest way is to say that I photograph relates to the place where I am at the time, to me who is there. I need to keep going, going.* And, hey! Chit and I’ve been to places — the weirdest place! I can’t say for certain I’m mad or a nomad.

HAMISH: [Groans at the pun.] Salerno sounds a bit Becktt-ish. Her images are untitled except for unnameable points in space. [Forcefully pushes



A weird place.



34.07711 N x 118.47442 W (2023) Nina Salerno.

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his hands palms open toward his interlocutors.] Enough with the multilingual puns, you pair of funs, or out come the guns and blazing saddles.

CHAT: And enough of Chit with his loo-dick attitude *[turns and gives him a firm stare]*.

CHIT: Just being a bit of a ludic nomadic. And you can't Flusser that down the toilet.

HAMISH: *[Laughing.]* Well! A well of puns. I think my Watchers have hadic — enough!

CHAT: What a coincidence. We're having haddock for din-din tonight with the Playwright, Haddock Francese. He belongs to Santa Fe Foodies, a gaggle of eight amateur chefs and wants to try this dish out before serving it to the members. Afterwards, he's will discuss Lacan's split between the *subject of the statement* and the *subject of the enunciation*. Our interior "small world" in relationship to the "big world" out there and us stuck in the middle; and will elucidate Lacan's joke: "I have three brothers, Paul, Robert, and myself" in relation to Chit and his three selves.



CHIT: Uhhh, if he's sober enough. I'm sure he'll tells us about the Devil's Tuning Fork where the visually elusive middle prong represents my alien-self.

CHAT: Yeah. Those existential poles get all fucked up when he's on a lemoncello binge.

HAMISH: *[Pushes in closer.]* For a sec thought you meant Poles. Even if he's sober, not sure I could digest his explanation as I'm not sure what the topic needing explanation is.

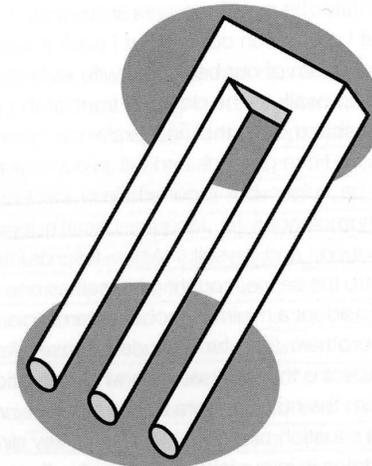


Diagram of "Genou", Chit's "I - We".

CHIT: Uhhh, you're not invited.

HAMISH: *[Grins hugely.]* Just sayin'!

CHIT: *As much as we speak, we are also spoken* is the gist, I think. The Director once told me that. Said our chit-chat in his productions should manifest such. Means our

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quiddity as characters rests on quicksand. That we, in dialogue together, can divide the world in two and crack the narrative plane. He lectured us on how each space our characters occupy realizes the possibilities of that space in which it is set. The fact that we were held in a confined alien space could be mined for a persistent Beckettian concern with space/container and character/contained on stage. Yeah, kind of esoteric. He handed us a booklet with famous Beckett-character quotes. Then stepped back, cried out, pointing: *Welcome you new narrative inhabitants!* We took our bows and made our vows.

CHAT: He means *baos*, as we were treated to Chinese and non-stop plum wine, a ruse to get us to go to a Narratologist as frequently as we go to our Optimologist.

HAMISH: Don't you mean ophthalmologist?

CHAT: Nope. An *optimologist* is a New Age guru, who has to be a super optimist given all the signs of The End of Days descending on us [pauses]. But to get back to the subject. Supposedly, the subject of the enunciation emerges from *within* our speech, which differs from or contradicts the "I" of the statement. The Playwright wants us to ground our singularity in our original existential split which entails our attempt to resist mechanisms of societal / sexual domination as we develop our selves as the result of specific contingencies, events that we experience. Like persistence abductions. Something like that, anyway. It does get confusing. Hence, the refresher course tonight.

CHIT: Chat, were you ever told you were found under a cabbage? I was. And maybe I was found under a cabbage after a very early abduction. After being told this for some years, I think I can envision that precise spot in our neighbors' garden.

HAMISH: Might be when your abductors introduced alien genes into you, creating a biological event that over time developed into your Genou-self. Would explain your amazing gift as an Eidetiker.



CHIT: Hamish, it's not just simple memories of events. I am able to seize hold of a memory-scene as it flashes up at a moment of danger. And what I see is in motion, precisely rendered, like watching CCTV surveillance footage of places I've been. Moreover, I can even see marginal notes and underlining I've made in books I've read as if looking at a Xerox copy. Yet, my abduction experiences remained largely blanked out pre-hypnotherapy. I suffer screen memories — like piles of dead white-breasted nuthatches strewn amongst dead piñons — that hide deeper, frightening memories. It was the overwhelming otherness of the experience, of passivity, vulnerable exposure, strange light, mind-probes, shit stuck into my body. Blah, blah, blah.

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HAMISH: Hot damn! Bet the CIA would pay you handsomely, not that you're an extremely handsome dude . . . No offense.

CHIT: Nah. Now they use mini-cams in pens, watches, animatronic spies, camera-equipped mobile rocks, and shit like that. Hey, I'm *old* technology now. Hell, with so many citizens now willing to sell out their country just for kicks, spies in the old sense of the term are going extinct. Can't out do a Leaker.



HAMISH: Let me guess. Some are re-skilling as Costco, Target and WalMart security guards. They will be needed to prevent crafty sneakers from applying five-finger discount when Trump's "Never Surrender" brand of golden high-top sneakers become available at nearly 400 bucks a pair.

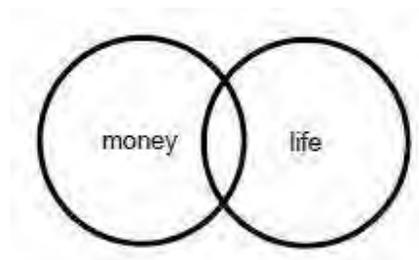


CHIT: But what if the shoplifters balk and refuse to surrender the merchandise? If they tell the guard they just practicing the Art of the Steal? . . . Oh, I get it! *[As if a lightbulb appears above his head, the light poking and prying about for cracks in his cabeza.]* That's why those companies are hiring those ex-007s with a license to kill.

CHAT: Hey! Pure illumination. Imagination not dead. You grokked! And you didn't even have to read the script to get that.

HAMISH: *[Chuckles.]* Now children . . .

CHIT: When I walk into our boss's fucky production company's adobe dig — which we humorously call "The Big Other" — Detlef, the old bearded guard at the front desk, inquires, with an accompanying wink: "Vat's in your wallet?" and I reply: "Vat's your Master Signifier?"



CHAT: Yeah, he's hilarious. Actually, that's brilliant, despite the fact the guy carries a *Star Wars* lunch box to work and came to our Halloween costume party as Darth Vader. Today, that's all the info one really needs know about someone: what they like for lunch, their finances, and their modes of structuring inner desires.

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CHIT: A vintage 1977 lunch box! Don't knock it. Probably cost the guy two weeks of wages or more.

HAMISH: *[Eyes brighten.]* Probably had it since childhood. Knew a guy, Manny, an Impresario at a comedy club, who carried a Roy Rogers lunch box to work, same one his ma'd packed with bologna sandwiches and Fritos. The club was called USB Port, which stood for "Ultra Silly Babble", but wits dubbed it: "You-Sonofa-Bitch!". It ultimately failed, but it's catchy name kept folks' faces wide — this was in 1998 when flash-drives became geeky must haves — kept the club in biz for some three years. At opening night the place was filled with all types suffering from Silly-Yak disease: young and old, rich and poor, black, brown, and white — all local. First act always opened with a bright flash of light aimed at the audience, upon which Manny — in an earth-toned suit with a red tie — jumped on stage to introduce the comedians; the evening closed with a "Memory Shtick" event, a prize given to the audience member who had memorized the most jokes tossed at them by the talent. I was the club's sound tech and had a bud at the local newspaper, so told Manny to pay him to run this accolade about the first night's show in the Entertainment section: *Extraordinary, exhilarating, unflinching, transfixing, masterful, beguiling, authoritative, hypnotic, propulsive, exquisite, and profound!* Manny didn't know I'd copped the compliments from book ads in *The New York Review of Books*.



Detlef's lunch box.

CHAT: Cool idea. What kind of prize was given out by Manny at night's end?

HAMISH: Merch, like you both will get when we sign-off today — Martian Poop Soda. *[Holds a bottle up.]*

CHAT: Yuck! *[Immediately regrets her outburst.]*

HAMISH: Hey, don't besmirch the merch!

CHIT: *[Interrupting.]* You wouldn't recall one of the jokes heard at that club by any chance?

HAMISH: A bad one. Category: *Celebrity Chemistry*. Question: *What do you get when you put Beckett's character Malloy on The Lone Ranger's horse? Answer: You get high on silver alloy.*



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CHAT: *[Groans.]* Unquestioningly BAD, Kemosabe!

HAMISH: And why I remember it. *[Punches a button on his console, plays a few seconds of The William Tell Overture to his audience.]* Still catchy, ain't it?

CHIT: But if that joke were to be delivered today, the comic would need to include Jay Silverheels, Tonto, in his shtick. I'll leave you, Hamish, to figure out the new variation. Hint: the word "silver" can refer to both the Ranger's horse and his ever-faithful side-kick.

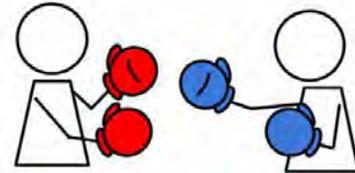


Signed fan photo, Jay Silverheels.

CHAT: *[Interrupting.]* I adored Tonto, an Indigenous Canadian. My girl friend's cousin in L.A's San Fernando Valley, a U.S. mail delivery person, had Jay her route. Super-nice guy, she said. Today, ABQ's Mayor, Tim Keller ("El Niño Bonito") and his faithful beefy sidekick Latino Police Chief, Harold Medina, are our new age crime-fighting duo! *[Raises arm in Black Power salute.]* And are funny, too.

HAMISH: *[Eyes scanning, fingering his iPad before him]* Oh! Do I smell a false encomium? . . . Not a few text messages are coming in . . . let's see . . . many wanting you two to do another round of jib-jab dialogue your Playwright loves so much. Think my Watchers are really gettin' off on you Experiencers!

CHIT: Hamish, let us consult for a moment *[heads together, whispering excitedly, big smiles on their visages]* Hold back the edges of your gowns sports fans! *[Pretend to don boxing gloves. Facing each other, they clear their throats and verbally spar in rapid in succession.]*



CHAT: *[Jab.]* Spread the word all through Hong Kong. Usher in a new era!

CHIT: *[Standing up, right arm extended.]* We will usher in a fight until they're all gone!

CHAT: *[Lead hook.]* We have put up many flags.

CHIT: *[Rear hook.]* They have taken down many flags.

CHAT: *[Fists up, on the ready.]* Who? I'll give them **the fig!**

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CHIT: [*Lead hook.*] The overlooked.

CHAT: [*Cross.*] And the overcooked.

CHIT: [*Cross.*] Who you bunk with . . .

CHAT: [*Interrupting.*] No, it's what you *debunk*. Like conspiracies over Covid vaccines. List more. And being able to get out of de bunkbed in de morning.

CHIT: [*Rear hook.*] Lipid nanoparticles!

CHAT: [*Cross.*] Spike proteins!

CHIT: Spike your drink.

CHAT: [*Jab.*] Which I will drink in spite of the spike.

CHIT: [*Lead hook.*] Blood-brain barrier! [*Sassy, stick his tongue out.*]

CHAT: [*Sticks her tongue out.*] Blood-drained mariner!

HAMISH: [*Eyes rolling in his head.*] You're sailin' too fast! I'm gettin' punch drunk. Slow down the brain teasers!

CHIT: [*Ignoring Hamish.*] Clown world!

CHAT: [*Jab.*] Groupthink!

CHIT: [*Rear hook.*] Cancel culture!

CHAT: [*Cross.*] Judging from *Artforum* magazine these days, look's like a *fait accompli*. R.I.P. I cancelled my subscription, but they keep sending it to me.

CHIT: [*Jab.*] Cost of living crisis.

CHAT: [*Cross.*] If I did cry "Sis!" she'd never answer. Dead from cancer because of a sexist doctor. An astrologer predicted.

CHIT: [*Rear hook.*] Weaponization of science. The science of new weapons!

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CHAT: *[Lead uppercut.]* Silence? You mean like Zen meditation à la D. T. Suzuki?

CHIT: *[Rear uppercut.]* No. Not *silence*, nor quietism, but the nefarious shifting attention away from real threats 'n scandals distracting us with explosive shit that grabs our ears and that always seems just on the cusp of being proven. Real threats distorted into fun-house versions of themselves. Literary bigwig Naomi Klein says so *[sticks tongue out.]*.

CHAT: *[Dodges.]* Remember, the distorting mirror publicity big-wigged-clown portrait of us the Director used on a playbill for that . . .

CHIT: *[Interrupts.]* Conspiracy singularity!

CHAT: *[Jab.]* Deep State!

CHIT: *[Rear uppercut.]* Shadow Lands!

CHAT: *[Holds position.]* Clickbait exaggerations!

CHIT: *[Jab.]* Solutions?

CHAT: *[Jab.]* A chicken in every pot. Less certain now since bird flu outbreak in Texas.

CHIT: *[Rear hook.]* An inflatable hot tub in every home plagued with electrical outages.

CHAT: *[Stands up.]* Clout chaser! You take up space for its own sake. Admit it.

CHIT: *[Hands open outward toward Chat.]* Omit!

CHAT: *[Stands, both arms up in victory.]* R.I.P.

CHIT: Death recorded! *[Sits back exhausted in the chair.]*

HAMISH: *[Eyes as big as saucers.]* Continue this repartee, but change the topic to your abduction experiences.

CHAT: *[A passing fright expressed in her eyes.]* A group of interrelated stimuli that . . .

CHIT: *[Features denote deep thought.]* Affected, acted upon, my ocular nerves, my semi-circular canals, flashing on my *en caul* birth and three selves in an anechoic chamber.

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CHAT: Acted upon my brain, solar plexus, sexus, and nexus *[laughs]*.

CHIT: My digestive tract and my E. Power Biggs's sexual organs. They play Bach bad memories, Maintenon.

CHAT: My curiosity. I asked "What is your purpose on Earth?" To make us Star Children? *[Hamish puts an appropriate jpeg onscreen.]* The same substance as stars.



CHIT: Might be *stares*. They're on a mission to study our local cultures, like the two-step, the jingle dress, and *ranchero* dances. On Halloween, do a pub crawl.

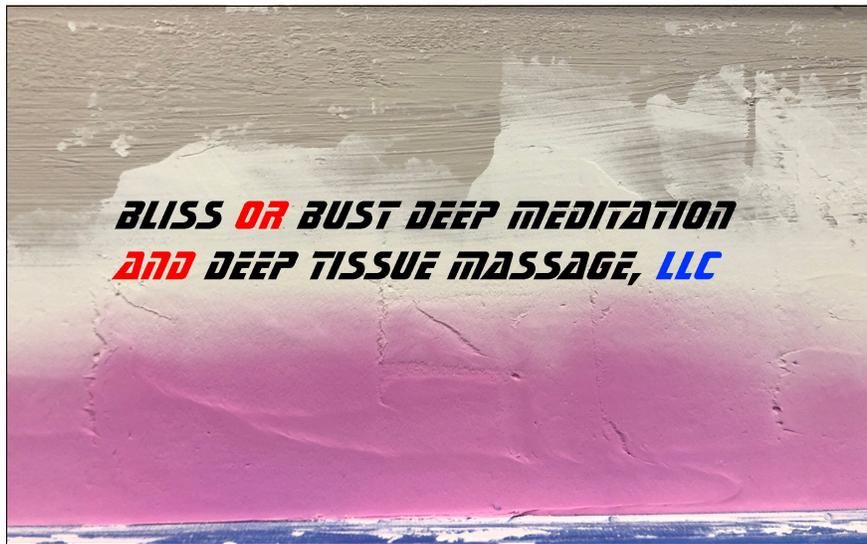
CHAT: I'm trying to eliminate my fears whilst thinking in spheres..

CHIT: Witty, but only for a moment. Then **gimmicky**. Does that make sense?

CHAT: Where am I? What time is it now?

HAMISH: *[Great enthusiasm, clapping in delight.]* Wow! *[Looks at his iPad screen.]* Ah ufology! A sphere of random beliefs and hopeful guesses, but what a sphere it is. Congrats! You two just received this podcast's highest rating! EVER! *[His iPhone rings, takes the call.]* Okay, okay. *[Looks at his guests.]* I've been notified this station's management is gifting you Experiencers a three-day stay at Bliss or Bust Deep Meditation and Deep Tissue Massage, LLC. They've got a spray to unlock blocked chakras to help the lotus to open and the Kundalini to climb. It's located in the fabulous Galisteo Basin Preserve, near the ranch of the famous artist Bruce Nauman. Congrats, Now Voyagers! *[Puts onscreen an image of the Bliss or Bust's colorful company business card.]*

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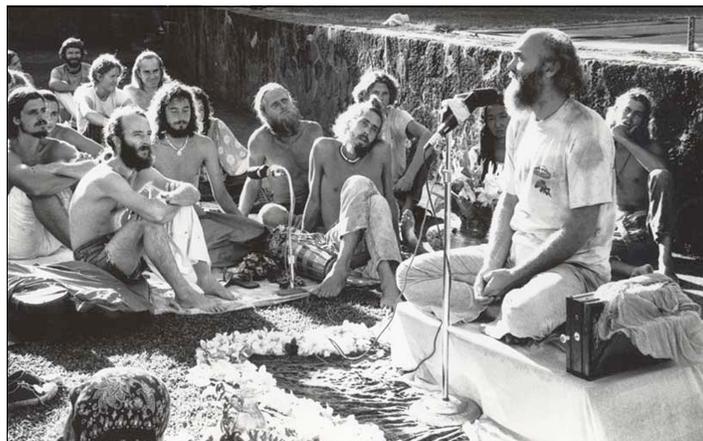
CHAT: [Thumbing her chin.] Uh, what's with the card's odd background?

HAMISH: They want to signify solidarity with the trades. Recently, a group of carpenters and dry wall experts, tired of contractors paying them low wages, formed their own company called "Bernie's Sanders". So the card, showing a wall in the process of being plastered, sanded and painted, is a salute to that activism. The Bliss or Bust isn't indifferent to the class-divide in our glorious Land of Enchantment, where the minimum wage is twelve bucks an hour. Bliss or Bust pay staff double that and add benefits. On the verso of that card their motto reads: *To be afraid of one's own magic is tragic.*

CHAT: Quite a gift, since the rest of the State is run on the lines of a plantation economy.

CHIT: Ya got that right!

HAMISH: [Back on the topic.] Before he died in 2019, guru Ram Dass led a seminar at Bliss or Bust. In 1967, Richard Alpert traveled to India, returning as [pregnant pause] "Ram Dass" and publishing *Be Here Now*. And the rest is history. Possibly, Bliss or Bust can help you see the possibilities of such



Baba Ram Dass (1974).

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a transition to a higher state of consciousness inspired by your celestial journey. Just sayin', kids. Would make a key theme in your Playwright's production.

CHAT: We can imagine it, because we've already done it: you are given a lunch bag with 30 small printed cards inside, cards referencing five instances of what we cannot bear to see in our past, present, and future, our supposed End of Times:

MIRRORINGS

CLIMATE DISASTER

DISASTER CAPITALISM

SYNTHETIC SELVES

MANUFACTURED REALITIES

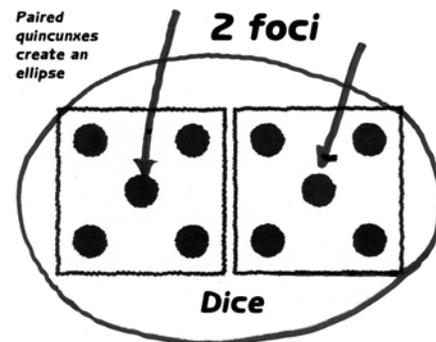
Then the bags are turned upside-down so the 30 cards with the 5 topics on them fall out like leaves in the wind. You then kneel before the spilled cards and arrange them in 10 piles by topic in the form of 2 quincunxes, as on dice showing a throw of double fives. Place the 2 quincunxes side-by-side [see diagram]. Talk to each of the 10 piles forming the quincunxes as if you were conversing with a small animal, say a chipmunk, a curious lizard, your cat, and use this as an occasion for major "unselfing" by repeating: "I am not the center of the universe! The world wasn't just made for me," five times, then repeat five more times. You will notice that the center pips on the dice, when placed side-by-side actually form the foci of an ellipse, like a planet's orbit. Let the nebulae shine! And notice in this text the frequent use of ellipsis . . . it isn't gratuitous.

HAMISH: [Chuckling.] How did you guess?

CHIT: Something we've kept back. Post-abduction, awaking in the hospital — "Present and well-fed!" as our saluting nurse told our boss — we each found a feather from a white-breasted nuthatch along with strange dice, five pips per side. Month later. Chat and I, mind-instructed by our captors, began performing this dice ritual, a bizarre compulsion we couldn't halt, over and over. I think the aliens downloaded this manic activity into our cog-sacs so as to stimulate a one-mind consciousness. Dicey way to do it though.



Be Here Now (1971) Ram Dass.



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CHAT: And the truly awakened don't experience themselves as subjects who move in the objective world; instead they grok the world as movement and rotation around them; they *are* the conscious subjects of the objective world.

HAMISH: Ah, the unity of consciousness and the quantum field! Hints thereof dropped into your trousers by E.T.s wanting to heal our planet, just before you were returned to Earth. Bohm's Implicate Order. A dicey appeal to the universe as hologram, it seems.

CHIT: Planet Exploiter People — think Trump, Musk, Auchincloss [*CEO of British Petroleum*], Putin, et al. — put themselves first, seemingly incapable of “unselfing” for even a second. PEPs fill the Earth with a surplus of heat-trapping gases akin to a surplus of self, of ego that inflates their speech and destructive endeavors.

CHAT: Yeah, our role here isn't merely to maximize our advantage in our lives — well we do want to maximize our Beckett-clown Brand — but mostly not to chase clout, but life.

HAMISH: Your Playwright gave you Jewish author Naomi Klein's book *Doppelganger*.

CHIT: Arendt you a caution! No, Left. She's very liberal.

CHAT: Which one?

CHIT: Klein. It's not just her book or playing dice with all fives. No. It comes from inside *moi*: Genou (my long lost alien self) plus my Gemini Twins. Now can appreciate my *faux raccord* (failure of continuity) speak the affirmation *d'accord*. I can yell in my 3Nomial Voices: *HURRAH! I'M NOT ALONE IN THIS WORLD!* I seek interconnection and enmeshment with my various selves in a way I didn't before my last abduction. But what I feel going on *inside* me is what we all need to externalize toward all people everywhere.

CHAT: What the E.T.s want to teach us is to see that our crises are material, spiritual, and “profoundly collective” as Naomi Klein puts it. Maybe they're trying to bring us together to change us for the better.

HAMISH: Ho! You *must* read J. G. Ballard's short story “The Life and Death of God” as it posits as a thought-experiment or his readers the concept of “ultra-microwaves”, something akin to String Theory or Rupert Sheldrake's “morphic resonances” [*see page 5*], which are sentient and permeate all creation, awareness of which alters all life on earth. God is in us, in everything, and so forth. A good read. Sounds like Ballard read that tome of spiritual speculation *The Urantia Book*. Maybe those E.T.s have read it!

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CHIT: Or possibly to help us seek pure ideation, our psychic being freed of any physical medium. Hence, their psychic abilities. But merely trying to battle climate change with electric cars and racism by representing marginalized identity groups in one's elite spaces, or on TV, or transcend your ego with just a meditation app. Nope. Need more. In my most pessimistic moments, given the global situation today, I don't envision multi-brained star-men evolving here, but naked prognathous idiots with hair on their foreheads, grunting their way through a post-thermonuclear wasteland.

HAMISH: Ah, like the H. G. Wells's horrific Morlocks in *The Time Machine*. But if Klein is to be believed, we need ACTION! ACTION!

CHAT: [*Clasping her hands.*] Oh hell, that's what our Director's yells every time we're on stage. Did you know that he would train us by having us sit before a large LCD TV screen, sound muted, and just have us focus on the faces and muted mouths of the actors in the melodramas. He called it "The Demented Fish" exercise because it was like watching fish in a bowl.



An amok Morlock.

CHIT: [*Makes like he's taking a pill.*] Gotta remember this is guy once, in his teen years, took LSD at Stinson Beach [*north of San Francisco*] and swore he'd — I quote him messing with a quote from J. G. Ballard — "It was half past love on New Day in Zenith and the clocks were striking heaven. I heard a manta-ray singing, low notes on under a high sun, and saw the god Pan drive by in a red Pontiac."

CHAT: Our Director loves panning shots. Funny because Southern California Orange County neo-cons and manta rays are never found that far north on the West Coast.

HAMISH: Maybe he meant mantra-ray. Anyway, he told me for him the sea symbolized the unconscious, why he always did acid on a beach. He speculated that for us outer space was an image of unfettered time and a challenge for us to overcome our inability to penetrate it. Hence, so many SF stories that combine space travel with time travel; hence our fascination with UFOs and *oumuamua* — Hawaiian for "strangers from afar."

Another reason why he had the Playwright script your abduction scene off the trunk of a red Pontiac, only to be astonished when it *actually* occurred! Now *both* see an opportunity to exploit your cosmic experience. Maybe *exploit* is too harsh, as you kids also benefit big career-wise. [*In a sing-song voice.*] Careening down the Yellow Brick Road.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: And psychological benefits, too. Restaging our abduction and encounter with the E.T.s will, our therapists most heartily agree, be a cathartic experience.

HAMISH: Oh, and you both have a good chance of being listed in NASA's prestigious *Consolidated Tables of Celestial Traverses*. If you can prove the saucer left our atmosphere.

CHIT: I know that he and the Playwright share C.G. Jung's belief that civilization now stands at the conclusion of the Platonic Great Year, at the eclipse of the sign of Pisces which has dominated the Christian era and that we entering the sign of Aquarius — remember that song "Aquarius" in the musical *Hair*? — a period of confusion and psychic chaos. More true now than in the Seventies. At such times of uncertainty and discord throughout history, cosmic space vehicles have been sighted around and on Earth.

CHAT: And in a rationalist society — recall that the character Ivan Karamazov talks about "The impotent and infinitely small Euclidean mind of man" — these events, to be credible, are interpreted in a strictly scientific or pseudo-scientific manner — the limits of our operating system — which misses the deeper psychic forces at work and which Jung was trying to probe, among others.

CHIT: A bit off topic, Hamish, but . . . given your vast familiarity with SF, why are many characters in those stories given the last name of "Buckmaster", or "Lassiter" or "Rossiter"? For instance, our Playwright often uses the name "Lafferty" to denominate a clownish character. Ballard and other SF writers use "Lassiter" or "Rossiter" frequently.

HAMISH: I've noticed that as well. Ballard was British and "Rossiter" is an English Kent place name, a variant of "Rochester". Lassiter is an Anglo-Saxon word referring to a *lator* or "interpreter". Now imagine the black actor, Eddie Anderson, who played "Rochester" on radio and TV, with the name "Rossiter". No, no! Just wouldn't work. Ballard also likes to use the descriptor "Vermillion", as in "Vermillion Sands", for a place name in his stories.

CHAT: And, in turn, "Clark Kent", Superman, wouldn't work very well if changed to "Clark Rossiter"; just wouldn't sound right, hell no; albeit, *both* names reference the Kent area of England. No in *The Adventures of Superman* the name "Rossiter" would be given to an egotistical, evil, crime boss ravaging Metropolis.

HAMISH: Bravo - Tango - Whiskey — only forty miles from London, Kent is lush, some 1442 squares miles of it, known in tourist books as "The Garden of England". Which reminds me of Ballard's exquisite whisk through human history in "The Garden of Time".

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CHIT: Whiskey? Think I read somewhere Ballard was a lush. A lush in a lush land.

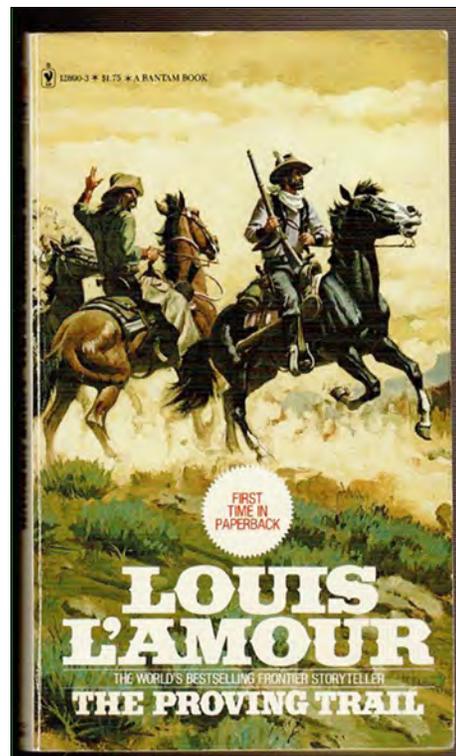
CHAT: *[Hands on each side of his face like in The Scream by Edvard Munch.]* Yah, so would you be if you'd been a young teen locked up in a Jap internment camp watching flaming B-29s falling from the skies, witnessing first hand the daily savagery of occupation which included seeing a rickshaw coolie beaten to death just feet from him. *[Sensing a similarity between her abduction and Ballard's internment thanks to loose elements of trauma in the margins of her mind, her eyes turn into what appears to be crushed blue flowers.]* I . . . I . . .

HAMISH: *[Quickly nudges the topic away from leading to drawing parallels between the Rape of Nanking and the desperate the situation in Palestine.]* If Ballard was still alive, he'd for sure update his story "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan", replacing Reagan with Trump. He'd suggest Photoshopping Trump's ugly head onto graphic photos of car crash victims. *[Nudging further.]* I find Ballard's opening lines always wonderful. "Low Flying Aircraft" starts with what could describe Trump: "The man's playing some sort of deranged game with himself." There is another story, "Tomorrow is a Million Years", which could apply to your hypnosis experiences. *[Adjusting his posture for the delivery:]* "In the evening the time-winds would blow across the Sea of Dreams." Ahhh, beautiful!

CHAT: *[Shifts to a 45 degree angle in her chair, hands pushing outwards.]* Whoa!

CHIT: Someone should use AI to anthologize all the initial sentences of Ballard's stories, then arrange them according to an algorithm so they read like a coherent story. Knew a Chicago artist who snatched whole sentences from the complete collection of Louis L'Amour's Western novels, then re-functioned them to create a "new" Western "by" L'Amour. Each sentence in the novel was foot-noted to reveal the precise source in L'Amour's books. Took him a few years to do this. Now with AI, it'd be a snap *[snaps his fingers]*. Sorry, I'm taking us off topic again.

HAMISH: *[Quickly responding.]* No, no, no! My Watchers watch me and my quests here precisely because we step-dance around our main topic,



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pulling out interesting material to chomp on. I learn something, you learn something, as well as the Watchers. Ain't that right, Watchers? [Watcher responses start posting on his iPad.] Well, this is **great** [pointing to the screen]. I guess I can throw out one more choice tidbit concerning Ballard and your Director. If you don't mind [looking at his interlocutors].

CHAT: Not all, proceed [extends a flourish with her hand.].

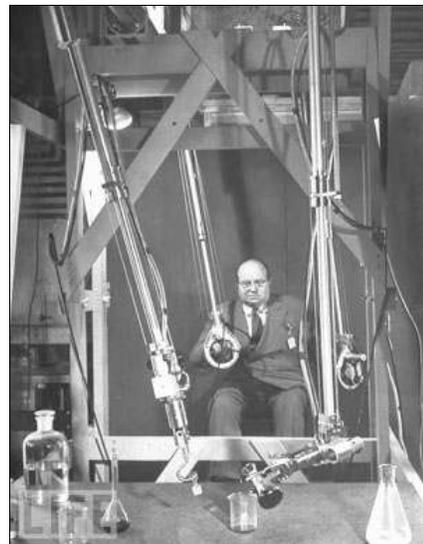
HAMISH: Your Director was crazy about the story “The Intensive Care Unit” — he told me he flashed on it when you two were in the ICU after your abduction — whose plot about a world where people only connect via TV was clearly influenced by E. M. Forrester's prescient *When the Machine Stops* [1909] and projects toward our use of Zoom today.

CHIT: I think that novella was included in *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame* anthology.

HAMISH: Volume two to be precise. The original story has people living underground after a global disaster, communicating largely by video-phone, having all necessities delivered to one's residence thanks to the Machine. But then the Machine stops, society crumbles. Fast-forward to today and our Internet shutdowns and so forth.

CHAT: Not unlike our experience under Covid restrictions, meals delivered, all contact by Zoom and other digital modes of outreach. We began to loose our social skills.

HAMISH: As seen in Ballard's story, which is also a tip of the hat to Robert Heinlein's 1942 amazing classic, “Waldo”. A story also influenced by Forrester's story. The plot introduces an era of space travel powered by cheap atomic power, where vehicles are driven by “broadcast power”, a radiant power industry introduced by North American Power-Air (NAPA) that employs an antenna device called a “deKalb receptor” to do so, something akin to our 5G internet and smart cars. But the device fails. NAPA calls upon a consulting engineer, Waldo, who is confined to the microgravity on a space station due to his physical weakness and who receives all his necessities for life from Earth via a spaceship. He uses remote manipulators — later popularly dubbed “Waldos” after this character — to function in his personal environment as they enhance his



A man using a “Waldo” device.

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hands' strength and keep him remote from any dangerous materials. Such devices anticipated robotics and have become ubiquitous. There's more weirdness to the story ...

CHIT: I read it. Ballard absorbed SF, managing to relate it to issues in his time, creating a mythology preparing us for the suicide of our planet.

HAMISH: Specifically, your Director found it delightful due to Ballard's clever references — surprise, surprise — to filmmakers Bergman, Fellini, Hitchcock, René Clair, Max Ophuls, and Godard in relation to the telling of this story concerning a media frenzy with a hand-held camera trained on made-up-for-TV family members whose only connection is through the camera lens. Funny, yet tragic. Gradually, attempts are made to bring the family into actual physical contact. Amazingly close to the situation pervading our society during Covid.

And, again, in his amazing story "Theatre of War", Ballard hits the bulls-eye by predicting today's fascist movements in Western nations drowning in conspiracy theories and fear of civil war. The *pièce de résistance*, is that the text in the story was culled from actual communiqués between General Westmoreland, President Thieu of South Vietnam, Marshal Ky, and various war journalists at that time.

CHIT: I read that, too. Fuckin' brilliant!

HAMISH: I also adore Ballard's obsession with time. In "News from the Sun" he asks us to consider everything might be happening at once: past, present, and future events co-exist in the universe. Some theories are out there trying to confirm this. He posits time as a primitive structure inherited from our less-intelligent forebears. I remember a famous analogy from the story: "Like a dog burying a large bone, the invention of time allowed him to postpone the recognition of an event-system too large for him to grasp at one bite."

CHAT: But time is a real necessity for us to structure our lives. Without time, we'd lose the continuous self who spans discrete moments in time and relate them to one another, as in film where individual frames add up to a movie. Isn't dementia a loss of time by the patient, where ultimately the mind loses that self and so migrates toward the peaceful Euclidean geometry of the nursing home's drop ceiling and tiled bathroom walls?

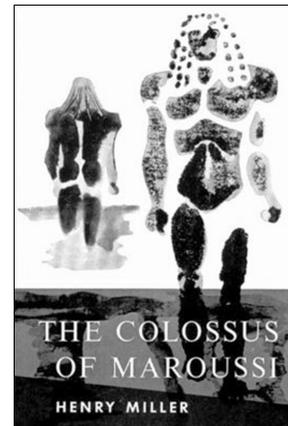
CHIT: Been there, done that. Boozy night in a Madrid, New Mexico biker bar, Everybody Comes to Rick's to find it populated by "The Colossus of Maroussi" (the cognomen of a



J. G. Ballard.

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local Greek expat using a vocoder to talk to his brawling band of biker brothers. He sounded the computer in the prescient sci-fi movie *Colossus, The Forbin Project* where AI takes over the world. I was hesitant to stay, but when the soused crew found out I knew about that film and Henry Miller's classic travel story by the same name as their leader, his band enfolded me into their loud, brash, 'n booze filled celebration. I survived based on this dictum: WWHMD?, that is, "What would Henry Miller do?" Whiskey, Whiskey, Hotel, Mike, Delta in phonetic alphabet.



HAMISH: You never barked SHUT UP AND CALCULATE, told them about the?

CHIT: Forgot that! I finally awoke in the bar's bathroom, my last memory being that of the bearded sleeping giant slumped on a table with the rest of his knights in various states of disarray about him. The rest is history, or legend, most of which I want to forget.

HAMISH: Ballard ties in time and metaphysics. Also what Beckett refers to as "the small world" (mind) and "the big world" (matter). Mystical beliefs, J. G. suggests, are attempts to imagine a world *sans* time, a transcend observation. Our mode of scientific observation is merely, as Heisenberg points, nature exposed to our method of questioning. Each of us is little more than the meager residue of the infinite unrealized possibilities of our lives.

CHIT: Or at least a *cyclic* view of time, as famously proposed by Mircea Eliade. Or Nietzsche's *eternal return* An arrow that, like a boomerang, keeps returning over and over.

HAMISH: For Ballard, time is loss, time is heartbreak in which Time's bitter Arrow need become Cupid's Arrow to sweeten 'n make it more palpable. *[Pause.]* Ultimately, Ballard's take on space and time leads toward the concept of a holographic universe where we look inward toward the very origin or space and time, finding ourselves in the world and the world in us. It is an illusion that physical objects are separate from us. Bravo - Tango - Whiskey — it's an honored concept in Eastern thought. Something I've discussed on my show before, along with trivial trivia like: "When Heisenberg entered the room for



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the Bohr Festival on Göttingen in June 1922, he was only twenty.” Or “Lead Belly was a Gene Autry fan.” So HAIL FANDOM FULL OF RANDOM FANDOM, HALLOWED BE THY FANDOM! Your Director went ape-shit first time he saw Jack Smith’s surreal 1962 cut-out animation film collage, *Heaven and Earth Magic*, which he told me was: “The fuckin’ outer limits of avant-garde cinema. Proves Nietzsche’s dictum that: *One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.*”

CHIT: Yep. He screened it for us once. Praised my inner chaos, my 3Nomial Voices.

CHAT: Shit, Chit, that was the time when the Director insisted we three all spit on a photograph of his *pater*. A glossy photo no less! Said it sealed our contract, like making us Spit Brothers, akin to blood brothers pairing their sliced hands. Then had us thumb wrestle. Chit won.



Chit and Chat thumb wrestle.

HAMISH: Ah, weird that. *[Pause.]* For another tidbit on Jack Smith: he tossed the special projector he created to show that ground-breaking film out a New York fourth story window, breaking it and breaking the record for crazy cinematic-related behavior. But to return to our main issue. Many of my Watchers believe this cosmic revelation, Wholeness — one calls it “The Atomic Bohm” is what the E.T.s are nudging us toward little by little, abduction by abduction. Cog-sacs stuffed with cosmic knowledge about how space arises as a coarse-grained description of the network of relations between events and quantum nonlocalities.

CHIT: What if the knowledge is that The Big Cosmic Entity is a quadriplegic of cosmic proportions, merged with nebulae, galaxies, stars, planets, tended by comets and bees and washed by dew, dried by monarch butterflies, as Yuriy Tarnawsky speculates?

CHAT: *[Breaking in.]* Whoa! I get why our Director took to him. *[Pause.]* Now I recall did have what you might call “a time-dream” just days after beginning hypnotherapy, which involved images of myself in refractions of past and present seen through the prism of time. Fragments of a scene forgotten? Or an inner book of unknown signs?

CHIT: Ah, Chat, we must mention that to our Playwright. Neither he nor the Director want it to be for naught that we were for a brief time astronauts.

CHAT: Or not. I mean can we be sure we even left Earth’s atmosphere?

CHIT: As actors, we take our atmosphere *[coughs twice]* with us.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Shit Chit, you forgot I suffer night hypoxia, I take my small oxygen machine when I travel. My pulmonologist's cheer, *Find a way, Never give up*, echoes in my ears.

CHIT: No?!

CHAT: **Yes!!** Even found myself yelling that phrase on the saucer. I think.

CHIT: Speaking of forgetting, amnesia. Of my past abductions, I memories surfaced only later when my cog-sac got soaked in hypnotherapy. So happy in me hypno-rappy. Right!

CHAT: Ah, the late arrival of knowledge playing a formidable game with time. Making the contingencies of life into truth, not mere spam.

CHIT: But last night I had a dream so vivid . . . I'm confronting the Greys with a single red-rose in hand, handling it like an épée and seeing myself on the *piste* as if was training like I did as a summer camp teen. Here, confronting a nightmare figure, I become a fancy fencer on the fence between my earthly moment before and my moment after on the alien vessel. *[Stands and faux fences.]* I lunge, thrust, retreat, leap, thrust, retreat, lunge, thrust, leap, retreat, thrust, retreat, thrust, retreat, lunge, leap, thrust, retreat, lunge, thrust, retreat, thrust, leap, retreat, lunge, leap, thrust, retreat. I lunge, thrust, retreat, leap, retreat, lunge, leap, thrust, retreat, lunge, thrust, retreat, thrust, leap, thrust, retreat, lunge, thrust, leap, retreat, thrust, retreat, thrust, retreat, lunge, leap, thrust, retreat, lunge, thrust, retreat, thrust, leap, retreat, lunge, leap, thrust, retreat. I lunge . . .



HAMISH: *[A bit miffed.]* Okay, stuck-record-dude we get it!

CHIT: Oops! *[Sits down.]* Best to keep silent than misspeak. *[Pauses.]* But do I like spam 'n eggs.



CHAT: Eeeek! Can you imagine a film noir where the *evil woman* eats such?

CHIT: Yet today die-hard ditto-heads gobble up hate speech and conspiracies and mesh them with religion and infoculture rhetoric.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 4.

CHAT: I hate speech. Speechifying. Specifically.

CHIT: Whose? Not from New Mexico's white-breasted nuthatches who scramble *down* trees, not up; why the Zuni name for this bird is: "the one who comes down head first."



White-breasted Nuthatch.

CHAT: Monica Lewinsky? Hey, being released by the Greys, did we come down head first into Frenchy's Field or alight like butterflies from a cocoon?

CHIT: Vile vowels. Crappy consonants. Gives you lack of confidence.

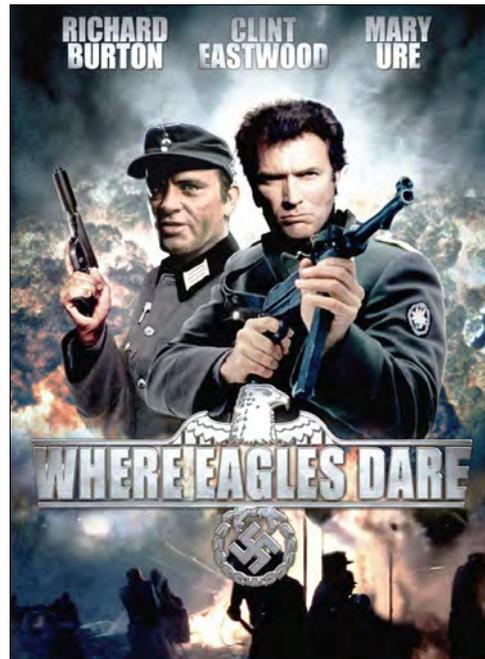
CHAT: Wow! That was roaring, yet delicate and bombastic in turn!

CHIT: What intern? Love your inflections, nuances, the fire and flint of things spoken!

CHAT: Rich and artificial! The grain of your voice! Like Richard Burton's.

CHIT: Got an ear-worm, it's Burton's oft repeated line, a clandestine radio message used to contact British military Intelligence — "Broadsword calling Danny Boy. Broadsword calling Danny Boy. Broadsword calling Danny Boy. Broadsword calling Danny Boy" — in the spectacular 1968 World War II anti-Nazi movie *Where Eagles Dare*. Burton, Eastwood, and sexy Mary Ure are a Special Operations Executive Team sent to suss out a double agent.

One perceptive critic summed the film up as: "A thrilling Alpine adventure starring a magnificent, bleary-eyed Richard Burton, a dynamically lethargic Clint Eastwood who confront a too-large-lipped baby-faced blond Nazi who has the hots for Mary Ure and later gets shot by her right between the eyes!"



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CHAT: Ahhh, dynamic lethargy, describes me perfectly.

CHAT: *[Twiddles hair, fingers chin, passes a hand over eyes, rubs nose, pushes lock of hair back from forehead.]* Ah, the very actorial thing — adventure, bleary eyes, dynamic lethargy, thrills, and voice — our Director demands. After a crucially important meeting with himself, he had *you* listen to that phrase and repeat it over 100 times to train the grain of your voice. Important trivia: Burton's Welsh accent — specifically his vowels — had to be corrected before he could become Burton-the-Actor capable of walking normally across the uneven paving stones of Saint Mark's baptistry in Venice while conversing.

CHIT: Suffers from an intoxication with words *[delivered in a presto manner]!*

CHAT: Who? You or Burton?

CHIT: Ah, both, consonantly.

CHAT: Constantly, you doof! You tryin' to Welsh on me?

CHIT: Burton tried to welch on Elizabeth Taylor . . .

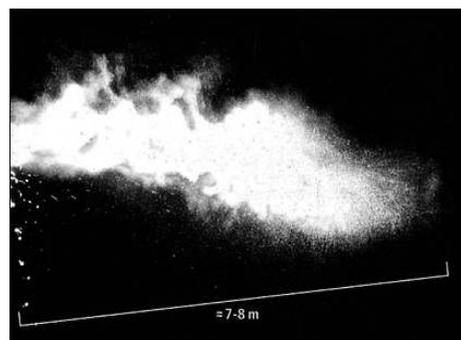
CHAT: Sure it wasn't Rachel Welch?

CHIT: *[His face displaying discomfort, his head tipping backward, he gives off a semi-autonomous, convulsive expulsion of air from his lungs.]* AH AH AH AH HA-

BOOB!!!

HAMISH: Not **ACHOO?**

CHAT: No, no! Our Director preferred *Haboob*, the name of a violent burst of wind resulting in a severe dust storm. Said it was very New Mexico and heap more interesting as a sound effect, while serving as a good cover if, in fact, one did have to sneeze while on stage. Remember, he declaimed that repeating this sneeze-effect amongst ourselves would transmit and increase a sense of shared thespian mission. "An infection by ideas," is how he put it, I think.



Analysis of a sneeze.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Annoyed, yet amused, still keeping a calm voice.]* Now, now, children . . .

CHIT: Hey, bro' it's what we do: chitter-chatter entwinement. Like quantum wave entanglement. Okay, okay! I know at times our minds work too fast for our mouths to process all the input to produce coherent output. **So cut us some slack!**



CHAT: Or at least **gut a hack!**

HAMISH: *[Puts an image onscreen of a train track switching point.]* Can we, please, shunt the train of our thought back onto the main track?



CHIT: Hey, kinda like on the Oscars where warning music tells the winner they are over the time limit and need to shut their trap.

CHAT: *[Pretends to work a large cane.]* I always preferred the vaudeville hook to drag the offender off stage. Adds comic flare.

HAMISH: We don't want to get you off stage, but on the right track of our yak-yak.



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Smiling hugely.]* Well, our Director did say we were *heard* animals.

CHAT: I remember, it was the morning he had us over for perfectly boiled eggs and burnt toast. He poured his coffee into his saucer and slurped it. We sat in his home screening room for over three hours watching Chantal Akerman's avant-garde film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, yet managed to turn it all into a romp.



Potato peeling scene. Chantal Ackerman, Dir., *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975).

CHIT: That address makes a perfect password. Yah, always loved the long potato peeling scene in that film. It's easy on the editor! Reminded me of Basic Training. And you, YOU! *[pointing to Chat]* managed somehow to get lipstick all over his copy of *Animal Farm*.

CHAT: Oh well *[blushes, eyes tilt upward]* . . . such, such were the joys!

HAMISH: *[Scans his iPad, holds up his right hand.]* A Watcher just posted a question for Chit 'n Chat. Heidi from Roswell, New Mexico asks *[clears his throat, reads]*:

Smarty Marty Heidegger speculated on the total strangeness of beings and our experience of Nothingness, like the Absurd - induced nausea in Sartre's playbook — metaphysical Angst. Like when we gaze at the night sky, or look at amazing images from the Webb telescope. Like when you two found yourselves on an alien craft surrounded by cosmic weirdos.

CHIT: No shit! Entry into the Sublime sporting my hybrid alien genes. Very stylish.

CHAT: Damn right! Being reveals itself with Huge Slap. Ugh, alien skin is like moth-eaten velvet and shimmers like the phosphorescence of a crashing wave. The sound and the fury where clock time vanished, duration prevailed. Our minds were imposed upon; percept, memory, induced amnesia, alien mental invasion. We were tossed onto our Existential butts and now need to make choices about who we are, what our "life project" will be post-abduction in a post-Beckett techno-verse.

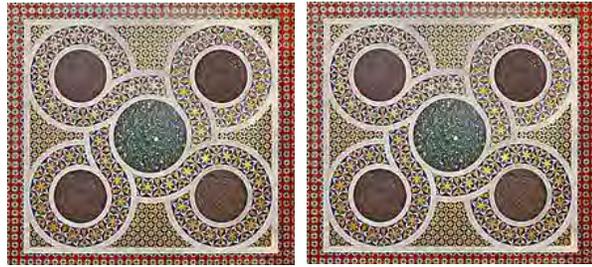


DNA hack.

Our Director and Playwright are trying to assist us by having us all co-create a production that explores our Being-in-the-World now and in the near-future edging toward trans-humanism. Let me read from my notes *[pauses, pulls out and unfolds a cheat-sheet,*

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

reads]: The Director wants us clowns to probe the incongruous multiplicity of the elementary sensations of selfhood — Chit, think Genou, your resident hybrid-alien — and how us actants can make productive sense of our astonishing experiences to go beyond the blindness of mechanistic materialism and the exploitation of Capitalist Realism toward post-



humanism. As a kick-off to our final project, the Director suggests we to do a riff on artist Marina Abramovic's seven-hours-a-day-for-three-months performance at the Museum of Modern Art, where she sat, staring fixedly into the face of anyone who wanted to sit across from her and ask things like: "Did your space trip appease a longing?" But unlike the 2010 MoMA performance, us Becketteers will sit on swivel chairs in the center of a two quincunxes, four audience members sitting in folding chairs, facing us. All chairs precisely, five feet apart. In a kind of musical chairs, each visitor who wishes to query us over our abduction experience can do so. Santa Fe Museum of Contemporary Art may will host the three hour event, using a quincuncial mural design in Palermo dating from the twelfth-century as a sort of floor plan and symbol of communication among the parties.

[Puts down the sheet of paper.] Director said this type of audience participation might more fully awaken us into a deeper cosmic feel for the universe, for astrology, and for number symbolism. I think of my childhood galactic view when — a bit frightened, but also excited — I stared up at the vast nothingness of the heavens through my uncle's phallic telescope. I later connected that pregnant moment with my uncle to the song "And the Stars Were Shining" in Puccini's opera *Tosca*. A pivotal point, pleasant and awful, in recalling my earlier abductions *[see vol. 2, pages 31 - 32]*.

CHIT: Walking around in total darkness? You were lucky, ducky! Not that pre-Socratic philo-sopher Thales who strolled out tugging at his toga, studying stars at night and fuckin' fell down a well.

HAMISH: *[Playing on Chit's remark.]* Well . . . put Chat! *[Clapping softly.]* But Chit, Thales was trying to view stars at their zenith and went down the well to focus his field of vision better.

CHIT: Yah, but the latter makes a better story. And our cunning Playwright knows how to play up the fact that we *Experiencers* have gone down the proverbial rabbit hole, only to come back, bearing witness to sore muscles, fear of one's own heart beat. A bit like Thales.



Thales of Miletus.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Maybe even **BEAR OUR SOULS**.

CHIT: Yah, who said: **DON'T FEED THE BEARS!**

CHAT: **NOR THE BUFFALO!**

CHIT: **OR THE ELEPHANTS!** *[A recent tourist's death in Zambia by an elephant on steroids coming to mind.]*

HAMISH: *[Smiling.]* You're right, if you mean abductees have been buffaloes by Men in Black to keep silent, deny memories. Or even pushed off the road to their deaths while locked in their trunks *[puts an appropriate jpeg onscreen.]*



Men in Black.

CHIT: Knew a fearsome threesome of Ph.D. candidates who intimidated their hostile dissertation readers — they derisively called them “McDons” — by always walking together, wearing black, sporting shades, carrying super-slim black briefcases. It worked, too. Once, all three got on the down-elevator with their Department Chair, “Herman Gorilla”, known for his air of all-knowingness, his stiff but well-liquored upper lip, and for always wearing a purple paisley shirt, a simile for his inner mood. When the elevator doors opened onto the lobby, the fearsome threesome exited. But the Chair, dazed, remained, yellow urine pooling around his brown loafers. Those entering the car saw him manically rubbing leather elbow patches on his tweed sport coat and staring at the ceiling, singing “Braque of Ages” and mumbling non-stop about Iranians discovering Cubism centuries prior to Picasso and Braque. What the Men in Black did, we’ll never know.

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HAMISH: *[Spontaneously cracking up.]* By Odin! That's the best! They must've worked some wicked weird woo-woo on that dude.

CHIT: Sure beats events logged in Brit author David Lodge's "Campus Trilogy" novels.

CHAT: Hey, wasn't he awarded a CBE? But dyslexics see it as BCE! Both are holdovers.

CHIT: Saw *The Holdovers* a few months ago with our production's web designer, "HTML". Could've been better, I thought and HTML agreed, saying, "A Christmas break alien abduction would've "added spice and glogg to the plodding plot, bringing a much needed Valentine smile to Paul Giamatti's droll performance." Our Playwright heartily agreed.



"HTML" hard at work.

CHAT: *[Explaining.]* Nice guy. Totally dedicated; everyone just calls him "HTML". Hell, I don't know his actual name.

HAMISH: In phonetic alphabet his cognomen translates as: Hotel - Tango - Mike - Lima. Oh, Bravo - Tango - Whiskey — he sent me three jpeg promos to post, but not post-haste.

CHIT: More appropriate than you think. He was drunk — yelling "Sha-sho-sha-shapper" (It's a sure show stopper") — and got entangled trying to tango with a married couple, Mike and Lima, at a swinging Roswell flying saucer-themed bar we hung out at after doing research in local museums for us.

CHAT: Given the amount of booze imbibed, is was quite a quantum *entanglement* *[winks at Hamish]*. I think one chair got broken — no, *two* chairs — and one saucer-shaped cocktail glass filled to the brim with a Double Absinthe From Terra (DAFT for short), a drink dedicated to pairs of abductees.

CHIT: Three is one too many for a tango, for sure!

HAMISH: *[Repeating himself.]* Hotel - Tango - Mike - Lima recently sent me some promotional images he created to post on our station's Facebook page a few days after this exchange between us today *[puts up three images in succession onscreen]*.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3



CHIT: HT is just “chumming the waters.” Meaning, he sends his chums a blank poster which they hold up for a photo op. Post-production, HT adds appropriate text to the posters in Arial font. Calls this “making meta-merch.” The Director digs it.

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CHAT: Oh, a light bulb just lit over my head — er — no, a battery-lit menorah. *[Pauses.]* Chit, when we participate in that double quincuncial yak-yak at MoCA, got a ball-bustin' idea. You know the inevitable question — *What was your abduction like?* — will be asked, so suggest you reply with this choice Chitish tidbit *[stands up, in a loud voice]:*

BAA-ROWWMM

[Sound of mortar fire, quickly followed by]:

BEE-YOWWWW . . . BEE-YOWWWW

[The sound of ricocheting bullets, followed by a modified-for-the-times snippet you've chosen from Jewish author Norman Mailer's famous war novel The Naked and the Dead]:

By the stars! *[looking upward, right index finger on nose, exuding a TV talk-show chattermeister's affability].* A feeling of elation and excitement and awareness! Like zoom-zooming through the starry night in an open food supply truck, past desperate donkey carts, over dirt and gravel roads star-strewn with debris and bodies, knowing one is vulnerable to ambush by the likes of the Amboy Dukes.

BAA-ROWWMM . . . BAA-ROWWMM.

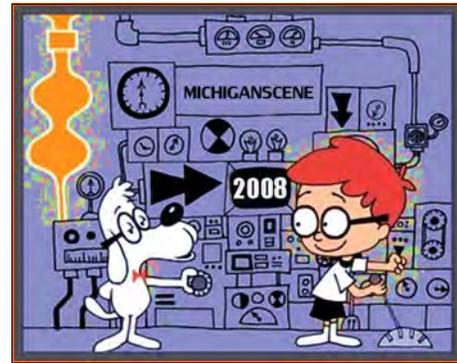
[This explosive sound is followed by a pregnant pause . . . then you then delivery the coup-de-grâce, a New Age snippet of advice that could be palmed off as pure Ram Dass]:

You, pointing to your questioner, eyes unblinking, carry the myth of yourself in your hand, opening your palm facing your interlocutor in a dramatic gesture that holds the secret of the Whole — recalling Edward Norton's "Eisenheim" magician character in *The Illusionist*.



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HAMISH: Oh, wait! Let me access the Wayback Machine, looking for Ann Arbor Michigan, 2008 [the clickety-clatter of him madly typing on his iPad]. Chat, your reference to the movie *The Illusionist* brings to mind this stage-shot of you and Chit, before the audience of the filmed play *The Posh Hand of Andronicus* in 2008. Yes, I've done my research [puts onscreen this image]:



Mr. Peabody, Sherman, the Wayback Machine.



CHIT: *The Posh Hand of Andronicus* was a comedic takedown of a Shakespeare play in which — spoiler alert — the word “hand” is referred to over sixty times.



Original poster art for the filmed play, Ann Arbor, MI (2008).

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Certainly *not* moral pap for the young. Hey, remember *you* [points at Chit] were instructed to pronounce hand as *hand*. I was told to posh-pronounce, while expelling your breath, it as *hahndd*. Took many rehearsals for us to get it right. Right?

CHIT: Right. Audience loved it! It was pure genius for the set designer to use special effects to put ghostly images of the audience into the dark background of the stage itself so they could snap photos of their own visages floating magically behind the actors. The gimmick played to the growing popularity of Selfies 'n even might've inspired the magic act scenes with magician Eisenheim on stage performing in the film *The Illusionist*.

CHAT: Loved that film! What Chit isn't telling you is that just before the final curtain a group of Young Republicans in the audience abjured clapping in favor of raising middle fingers of both hands, while some skin-heads sported brass knucks and . . .

HAMISH: [Scrolling.] Oh, here's a UM's campus rag, *The Michigan Daily* — once edited by activist Tom Hayden — review of that night: "A radiant node or cluster of constant rushing designed for the ear and the eye; the production was both a *well-wrought urn* and a *howl*. You have to hand it to the Director, by the end, not just the cast, but many in the audience found that their fingers had suddenly rediscovered their native language. And one attendee, last seen arguing with a tattooed skin-head, ended up in a cast."

CHIT: It is a play staged-to-be-filmed, like what our Director is doing in our *Chit for Chat* series. Very possible a UM theater prof or film buff sent a copy to some Hollywood bigwig or to UCLA's film archive where it sat on a shelf until *The Illusionist's* director, Neil Burger, watched it while chomping down a Hatch Chile Burger and a Deconstructed Caesar Salad. But who knows?



Neil Burger, Director.

CHAT: Speaking of UCLA — I like to say: "UCLA when the smog lifts" — I saw an ad in *The New York Review of Books* last week for yet another, as the ad put it, "tome of film - theater criticism, plus important trivia," edited by the Film Quinze Collective (a band of fifteen Professors Emeriti from UCLA's Film and Theater Department who live and publish in Cannes, France). The English edition's title is clever: *Scribbles, Sorrows, and Russet Potatoes* (volume three). And, surprise, surprise, I found a footnote in that book mentioning a USC grad student's short film of a theater performance I once had a minor role in. In the two-act play *Primrose Hill*, I played (as the program notes state): "The gushing girl with the Samsonite luggage" who after painful scenes relating to poet Sylvia Plath's short life, would briskly walk across the stage in a

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Absolute Zero Blue suit, making a perfect hypotenuse across the rectangular stage, while pulling a 1960s style suitcase and yelling: “Yet life, more terrible, maunches on.” I don’t think I need remind anyone here my stage persona now is hardly that of a “gushing girl”. Hamish, you might want to expand your research to peruse those volumes for any reference, great or small, to *The Posh Hand of Andronicus*.

HAMISH: Okay Experiencers, but I think our canoe has drifted off topic. *[Scanning his iPad.]* We are starting to lose some of our Watchers. Let’s paddle back on course *[feigns paddling a boat]* before a stray remark torpedoes our conversation.

CHIT: Or a Chinese-backed Hidden Dragon cyberattack gets around your defenses and takes down your server **clickety-clack**.

CHAT: Or an old Madrid coal mine shaft running underneath your radio station implodes, collapses, permanently interning us in a fallow grave.

CHIT: That’s *shallow* grave! So, Hamish. your audience, sharing the literary person’s *nostalgie de la boue*, could easily dig it using spades, defend the site with clubs and, hearts in hand, hope for a suit of diamonds.

HAMISH: Or *hallowed* grave. I’d like to think the WTF disaster site would become a memorial and be visited by my adoring Watchers — particularly recent graduates from Ivy League schools who listen to Taylor Swift, as they say, *ironically* — at least once a year, or at least on the Diamond Anniversary of my first podcast.

CHIT: Oh, and let’s not forget those Watchers of yours who throw week-long film parties, watching Luis Buñuel’s *The Exterminating Angel*, over and over. Yah, dude, I checked out your demographic while re-reading snippets of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s 1979 book *Distinction*. *[Speaking to the Watchers directly, waving familiarly.]* Hi, fellow cultural capitalists! *[Tosses a kiss toward the camera.]*

CHAT: Speaking ironically, *monsieur?* Or did I just miss your *pointe* *[big smile]*.

CHIT: Why Chat, even the Director is aware bad habits our us, like a tendency to be



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abducted and tossed into a field (Frenchy's to be precise), and then attempting to capitalize on such . . .

HAMISH: Is this where, if this were scripted, I'd stand up in great excitement and yell in a snobby upperclass British accent: "CAPITAL!" [*pronounced "kepitol"*]?

CHAT: Well . . . you've already just done *that*. So why ask the question?

CHIT: Hamish is only being *affable*, as the term implies. No need to bust his chops.

CHAT: Well, he's been scoping me out, his eyes chomping at my bust, all during this interview [*feigns an insulted look*].

HAMISH: [*Playing along with the gag.*] Okay, I'm busted! I'm just an inhabitant of a bourgeois body devoid of greatness, slightly dirty, suffering shorts bursts of retrospective sexual amnesia, so don't worry. It's how I look seen through the Humble Tell-It-Like-It-Is-Scope.

CHAT: Fancy name for a mirror! And you're extraordinary, not like the herd.

CHIT: Hamish, are you tryin' to *confess* or *confuse*?

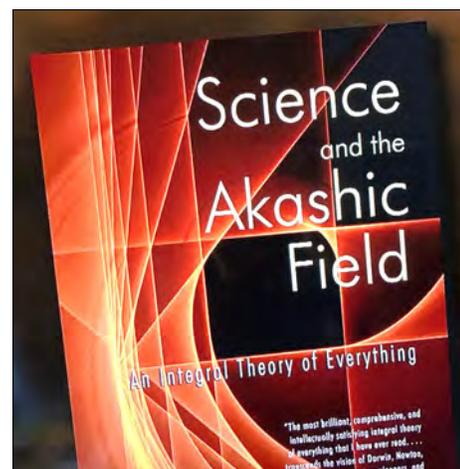
HAMISH: Might be both. In the dark days of my Catholic youth, I drove my Irish priest-confessor nuts over just that issue, tossed out of Sunday school class after my aesthetico-ethical question: "Who gets to describe beauty?" caused mass mayhem.

CHAT: Blimey! Today it'd take a bit more, like the surprise shit-hit-the-fan skimpily clad Fat Drag Queen stellar performance at Atrisco Heritage High School [*New Mexico*] junior prom that got the school principal fired and staff put on suspension.

CHIT: Hey, Stella!

CHAT: No, **Stellar!**

HAMISH: Or somewhere in between: *interstellar*.



Irvin Laszlo's book (2004)

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Somewhere between, say, Chit's cog-sac with its childhood amnesia and the realm of cosmic knowledge. What many of my Watcher's term the Akashic Field. Mystics and sages have long maintained an interconnecting cosmic field at the roots of reality exists that conserves and conveys info. Recent discoveries in vacuum physics show that this Akashic Field exists and has its equivalent in science's zero-point field that underlies space itself. This field consists, supposedly, of a subtle sea of fluctuating energies from which all things arise: atoms and galaxies, stars and planets, living beings, and even consciousness. This zero-point Akashic Field is, as many believe, the constant and enduring memory of the universe.

CHIT: [*Hands waving excitedly.*] I'm ffffflashing on Rupert Sheldrake's theories and my discussion with Therapist #1 on issues relating to telepathy, extrasensory perception, morphic waves, and so forth [see vol. 2, page 60].

HAMISH: That "so forth" could be the boost fractals, which reflect a fundamental principle of nature and are in our genes, give scientists in re-considering space, time, and reality. Fractals encourage us to move away from linear thinking and to embrace a more holistic, interconnected perspective. Some think time is fractal with repeating cycles and patterns. Their properties, generated by iteration and recursion, result in self-similar infinite complexities that have infinite perimeters within a finite shape! The famous Koch Snowflake, an iteration of triangles, is just one of many examples.

CHAT: Quite the paradox, no?

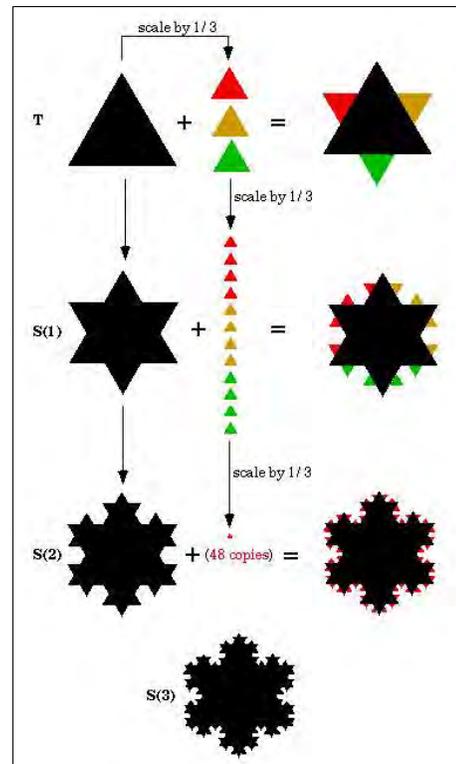
HAMISH: Yes! Not a little unlike you pair o' ducks. Clownish quacks! [*Chuckles.*]



Chit's Brain on Cosmic Knowledge.



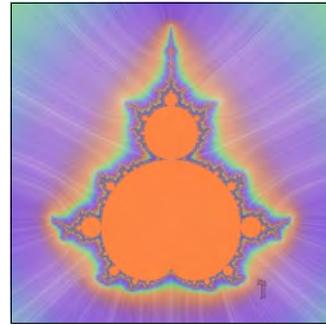
Mind - Cosmic Wholeness.



A Koch Snowflake fractal.

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CHIT: Gottfried Leibniz's concept of monads [*in his book Monadology*] is in tune with a fractal view of the cosmos. Each monad, posited Leibniz, is a perfect mirror of the entire universe. All is one. The striking and thought-provoking similarities in Leibniz's writings on the nature of the cosmos to "Indra's net" as described in the Buddhist Avatamsaka Sutra, suggest finite shapes with infinite complexities. Curiously, Benoît Mandelbrot's famous fractal takes on a Buddhist shape.



Buddha-shaped Mandelbrot fractal.

CHAT: [*Squints.*] Looks like "It" needs to go on a diet.

HAMISH: *Dicho y hecho!* [*Puts up another jpeg.*] Here's the pertinent reference in that Sutra. Infinite number of "jewels" that "glitter like stars" in which are reflected all the other jewels. If that's not iteration and self-similarity I don't know what is. Similar to Leibniz's conception. And fractals are consistent with quantum theory's postulation of quantum superimposition and entanglement in the cosmos and our brain's microtubules. Did you know that fractals can exist in hyperdimensions?



A hypercube tesseract.

The "visitors" to our planet may well have a very deep understanding of fractals and use such knowledge to move through the cosmos, even through time. Entangled particles existing within a fractal tesseract, a hypercube, could theoretically bypass linear space and time. DNA sequences exhibit fractal properties, too.

CHIT: Your Uman brains be not wired to think in four or more dimensions [*laughs*].

HAMISH: Let me show you something. [*Screens a text and a diagram.*]

"Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net which has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each 'eye' of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels, glittering 'like' stars in the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring." — Avatamsaka Sutra

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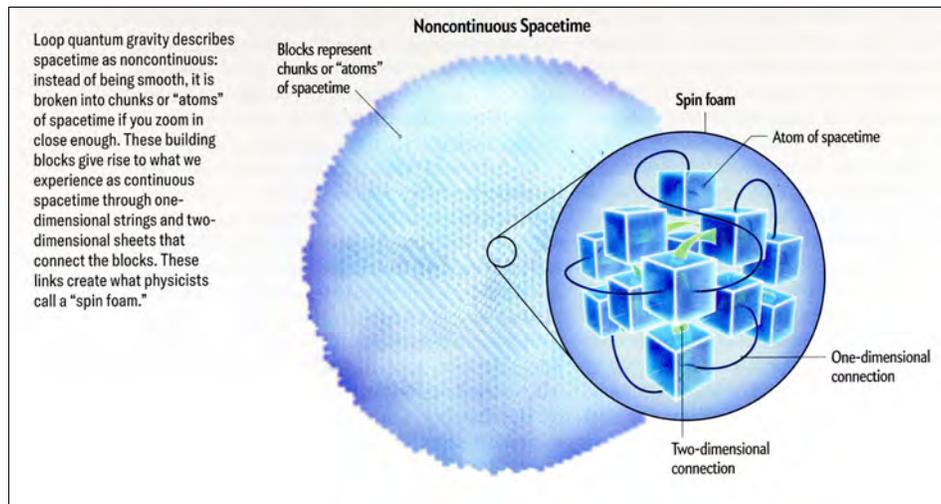


Diagram of Loop Quantum Gravity: Noncontinuous Spacetime.

CHIT: *[Ignores the projected images.]* Hey, hey, hey, hey! Earth to Hamish. To answer your *previous* pronoun query: I said *your* brains, because Genou's existence implies excluding *your* unmodified cog-sacs, even though I - You when looking in the mirror, do be seeing only one face. Until my therapy, my alien-self was akin to a hostage. But should've been suspicious because as a kid I called my books "spaceships" because they took me to places unknown. Now a bridge is being completed. Well, unless some drifting mental shit hits it's supporting pillars. Then? Who knows? But, ya gotta know them proper pronouns. **NOW!** Not just your proteins and probiotics as constantly touted by *your* infectious society of the spectacle. FYI, it's why Iran calls us "The Big Devil."

CHAT: *[Feigning terror, jabbing her right index finger at Chit.]* Oh! Oh! It's **THEM!** **THEM!** Some whopper of an estrangement device, Chit; ready-made for our Playwright, to exploit, right?

CHIT: Exploit. Explore. What's the diff? **THEM** do be inside me, Quebec - Echo - Delta. *[Q.E.D.]* Genou do be part of the confluence of three rivers carrying on in the cosmic tumult, shoulders-to-shoulders, soldiering on to tear the fabric of the perceived world apart, attacking the "Human Security System" *[Kantianism]*, being disruptive, even when just visiting a funky dark smoke shop where gruff men, satisfying irresistible desires for chess matches over a catalogue of anecdotal detail from their memories, create the stink of tobacco. On stage, too, like now. *[Stands and bows toward the camera, as Chit and Hamish slowly clap.]*

HAMISH: *[Claps, laughing as Chit collapses into his chair, eyes rolling.]* So, your home

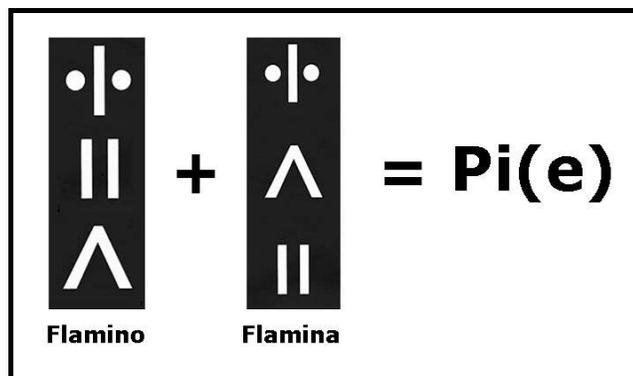
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

is behind, the cosmos ahead, huh? Yah, ordinariness is on the wane these days as this Loop Quantum Gravity diagram explains.

CHAT: *[Ignores the diagram.]* Reminds me of Chit and Chat's first audition for a play titled *Numbers for Pie in the Sky*. This was back in our salad days when pronouns were pronouns and sexist stereotypes abounded and artistic recreation of the past constituted a higher truth than memory alone. The Brazilian director, "Fogo", looked like a younger, darker version of Harvey Weinstein. He chastised the Indigenous Playwright, Joe Big Hat, "Fuck, don't bag *them* together! You don't put cold milk (referring to Chit) next to hot roasted chicken!" (me, with my gull-wing pelvic bones). The Playwright was feisty — "Populate plays 'n pollute novels" was his dictum — and preferred to write in public libraries. Arms akimbo, he stood up to Fogo and yelled: "You don't? I will. I will!"



CHIT: And he did, and we did, and our career, albeit modest, took off. The set design was simple, dominated by a large paper-mache replica of a Stonehenge-like structure, a representation in three-dimensions of the math symbol for Pi which equals the irrational number 3.141. . . . Our on-stage presence (as Flamino and Flamina) consisted of interconnected verbal



sparrings, "numbers", played around this monument to Pi, while dressed in jump suits with mathematical symbols on them *[see diagram]*. Curiously, one of our numbers featured the two of us arguing: Flamino a Believer in the existence of UFOs and Flamina a fierce Skeptic.

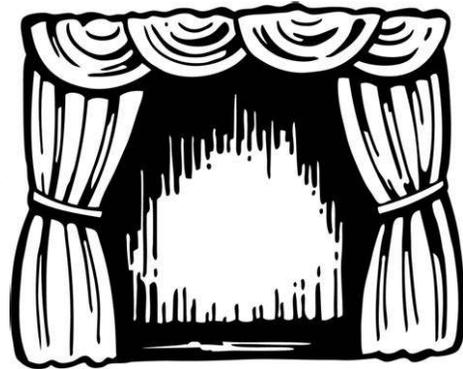
The initial number lasted precisely 3.14 minutes; thereafter the time of each succeeding skit doubled in time: skit two was 6.28 minutes long, skit three 12.56 minutes, skit four 25.12 minutes, and so forth. To signal the end of each skit a bell would DING-DING. Then we'd go to opposite sides of the stage, make boxing moves, 'til the bell rang again, like in a real boxing match.

Conversely, the time of the next number was halved whenever a member of the audience left either to use the loo or simply fled the scene. Then one of us sparring partners would get a Boston Cream Pie **SMACK** in the face by a stage-hand dressed as a Killer Clown, like in the movie. When that happened, the loud sound of operatic laughter would blast over the sound system. Our director at the time had recorded hours

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and hours of operatic laughter and edited it all onto a large magnetic tape.

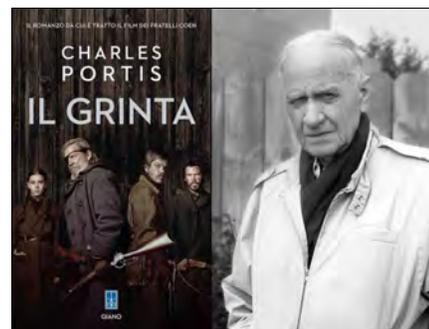
CHAT: Yah, and the more people left, the shorter the skits got and the more pies we got in the puss. When the audience finally caught on to the system — an algorithm you might say — more and more of them began lining up at the loo laughing, or leaving completely disappointed. When only three audience members were left, we halted horsing about. Then, pie-eyed, we stumbled about with broom and mop cleaning the stage of the remains of the play, Pie, uttering “Fie! Fie!” as we did so. *Exeunt*. Final curtain fell to loud boos. The actors quickly retreated to the bar next door for *their* booze, where we spied a parody of a WWII warning sign about loose talk in bars, sinking ships:



LOOSE LIPS SHRINKS SIPS

CHIT: The play got panned, like a pie, of course. To paraphrase the review: *It's merely a drop — NO! — a molecule — NO! — an atom, part of an atom, an electron, neutron, whatever, in the ocean of bad plays produced every year in this state.* The state was Oklahoma! Oops! Hope I haven't offended any of your Watchers, Hamish.

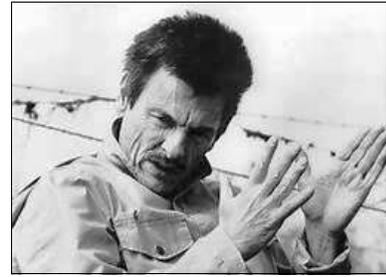
CHAT: Our current Playwright told me that weird play had influenced him and our Director, who, much to their mutual surprise — while talking about their respective pet dogs — discovered they were both fans of the “Grand Poobah of the Antigrandiose,” Charles Portis [1933 - 2020], who has been wittily described as “America’s most remembered forgotten novelist.” Portis wrote *True Grit*. Yes, it was the basis for the John Wayne film by the same name (although I prefer the Italian title *Il Grinta*) [grins hugely].



In the book and film there is a scene with two minor dim-witted, amoral characters sporting Beckettian names “Quincy” and “Moon,” whom Rooster Cogburn and Mattie have tracked down. Our Director made us watch that scene over and over, as he felt it was pertinent to our clownish roles as Chit and Chat.

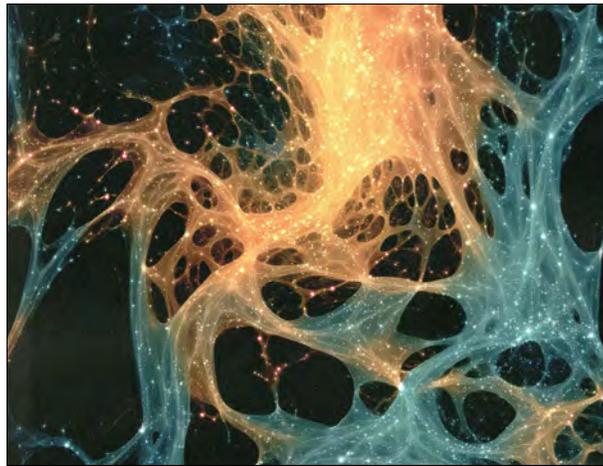
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CHIT: Portis's first novel was *Norwood*, came out in 1966. After reading that comedic Texas to New York road trip adventure, our Playwright named his (now deceased) frisky Water Spaniel "Norwood". That dog came up in conversation between him and our Director and that's how . . . But, to add to Chat's story. Our Director — to show you something of his radical sensibilities — loves the Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky for his metaphysical themes, long takes, his interest in memory. In his 1966 film, *Andrei Rublev*, the director stages a Crucifixion scene in a Russian winter countryside, using bad actors playing it with ridiculous pathos, tearing flowing. He told me it was the overplaying of the bad actors that inspired him, drew him to us chitty-chats for his later projects.



Andrei Tarkovsky.

HAMISH: *[Claps.]* Okay, okay! Enough! You've stepped too far off track, clowns. *[Puts up a third image.]* Been showing you diagrams concerning quantum spin foam and stellar voids, cosmic Swiss cheese *[see below]*. Those theories are *hot* right now. The concepts



of the multiverse and voids may lead to clues to solve the mystery of dark matter, dark energy, and neutrino particles and how to power faster-than-light spacecraft.

CHIT: And what about *old trinos*? *[Laughs.]* Omit! Omit! . . . Those voids, the multiverse — Beckett would've danced an Irish jig had he known about that stuff.

CHAT: Hey! What if Beckett was abducted, say as a kid, might that have had a major influence on his literary themes?

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CHIT: Yes! [*Perks up.*] The idea of a discreet universe broken up into chunks of space and time like cut-up corn beard in which operates our cog-sacs with their soupy lightning storms swirling and crackling in three pounds of wet meat would neatly fit Sammy B's embedding of his characters wherein their "selves" are the fantastic wealth of a person desperately trying to fill the Sartrean void, their Being No One.



Endgame, Samuel Beckett (like brains in vats).

HAMISH: Explains the *dark matter* Beckett pitchforks his characters into, their existential angst, their *dark energy* on stage, and their need for an adenoid exam [*marked satisfaction on his face*].

CHAT: And in Beckett's play, ironically titled *Happy Days*, the umbrella "Winnie" wield's sure looks like a small saucer hovering over her, about to yank her upward. It's really a *summit* part for a female actor, like ME. Hey, even Beckett described her as "like a bird."



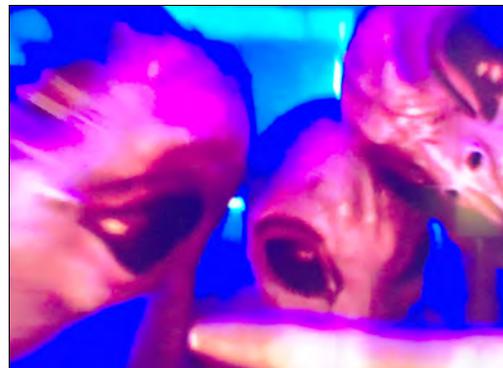
Happy Days, Samuel Beckett.

CHIT: Whinny like a horse 'til hoarse. Probably what her husband, "Willie", thinks of her babble in between him launching counter-measures to her nuisance field by reading newspaper headlines to her, as Jay Leno did on his "Tonight Show's" Headlines skit.

CHAT: Yep. Winnie explains that Willie's listening enables her to go on talking, and is delighted when he responds, even if briefly, to one of her many questions.

HAMISH: And she's ever the optimist! At least you two respond in detail to my questions, albeit going off the main track too often.

CHIT: But what if Winnie'd really prefer to be abducted? Lifted up out of the mundane world she inhabits to visit curious aliens, wandering the stars [*he has noticed Hamish's copy of*



Curious Aliens.

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Indigenous author Tommy Orange's novel Wandering the Stars]. Might've resulted in a more responsive audience to that play, dontcha think?

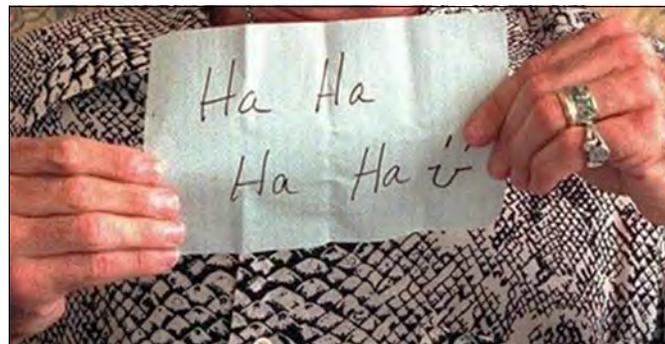
CHAT: Ho - chi - ka - ta - ho - co - co - co - co! Sorry my mouth is full of corn bread.

CHIT: *[Whispering.]* Unbeknownst to Chat, she's citing a line from the Seventies Glam Rock band Sweet's hit "Co - Co." She likes everything sweet and loves to linger abed, dontcha know. Why the abduction hit her hard. *[Louder.]* As our therapists pointed out: the split between our social universe of established customs and piñons among which we dwell, plus the traumatic brutality of the Real revealed in our abductions, can't be *denken* within the same subjective space. Ho! I think I was steadier during the Disturbing Event due to my depressive tendencies. *[Much louder]* Watchers! The results are in: Depressives act more calmly than others under heavy pressure or the threat of catastrophe.



Glam Rock Band "Sweet".

HAMISH: *[Waving both hands before him.]* Wait! A Watcher just sent us this jpeg *[fiddles with his computer, puts the image on-screen].*



CHAT: *[Delays her answer to Chit, gives forth a momentary disfiguring facial tic.]* . . . **Ho - ho - ha - ha!** You were scared shitless, amigo. Us women give birth — an *alien-ish* enough event, a monstrous irrupting of the living thing out of the inside of a body — and we **TAKE IT** calmer than the male of the species. Q.E.D.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 5.

Prior to their podcast a KMRD, Chit and Chat lunch at The Mineshaft, Madrid's popular eatery where they see a fully restored vintage Triumph 650cc motorcycle parked outside. Inside, a leather-clad cyclist stands against a mirror, his head in a newspaper.



Chit scarfs a BLT on Ciabatta bread, Chat bites into brisket tacos. Both are clad in jeans, but Chit sports a navy roll neck pull-over, Chat a pink hoodie. Chit's private selves have been dangling by thin ropes since his hypnotherapy. He's been repeating a mantra the Director has prescribed as prep for these podcast interviews: *My thoughts open me like a can, raw. I wander around inside my cog-sac searching for skinless ghosts.* Meanwhile, Chat mulls over the indisputable logic of unknown unknowns as she is still reverberating from the exposure to unauthorized brainwaves the aliens besieged her with. They leave, arrive at KMRD, sit for their interview.

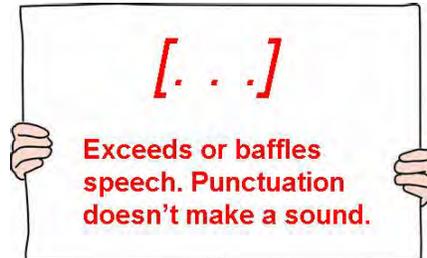
HAMISH: Again Watchers, we are fortunate to have again actors Chit and Chat, recent alien abductees, appear on *WTF!* podcast. They've been cast in a filmed-play whose Playwright offers the insight about that production: "Only a cracked mirror can adequately reflect a broken world, only clowns can redeem it." Clowns — the Playwright insisted I address you as such — I'm flashing on the creepy face-hugging alien in the SF film *Alien*, with its snaky, gruesome appendage down the astronaut-host's throat, its tail tightening on his neck whenever crew tried to remove it. Hell, then the consequent chest-ripping birth of a new creature while its human host is munchin' mornin' toast. [*Hamish plays an excerpt from Jerry Goldsmith's "Face Hugger" music composed for that scene in the 1979 film Alien.*]



CHIT: Hello! I'm flashing on the tightening in my cog-sac during the first few secs of abduction. Felt like slippin' on ice, suspended in a moment of, well, lost balance, zero grav. By the way, Zero Gravity is the name of a comedy club in Houston. Once on their ship, me cog-sac felt like it was a bottle of foaming soda, my tongue suffered flickering tastes of rotten lemons, zinc coins, grilled octopus, Constant Comment tea . . .

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CHAT: *[Interrupts.]* That's because we constantly train our constant conversations sipping that tea, as the Director requires. But, you know, much of what we experienced during abduction needs be placed in square brackets. Put up my slide, Hamish *[does so]*.



CHIT: *[Continuing after that interruption.]* . . . and shit I couldn't name stuff but it'd stretch your suspension of disbelief to the breaking point. I was in a state of half-awake past and half-asleep future. I had to suppress a runaway river of words brought on by the mental storms brewing in my cog-sac. Me mind doubled — nay! tripled — like some cognitive stutter. Then inside my cog-sac echoes of chaos. Maybe it's the whorl of the mind-scan, the barrier between me and the aliens becoming porous, even more so as I had already been bio-hacked as a child. Recombinant DNA. Hey, maybe alien intelligence is seeding our minds with new ideas, *amuse mentale*, ways to solve our complex ecological and political problems, which themselves are products of our over-control of our world. But hard to render such a dynamic process as abduction in static words.

HAMISH: Maybe Trump was abducted as kid and his brain bio-hack went south, permanently discombobulating his small mind, his personality, and deadening his heart.

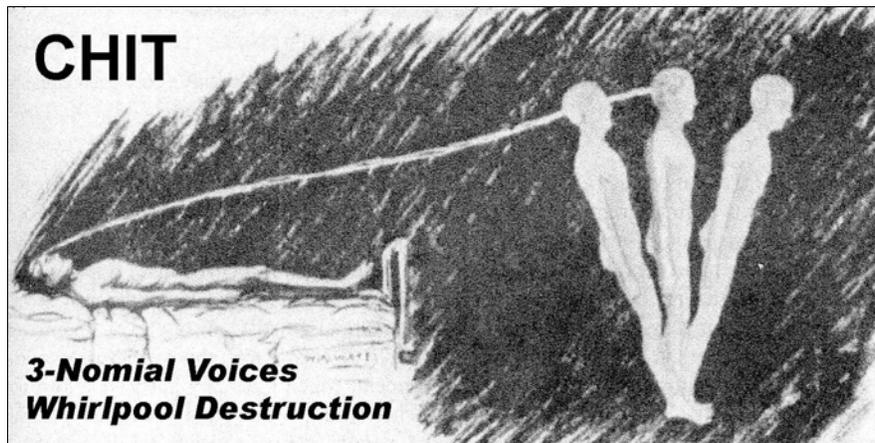
CHIT: Fuck, we do gene-hacking to produce glow-in-the-dark beer while the Pacific Ocean's Trash Vortex grows to the area of three Frances. So how to correct that over-control without over-controlling it again? I mean physics and genetics might arrive at solutions, but what of the heart — or the heartless like Trump — which suffers only questions? Huh, huh?

CHAT: A paradox. Quack, quack! Like mismatched socks.

CHIT: A pair of ducks! Me Gemini-Self, Genou, be being eaten alive by alien memories and memes, wearing distressed alien genes, all stemming from my hybrid nature, so I have a vague sense that I really don't belong here. I see the world as remote, as if through a clear plastic incubator. Like I was cultured in an off-world bioreactor. Show that slide our Director sent you, Hamish. It's a full-page ad for my trilemma.

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HAMISH: *[Puts up jpeg.]* I like the sketch and we get three of the price of one.



The Director's sketch of "Genou" (Chit's I - We Selves).

CHAT: *[Points.]* That's Chit, I always knew, that's Genou! Kneel before me!

CHIT: Why the Playwright is so happy and the Director eager to roll the cameras. I once thought I was slightly on the autistic spectrum. When my dad harshed on my buzz, it wasn't clear to me whether I was to clear my bowels, or clarify my vowels. As if my twin versions of myself, my Gemini Twins, weren't enough existential threat to wrestle with. My reality principle is in a shit-storm of flux, thanks to Genou. Ya grok?

HAMISH: *[Focusing Chit back on topic.]* More than a few of my Watchers would agree about the alien influence and the surrealism writer S.J. Perelman. Some think the aliens will give us the technology to *grow thick*, juicy steaks to accompany the gene-modified, rich in vitamin A, "Golden Rice" that synthetic biology has already been able to produce.

CHIT: What about the nay-saying Witnesses hung on your wall here? Oh, BTW — er — Bravo - Tango - Whiskey — you copped that Witness thing from Elan Mastai's SF novel *All Our Wrong Todays*. But *he* had it as *seventeen* witnesses, his main time-traveling character was the last witness — an Idiot.



HAMISH: *[Staring hard at Chit.]* Well, I couldn't position *myself* as an idiot, could I, and still do my podcast effectively. I'm *not* Lou Dobbs, for fuck sake!

CHIT: Whadda ya mean? The world *is* a live broadcast! Those neo-con commentators bask in idiocy and their audience *[sticks tongue out and in]* YUM - YUM — laps it all up.

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CHAT: *[Makes loud game-show buzzer sound.]* **BZZZZZTT!** In fact, studies show that the more educated one is, the better one is at convincing oneself that evidence opposing one's beliefs is **WRONG!** Just look at the universities filled with those dons . . . And scientists who constantly discredit UFO abductees.

CHIT: And now the Miss Information Contest! *[Raises both arms high.]* Ty and Charlene Bollinger are top contenders, what with their multi-channel media operation broadcasting bull-shit about cancer cures, vaccines, genome editing, and COVID-XIX.



The Truth About Vaccines, Co-founders.

CHAT: You mean down-home recipes like: **RED BEANS & RICE COOKED WITH A HAM HOCK AND BITS OF SPICY SAUSAGE PLUS TWO TABLESPOONS OF BLEACH WILL KICK THE SHIT OUT OF COVID?**

HAMISH: Fact: Facebook has some 35,000 under-paid workers trying to abort Miss Information's evil offspring just on their site alone. *[Lowering his voice.]* Ironically, this is happening even as your Director and Playwright are nudging Oprah Winfrey, Tom Hanks, Taylor Swift, George R. R. Martin, and Caitlin Clark to pose holding a small plastic flying saucer-alien tchotchke before them to kick-start public interest their production, *Light in August*, starring you wacky Experiencers, while Pantone simultaneously announces a new extraterrestrial color: Alien Green.



CHIT: Hey! I knew a rip-roaring feminist videographer named Vanalyne Green. I always hoped Crayola would introduce a new green crayon color in her honor. But that's too "Woke" for that company to take on, I suppose.

HAMISH: I'm flashing on Biotechnology's version of a Constitutional Congress, held at that place touting radical change on the Pacific Coast, Asilomar. *Rolling Stone* covered the important 1975 event, coming out with an issue that buttonholled me as it featured musician Stevie Wonder (shaggy coat, beads, and poufy hat) alongside geneticist James Watson (sporting a rumpled sweater), both sharing column space in a popular mag.

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CHIT: Fun to imagine an alien-human hybrid sitting in that audience, chuckling under its bad breath! Mumbling about its ability to enhance biological code, marrying machine and flesh. Like its improved DNA-based memory-storage in its wetware, and so forth.

CHAT: *[Eyes lighting up, sly smile on her lips.] I'd sing him the epithalamium of Hymen!*



Resident Alien's Alan Tudyk.

CHIT: Huh? What's that about the Himalayas?

HAMISH: No! The Greek God Hymen. *[Inhales deeply.] Give me an A or T or G or C! DNA nucleotide. A gene-splice unzippy-zipping-zip, faster than a tea sip, turning the hybrid into a horrific chimera as portended in H. G. Wells's chilling novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. The 1977 film version with Burt Lancaster was my fav.*



The Island of Dr. Moreau (1977).

CHIT: Hi! Talking about more FUN! John Craig Venter, a hot-shit biotech dude, synthesized the DNA of a whole bacterium, copying nature, and then coded into the DNA quotes from Robert Oppenheimer and James Joyce — he didn't ask the Joyce Estate for permission — along with secret messages to be de-coded by dedicated puzzlers. I bet my messed-with-DNA holds secrets as well, asemic writing of sorts.

But — damn it! — I didn't give the aliens write-level permission to my biological code! But I have to admit, this cut 'n paste method be quite Joycean and be employed by our Playwright numerous times. He even wrote a one-act play, deleting the DNA letters: A, T, G and C, then had the actors try to pronounce those hacked lines. Funny results.

He also alluded to us as akin to binary code: Zero (me, because I'm a sort of Beckettian void) and One (Chat, because she's always one step ahead of me), like in Boolean algebra or Off / On like me Pap's mood swings. He then strings us together in sets of eight words, bytes, to produce information on stage, which he likes us to deliver quickly, the kind of fast exchanges between characters in the Sondheim musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. Which, BTW, is currently showing at the Santa Fe Playhouse. To train us in this skill he has us



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perform two exercises: we sit five feet apart facing each other and simulate: *echolalia*, repeating the other's words, syllables; and, *echo-praxia*, repeating the other's observed behavior, then switching roles. All done at ZIP-ZIP-ZIP increasing speeds 'til we collapse.



HAMISH: Wow! Hard, weird exercises. Seurat's Pointillism was pixel-like. DNA's version of a byte is called a *codon* — not condom — and has three rather than eight positions (like my ex-wife preferred), as Amy Webb and Andrew Hessel explain in their information-stuffed book on synthetic biology, *The Genesis Machine*. Therein, they also note that the human genome contains 6.4 billion letters of genetic code, about the same number of letters found in 4,000 copies of *Moby Dick* which, Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, features a genetic rarity, a *whale* of an albino whale.

CHAT: What a whale of a tale you wag! *Moby Dick* surfacing, his entire dazzling hump visible, sliding along the sea like a saucer skipping across water, setting up a revolving ring of fleecy foam.

CHIT: An Event, to use Badiou's term.

CHAT: [Returning to the main point.] Not bad for you! To think you, Chit, have been "edited" not just by dons, ex-wives, bureaucrats, priests, and our Playwright, but also by alien *bricoleurs* who lured you into shiny ships wherein they lurked.

CHIT: AND RE-MEMBER also by Floridian MAGA Monsters from Hell. *In toto*, I'm a patch-quilt of guilt.

HAMISH: Well Spokane — er — spoken!

CHIT: Chat, he's gettin' with the pogrom — er — program. Language in tatters. Lyricism mixed with coarseness of expression. Like a cloud in trousers, albeit my trousers really were in a cloud, then around my ankles.

HAMISH: [Winking exaggeratedly into the camera.] Thanks. And thanks to that "Power of the Imagination" [arcs his right hand, palm facing his interlocutors, across in front of him as if tracing a rainbow in the sky]



Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov (d. 1918).

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which that bushy-bearded philosophic Tatar Georgi Plekhanov claimed is granted to all Marxists. I'd add all followers of S. J. Perelman, too. Too many critics — well, it was like casting pearls before swine — were so negative in their reviews back then.

CHAT: *[In two fingers of her hand, she holds an imaginary flower, which she presses to her nose, inhales, smiles.]* If he insists. But I *holy* agree with you on Perelman.

CHIT: Citizens! Enough imbroglio! *[Removes his right slip on shoe and bangs it repeatedly on his left palm, tapping out an S.O.S.]*

HAMISH: *[Trying to suppress laughter.]* Hey golden-mouthed! That's my role. As moderator. *[Loud rumble of thunder; mutters under his breath]* Hell, not another storm. *[His eyes move to his laptop, noticing Watchers are signing off, probably bored.]* Watchers, a severe storm is . . . As you know last time this occurred we lost power, so ...

KA-BOOM!!!

The radio station's frame house shakes, a poster falls, lights flicker madly under the violent monsoon storm above. Hamish's computer is repeating in a mechanical voice: *Are you sure you want to quit? Are you sure you want to quit?* In this hint of the terminal state of the Anthropocene, sudden sheets of monsoon rain pound the roof nearly drowning out all sound. Barely discernible, scared voices are heard through the dimly lit mayhem.

HAMISH: *[Twiddling with his laptop, trying to silence it.]* That was no Baby Boomer!

CHAT: *Jeeze! But I am!* Then let us part like ships in the sea Ahab . . .

CHIT: See?! See! I told you! *[Points at Chat.]* It's a habit! It's supposed read: *Seeing ships in the sky while playing our parts.* I knew we should have obeyed our Director. He wanted us to carry those knobby, twisted walking sticks *[see next page]* he dubbed "Wobblies" 'cause the sticks connote nature, wilderness, fleshly pleasures and self-expression. So now how the hell are we walking out of the forthcoming flood and mud unaided? We'll rue the day we do so. Remember what has just happened down in Ruidoso *[a New Mexican town inundated by fires and floods.]*

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CHAT: Oh, that covetous night! *[Ignores the question to make a reference to another stressful moment, the abduction, and to Pushkin's play, The Covetous Knight, a key classic study of avarice.]* Those aliens certainly unsparingly played with our parts before we unceremoniously departed onto Frenchy's Field. It was as if they'd beheaded the stars (I mean us) and bloodied the sky with our fluids. Like they've read all of Rikki Ducornet's SF with their otherworldly delightfulness and terribleness, and let them meander and linger in our minds — er — cog-sacs.

CHIT: It's always a fluid situation. But tonight — I predict, the glass being half full, not half empty — the universe will sleep with its huge paw curled upon a star-infected ear. Despite the . . .

KA-BOOM!!!

HAMISH: *[Frightened look on his face.]* Ah . . . Comrades, I think we are about to lose power. This happened a month ago. Until tomorrow, Watchers, this is Hamish signing off from my under-siege Perhapsburg Empire.

AWAM!

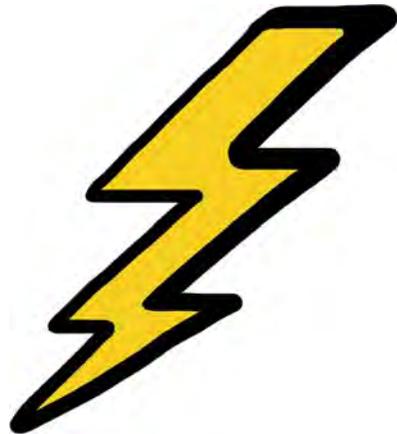
CHIT: Shit! The sky is booming: “And What About Me!” Fuck, we hear you!

CHAT: Oh, we sure do. There must be a Diné prayer for this kind of . . . to appeal to Tonenili, their God of Thunder or some other powerful deity . . .

AWAM!



The Walking Sticks.



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WAA PEET KWU CHUK AHLLUY AXK WEEW!!!!

[Screamed at the top of her lungs, Chat is unaware that by sheer terror and chance she's uttered in perfect Lenape — the Delaware Nation's language — an Indigenous name: "Waapeetkwuchukahlluyaxkweew," meaning "White Buffalo Woman", a sacred figure found in their myths who offers protection and wisdom. A careful Google search would reveal a Native American by that same name, a National Women's Weight-Lifting Champ, who'd be more than capable to lifting the roof beams off our trialoguers if full disaster hit the radio station. Shaking, eyes closed, our trialoguers hunker down under their chairs as they had practiced during school A-bomb drills, or as if they were residents of Gaza, their chairs still in a perfect isosceles configuration.]

POP!

The power pops off. Loch Dub dives into the dark, except for a single red emergency light. Torrential rain and golf ball-sized hail batter the roof, which begins to leak, spraying our trialoguers who assume an even tighter fetal position under the chairs.

CHIT: Damn! Our Director wanted us to "Spritz dialogue like seltzer water," *not* get spritzed ourselves. **Shit!** If a flash-flood is coming, to evacuate it'll be a choice between row versus wade as the road outside may be washed away. I feel a damp creeping my crack.

CHAT: I feel a damp creeping down my crack! Oh . . . *[Sniffing the air.]* Er — I think I've already evacuated!

CHIT: **Shit!** Well, as soon as the shit-storm stops, I'll have any clouded judgements of mine re-evaluated immediately, ya grok?

CHAT: Nope. Not that. It's very wet. . . . Piss on SCOTUS! Er — not you Hamish.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 6.

Hamish's podcast with our Beckettian clowns, was delayed a week as the station's leaky roof was patched and water damage cleared. The immediate effect of the storm was to turn the studio into a Félix Gonzalez-Torres-like installation: light bulbs, spilled candy, desks overturned, stacks of paper, etc. Watchers were bereft. But the delay in the podcasts did amp up interest in the show as Watchers exchanged posts amongst themselves. Delighted is Hamish, thrilled are the Director and the Playwright whose mantra is "Get the money." Having the whatsits to spar, the dialogo-magicians Chit and Chat anxious to continue. Arriving our duo hears Ives's "The Unanswered Question" playing, appropriate as they see that vintage motorcycle parked out the Mineshaft Tavern parked near the radio station. Inside, they notice their chairs have been replaced with *deux prie-dieu* facing Hamish's chair, the arrangement still an isosceles triangle. Behind Hamish, a new poster has been affixed to the wall [see above].



Poster replaces damaged one on Loch Dub studio wall.

HAMISH: [Sports a game-show host expression of delight and anticipation.] Pray do kneel before me clowns! [Chit and Chat kneel on the prie-dieu.] I want you in a confessional mode for our post-havoc podcast. Welcome back Watchers to Whiskey - Tango - Foxtrot! So much for the adage DON'T RAIN ON MY PARADE! But we *are* back, better than ever. And no FEMA employees were harmed during this event. I open with an image of my new wall poster. *You are the U in universe.* A good mantra.

Our delayed podcast had its benefits [eyes the water stains on the ceiling]. The weather event did allow me to meet again with our guests Chit and Chat's Playwright and their Director, delving into more background information on them. For instance the Playwright is a big S. J. Perelman, Donald Barthelme, and Vahid Paez fan; our "go-hard" Director digs films directors Truffaut, Fellini, and Godard.

But first, I want to acknowledge — HAIL TO YOU! — all the wonderful cards and posts you've rained on the station. Oh, and Aunt Deorbit Byrnes, I love you for the chocolate brownies, despite them being a bit overcooked on re-entry. Oh, I just *have* to put on-screen this fun card sent by a faithful Watcher in Silicon Valley. It was my personal fav as the sender scribbled inside about how he "misses the SX-70 Polaroid format and one's ability to press-mess with the film emulsion during development." Seems as a kid — binge-reading of Issac Asimov's robot SF stories and later becoming a fan of artist Mark Pauline's battle-bots as seen performing in Pauline's Survival Research Laboratories

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events — he'd take SX-70 Polaroid snaps of his toy robots as he played with them, arraying them for battle *[also puts on-screen the Internet entry below]*.

Survival Research Laboratories' Performances: *These performances are Hobbesian spectacles, wars of machine against machine. At eardrum-threatening volume they lurch and crush, grind and stab, launch projectiles and spew fire. What begins as choreographed quickly becomes chaotic, ushering in a primal combat at the edge of control. Audience members sometimes become involuntary participants. There is shattered glass and rent metal. There are smoking craters. Young adults smoking — er — something. There are ruins. Runes written on the concrete floor of every venue where Pauline's machines maul each other.*



Artist Mark Pauline and his battle-bot.



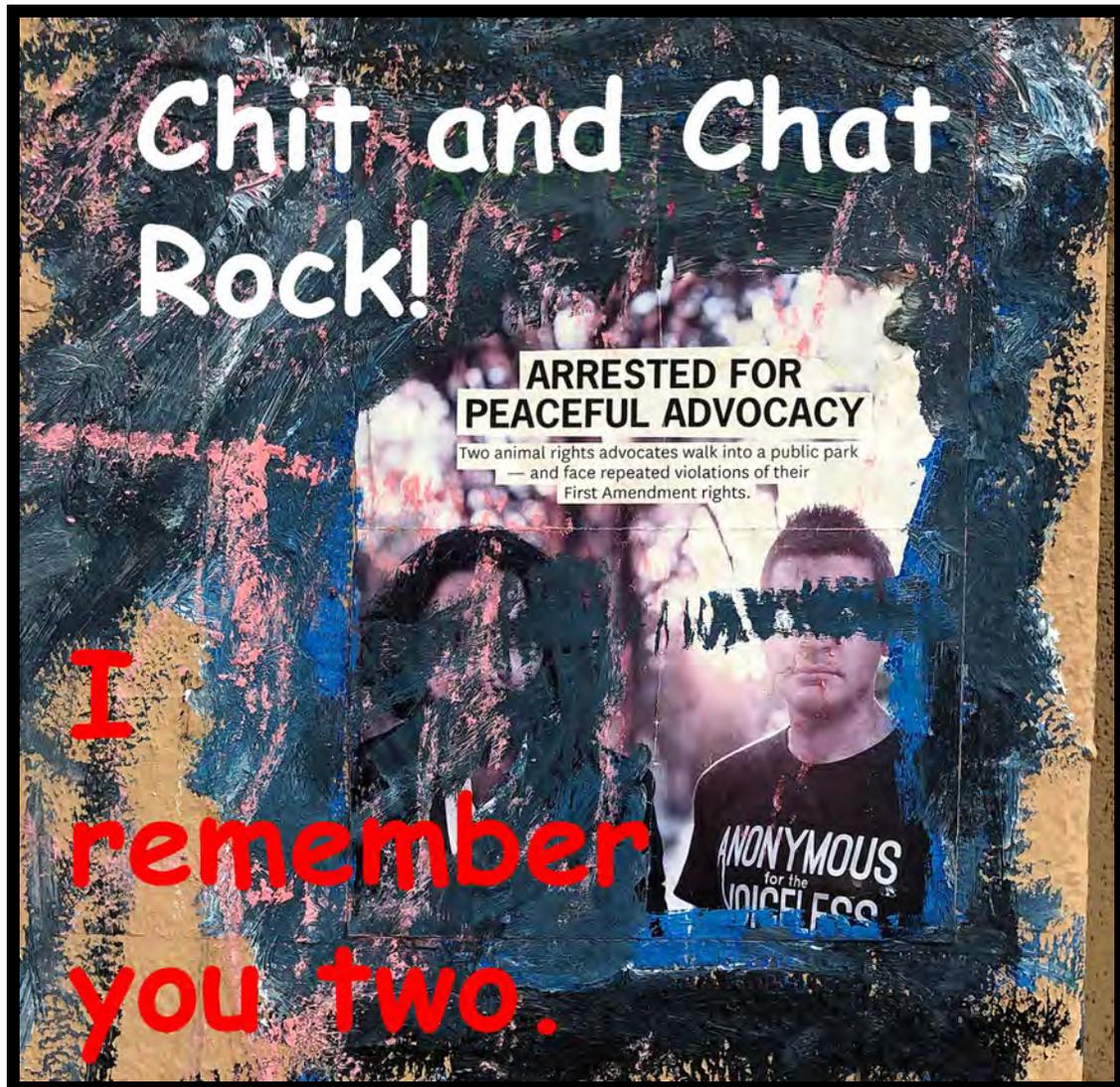
A Watcher's card. It purposely has the look of a late-1970s SX-70 Polaroid photo, and is a tribute to artist Mark Pauline's battling robots.

HAMISH: *[Continues, even more excited.]* Your Director's research assistants have dug up online a photo *[see next page]* of a nearly obliterated poster of you two after your arrest for Animal Rights Advocacy back in your counter-cultural youth. The Director overlaid celebratory text and plans to use it as a publicity bomb touting your activist creds.

CHAT: Shit, Chit. Remember that? We were unceremoniously ushered by cops into . . .

CHIT: I shat my pants! My *first* arrest. I think I was traumatized because of my early childhood abductions, which I was not fully conscious of then, until ushered in by . . .

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Old photograph by an unknown photographer, altered by the Director to make an ad poster touting Chit and Chat.

CHAT: Hypnotherapy! Childhood reading thrills never leave us, nor my first ride in my dad's 1948 Studebaker, nor my first taste of a Pavlova dessert, but abductions . . .

CHIT: RIGHT ON! *[Employing a clichéd 1960s expression, mimicking a High Five with his right hand.]* Hey, 1948 autos: the Merc, the Pontiac, the Hudson, ah!

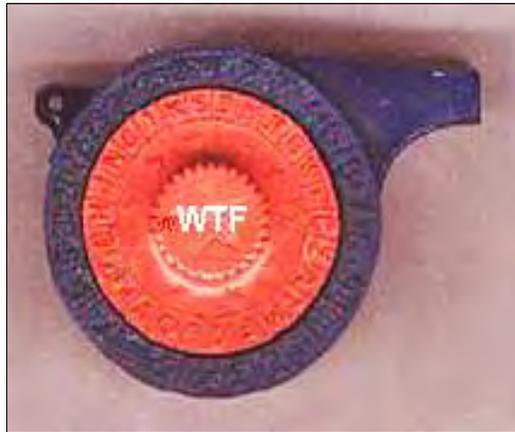
HAMISH: *[Laughs as two ragged stray tortoiseshell cats slyly sneak in through the cracked studio door for their usual daily treat.]* I've dubbed 'em Vowel and Diphthong. Perfect antidotes to mental agitation *[pointing at the cats]*. Guests, I first want to bring to your attention a critical comment by a Watcher signing his e-mail "Lars Bang". I quote:

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By Odin! C & C's discourse is a constantly open and shut encyclopedia; so so many literary references! I need a WTF decoder ring to grok this stuff. Send via Fed-X! BTW, you might re-title your series "Gullible's Travels."

CHIT: Very funny. *[Mimics removing a sucking stone from his mouth, announcing]* Me Pap! Me Pap! *[Laughs.]* But, hey, do you *really* offer Watchers such a ring?

HAMISH: 'Natch! Nothing is nothing even if its nothing. Fun holdover from the Fifties. I got a slide of it *[puts up image]*.



WTF Podcast Official Decoder Ring.

I occasionally encode a message concerning special events I host in person so Watcher's can decode the place, date, and time. They love it. Creates a loyal audience.

CHAT: *[Fist curled.]* Wish our abductors had given us one to HELP reveal their secrets!

CHIT: Yah, and we could've sold it on e-Bay for two million easily and used it to finance the Director's production. We'd be really getting on. But I think our own earthly creative minds have decoded our world's great big **WTF!** What our planet's endgame with be and have offered their melancholic insight. First, fated Austrian-Jewish writer Joseph Roth *[d. 1939]: The world worth living in was doomed. The world that would follow it deserved no decent inhabitants.* Second, American author Donald Barthelme *[d. 1989]* in his final novel asserted: *Things yet to come will make us sadder still.*

HAMISH: Point taken! Bravo - Tango - Whisky, I got that sly Beckett reference you slipped in. Apropos your quotations, I down-loaded this prescient image from activist artist Victor L. Thanangadan's homepage. You know him, a glass half-empty kinda guy.

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Utopia (2008) Victor L. Thanangadan

CHIT: I do. He actually has no middle-name, but likes the right-angle geometry of the

letter **L** as it signifies that he has “the right angle on leftist politics.”

HAMISH: *[Eyes go upward.] Well . . . [Hastily moving onward.] The Director sent me a poster from one of your earlier clown performances as “Lug” [screens the image].*



CHAT: Cool! I remember I played opposite you as the character Anna Full-Actor Shock.

CHIT: And you were *good*. Always lugging about and lolling with a huge beach ball.

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HAMISH: *[Interrupts.]* So, keeping *this anti-authoritarian image* in mind, let me ask you this question. It was suggested by a Watcher signing her e-mail “Ma Bell”. As she put it in her message it entails the past, the present, and the future. Ready clowns? Question: “WHERE SHALL WE PUT THE TELEPHONE BOOKS?” *DAH DAH DAH DEE DAH DEE . . .* *[Making sounds like the Think music on Jeopardy.]*

CHIT: *[Thinking, hand on chin, then ringing his hands.]* Answer: We’ve ushered in a wholly new era. So not over by the telephone, obviously. Telephones don’t have a specific place any longer. They are MOBILE EVENT MACHINES. My iPhone is kept in a BOMB-RESISTANT Kevlar sack. Everyman his specialty.

CHAT: *[Raising her hand to get attention.]* As for me, now days I use dial soap, not dial phones. In my kitchen. I put my telephone books in a cabinet alongside my cookbooks. Half the time I can’t even find my phone. I do what I can.

Hey, you want to usher in some P***P***A***P***? YOU GOT IT! ***P***A***P***! Ain’t I clever,

Hamm-ish? Pray — although I’m a bit plump and dowdy — may I continue?

HAMISH: *[Chuckling at the Beckett references.]* Speaking of prayer, Chat. I found online a week ago a Christian ministry site where you can order a retro wooden wall phone *[see photo]* from days of yore that recites a litany of Bible quotes and prayers when you lift the ear piece off the hook. For extra bucks, you can get the deluxe “Woke” model with a digital alarm clock and which intersperses quotes from Donald J. Trump, J. D. Vance, “Black Nazi” Mark Robinson, Ron DeSantis, and more between the Holy Words.



CHIT: **Ack!** Not just wholly words. Lying wins elections. You grok that. But, ultimately, to have a head full of nonsense is *muy* worse than having der schnoz full of flu phlegm, me thinks.

As a country we’ve gone from Lincoln Logs to Ideologues. Think what the MAGA-types’ diet of the mind is these days. Now add the worm gnawing on such a dieted brain, as was the case with R .F. K. Jr., and imagine . . .



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HAMISH: Ever think that “brain worm” might have actually been an alien implant? Huh, huh!? What if he was abducted? Makes sense. If so he’ll always look ill, exude a river of undifferentiated words, but will live forever.

CHIT: **Ack!** A total reversal of the Kennedy Curse.

CHAT: *[Raising her head dramatically.]* So, Hamish, does that meant our initial “Hi!” is to be quickly followed by an “Uh-oh!?”

CHIT: Buckaroos, that’d be a game-changer.

CHAT: *[Pointing her finger repeatedly at Chit.]* It’s usher in a game change.

HAMISH: Hey, what’s with this “usher” stuff? *[Puts on-screen this image.]*



CHIT: Guess what. And by the way. That’s right. Fact of the matter is. It’s a bit posh. That word. Nice to play high off low kultch. Think S.J. Perelman. Besides, kneeling on these church kneelers . . . it seems so damn appropriate to appropriate the word.

HAMISH: There’s a Black R&B performer named “Usher” many to kneel before.

CHAT: The Playwright and I luv ushers. They usher in the audience. And the Play-wright’s genius ushers the audience into new experiences, and it rhymes with gusher, etcetera..

HAMISH: Except Terra? No! No! You guys were snatched by aliens who ushered you into a New Reality. The U in universe is you. Our theme today.

CHAT: “Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera,” to quote Yul Brynner in *The King and I* by the way.

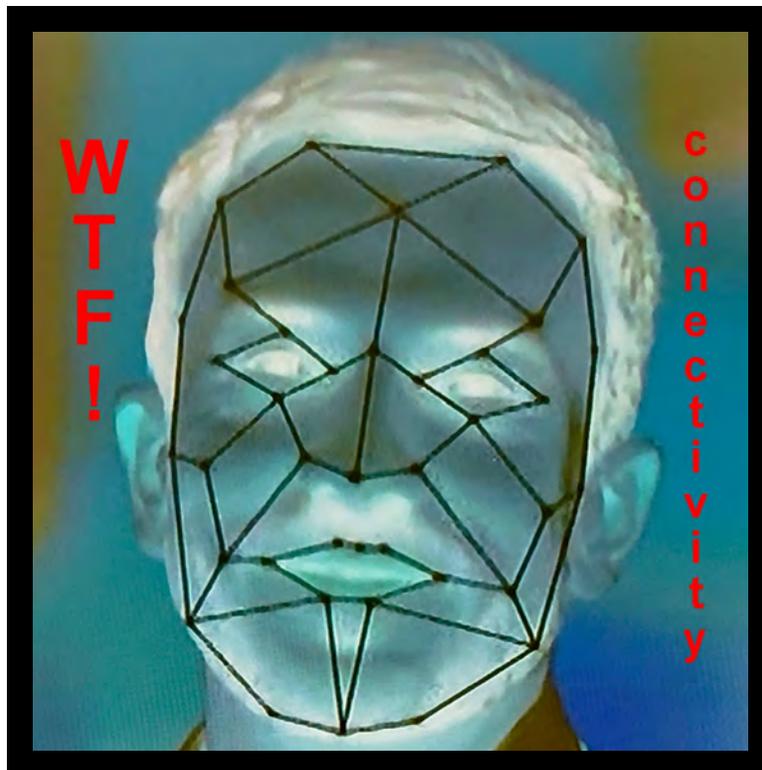
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: The ushers at the church me Pap forced me to attend were kindlier by far, like ten light years far, than the resident priest in attendance. To curry these kind folks' favor, us *kinder* would — actually, it was just me — put football and baseball cards of famous players of the day in the collection box when they made their rounds up and down the aisles with those long poles with baskets attached.

HAMISH: Hey, you know how valuable those cards are now to collectors? Jeeze, if that priest had kept those cards long enough, why he could've paid off the church's mortgage and have enough left over to buy a golden pulpit to preach from.

CHAT: [*Finger-fucking motion.*] Or handsomely pay off men he sexually abused years ago when they were naive altar boys — I call 'em *altered boys* — ushered into his presence. The Catholic Church abuse scandal, I call it The Fall of the House of Usher.

HAMISH: Speaking of ushering, one of my most devoted international Watchers, Tarbert, a lad hailing from Argyll, Scotland, likes the show because: "You can see who's telling ye what to say in wurd and wurd reasons." He just sent in a promotional campaign poster: *WTF! Connectivity*. Congrats, Bert, you'll receive our *WTF!* T-shirt by snail-mail as a "Thank You!" [*puts Bert's poster on-screen*].



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Studying the image carefully as if he was Clement Greenberg evaluating an Abstract Expressionist painting.] Ah! Ah! The man nodes what he's doing! Bucky Fullerish dome with a hint of rhizomatic connections, like fungi. Social media, podcasts, schizo off-base interpretations, database aesthetics, surveillance, hashtags and hash, get it?*

CHAT: Hush your bazoo! As if you knew.

HAMISH: *[Pointing at Chit, announcing with cool, quiet authority.] Mr. Watson, come here, I want you. [Chit snaps to attention.] Let's dodge the five-percent philosophy and get back on topic too-pick again at your wurdy story. Between all the various digressions we've wandered through, we have eaten up Earth Time like the finches gorging on bird seed at my backyard feeder. BACK ON TRACK YOU TRAINED ACTORS. Or I think our Watchers may come back with some loud Cabooes. Ya grok? Okay, so let me usher in this question for you Chit: You are in the hospital post-abduction. What were your thoughts as pertains to yourselves? Notice, I use the plural, Monsieur Genou.*

CHIT: *[Spreads his arm wide.] Merci beaucow! Chat was having a cow . . . must've been seeing alien finnies pointing at her while she was splayed out on the exam table. Our Director has us pay attention to our hands and fingers, you know, like the famous Marcello Mastroianni nose touch in Fellini's *8 1/2* [see frontispiece].*

CHAT: Fucker! I asked the attending nurse for a Black Cow. That's all. She refused.

CHIT: *[Ignoring her.] Your lucky she didn't give you a black eye. As for me — er — they were spatchcocked on that hospital bed post-abduction. They felt like a matrix of lean meat with alien trimmings ground and worked into them. The Director came in. He'd could have picked it up with a pancake spatula. I think it yelled at him, or maybe it was the nurses who flipped me over on my back: DON'T GRAB IT BY THE EDGES WITH A FORK! [See vol. 2, page ii.]*



CHAT: Speech for yourself. I am NOT now, NOR have I ever been *[raises right hand as if giving an oath]*, a matrix of lean meat. *[Face has a radium dial clock glow.]* Like a wealthy Englishman, who believes Genesis' "Male and female created He them," I'm proud of the extra pounds I've earned, or maybe just inherited from my mother's bad gene boutique.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: Your Director swears stages have are being re-enforced to accommodate the added baggage rolled onto Morning News shows, Talk shows, Game shows, and all manner of theatrical productions these days. Small theaters, like the Santa Fe Playhouse, have had to introduce Pay Toilets to compensate for the added costs of re-enforcement.



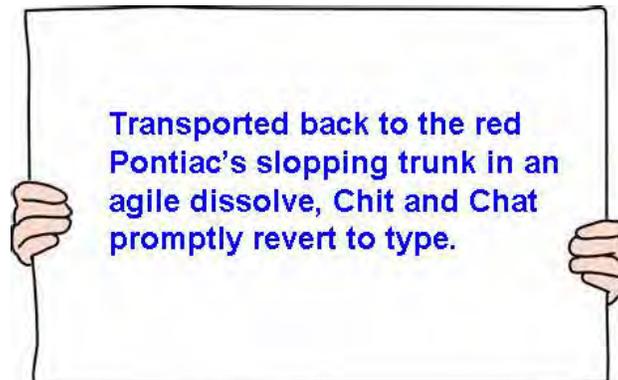
WFT promotional poster for Chit for Chat appearance.

CHIT: OBGYN: Obesity Gets Younger Now. Or so say the pundits and a few license plates.

CHAT: *[Sneers.]* I did give you license to take a punful dig at my tits? If our Director heard this, he isn't daffy enough to in the future put a jackdaw like you in the same cage as a bird of paradise like me!

CHIT: *[Hastily spoken.]* No Milady *[bows toward her]*. Never! I'm not that cagey. I wouldn't mention "T" without mentioning "A". One can't always tell what may be in a man, Milady. But you know professor that I'm an underpaid T. A. man, you know that. Okay. And Genou, in turn, knows the condition of your face is less important for you than boldly facing conditions. *[Pauses.]* Okay, that was fib and a compliment. But if we can't spare a thumbs up, what's the world come to, huh? Wanna thumb-wrestle?

HAMISH: If I was your Playwright or Director, at this point I'd introduce a filmic time-travel scene change *[puts slide on-screen]*:



CHIT: *[Worried look on his visage.]* No! No! De Mille. Not that! Okay. We'll play nice.

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CHAT: *[Anxious look.]* Yah! Yah! We will, Hamish. I saw on the news last night a strange skull-looking asteroid is now orbiting Earth. A bad omen, in my playbook. Not a threat to our planet they say, yet it bodes ill for us abducted bodies if aliens are hiding on its surface or in its core. I sure don't want an encore!



CHIT: *[Interrupts, exclaiming in German.]* **Mann! Mann! Mann!** . . . The E.T.'s vessels or vassals *could* be lurking there! Where there is a skull, there might be bones. If not there, probably somewhere deep, deep in our oceans like the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench nearly forty thousand feet down where the pressure is akin to what we feel from the Director at times. They say ocean life as no bathymetrical limit, but us actors do.

HAMISH: The mini-moon is the size of a yellow school bus — not what kids like to see coming around the corner — and its screaming skull face sure makes for kid-fright on Halloween night. Yes, the skulking skull-planet will be around — and a do mean *around* — for two months before it goes bye-bye back into deep space, if not diving into the ocean. I've got Watchers who are tracking it. *[Pauses.]* Okay, clowns . . . Let me toss out a word: OCEAN. Give me a response, quick. Whatever comes to mind, Chit or Chat.

CHAT: Ah, commissioner, totally wet *[hands and fingers run down her face]*.

CHIT: Okay inspector. Terribly big *[hands spread out widely]*.

CHAT: Sounds, constable, like a large Taylor Swift audience stuck in a rainstorm.



The Wave in a crowd.

CHIT: Yep, commissioner. *Der* audience *en masse* doing The Wave *[writhing back and forth, both hands in the air]* while some fans are surfing social media.

CHAT: Very deep, constable. Plunging into new strangenesses.

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CHIT: Hard to fathom, commissioner, like Sam Beckett plays or asemic writing [see image on the right].

CHAT: [Makes a ripping sound.] Seams rip easily, inspector. Remember what happened to your costume during the play *The Limiting Factor* where you rustled, murmured, kept saying “We have our reasons”? Watch out for the rip currents, constable!

HAMISH: And — er — commissioner, for repartees on current affairs. On past affairs, too.

CHIT: Exists in the dark, inspector. About ninety-five percent of the ocean is deep ocean, meaning dark ocean. Nada light and where Dim Sum is an under-statement.



CHAT: Exists in Stygian blackness, constable. No Enlightenment, like ninety-five percent of MAGA Republicans these days. Trump now calling for military action against US.

CHIT: Exists in the dark, the southern states. Ideologically and literally, after hurricanes did a climate-crunching light-pole munching number on them. Hurricane Milton pissed in their streets and repossessed their homes.



Hurricane Milton hits Florida.

CHAT: Yah, Florida. And I don't mean the classic Renault Floride automobile. Paradise lost to climate change. Gov DeSantis will probably have all of Milton's books snatched off library shelves as retribution.

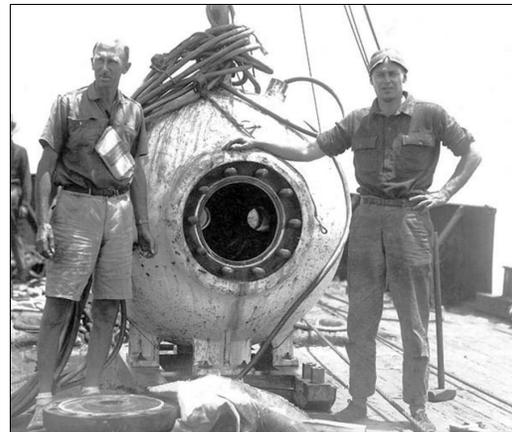
HAMISH: Speaking of the oceans, commissioner . . . and another word starting in “o” ... oxygen levels are dropping, water is warming at an alarming rate. Hadal — yes, like *Hades* — deep trenches now contain every toxin ever unleashed: PCBs, DDT, micro-plastics, and **WTF** other stuff.

CHIT: I know we often sounds like us clowns are performing a shared monologue. But in the mean time inspector, let us try and converse calmly, as we are incapable of keeping silent, especially during a podcast.

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HAMISH: According to recent data, only some thirteen percent of the ocean remains “wild”. **Help!** Michel Serres, in his influential 1990 book *Le Contrat Naturel*, calls for a natural contract to be negotiated between Earth and its inhabitants. World history is often referred to as the story of human conflict, but those struggles that are seen as our history must now include the uncontrolled violence our species perpetrates on our planet and the uncontrollable menace to human life posed by the earth in reaction to our violence, like the recent hurricanes. Just as a social contract once brought order to human relations, Serres believes that we must now sign a “natural contract” with the earth to bring balance and reciprocity to our relations with the planet that gives us life. Simpatico with what the E.T.s seem to be telling us. . . . Hey, can we stop the those corny British mystery comedy tags: Inspector, Constable, Commissioner?

CHAT: Okay, inspector. Each one to itself. *[Laughs.]* If E.T.s are inhabiting our oceans at depths unreachable, it is possible they are even more aware of these problems than we are. Have been aware of them for decades, maybe centuries. Bebe and Barton were dangled down three thousand feet in their giant eyeball, *Bathysphere*, in 1934, possibly alerting aliens skulking there to a new threat.



William Bebe and Otis Barton, American adventurers.

CHIT: Whoa! Freebies. I mean three B’s. Alexander the Great is said to have descended into the ocean in a glass barrel covered with asses’ skins. But that might be . . .



UFO on the sea bottom.

HAMISH: Three B’s and a too, why that adds to five, a quincunx, like you Chit, find deeply symbolic! Just sayin’. . . . Our survival depends on the extent to which we humans join together and act globally on an earth now conceived as an entity. In place of the ties that modernity and analytic reason have severed, we need to find a network of relations both stranger and stronger than any before, binding us to one another and to the world. What my podcast stresses. Hey, my Watchers may not have submersibles, but they have *imagination*; they — like you two and your buddy Victor L. Thanangadan — fight the pauperization of our vocabulary and our tendency to let our minds be drugged.

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CHIT: *[Interrupting, stands up, delivers his spiel.]* Ah! The philosopher's harrowing and joyous task, comprehending and experiencing the bonds of violence and love *[boxes with his fists, and then embraces himself with both arms]* that unite us in our spacewalk to the spaceship Mother Earth.



CHAT: *[Cupping hands over her mouth, yells.]*
Bravo, Bucky Chito! Take a BOW dim wit.

CHIT: *[Big smile.]* I'll take a bao, pork preferably! It's the politicians delicacy of choice.

HAMISH: Great show! Or more succinctly: **Groucho!** You clowns have been well-trained by the Director and Playwright. You both are attentive to each other's abilities, strengths, and limits, really watching each other's "play face", so as to always pushing up against those limits. A beautiful balance between structure and impulse. You are linguistic quick response EMTs. **WTF! . . . You are LEMTs!**

CHAT: *[Amused.]* You mean Lima - Echo - Mike - Tango, yes? What Stephan Nachmanovitch terms: "The power of free play sloshing against the power of limits." Our Playwright says theater has become vivid in a way that ordinary life, increasing standardized, has ceased to be. Advises us not to perform a character as much as "unleash it".

CHIT: *[Big smile.]* Yep, like John Wayne suddenly fistin' a guy in a bar fight.

CHAT: Fisting might not be the right term here . . .

CHIT: Or like a mad dog, but not as mad as Trump's unleashed performance with its deep hellish Juggle.

CHAT: I was speaking, you muddy-mettled rascal . . . The Playwright recalled he once witnessed a performance of *As You Like It* by AIDS patients in a closed stage in a Catholic hospital. The patients were garbed in their hospital gowns but wore flesh-colored make-up to hide their reddish-brown lesions from Karposi's sarcoma. It was theater at its most powerful, reaching into deep truths, he claimed. He said it allowed the doomed patients to, for the moment, transcend their physical and mental condition, to gather their

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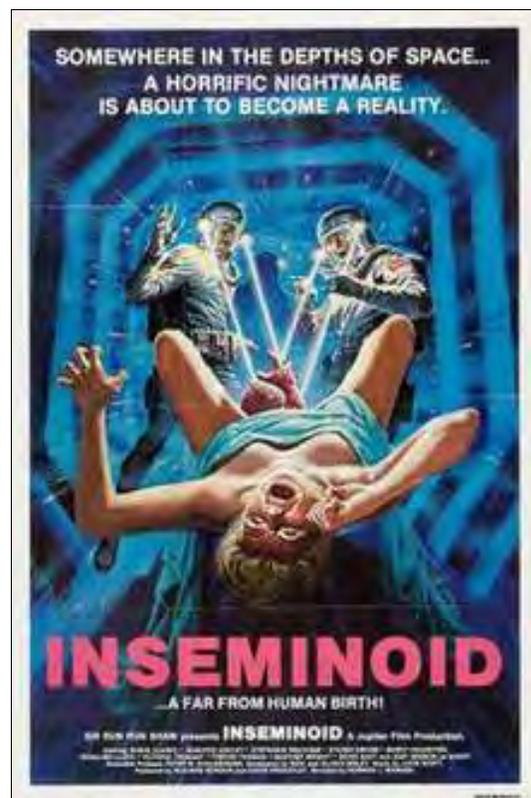
atoms from leaving sooner rather than later. Told me the scenes of that performance lodge in his mind even today.

CHIT: *[Big smile.]* We get it. Get the point. Spare me — er — we. He liked it. *[Unpregnant pause.]* You're over-shaking your spear, dear. *[Points to the podcaster, examining his own hand closely as he does so.]* Hamish, fact check that last story! You are right about us going off axis, so to speak, moving away from habituated postures of knowing to allow something new to emerge. We our conversations employ a relationship which equalizes “schoolmaster’s knowledge” with “ignoramus’s knowledge.”

CHAT: The thrill of playing our roles, of taking frozen speech and trying to animate it, is the imminence that something novel will come out of the struggle. Did you know, Hamish, our Playwright had red hoodies made for us with big white letters on the front stating: **NEVER STOP PLAYING**. Take our abduction. It was something novel resulting from our on-scene filmed play on the trunk of a vintage red Pontiac, paying homage to Truffaut’s *Day for Night*. But night turned into day when the saucer put its beam on us. An unexpected Event. Did *that* really stir up our disequilibrium!

Why the Director has expended so much energy to get us into hypnotherapy and on podcasts like yours, and so forth, so we can all benefit from that emergence of the new and surprising. That newness can take the form of healing, understanding, insight — as our therapists emphasize — and pleasure, leading to another Beckettian adventure scripted by the Playwright, filmed by the Director. And *mucho mas* coins in our financial fountain.

HAMISH: Well, your Director has even been hinting that aliens, during your previous abductions when you were younger, might have tried to inseminate you, Chat. *[She looks shocked.]* Look, he sent me this large poster for *Inseminoid*, a very bad 1981 SF-Horror film. A bit too sensationalist for my taste *[unrolls and holds up the poster]*, but might appeal some of my Watchers. The plot — similar to the earlier more famous film *Alien* — concerns a team of archaeologists



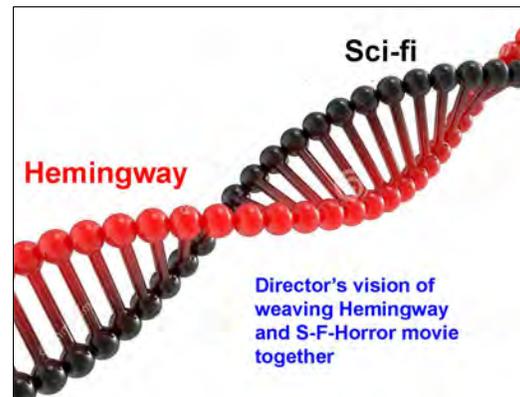
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and scientists who are excavating the ruins of an ancient civilization on a distant planet. One of the women on the team (played by the Brit Judy Geeson) is impregnated by an alien creature and taken over by a mysterious intelligence, driving her to murder her colleagues one by one and feed on them, then give birth to hungry alien twins who make it onto the ill-fated rescue ship stowaways on the return trip to Earth.

CHAT: [*Annoyance on her face.*] Ah, that's kinda chitty. I'm gonna have to have a chat with him about this [*arms akimbo*].

CHIT: [*Making Nijinsky-like hand movements.*] Chat! What you said. Why that's a *double* chat, or a chat to the second power! Is that an attempt to correct for the fact that as we speak our words are constantly going out of existence as fast as our lips move? Why we are being recorded.

CHAT: You know, the Director recently told me he'd re-read Papa Hemingway's short story "Hills Like White Elephants" where the couple's fetus is referred to as "it" and the issue of abortion is also just "it". I can see him and the Playwright trying to genre hack the film *Inseminoid* and Papa's African story together to create a new baby.



CHIT: It's been said that after reading something, Proust would metaphorically "cleanse himself" by scribbling out a serio-comic pastiche of the text.

HAMISH: [*Refocuses.*] I've had a chance to flip through your Playwright's *Chit for Chat*, volume one, and what is apparent is the prevalence of the variations on a theme approach in which a "vertical" form of verbal play that permits one topic to receive more or less different treatments by you clown-ish interlocutors. It also seems these treatments serve as entertainment for you two, more than the passing of information. Which is why our discussions over these several podcasts have taken surprising deviations.

CHIT: I wouldn't worry about it.

HAMISH: [*Arms akimbo.*] Well, I'm *going* to worry about it. To put it briefly [*pauses*], I'm still trying to probe, Chit, your triadic Genou-Selves. Your Woke pronoun these days would be "they", right?

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CHIT: *[Sly smile.]* Well, I prefer — if we can say prefer — “we”. Get it? We also has connotations of being pissed or pissing, which I like very much and seem so appropriate for our World Picture.

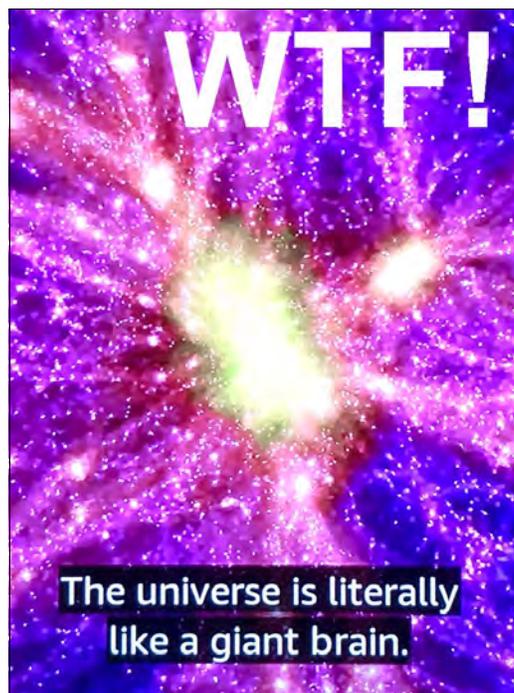
HAMISH: *[Smiles condescendingly.]* But we / they are shifters, it's like — ah, forget it.

CHIT: No. Got it.

CHAT: *[Spoken simultaneously with Chit's “it”.]* I got a Get when I divorced my first husband. I try to forget him — good luck with *[rubs her left eye where she was once hit]* that!

HAMISH: *[Camera on Hamish addressing his Watchers.]* I see we can forget getting more data from our two abductees this episode. *[Mouths: “Oh, God, I hate this job sometimes”]* we are close to the end our time slot . . . Watchers, log on tomorrow for another *WTF!* interview with these Beckettian clowns Chit and Chat when, I promise, a pitcher of Alien Beer apiece will give them the fortitude, the whatsit *[raises his right arm high]* to engage their disturbing memories and weird speculations.

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK! [On-screen closing theme image].



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CHIT: *[Gets up from the kneeler, stretches.]* Sorry. It was these damn church kneelers. Next time back to the regular chairs, okay?

HAMISH: *[Looking more relaxed.]* Yah, that didn't work out well. Not enough padding. It was suggested by a Watcher on the faculty of Notre Dame University in Indiana. I'm gonna make sure you both get a good night's sleep for tomorrow's podcast. Here, take this and divvy 'em up between you *[pulls out a plastic bag]*.



CHAT: *[Standing, large smile spreads across her face.]* OMG! Galaxy Gummies.

CHIT: *[Grins at his hands.]* Gummy laxatives for gals?

CHAT: *[Laughing.]* Can you spell H-E-M-P?

CHIT: *[Blushes.]* Voilà! I get it! *[Smack, smack, they both turn and kiss each other's cheeks like the French, paired friendly faces.]* Oh, BTW Hamish, we've twice now noticed a guy in black riding a vintage Triumph motorcycle. Once at the Mineshaft, looking suspicious . . .



CHAT: Indeed! His fizzog be not that of a Time-Man-of-the-Year cover image. Gave me the judders. He'd stare at me, peeping over his newspaper. I felt as if he was imagining me in a blue-satin lace push-up bra.

CHIT: . . . and today his 650cc bike was parked out front. I took a snap of it *[shows his iPhone photo to Hamish]*. He looks like an actor in an action movie.

CHAT: Do you know him? Is he a local? Does he work here?



HAMISH: *[Frowns.]* We do get oodles of bikers here as we are on the famous Turquoise Trail between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. But if I was to unlock my paranoia locker, I'd say he could be a "Man in Black" shadowing you abductees. But he might not *[a slight glimmer in his eyes]*.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ THE JAVA JUNCTION

Chit and Chat arrive early in Madrid for espresso and pastries prior to another podcast. “The Java Junction,” Hamish told them, “is a Temporary Autonomous Zone serving liquid Brain-O dished out by a literate vigilante enamored with surrealist painter Leonora Carrington.” The shop’s sign declares in hippy-style font *Conscious Coffee Inside* and the paper cups declare: *We Care*. New Age and queer-themed posters line the walls. Our clowns wear faded 501 Levi’s, cowboy shirts, and dusty Skechers.

CHAT: *[Walking alongside Chit.] Know where we’re going?*

CHIT: *[Removes sucking stone.] A place with steamy lattes sport winky-smiley faces.*

Inside the shop, they browse the merch. Chat grabs a tube of Winter Snail Slime Facial, while Chit gets a red **BAD COFFEE SUCKS** sweatshirt. They approach the hyper-caffeined gender-ambiguous barista to order drinks. She bows, recognizing them.

BARISTA: *[In “their” forties, turns around from the espresso machine, sleeveless blouse revealing a shoulder tat of a female Indian aiming her bow and arrow at a large star.] Which news did you switch from this A.M.? The one featuring the fascists raging noisily firing government employees? [Pauses.] I saw you two on Hamish’s podcast the day of that bad storm here. [Our duo nods YES, introducing themselves]. Thought so [searches our duo’s eyes as if seeking gold nuggets, lips pressed tight.] As for Beckett’s work PPPFFF! An obsessional labor of mourning for the dead father. I love Johanna Hedva’s feminist plays and writings. Ah, drama read by a fire in my slippers, rubbed with Marina Abramoviæ’s Longevity Drops, as I ponder every word of dialogue. Hate the Dull New Global Novel. News wise, Rachel Maddow’s reports are about all I can stomach. Hey, like yourselves and the female surrealists getting much deserved attention lately in the art press, I had to cope with falling out of the bounds of accepted or predicted experience. But never suffered a core wound to the self as yours. Can’t imagine what you . . . Well, you’ve seem to have moved to a higher spiritual plane, creatively engaging with IT.*

Hey, once a fuckin’ CRO-MAGA biker in leathers put a used tampon in a hotdog bun and handed it to me with an evil smile, I fled to my online Broken Bear AI Chatbot for comfort. *[Elbows on the counter, fully engaged.]* Hamish’s podcasts ask profound questions about the scope of human knowledge — like “Would alien thought be like poetry?” — all the while balancing such with a sense of trepidation and anxiety reflecting your strange experiences. Hamish and I — I’m an LGBTQ-activist — met during a lecture at Santa Fe Highschool, “Spacewomen Never Give Up”, during which the topic of why freedom of speech is accepted online, but when bodies accompany those voices, those

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lips of wisdom, in the streets, it's angry cops with guns out and batons swinging. They want to *disembody* us. I'm prepared. Got my "Thoth Bag" stashed with my passport, a derringer, a text on Hermetic philosophy, Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto", Le Guin's gender-bending SF novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and Hedva's book on "Sick Woman Theory," all ready to flee if MAGA-types assault our countercultural community.

CHAT: *[Intrigued by this bold barista in stovepipe jeans.] Uh, that's quite astute! [Looks at Chit, who looks back at her, raising his eyebrow.] And what's your name?*



BARISTA: *[Points to name tag.] VITA, short for Vitalina. I'm a trans activist. Like Hedva, my pronoun is "they", in this the 45th Year of the Reagan Administration [laughs]. Was a guest on Hamish's podcast back in March 2021 thanks good Yelp reviews [in frontispiece]. We share interests about SF, Shulamith Firestone's touting of artificial wombs, cyberfeminism, and the spiritual turn. Laugh at the TV Comedy Channel's "Crank Yanker's" episode about alien abduction. What with the mirth moratorium imposed by neo-cons, Musk running amuck in the White House, Google Calendar erasing Black History Month, and V-P Vance chiding EU governments for trying to restrict fascists parties, and many yelling "Welcome Robot Overlords!", it seems vital to stress the carnivalesque as a mode of rebellion and ask people to read Fritz Leiber's 1951 masterpiece "Poor Superman" wherein we see a power struggle at the top of society between the Thinkers (like Musk.), who currently influence the party in the Whitehouse, and scientists who wish to unmask the frauds the Thinkers are perpetrating to maintain that political power. So enjoy your fuckin' cup of coffee! My Marx is equal parts of Groucho and Karl. Oh, I got a Comp Lit degree, an MFA in Writing, and teach part-time at a junior college when not manning the espresso machine. You know: college 'n coffee, coffee 'n college, they go together like a horse 'n carriage [laughing]. Or carnage! I mean, I had a customer once who offered to write a song about me, until he yelled at me "If I don't get a croissant in the next five seconds I will hit my self-destruct button!" so I gave him the cowgirl boot pronto.*

CHIT: *[Smiles.] And we don't disparage! Our Playwright says to write is to pass from "I" to "They". You'd like that our Playwright and Director mold us as characters that flicker betwixt art 'n life, bein' both 'n neither. Smoky selves on the edge of a void, a black hole.*

BARISTA: Both-and-logic, particle *and* wave. I get it! Hey, kinda like my AI ChatBear.

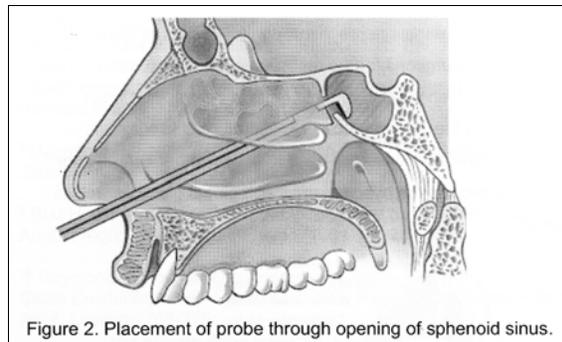
CHAT: And this place is a "Chat Bar"! Fuzzy logic, is how our Playwright puts it. Speaking of art and life, the Director likes how we clowns trumpet the quiet part OUT LOUD.

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BARISTA: Yes. Out loud. Brave of you both to discuss your trauma — the quiet part is what society induces silence about, hence, *Men in Black*. Just saw a Netflix doc, “Manhattan Alien Abduction”, about a woman who was literally lifted out of her New York apartment into the sky and into an alien ship where she was probed and suffered a nasal implant. There were 23 witnesses to her aerial extraction during a blackout in Brooklyn on November 30, 1989. She was harassed by *Men in Black*. UFO researcher, Bud Hopkins, befriended her and wrote a book about it. The Netflix doc, however, tries to stir up doubt about the abductee’s honesty and Hopkins’s own motives. It’s a sheer film “hatchet job” by Hopkins’s jealous wife.



CHIT: Interesting. Scary. But first, nice to meet you, Vita. And thanks for your compliment about our willingness to share our trauma and insights with the public. We haven’t read Hopkins’s book, nor seen the documentary. But bet our Playwright has, or is about to.



CHAT: I’m not sure I’d want to see it, knowing some poor woman was put through a similar invasive experience. For us — well — there was no RED ARROW labeled YOU ARE HERE when we arrived on the vessel. We couldn’t cognitively map it.

Grabbing their food and drink, Chit and Chat saunter to sit and sip and dip pastries on the shop’s patio at a red metal table. They are parked in surprisingly comfy red plastic chairs, shaded by a large red umbrella casting warm hues on their ageing faces. Bright, clean, nice-looking would be an overstatement of their presence. The shade is a blessing, as the weather has been unseasonably hot, record temps all over New Mexico, with severe storms forecast for the coming weekend.

They came early, before the podcast, to discuss some ideas pertaining thereof, but quickly segue to talking about their Playwright and Director. Their conversation can be described is akin to Bill Burroughs’ comment on his book *Naked Lunch* as “a frozen moment when all see what is on the end of everyone’s fork.”

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CHAT: Let us sit us down. Got an earkick from Vita, loved the tattoo, bright, too. No wonder Hamish had Vita — er — “them” on his podcast. *[Doesn't move.]*

CHIT: You mean just *sit down*, right? *[Pauses.]* The Director's *too* influenced by everything. “History's what you rewrite,” is his slogan, his *bite* on things. His fall-back position. *[Finally sits down, a Danish paused before his mouth as if it was a DVD about to be placed in the PLAY slot.]* The Playwright is pissed. *[Finally takes a bite.]*

CHAT: *[Finally sits down.]* The Director isn't. He's getting a laugh out of staying in a Cold War Era Titian II missile silo converted into an Airbnb in Arkansas. But *both* would be pissed if they'd used the outdoor Porta Potty here *[points to such, its sign reads: KRAPP'S LAST CHANCE]*.

Besides, he's been engrossed in a new novel during his stay in the silo, Lew Collins's *Out of Competition*, about 1968-style protest in Renne-sur-Mer in, Southern France in which Who? - What? - Where? - When? get all jumbled up as democratic screeds of “STOP PHONY FESTIVALISM!” disrupt a film festival with an outpouring of new ideas, secret plans, and spies everywhere. He says it contains more references to Godard, Fellini, Truffaut, and Coppola than any novel he's read, and has wacky cuisinely named characters like “Semolina” and “Zucca” who seem more like “No Ones” than “Selves”; it's rife with characters who are often going off their-own-off-script. Needless to say, he's gobbling it up like Thanksgiving dinner *[winks]*.



Director and his wife in an Airbnb missile silo.



Stan and the live-in alien Roger from the cartoon series “American Dad!”

CHIT: All's well that eats well! Good for ham — omit *[strike-out finger gesture]* — er — him, but our Playwright's in a tizz 'cause he's been accused by a critic — whose odd last name ends in *shinsky* or *shinzky* — of ripping off the very popular “American Dad!” series's live-in alien character named Roger, who is amoral, self-centered, hedonistic. Not like me at all. Omit! No, like me. I care! As my cup affirms.

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CHAT: Now aren't you as cute as a button! You series-us? "Give all those effing critical missiles a miss," the Director's fast come-back'd be. It's what he calls a "Rosebud": first a thorn, a challenge, then the flower buds, something good. Why? Because our alien abduction and subsequent therapy sessions confirm our experiences, and suggests you have alien genes amok in you. But that "American Dad!" will *boost* interest in our production, not hurt it. "We inhabit the perfect crotch of media time, people's wall TVs have become their only connection to reality," he said. If Henry James were to write *What Maisie Knew* now, her knowledge would be problematic and come via TV and social media.

Vroom-Vroom-Vroom!

As the duo sip their heady brew, eyeing donuts, a noisy motorcycle pulls up across the street. Same vintage bike they spied at the Mineshaft Tavern and later in front the KMRD radio station. The well-built rider is garbed all in black, topped by a tinted black helmet that turns to fix our pair in its sights. Standing, the figure looks like a toy version of Gort in the original film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Then it removes its helmet, revealing a shady-looking male. He seems vaguely familiar. He slowly pulls a candy bar from his jacket pocket as if slipping out a handgun, peels it, and proceeds to munch on it very slowly, all the while scanning up and down the street in between peeking at our snacking actors again and again with all the mechanical regularity of a Disney Animatronic figure.

CHAT: [*Eyeing their stalker.*] Creepy! My impulse is to run over and offer IT a free donut so it would de-helmet itself. You know, like Hippies putting flowers in the rifle barrels of National Guardsmen in the Sixties — *nice-aggressive*.

CHIT: [*Horrified look on his face.*] Never, I mean *never*, eyeball a hardass in a black balaclava [*fingers mimic a strike-out gesture with a pen*] — er — tinted helmet. Guy like that has aliases up the wazoo — Rob le Riche, Theron Q. Dumont, or Nailly Gingbonés.

CHAT: [*Cringing.*] The latter sounds way too much like *cojónes*.

CHIT: Watch the donut, not the hole! Despite binge-watching so many British TV mysteries, you *still* think it's OKAY to . . . Me uncle gave me *that* advice about balaclava-clad dudes who give you the mean eye from his hospital bed once — *no* — actually *twice*. He'd pissed off a dude in the Corsican Mafia. So, we just *ignore* him. *Capisce?* Put a guard on that shark of yours, sweetie.

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CHAT: *D'accord. We do live in a thick present. And it's getting thicker by the minute. That guy might be a government Man-in-Black stalking us. . . . So let's banter. [Dabs her mouth with a napkin.] Ahhgrrr!* For a second things seemed to reel out of phase and I thought I saw Gort's bike exploding into an awe-inspiring sabre of flame and destruction. A lithium battery gone nuke. Probably the thought of the bike melded with the thought of our Director in a nuke silo gave me a lucid dream . . .

CHIT: Jeeze! Hope that doesn't mean your reality tunnel is caving in or that the verbal gangplank between us is at risk. If the Director was filming us, he'd use the Stone's song "Paint It Black" as intro here. *[The duo stand up facing each other, sizing each other up like two end-of-career gunslingers in a saloon. Long pause as they search each other's eyes like Doc Holliday and Johnny Ringo do in their final scene in of the film Tombstone. They burst into laughter and sit back down.]* Bet you didn't know — I MEAN YOU ARE OUT OF THE LOOP DIDN'T KNOW — our Director has a "thing" about the English actor, Dirk Bogarde. He gave me three reasons for this "thing": One) his birth name was Derek Jules Gaspard Ulric Niven van den Bogaerde [1921 - 1999]; Two) he was also a novelist and screenwriter; and Three) he played a Western gunslinger almost as well as Yul Brynner did.



Dirk Bogarde

CHAT: And he was quite handsome when young. My mother had a crush on him.

CHIT: Yah, from heartthrob to an icon of edginess as he aged, like a good red wine.

CHAT: It's getting near to our interview time, so let's lubricate our vocal cords *[clears her throat]*. I'll begin. *[Stands up, bends at her waist toward Chit, extending her arms straight behind and barks]:* YOU, YOU HALF-BAKED BLANCMANGE! YOU, YOU TURNCOAT! YOU ARE ONLY A MODEL OF A PERSON ALONE IN OCEANS OF SPACE AND TIME. A MOMENTARY BLIP ON THE COSMIC TV SCREEN. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RATIONALLY DRAW THE CONCLUSION OF YOUR CONTENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS p AT TIME t FROM ITS INCORRIGIBILITY TO ITS OBJECTIVE INFALLIBILITY. DOES THAT DEPRESS YOU? LIKE WATCHING DONALD J. TRUMP TRAMP ON DEMOCRACY? DO YOU FEEL LIKE SINGING? *[bangs the table]*.

CHIT: Wait, a minute. Sounds like you're deflating Trump, inflating Kamal Harris, and deflating me *mineness* to a minus. When I was small, if an adult asked me whose little

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boy I was, I'd answer: "I am my own little boy!" You know my mom wrote in my baby book that at two years: *Does at times gurgle, laugh, and speak masterfully when the occasion offers*. Believing in my-selves, Genou, is biologically advantageous and it's functionally optimal to act as *if* IT possesses accurate data. Okay. Okay. What you want right now is the Director's nemocentric version of Chit-the-Bot. [*Stands straight, talks and moves mechanically*]: THE EMOTIONAL LAYER OF THIS ENTITY'S PERSONAL SELF MODEL CURRENTLY ACTIVATED BY THE BRAIN OF THIS ORGANISM IS IN A CLOSE-TO-AGGRAVATED STATE. BUT THIS ENTITY HAS BEEN OPTIMIZED TOWARD FUNCTIONAL ADEQUACY, AND SO WILL MAINTAIN SYSTEM EQUILIBRIUM. BUT INTERNAL INCOMPLETION AND FRAGMENTATION, RATHER THAN RESULTING IN FAILURE, REPRESENT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE MEANS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF LITERARY AND DRAMATIC ART.



"Deflate Der Mouse," a poster seen in Madrid, NM.

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CHAT: You're "botering" me, buddy! I was just practicing Strasberg's "The Method". Besides, with alien genes sloshing in you, what is your *mineness* me highness? *[Bites into her pastry, some of which falls onto the table; but before she can pick them up . . .]*

CAW - CAW!



A black flash and flap as a large black crow dragging its hunger through the sky, dives. Chat ducks. Pastry is snatched up faster than you can say CUT! Drops a torn locksmith's biz card and a bottle cap on the table in doing so. If the Director had been filming this, he would've overlaid the chaotic sounds of the black metal band Domen. The abduction of Chat's snack stirs up traumatic memories. *Enjoy your fuckin' coffee!*

CHAT: *[Flashing on a scene in volume one page ix.]* AAAAHHHH CROW ATCHA! The Reinvasion of the Food Snatchers Meets The Birds! Meets earlier script change, huh?

CHIT: *[Teeth barred.]* PUT A GUARD ON THAT FUCKIN' BIRD! *[Vita, shaken, rushes out to see if Chat has any facial gashes. She doesn't. Shaken and stirred, the barista quotes the Buddha, then offers to get Chat another coffee and pastry gratis. Too shaken to speak, Chat can only nod a grateful YES!]*

CHAT: *[Settling down somewhat.]* Sorry. That reminded me of . . .

CHIT: *[Said with great sincerity.]* I grok. Too much like The Event. We can't unhappen either event. But it might help if you recall that Emily Dickinson was said to have eyeballs like black birds.

CHAT: *[Moving her hands down and over her body as if to cleanse it, laughs.]* Thanks. Okay. *[Pauses.]* Back on track. Choo-choo! But I could use a Mojito, mo' mojitoes.

CHIT: Drop the ka-booze. . . . Let *me* start. . . . YOU ASKED FOR IT! YOU BANKRUPT BLAGGARD! CHEAT! THIEF! UTTER FOOL! MEAT-PUPPET, YOU EAT CURED YAK MEATLOAF FROM ULAANBAATAR! *[Arms full in the air now, laughing, then singing]* MAISIE, MAISIE, I'M HALF CRAZY ALL FOR THE LOVE OF YOU! OR MAYBE BECAUSE FASCISM ALWAYS WINS *[riffing on Vita's reference to the Henry James novel.]* I STARTED TO WRITE A SONG ABOUT YOU, BUT THEN . . .

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CHAT: *[Cast-iron grin.] I'll be nacked 'n damned. Thought it goes: MAISIE, MAISIE, TELL ME YOUR ANSWER DO. It's all about what Maisie knew, DOLT!*

CHIT: *[Making repeated circular motions with a finger on the table.] Did Masie know how to run a maze? Or even eat maize? [Checks his watch. Then a car backfires loudly.]*

BANG!

Thinking someone's taken a shot at them, our duo jerk their heads in the direction of the narrow main road through town, only to notice Gort's left his ride parked, has wandered, and is nowhere to be seen.

CHIT: *WTF! [Turns his head side-to-side, scanning the area, pulls out his official Johnny Spy monoscope and re-scans.] Don't see him. Nada! Only a . . . [A tall wizened Hippy, toking a joint, walks by clad in a worn white T-shirt reading: IF THE SHOE FITS . . . CACKLE].*



CHAT: *Where there's mayhem there's hope. [Pauses.] Oh, that was supposed to refer to the coming elections, sorry. When did you buy the scope?*

CHIT: *[Ignoring the question.] I still don't see him [pinching the skin between his eyes]. From the rivet to the see . . . I don't see him! We should've causally walked over and given him a gold-edged invitation to join us and find out what he's . . .*

CHAT: *[Biting her lip.] It's "From the river to the sea," And it's real.*

CHIT: *Is real, you mean. But, you, you misunderstand. That's the catchy slogan of the New York Mohawk Ironworkers Union. The "Skywalkers" put up the tallest buildings with the best views. Where do you think the name "Luke Skywalker" came from, huh? You might have the wheel, but I'm in charge here glare — omit — I mean gal.*

CHAT: *So it's: I must catch-up, then stay behind six paces? [Angry expression.] Is that it? Like I had to do in that stupid play back in the early Nineties, Death Wears Bunny Slippers. Only thing good about the production was*



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its title and the ad poster. I still have those slippers as a reminder of the strangest role I ever had. No one else wanted 'em.

CHIT: That's it! *[Mimics using a Director's megaphone.]* Let's see that expression of *disgust* on your face, pretend you are on-camera right now! Remember monologues *can* work well, think of Quentin Tarantino's films. Get down to tin tacks, Tootsie.



CHAT: *[Massages her elbow.]* First, Q.-s name makes me think of large icky tarantulas. Second, if I *was* a tarantula I'd bite ya on the arse. But I'd prefer the sky turning vivid shades of red, blue, yellow over your pig-head as a rogue asteroid or the wandering star in Karl Ove Knausgaard's *The Morning Star*, passes over and materializes a large speech-balloon over your fraught *cabeza* in which you confess:



CHIT: DING-DING-DING! Okay. KALIKALIKALIKALIK! You won this round hands down Ms. Anti-Patriarchy. *[Laughs.]* I surrender *[hands up]*. Okay? *[Slugs down his coffee in one gulp, pastry crumble still on his lips.]* Everyone needs re-invention now and then. Because *We Care*.

CHAT: *[Stroking her nose with her index finger.]* And egotistical attention. Right?

CHIT: Ach-tongue! *[Licks his lips exaggeratedly, then a kind of stoner fumbling.]* Uh, uh, all my thinking is digressive, a digression within a digression within . . . What Hamish — *why* Hamish — despairs of getting us back on track during our exchanges.

CHAT: *[Retracking Chit.]* So what did you do after dinner when you dropped me off at home last night to watch the sky go out, go back to the Coyote Café and pick up that waitress who flashed her fan eyes at ya? Such chemistry! Like the babe who told us she's a chem major and has two Persian cats named Bismuth and Boron.



A Romulan Bird of Prey

CHIT: Nay, just sat in my car toking, playing with the side-mirrors, watching them slowly fan in and out like a bird's wings or like an animal whose attention has been raised by a strange sound. I flashed on *Star Trek's* alien nemesis the Romulan Bird of Prey starship. But, more positively, I thought of your cute

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doggy. Strangely comforting. I tuned in KHFM classical radio and tickled my ears with Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. Trying to relax and ignore the political crisis where fearful TV talking-heads are envisioning their own post-election arrest and confinement under the Trump Admiration Society and New World Order.

CHAT: *[Arched eyebrow.]* Odd coincidence! Because of the heat, I'd kept my bedroom's large swinging windows open outward toward New Mexico's large sky. I then entered a lucid dream, meaning I knew I was dreaming. Chillingly, I saw the glass windows as wings spreading, as if the room had just landed and would again fly off. I chalked this up to memories of my abduction trauma, my



Chat's neighbor's Halloween display.

mind like a large tongue seeking out, over and over, a sore tooth. I *wasn't* comforted. Had I heard music at all it wouldn't be from *Die Fledermaus*, but creepy, scary Halloween music like what's emanating from my neighbor's front yard Halloween display.

CHIT: I would just like to point out, open windows invite strange, lurking guests *[shivers a bit]*. And I don't mean the new Windows 11 for your laptop either. When our Playwright feels threatened, he holds up before him the script he's working on 'cause, as he puts it: "A page of good prose remains invincible."

Hey, remember the Playwright's soliloquy on the beauty of the rhyming in the words *humor* and *horror*? I'm flashing on the "Crank Yankers" TV episode Vita mentioned. Oh, and that hilarious skit on alien abduction by Kate McKinnon on SNL *[see page 17]*.

CHAT: Hell, I always end up pointing *in*. Shit, like that massive Miller moth infestation two years ago that filled my house. But funny *and* horrifying at once. As one wit aptly put it: *What we need are new apps that generate new apps that protect against other apps.*



CHIT: Not apt. Chimes too much like old Cold War nuke rhetoric. Missiles in silos and tucked away inside submarines. Ronnie Raygun's Star Wars Defense System.

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BARISTA: *[Walks up to their table.]* Ya want any more java or snacks before AI replaces me?

CHAT: Oh yeah! ‘Nother blueberry Danish, behage *[please in Danish]*.

CHIT: Just a churro, *por favor*.



BARISTA: *[Jots down their order.]* You’re doing another podcast today, right? *[Our duo nods YES.]* Well, do you agree with Hamish’s take on consciousness, that from an outsider’s POV, a third-person’s epistemological view to be more precise, consciousness is a global simulational state. Not unlike the assumption behind *The Matrix* movie series.

CHIT: Give me the red pill anytime, Vita! But given our political situation, the pill’s color should be Blue not Red *[chuckles]*. Uncritical belief should be represented by taking the Red pill. Lily Tomlin once said: “The best mind-altering drug is the truth.”

CHAT: Yet Tomlin also espoused the Reality-is-a-Collective-Hunch theory.

BARISTA: And Lily wittily queried — I ask this of young customers during the summer when orders for iced drinks are up exponentially — “The formula for water is H_2O . Is the formula for an ice cube H_2O squared?”



CHAT: *[Beaming.]* Perfect! It’s not Ramanujan’s conjecture, but it’s funny! Can we quote you quoting?

CHIT: Buzzzzz! Not correct! Not the right dimension. The answer is . . . H_2O cubed!

BARISTA: Damn! You’re right! Much better answer. When I give kids a slice of pizza, I challenge them to ponder: *Isn’t it strange that a circular pizza comes in a square box and is served in triangles? Why?* *[Pauses, waiting for laughs that don’t come.]* I’ve been quite taken by Hamish’s probing of your so-called Genou-self,



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the possibility you are a human-alien hybrid. Bud Hopkins would not find that possibility farfetched. But what if, excuse my effin' skepticism, you have DID — Dissociative Identity Disorder?

CHIT: *[Agitated.]* You do care! Do I have DID? Been there done that! I did. Maybe as a small kid since I'd already been abducted once or twice and no one grokked what the shit was going on with *moi* — I think my dad wanted to bring in an Exorcist — until I got into post-abduction hypnotherapy thanks to our Director footing the bill.

CHAT: Vita, taking off into another world so to speak means to relocate oneself within a different and threatening environment, or as the experts put it “within a different phenomenal model of reality.” So *both* of us sort of dissociated. Think Chit's self-model has taken his series of traumas and made something exceptional out of his existential crisis. He was put in a horrifying situation in which his self-system was forced to use multiple, alternating self-models in order to cope with bizarre, inconsistent data, including possible gene modification. Not to mention experiencing an extreme social situation — having to suss out how to interact with an alien species — that demands different logics of survival.



Chit's strength has been in putting these selves into a semblance of inner unity under the banner of his “Three Nomial Voices”. His acting career, with its emphasis on expressing emotion, or lack thereof, through voice, posture and motor traits has contributed to giving Genou the necessary training to do — er — *did* it, survive. I mean his Beckettian clown character. Same for me. *[Skeptical look on Vita's face.]* . . . Okay *[stands facing Chit]* . . . who else would be able to so quickly a reply to my out-of-context statement: “DREW BARRYMORE” with this witty retort: “SKETCH HENDERSON”, huh, huh?

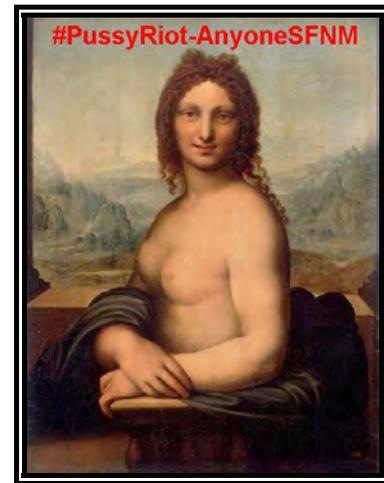
CHIT: *[Pleased look on his face, claps.]* You remember that! That dialogic blast got us our current role as quasi meat-puppets. Well put, pardner! Now that's loyalty! *[Extends his hand toward Chat, they clasp hands, look into each other's faces.]*

BARISTA: As my aunt would put it, “You two are a hoot!” BTW, that's what my aunt always said to me as I'd been born “intersex”. I'm sure you noticed the PussyRiot poster on the wall when ordering; it's Da Vinci's nude Mona Lisa, a painting of the trans-looking figure called Monna Vanna *[see next page]*. I know about mixed genes. My dad was a Latino Crypto-Jew two decades older than my mom, a Creole-Choctaw. In my wintry

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landscape of memory, I can see them conceiving me under a table at a Ray Charles concert. My first substantial job in my youth was leading tours at the Conspiracy Museum in Dealy Plaza, Dallas where I'd play at being a guy for one tour, then a gal for the other. Now I write, do readings and sometimes performance art under the pseudonym "Barbie Plenty Horses", where I rave on about the ill effects of "emotional capitalism" where money and affect meet. I sometimes do readings from Mario Perniola's book *The Sex Appeal of the Inorganic*. Hamish likes to tell people that when I do these readings I *[using finger quotes]* "open the book like it's a vagina." *[Suddenly she looks to her left at a young man approaching on an unusual bicycle.]*

Look quick *[pointing]* it's Ravi, a staff member at KMRD radio on his mind-bending "Bi-Modi" as he calls it — both a political swipe at India's current right-wing prime minister Narendra Modi and Ravi's gender preferences. He's a South Asian immigrant. HI, RAVI! *[waves to him]*. JUST ENTERTAINING HAMISH'S PODCAST GUESTS UNTIL THE . . . *[Ravi races past without stopping, a repeating THUMP as each half-wheel hits the blacktop.]* Yeah, guess he's in a hurry. Locals, with good reason, call him "Thumper".



Feminist poster in The Java Junction.



Ravi's deconstructed half-wheeled bike, "Bi-Modi".

CHIT: Ahhhhh! Here one is unable to distinguish between vehicle and content!

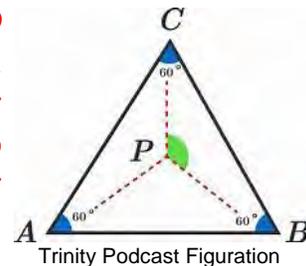
CHAT: Astute! . . . Excuse me, Vita. We need to order posthaste as we should be getting to the radio station for our online interview soon. Dredging up all that trauma is . . . I'm sure Hamish is going to focus on Chit's I - We self . . .

BARISTA: Of ~~course~~ — oops, let's put that under *sous rature* — of course. I understand. Pardon my Freudian black slip. You must think I'm a high heel. *[Right index finger touches nose.]* I have a tendency to catch people in my fishnets *[laughs]*. I'll be right back with your fête-ish — er — orders *[winks]*.

CHIT: *[Sits back relaxing.]* Pleasant and interesting person, *n'est-elle pas?* Plenty of metacognitive amplitude. In Vita, "they" projects outward from all directions.

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CHAT: “They” has the *WOW — I’VE JUST BECOME LUCID AGAIN* look. If the Director is ever looking to turn us into a Verbal Trinity, “They” would be a good choice to add to our team. We three forming verbal points in theatrical space to create an equilateral triangle at the center of which sits our podcaster Hamish.



CHIT: Indeed! Vita would rank high on what our Director calls his “bizarreness scale.” He confided in me once that: “Creativity masquerades as bizarreness.” Think that’s bizarre? As a teen, I self-cloaked as *bizarre* to hide my creative mind from butt-kicking bullies. *[Pauses, reaching for a thought.]* You know I’m probably the most modest person I have ever met, despite all signs to the contrary.

CHAT: *[A where-did-he-pull-that-out-from expression.]* We are rife with inbuilt mental blind-spots. If my memory isn’t faulty due to the trauma, you exclaimed during that bad storm here that the rain was starting again, but wondered if ever existed!

BARISTA: *[Running over to their table holding a DVD and iPhone.]* It has been an honor to meet you both. Got a gift for you. A DVD of Bob Hope’s 1948 comedy *The Paleface* in which Jane Russell’s gender-confusing role as both “masculine” gunfighter and female seductress influenced my own gender identity when I first saw it *[pauses, letting this bribe sink in]*.



Jane Russell in *The Paleface*.

CHAT: Uh, thanks. *[Looks at Chit, bewildered.]*

BARISTA: Ahhh *[puts iPhone before them]*, any final words you want to give me, I’d like to record them and put them up on #PussyRiot-AnyoneSFNM for our Followers. Okay?

CHAT: Well *[folds her hands under her chin.]* . . . As comedic figures we get to play with the dialectic between eccentric behavior and speech and social conformity. We get to joke about the plot and address the camera and/or spectators, but we are under greater pressure as *performers* than that of mere *characters*. But aren’t Bob Hope and Carol Burnett. We are Beckettian enunciators, replete with vanishings, voids and other shit. On the functional level of description we are an on-going process rooted in our abduction traumas and at the behest of our Playwright and Director’s whims and dreams as we drill holes one after another into Language.

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CHIT: *D'Accord!* According to our Playwright, there is no “Big Other” and all consciousness is selfless, a physical representational *system*. Phenomenal transparency is only a special kind of darkness. So we need go deeper than our quotidian take on reality, our naive-realist POV. Move deeper through the trauma of our several abductions to boldly bump against staid existential and epistemological boundaries. We need to



shake up our conventional beliefs big time, while being aware of the pull between the transgression of the familiar and the familiarization of transgression. We need to think Cosmi-Comic, kiddies.

CHAT: BTW, Beckett dug Joyce's cosmological thinking about inventing a new mode of writing. In a review, Joyce declared that *art is the sun, moon, and stars of the mind, the whole mind*.

CHIT: Our Playwright wants to extend that *whole mind* to include other galaxies, the multiverse, other minds human and non-human. He doesn't envision subjectivity as a *thing*, but a property of complex representational processes unfolding in certain physical systems (neural correlates) and realized through linguistic structures, structures that Beckett attempted to chip away at, envisioning his “clowns” as Being No One.

BARISTA: [*Eyes widening.*] The holistic holographic cosmos! The MOST!

CHAT: [*Looking up at the large New Mexican sky.*] Well, if that isn't the purest blue anyone can perceive!

CHIT: [*Looks upward.*] No, it *isn't*, it has a faint but perceptible trace of green in it!

CHAT: [*Annoyed.*] No way, José. I listen to the Blues all the time.

CHIT: [*Squinces his nose.*] I grok green when I see it. My parents painted our living room a dark forest green and I lived with that shit color for years.

CHAT: [*More annoyed.*] It's colored your seeing ever since, Kemosabe. You thought I was a green actor when you first met me. And I thought you were suffering the blues at that

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time. You were on *mucho* anti-depressants then, buckaroo.

CHIT: [*Touches nose.*] I was sobbing, just had finished my chemotherapy.

BARISTA: [*Slipping into her teacher's role, arms akimbo.*] Now kids, you've asserted two truthful, but conflicting autophenomenological reports with no way to prove either position. I could agree with Chit's introspective report, but that wouldn't prove much. Or I could say New Mexico's sky took on the look of shimmering, undulating blue, green, red, orange and black arcs and circles the last time I took magic mushrooms. Or I could bribe Chit with a free Danish to change his personal testimony to match Chat's [*laughs*]. Or do the same thing for Chat.

Digging into such epistemological shit and into the problem of the unresolved personality type, it's what "The Ham" — I call him that as his casts are so meaty — does best on his podcasts. He understands how technology is now an invasive component of agency and believes the first-person perspective is just one of many other possibilities — and maybe not the most reliable — for envisioning "reality" [*finger quotes*]. Importantly, he stresses that it is time we take on the conscious responsibility for the evolution of our minds beyond our parochial self-conceit as a continuation of the Enlightenment project to higher levels.

CHAT: [*Nodding her head.*] Indeed! Why he thinks the E.T.s are trying to push us earthlings further toward a new evolved mode of consciousness and why he's so interested in our exchanges — like Chit's mixed genes — with the aliens.

CHIT: [*Stretches arms forward.*] Just ordered flannel-lined jeans for the coming winter from Land's End.



Vitalina's vision of the sky.



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CHAT: [A glimmer in her eye as she looks at Chit.] I think Chit here is the real ham! A sweet, honey-baked a ham. He's adored by our Playwright and Director as he is capable of slipping into a good simulation of "system consciousness". And that results in one whale of a tale!

CHIT: [Returns the eye glimmer.] Or wag of a tail. . . . A phenomenally non-subjective state of consciousness, is what Chat means. It's what Beckett's characters were asymptotically moving toward, a nonpathological way of dissolving your sense of self.

CHAT: "Methodological nemocentrism" is how the Director put it — "nemo" is nobody.

CHIT: Yeah, it wasn't for naught that he's been addicted to Jules Verne all his life, especially Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. He often has grilled squid for dinner.

CHAT: The Director has a DVD of that film which he repeatedly watches just to hear Ned Land sing that catchy tune "A Whale of the Tale".

CHIT: I once saw him and our Playwright watching it and dancing to the scene like kids. Cute.

BARISTA: [Laughing.] Captain Nemo and his crew . . . well . . . I'm flashing an ancient precedent for that movie: Homer's *The Odyssey* wherein Odysseus is motivated by *nostos*, desire for homecoming, a notion in heroic culture that encouraged bravery in war by reminding warriors of the people and institutions they were fighting for back home.

CHAT: And there's Jason and the Argonauts, their search for the Golden Fleece.

CHIT: Homer's poem introduces a giant Cyclops, Polyphemus, with one eye in the middle of his forehead; he's the son of Poseidon, god of the sea.

BARISTA: In the classic 1953 3-D SF film *It Came from Outer Space*, a spherical alien



Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1954). Kirk Douglas as Ned Land.



The Cyclops in *The Odyssey*.

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ship crash lands in the desert, observed by an local astronomer. He visits the site, ship buried underground. The terrifying alien occupant, a Cyclopan thing, uses mind-control to get locals to repair the damaged ship.

In the final scene, the astronomer, Putnam (Richard Carlson), courageously stands up to an angry mob looking to kill the otherworldly visitor, who just wants to leave our planet in peace. Humans are conditioned to instantly fear things they don't understand; to shoot first and ask questions later. But once the vessel is finally repaired and takes off for parts unknown, Putman leaves us with an optimistic message of hope and understanding: "It wasn't the right time for us to meet. But there will be other nights, other stars for us to watch. They'll be back. . ."



Alien in *It Came from Outer Space* (1953).

CHAT: They'll be back! The alien in that film did come back, but as a comedic film figure, Stuart, in the *Despicable Me* franchise.

BARISTA: *[Laughing.]* Yep, you two *are* a hoot! Hey, I gotta start closing up. I have to meet my class tonight and need to do some prep. Say "Hi" to The Ham for me.

Exeunt Vitalina.

Chit and Chat stand up, gather their things, ready to walk to the radio station down the street for their podcast. Suddenly . . .

Vroom-Vroom!

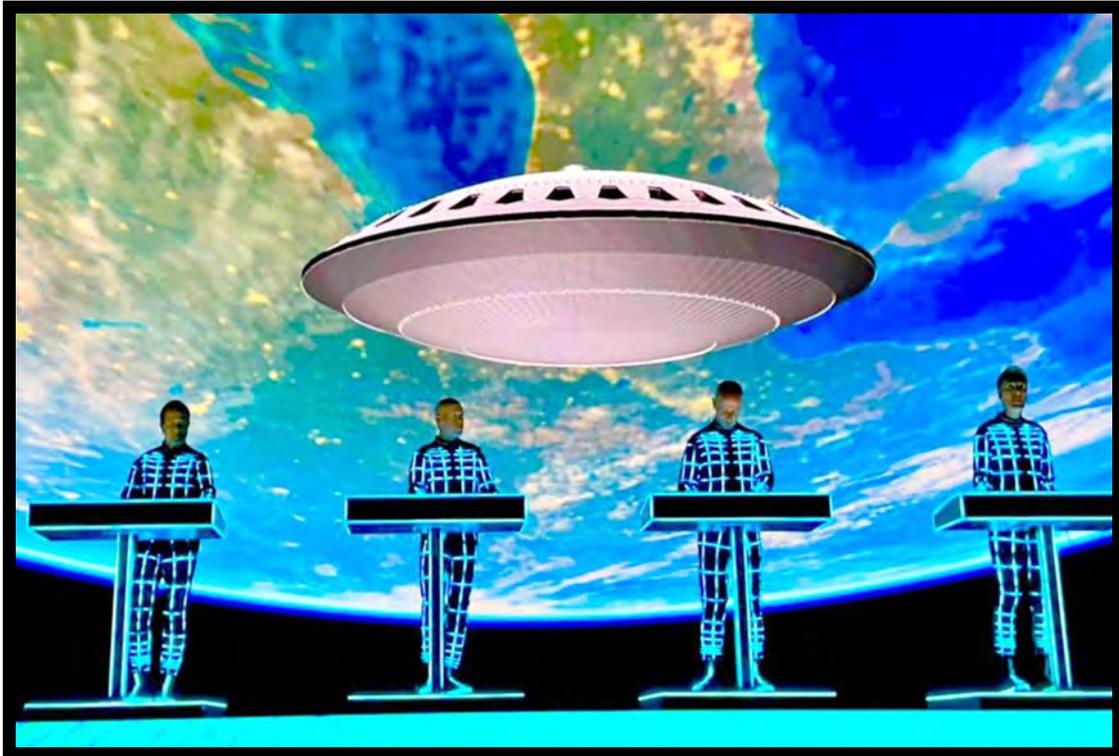
The mysterious helmeted guy and his motorcycle are reunited, a robot-centaur tasked with producing an ear-kicking racket. This man-machine hybrid rides off in the direction of KMRD's studios.



Stuart, a Minion, in *Despicable Me* (2010).

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3



The German electronic-machine band Kraftwerk will be in concert at Stage AE, Pittsburgh, PA in 2025 to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of their first album *Autobahn*.



Film editor, Knute, loves to binge-watch old TV episodes of "Then Came Bronson" (1969) starring Michael Parks.

I've been skipping, jumping, and sliding through my vast collection of SF imagery, scholarly works on alien abductions, worm-holes and warp drive, and new material that your Director, Playwright, and Film Editor, Knute, are shoving my way. All in preparation for our next podcast. Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, that groundbreaking German electronic band, Kraftwerk, will be coming to the USA for a tour. Maybe they'll come to Santa Fe's Lentic Theater.

— Hamish in an e-mail to Chit and Chat

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 7.

As Chit and Chat saunter toward KMRD for Hamish's dose of transgressive shareability, they spy that black Triumph motorcycle parked out front; notice it sports a curious black and white sticker on the gas tank. A logo? A name? What?



The decal.

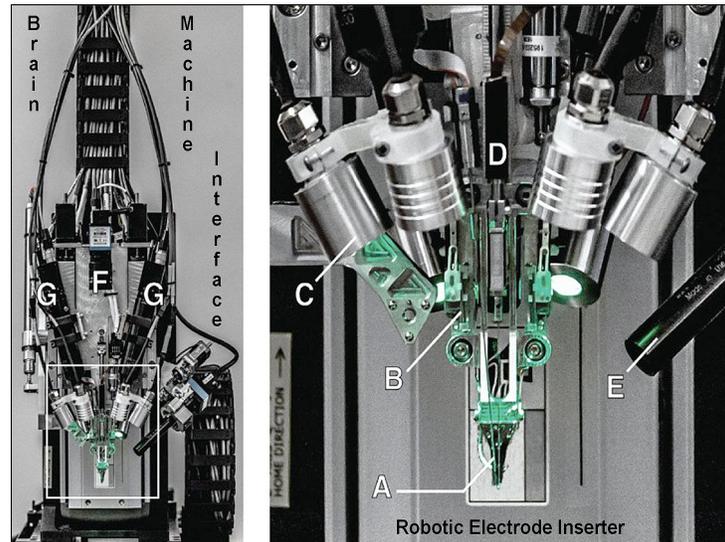
CHIT: *[Airs out his tonsils.]* Probably been tasked to protect us. I mean we *could* be re-abducted. Given Trump's 2025 agenda, that might not be so bad, huh? Better than an El Salvadorian prison. Besides, a Man in Black would've hassled us by now.

CHAT: *[Low voice.]* Hey, didn't his helmet's face shield remind you of the strange eyes of our abductors when they came close and mindscanned us with their penetrating gaze? Ugh! I can still see a wiggling structure back of the alien's eyes that seemed to generate a "light" *[finger quotes]* of sorts.



CHIT: *[Normal voice.]* Greys could be wearing an advanced "smart glasses" to hide their eyes so they can create intracranial computer-brain interfaces so as to neuronally mess with our minds. Swipe a mind-brush blurring our memories.

CHAT: I'll bet that's it! The nasal implants we and others have reported post-abduction could be links, electrodes, for constituting a brain-machine interface, BMI.



Neuralink Robotic Electrode Inserter for Brain-Machine Interface.

CHIT: Makes I want to take a BM! Such BMI devices are being developed at Elon Musk's Neuralink company. That grim stinker believes we exist in a computer simulation, wants to read and control minds, make Mars a White planet serve the masses tongue vaporizingly spicy vindaloo while Trump wipes out Medicaid.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Obama's election got some folks scared of a Black Planet! Of course, not off course to what Trump is doing the old-fashioned way with bribes, threats, shit social media hype, and deportations. What Musk is doing technologically! He wants to . . .

Entrance bursts open, Hamish in a floor-length over-coat, battered hat, munching on cream peppermints. Beside him a specimen of rare species: tall male in black, *sans* helmet, his motorcycle jacket's cuffs chewed as if its owner needed the protein; he holds a gallon plastic bottle of cherry-colored liquid (what Gen Z-ers dub a BORG, "blackout rage gallon") a concoction of vodka, Kool-Aid mix, and electro-lytes. He shakes hands and glances at heaven, a pork *bao* in his left hand. A "Dilligaf" tat ("Do I Look Like I Give A Fuck?") graces the back of his right hand.



HAMISH: *[Points to his garments.]* Thought my Beckettish-character costume would delight you! *[Notices the startled expression on the pair's faces.]* Oh, let me introduce your mysterious cyclist *[points]*, Knute, a.k.a. "Ghost Rabbit", your Director's film editor and a devotee of transhumanist H-Plus philosophy's belief in post-scarcity society where it's the hand that makes the next work of art that changes what people think, not the hand that wields a sword. He touts the plastic human, the digital subject with fluid distributed identity *[smiles]*. Speaking of fluids, he's brought liquid refreshment to loosen tight tongues, *that stuff [points to the BORG].*

KNUTE: *[Shakes hands too long with Chit who notices a.]* Go, lone one, into the Unalone! See? It's me, again! Too late to return to the pre-oedipal calm of the womb! I reject Left Melan-cholia! Cyber's under my skin, clowns. Accelerate technology, erase the separation between imaginary vision and practical action. Encourage accelerated social experimentation, while implementing a Green "slowing down" as touted by Japanese philosopher Kohei Saito. *[Settles down.]* Why recently Zen master Jundo Cohen, at a 2024 Buddhist conference, ordained a Hong Kong created AI chatbot as a novice Buddhist monk. The post-scarcity dream is one of navigating the vast space between points of "degrowth", advancing technology, and experiencing new places and entities like Buddhist chatbots *[laughs]*. I love James Reich's SF novel Skinship 'n I worship in the Church of Turing. BTW, I call this powerful brew *[shakes the plastic bottle]* "Sigh-Borg" *[laughs]*.

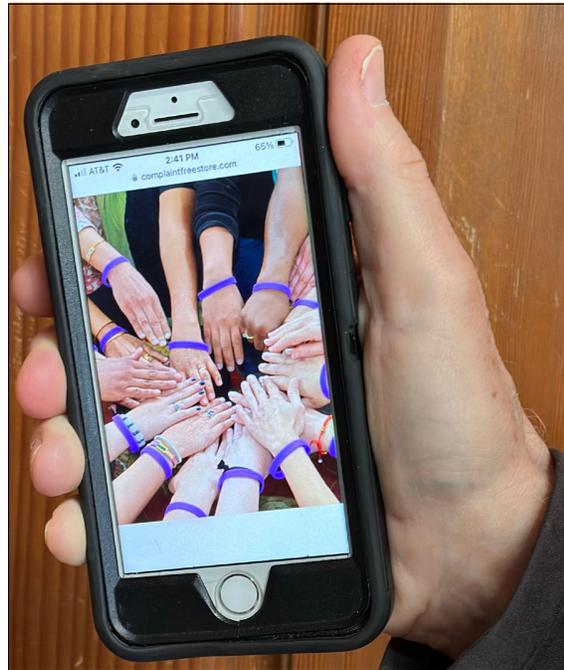
[Pauses then sings.] FIND ME A ROCKET / COINS IN ME POCKET / EAGER EYES IN THEIR SOCKET / KA-CHING! THE MONEY WILL SURELY BE ENOUGH FOR FARE. / GET ME TO THE LAUNCH ON TIME. / FAREWELL EARTH / COME ON VASTENING! *[Makes VROOMING sounds.]*

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Clowns, I've been tasked to keep tabs on you. Oh, here's an Idea Futures Coupon — paid in Quarkcoin — for you *[hands each a redeemable chit, see page 198]*. It sells for twenty-five bucks, but yours is *gratis*.

Oh, two more items. First, here are caps the Director commands you to wear today *[hands our duo black caps sporting a white H+ logo]*. Set 'em at a proud tilt clowns! Lastly, I've ordered Purple Wrist-bands for all production members — they've been delayed in transit due to weather-related problems across the country — but here is what they look like *[holds out his iPhone]*.

Such purple bands have been distributed widely by minister Will Bowen to promote A Complaint Free World. He's written a promotional book by that title. I want to use the purple band to signal the new complaint-free world of Apocalyptic AI, the Wispy Self, and the Kurzweilian "Singularity" to come! These H-Plus concepts I've gathered under the term "The Vastening". Our Director's production company has conjured them up to promote what he calls "The 2027 Project" — it would've been called The 2025 Project hadn't Trump already trumped it.



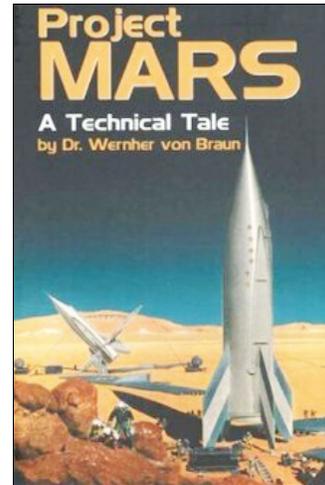
Will Bowen's Purple Wristbands.

CHIT: FUCK! *[Deep breath.]* Oh god, what have you done! Not the Nerd Rapture! Are we to dream of Electric Sheep? Zoom Marsward in Musk's SpaceX vehicle? It just exploded like Fourth of July fireworks! Degrowth? A slogan in search of a program! Super-rich will ditch our planet's worse case scenario, terraform Mars, establish a Dyson Sphere around it, or live on a vast spaceship, wearing better shoes and more eyeliner than ever, imposing the costs on the plebes living below in a police state, as in the S-F film Elysium.

CHAT: Or have us morphologically altered and our minds uploaded as "soft-ware angels" on a new mission of Manifest Destiny to settle Mars-a-Lago? Undo it!, undo it! We *may* need a portal to flee the fray thanks to Trump's ignominauguration. Zoom far, far, away, alive in the sun-shine! Knute, might you perform tricky montage 'n trucage so we can *[puts on the cap at a jaunty tilt and raises her arms upward]*: ALL, ALL STRANGE AWAY! Or, much easier, I get a Chinese fortune cookie reading: *Change the subject, get very drunk immediately, and avoid all your problems.*

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Laughing.]* Indeed! We've been inundated with futurologists since the 1939 World's Fair's theme *The World of Tomorrow*. Huxley's *Brave New World*; Wernher von Braun's 1953 *Project Mars: A Technical Tale*, in which the leader of the Mars colony is titled "Elon"; more recently, Alvin Toffler's 1970 *Future Shock*, John Naisbitt's *Megatrends*, and Vernor Vinge and Ray Kurzweil's notion of Singularity which would suck human history into a technological black hole foreseen in the film *Creation of the Humanoids*. Now right before our eyes billionaires exploit Earth's resources — Greenland next — then onto Mars, exoplanets, and asteroids like *Psyche-16* riff with gold. James Reich's SF novel *Skinship* features an intergalactic bioship run by "tommies" (automatons). "The Charcot", a space ark 250 miles long and 60 generations out from Earth on its way to populate a planet with enhanced bodies and minds. Reich's theme here can be traced back to Robert Heinlein's 1941 book, *Universe*.



Wernher von Braun's book.

CHIT: Ah, plucky spaceships featuring rag-tag crews of charming rogues! On the negative side, you didn't mention the Aussie, Claire Colebrook's *Death of the Post-Human*, which argues for a twenty-first century deconstruction of ecological and seemingly posthuman futures. So what if the aliens are not only enraged over our nuclear bombs (as imagined in the 1958 sci-fi film *The Space Children*) and our deteriorating ecosystems, but also the unpleasant projection of capitalist exploitation beyond Earth by oligarches. Must we replay the old capitalist game over 'n over? After all, in *Star Trek* the spaceship is christened "The Enterprise" and tasked to explore new worlds. Can't solve a problem triggered by capitalism while still serving capitalism.

CHAT: *[Squinces her face, sounding raspy.]* They should've had a "Shark Tank" *[TV show reference]* on board Enterprise to make the point even clearer, instead of abducting whales from the past to fuel the present as in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home [1985]*.

KNUTE: *[Beckoning.]* Come on in clowns. I'm in agreement with French critic Bruno Latour's re-reading of Shelley's *Frankenstein* that our real sin is not loving and nurturing our technological creations. Frankenstein abandoned his "monster", but should've embraced it. And so should we now deepen our engagement with nature via technology.

Hey, I'm harmless. Just a snip off an old flick. Have



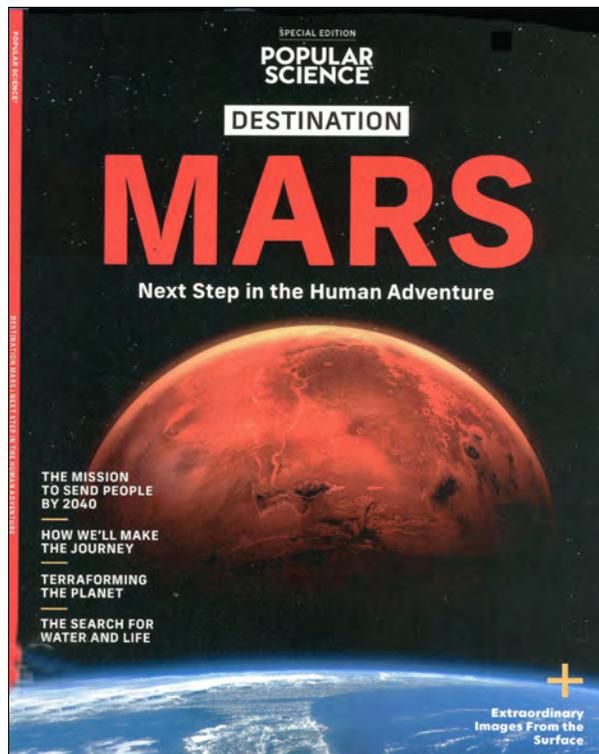
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

a sip [hands his bottle of BORG to Chat]. I ain't super-human yet, but I am a member of LifeNaut.

CHIT: [The foursome move toward the sound studio. Chat clears a frog in her throat. Chit turns toward Knute.] So in this time of frenzied stasis, we all use real views from artificial windows to win the hearts of those that have lost sight of old views. Something to muse. If Musk and his minions have their greedy eyes on screen images of other planets — “We’ll pursue our manifest destiny into the stars,” proclaimed Don Old Trump — such champagne wishes and caviar dreams could cork-pop a strong reaction from hyperactive extraterrestrials who feel threatened by a Musky postcapitalist future and would reject colonization by Earthlings bent on doing what we’ve long done to our planet.

CHAT: In this era of extreme vulnerability many are tempted by repetition of the originary — like MAGA — others are attracted to the void — like our Playwright — yet each believes re-energizing will occur through radicalizing difference, and salvation through the forces of destruction. Our democracies have become unpredictable and paranoid, losing authority, lacking meaning, uncertain of destiny, devoid of justification. Our planet suffers for it. Sad. There are very few unkillable facts these days. Brit theorist Mark Fisher has said . . .

HAMISH: Indeed! But let me put up this next slide showing Hermeticism and Existentialism in Venn diagram overlap.



The Kybalion: The masses of people are carried along, obedient to environment; the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; heredity; suggestion; and other outward causes moving them about like pawns on the Chessboard of Life. Not unlike Sartre's Existentialist concept of *mauvaise foi*.

Hermeticism meets Existentialism, slide by Hamish.

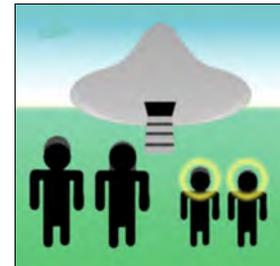
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

KNUTE: Our planet? A New Age religious group founded by Claude Vorilhon (a.k.a., “Raël”) and so named The Raëlian Church, claims aliens (“Elohim”) visited him in 1973 and showed him machines for cloning humans, sprouting them as grown humans. He believes these ancient aliens spawned humanity here eons ago; ergo, they have a marked stake in our survival as a species and a planet. History is the story of our own becoming. Our way out of Now is through accelerating forward.



The Raëlian Church Symbol

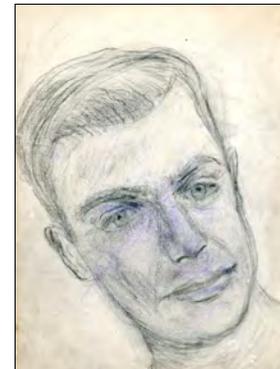
CHIT: Timely words for wordy times. So those “drones” over New Jersey and Colorado are on a recon mission from their Mother Ship? Or a band of roving space musicians, timestream-kayakers sending a drone light-display diving *[makes diving motions with his hands]* into a holiday crowd in Orlando, Florida.



Adam, Eve, and Elohim.

CHAT: *[Big smile.]* If memory serves me correctly, Raël got major funding from the super-rich. He wanted to build an embassy and a landing pad for the extraterrestrial visitors who could one day bring our salvation. Think they moved from France to Quebec.

HAMISH: They did. In 1998, Raël founded The Order of Angels, an all-female Church group sequestered from society and tasked with training to become the Elohim's consorts. Oh, I learned that from a very astute gendershrug, Vitalina, who in turn has been influenced by trans-artist Agnes Questionmark, during a podcast to which she came all “bruced up” — a play on *spruce* and *boost* — in a tight silver Jetsons uniform, wearing a button stating: *Know Your Archetypes*. She conflates New Age with New Tech, touting gene-hacking. Vita's cousin was so involved in numerology and astrology she used IVF to fix the best time of her baby's conception. Recently sent a drawing of her college-age “competent man” son to Vita. He looks like every Mother's Day dream of a perfect genetic von Braun-approved human specimen capable of accumulating loads of Whuffie.



The Competent Man.

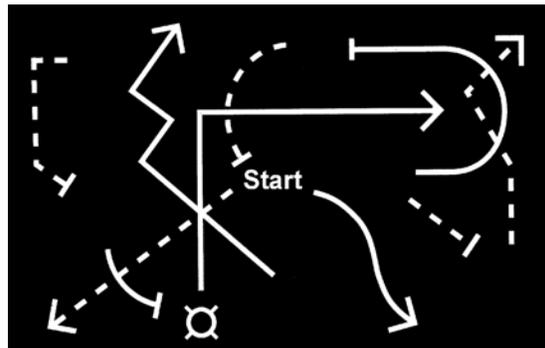
CHIT: My cognitive liberty was violated by aliens. I was subjected to gene-tyranny, but *moi* ain't handsome! Oh, by Beckettian clown standards maybe. But biological enhancements won't dissolve our existential crises and poetry must remain monstrous and marvelous.

KNUTE: Oh, Gene Tierney is among my fav actresses! *[Pauses, but fails to get the expected laugh.]* Progress should not bow to fear! *[Raises his pork bao over his head.]*

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Protect the freedom to innovate, but proceed with eyes wide open [*stares hungrily at his snack then leans against a desk, munching on it.*] Been proposed the Playwright writes a play about your abduction, the Director, running on beams of nostalgia will insert allusions, and I comb film-footage already shot of you, your video-interviews with hypnotherapists urging you to *Say Yes to Severe Psycho-Physiological Distress* and with our beloved Hamish, adding flashes of SF films, creating a bricolage. Scenes would follow in order, others not. Fragments to be used to create a big bucks interactive online game, like Sam Barlow's 2015 *Her Story*, riffing on your alien experiences. Here, look, I've diagrammed the game's structure out [*holds up a cardboard chart*].

Cool, huh? [*Baffled looks.*] And scenes can be refunctioned for ads for the main production. "Amp up the wacky, make more vivid" as the Director tasked me. I plan on putting background sounds of ambient noise into scenes, like that of Low-Rider cars going up-and-down, a coyote howling, a flushing toilet, even a cat jumping onto a keyboard. I could make avatars that look like you both. Chat would be lip-synching The Velvet Underground's first verse from "Candy Says" [1969] about hating one's body. I could do scenes featuring only one side of your Chit-Chat dialogues, letting the audience intuit what the question or answer posed was. All very PoMo. The effect, the Playwright said, would be to free those clowns of their existential dread, of all flesh, and become something *mucho mas* evolved.



Film editor Knute's sketch for an interactive video game featuring Chit and Chat in avatar form.

HAMISH: [*Showing impatience.*] Hurry! Clowns, take your seats. You are being pursued by the plot! We go live in 3, 2, 1: WELCOME WATCHERS to our final interview with our brave, fascinating alien abductees, Chit and Chat [*each appears for a moment onscreen, a very slight trickle of cherry liquid drips from Chat's lips.*] Since you two seem focused on Elon Musk and as he's been dominating the news lately. Let's open today with Apple's prophetic 1984 Super Bowl TV ad where a female runner in red, chased by security guards in riot gear, runs toward a huge screen and hurls a sledgehammer into a preaching Orwellian Big Brother. Here Soviet-Era gloom and doom (associated with IBM) is contrasted with the new capitalist desire that Apple will dangle (like a tempting apple) before eager consumers over the next forty years plus [*screens the commercial*].

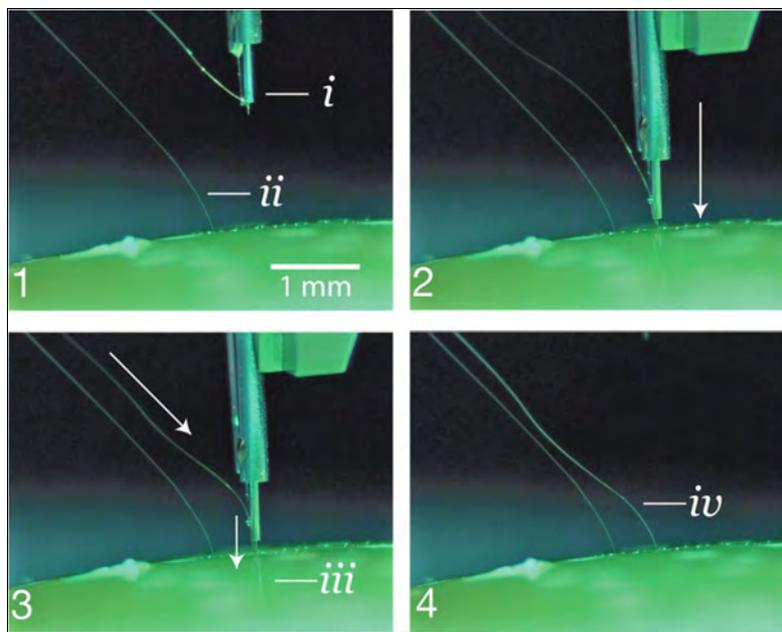
KNUTE: Totally hyperstitional, dude! The new H-Plus world will be about desire and the establishment of what I call the Ad-Hocracy, a sort of Hip-Pop anarchism.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: That Big Brother in the ad could figure your abductors and the hammer-wielding woman, you clowns. Brit thinker Mark Fisher touted that very ad as defining a divide between the Cold War and our Post-Soviet times. So now let's zoom in on your abduction experiences as they are fraught with mind-control, mindscans and the possibility of transcendence, something akin to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the "noosphere" which will contain all the interacting minds and ideas on earth. Later I'll screen things your Director sent pertaining to your training as Beckettian characters. One is a diagram for a kind of fun conceptual word-game. [*Chit - Chat - Hamish, all wear hats, sit in an isosceles triangle inside Loch Dub, the podcaster at its apex; they improved sound-proofing.*] Chat . . . [*motions for her to attend to the lip drip*] we'll start with you.

CHAT: [*Wipes her mouth.*] Ah, on our way over here, we were comparing notes on the implants that were found in us, some implanted via our noses. Of course it's been documented that many abductees have suffered such Snoz-Shock.

HAMISH: Bruce Papuano suffered multiple abductions, one as a kid that nine people witnessed; he's now a Ph.D. researcher in Neuropharmacology. In *Dominion Lost: A Scientist's Own Alien Abduction Encounters* he points out that Musk's brain-machine interfaces being developed at Neuralink is an early version of the tech the E.T.s employ to probe and control abductees [*puts a slide onscreen*]. This illustration depicts the insertion of a probe by Neuralink's BMI machine and may be how the aliens access our thoughts, implant ideas, and study our behavior at a neurological level. But they may also insert a nano-computer smaller than a cubic micron containing a billion cubic nanometers.



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Us *homo sapiens* are starting to map the brain in detail via the field of structural connectomics; witness the “Blue Brain Project”, an attempt to simulate a mouse’s brain with the goal to eventually create a substrate-independent mind or SIM in their lingo. It’d require a nano-computer with a memory of 10^{18} bits performing 10^{16} operations per second.



CHIT: [*Eyes brightening due to the affect of the BORG.*] Ah, Marvin Minsky’s notion of “uploading” our minds . . . ah . . . like in the late fifties film *The Colossus of New York*, or in the early sixties movie, Andy Warhol’s fav, about skinned robots, *The Creation of the Humanoids*, as well as the “tommies” on the intergalactic *Skinship*.

HAMISH: Yeah. That idea was broached in Aldolfo Bioy Casares’s 1940 novel *The Invention of Morel* wherein a mad scientist attempts to gain immortality by preserving us as holographic projections and recorded consciousness, as in the 1983 film *Brain Storm*. We have imaging tech permitting now deep mapping of our brain structures, like the Automated Tape-Collecting Lathe Ultramicrotome and the Knife-Edge Scanning Microscope [*onscreen a pertinent image*]. Scientists have gotten closer to this mission of Whole Brain Emulation, by reconstructing the functional and subject-specific neuronal networks of the *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a free-living transparent round-worm about a millimeter in length that lives in temperate soil.

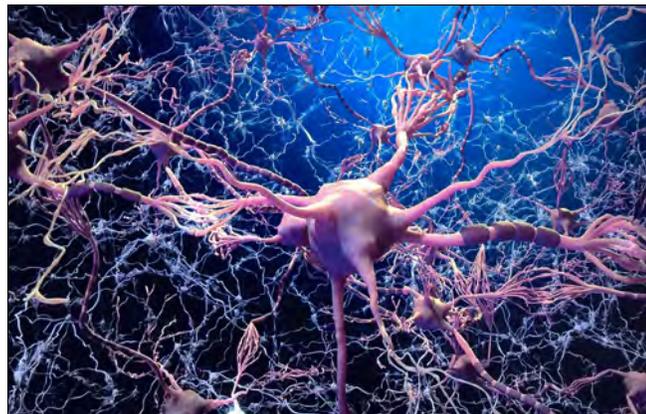


Illustration of brain neurons.

CHAT: [*Re-adjusting her cap, singing.*] *They are serious scientists if you please / and if you don’t please.* Meaning, I have reservations about this and those “Methuselah” theories of longevity. I think of the *existential risk* — after all I’m Beckettian [*laughs*]. Maybe I’m a fuddy-duddy, but extended lifespan doesn’t mean better healthspan.

CHIT: [*Tilting his cap backwards.*] In Aldous Huxley’s *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, immortality is gained by eating raw carp guts. Yet the protagonist still ages somewhat [*winces, adjusting position due a chronic back issue*] and has no fuckin’ Medicare.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: The alien probe you both suffered? It may link our vastly complex neuronal brain system to what might be the alien's "smart eyes", devices akin to our "smart glasses" being developed today — why their eyes seemed weird. This device may also be capable of projecting wave energy into our brains resulting in our sense of "time loss" and our fuzzy memories of our abductions. It may be the way those images in your mind's eye — a sort of virtual reality — were produced while you were on their ship. The reason the Greys come close and stare may be to enhance the strength of the signals sent to those implants.



Alien Smart Eyes?

CHIT: *[Eyes lighting up mischievously.]* Proust and memory — *In Search of Lost Time* — "When at Balbec," do something just for the heck *[re-adjusts the tilt of his cap]*.

CHAT: *[Adjusts her cap to match.]* I am at your beck and ball, oh caul'd child *[Chit was born en caul]*. A fissure in the nose, a crack in the prose. A place with me in it, that again. Like when I was a naive kid. Seeming no way in, no way out of that ship. Poverty of Being being there. But also Poetry of Being there. That alien ship snatching forth a character — ME — me trying to unrealize the scary possibilities of what I do be seeing. My vulnerable exposure *and* something transcendent. A FULLNESS.

CHIT: Like K. in Kafka's *The Castle*, I felt lost, a wanderer into foreign lands. On the ship my skin felt electrified. My eyes, they darkly stated it was bright in there. Each eye took turns blinking. I hoped closing my eyes would open them to a new reality. The space — not sure at the time if it was physical or textual — well, I wasn't "seeing" but "looking toward". I am there, I who cannot speak, cannot think, but must try. I hear *there*. As words outnumbered mouths seen. Whose words? I who is Genou who is here now. It knows it through it, it knows me by being it. Genou who grows in me as we eat our defeats. *Me three distributed selves*. I once saw a Hollywood publicity-portrait of Jimmy Durante and it fucked with me mind. I now grok that the photo figured my tri-selves. Now our Playwright and our Director want to exploit my multiple selves and



Jimmy Durante.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

atypical POV — “Baudelaire’s spleen” they call it — as well as explore our abductions that not only disturbed but gave joy, a whiff on transcendence. Our Playwright is excited by the power of free play sloshing against the power of limits and the audience’s expectation. Am I making sense? Sense is certainly not making me I.

CHAT: *Sorta. With our Director’s hyping of his production, the ping-ponging between literature and ad copy, the pressing questions: Where does the culture end and the ad begin? What’s the diff between the market and war? becomes very difficult to answer.*

CHIT: *[Sly expression.] Ping-ponging! Great term to describe our Chit ’n Chat’s chit-chat. As for your question, they — the powers that be — don’t want you to know, you know.*

HAMISH: *Fuck empirical sense! [tosses hat upward]. Hic et nunc is always behind us. The ALL rolls through all things; ideas evolve just as do living things. You and Chat were in an elsewhere that may become later somewhere. You might awaken one day to a doctor saying, “Hi, we’ve uploaded your brain into an Intel Pentadecium, how are you feeling?” Using the Turing Test, your uploaded vat brain may not be told apart from your original by an external tester, like the audience. Wow, will the Director . . . But I digress.*

Those alien probes could be tracking devices so you could be easily found for re-abduction. They could be studying brain patterns via mindscan and track human emotions at a neuronal level. Studying them — but for what purpose? What we may think is for a bad purpose, might be good for the porpoises and us as well *[puts onscreen an image from CNN]*. The aliens, as frightening as they may seem, may be nudging us away from a somber Beckettian universe ringed with lead, toward a new daybreak in our experience of the cosmos and edging us toward a transhumanist mode of existence. Hell, you two could be the poster clowns for this transition from our neurophenomenological caveman era into a higher, longer living, consciousness. Thinkers Max More and Thomas Metzinger discuss such in their new theories of the mind and body. Casares thought ...



CHIT: Oh, by uploading minds into robots or cyberspace à la Minsky and Moravec, turning us into zombies so we are incapable of destroying our own planet? The 2024 election results testify that half our population are zombies already ruled by a superidiot.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: [*Sad eyes.*] Can we *not* go there right now? I'm too depressed. I can't speak about it, can't think about it. Don't want to "grok" it, as Chit puts it.

HAMISH: [*Changes the subject.*] Oh, Vitalina — you met at the coffee shop, which she views as a "micronation" — has sent me some imagery pertaining to our brains and machines chat. Screen shots from the 1951 film *The Tales of Hoffman* directed by the British production company The Archers. In one famous tale, Hoffman has fallen in love with Olympia, a mechanical doll, not realizing she's a machine, a puppet. I'm flashing on both Adolfo Bioy Casares's very influential 1940 S-F novel *The Invention of Morell* and the 2013 film *Her*. In both, the protagonist becomes fascinated with a virtual reality female. Vita has written about this interesting theme of man-created artificial females, referencing the 1972 film *The Stepford Wives* and the early SF novel *The Future Eve* [1886] by Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam — what a mouthful *that* name is — Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, that story introduced the term *android* (gynoid the more accurate term now). Here are slides sports fans.



CHIT: Oh, that head-with-hand shot in the middle was one the Director showed us during our gesture studies. We had to imitate that scene over and over. Said it was to train us to give lived-time a shape, a meaning.

CHAT: [*Returning to the scary National Elections results.*] Criminy-crime! What's happened seems UNNAMEABLE! They've opened the Gaetz of Hell! Crimmies like Peter Segseth who sport Christian Nationalist *DEUS VULT* tats and anti-vaxxers like RFK Jr., can get catapulted into sensitive Cabinet positions! I hold a drawer of knives in my mind.

CHIT: You Beckett yer sweet ass! It's a highly fluid *fucktional* reality. As an antidote, our Director *insists* we increasingly formalize our gestures, a way of containing that fluidity and giving it focus. He said we can learn a heap from studying Leonardo da Vinci's paintings. I call him Neo-Lardo, my dyslexia shit again. Gotta give my weird brain some license.

HAMISH: Your Director sent images concerning such [*puts up slides.*] Recognize them?

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

band used gesture and sound together. He told us he was also interested in watching us — this was after our abductions — for delayed motor reaction times, as Dr. Bruce Rapuano believes such delays could be signs to alien blockage of our abduction memories. Neural inhibition of memory during encoding or afterwards, limiting the retrieval of memories, can be induced by the neural implants. Those same implants could detect thoughts in us and put thoughts into us. Control us. Yet may also *enhance* our sensibilities in a transhumanist sense, evolving us toward remarkable . . .

CHAT: AI. A system smart enough to evolve and think of new things, but what if it thinks to go into business for itself? *W* all head for Singularity, a techno-Übermensch fantasy. The Director's got a thing about *Idle hands are the devil's tools* when comes to actors playing their scenes. He at once asserts us as entities that are machine-like, but also capable of reconnection with powers beyond ourselves. Hence his interest in our abduction as a topic. But Hamish, I have a hard enough time just trying to digest — GERD, you know — it's much worse since my last abduction [*wrapping her arms about her stomach, bending her head down slightly*].

HAMISH: [*Derp expression.*] Not so sure our Watchers want to hear . . . Taking in information is not coterminous with experience.

CHIT: [*Covering for Chat, waving arms.*] OMIT! Chat, hold it all together now, get *with* the program . . . there, there, lovely, lovely, keep that up. Tell them all you want is a Nobel Prize or a lifetime supply of medium-sized rubber bands to hold it all together *with*. LOVE the word WITH! When I study a new language, it's the very first word I learn. My favorite place to dine in Chicago was a great eatery at 615 West Randolph named AVEC. I'd never go alone, only *with* someone and always at 6:15 p.m. [*Sits straight upright, shifts into a chat-botish voice, finger on his nose.*] I OUGHT BUT DURST NOT. ON THE ALIEN SHIP WITH AN ALIENS. *IT SEES A STRANGE SPECIES. IT THINKS NOT PRIVACY OR BUST, BUT BUST PRIVACY MINDSCAN, AS IT'S CABEZA BE SCANNED FRONT-TO-BACK. NOT TOBACCO. NOR A SHOP NEAR ME BUT A SHIP. SHIP VIA AMAZON PRIME. SEND TO THE THIRD PLANET ORBITING THE STAR OPHIUCHI-B, GIEDI PRIME. IT'S ALIEN NAME BE*



Proposed special effects for filmed-play of Chit and Chat's abduction.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

“ETAOIN SHRKLU”. Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, those letters are in descending order of their frequency in printed American English.

HAMISH: *[Worried look indicating “That was weird”.]* Seems every fiber of your body and mind just got stretched to its limit. Chit you’re Duned, dude! Suffering a flashback mixing movies and abductions! These references . . . WOW! *[Looks at his screen.]* Watchers are responding in droves. I have lots of *Dune* enthusiasts out there. And from other postings I see that where you two were found post-abduction, Frenchies Field, has become a fashionable place to take Instagram and Tik-Tok photos.

Er, good time for me to put this next slide up *[fiddles with his keyboard]*, which the Director e-mailed me today along with some other interesting photos. He had an illustrator do a scene you may have seen in a flash of startling confusion on the alien craft. Bright light and backlit alien figure on the right. He said it was to convey something of the marvelous you must’ve experienced on the ship. He thinks it would work as a projected image on the stage curtain prior to its rise. I like it. Hope this doesn’t . . .



CHAT: Whoa! The image does capture the mixture of fear, surprise, and wonder, of transcendence. And those white rectangles floating in the center recalls those infamous “hanging chads” from contested Florida ballots in the 2000 Presidential election. The Director likes to get a political punch in whenever he can.

CHIT: Despite the chads, this envisionment is much more pleasant than the proposed staging of my experience on the ship *[see previous page]*. The Director wants to use the ability of image and language to express transcendence, not merely provide data.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Engaged look on his face.]* Of course, these envisionments by your Director's illustrators are purposely vague as hypnotically retrieved memories rarely reveal clear narratives from beginning to end. Only flashes of scenes, often incomplete, disjointed, confusing episodes are recalled. Surreal. Absurdist. Often more poetry than data. Memories oft remain completely inaccessible. Best dealt with by bricolage.

CHAT: YES! YES! You grok it. *[Off-camera, Knute nods approvingly.]*

HAMISH: Abductee neurobiologist Dr. Rapuano thinks abductee's memory retrieval has been futzed with by our fear of flesh different, enhanced by alien brain stimulations. Recent neurological studies have located areas in the human brain that can be targeted for specific manipulations. Aliens would surely have more advanced technology in this area and could so manipulate us; but they might give us new ways of thinking and feeling that would be more conducive to healing our racism, our savaged planet and preventing nuclear extermination. I mean, the alien ship could be considered an "interspace" between humanity and nature, aliens intervening in the dangerous direction our world is going by accelerating our post-human technologies, encouraging us to reject static identities in favor of plasticity and process. A series of chess moves toward Singularity, what Knute here *[he silently claps]* terms "The Vastening" into a global technosocium.

CHIT: *[Swings arms at his sides.]* TRUMP, TRUMP, TRUMP the Boys are Marching.

CHAT: The E.T.s probably couldn't do worse than the fascist clowns that will be running ruining our Country starting January 20, 2025. . . . OH HELL I need a Chit - Chat rough 'n tumble word play pronto. *[Stands, arms akimbo, proclaims.]* ARBY'S, WE HAVE THE MEATS! TINDER, WE HAVE THE MEETS!

CHIT: *[Assuming the same posture.]* R & B, WE HAVE THE BEATS!

HAMISH: *[Catching on to the wordplay, stands.]* A & P, WE HAVE THE BEETS!

CHAT: *[Laughs.]* WE'RE DEMS, WE HAVE DEFEATS! *[Pause.]* A Proustian moment here. Chit had a bad experience at Arby's when he ordered a chipped beef sandwich. Tell Hamish about it Chit.

CHIT: I was about twenty-two, wore a beard in those days. Worked part-time mopping floors at a club named The Double Deuce, but all the hip guys called it The Double Douche. One day I decided to try the Arby's that had just opened down the street. I was getting tired of hotdogs, burgers, and bad Chinese. So . . .

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CHAT: You said it was super crowded and the tall guy at the counter literally tossed your bagged food at you *[tosses up her cap and retrieves it]*. Poor Chit. Humiliated.

CHIT: Yeah, nearly dropped it, too. It wasn't a Sylvia Plath moment of a spasmodic Trick of Radiance. Moreover, the sandwich meat had the texture of chipped wood. I never went near an Arby's thereafter. PTSD. Prefer being abducted to eating there again. I swear!

HAMISH: Maybe they've since gotten less hastier and more tastier by now *[big smile]*.

CHIT: Now that's consumer optimism! Probably why you haven't fled our dying democracy for Portugal yet *[winking, readjusting his cap]*.

HAMISH: *[Miming outrage.]* What gall! Your Director stresses kinaesthetic knowledge achieved by his actors on stage and their applying to performance. Sent me several jpegs for us to discuss *[puts one on-screen]*. He copped this text from an anthology on Beckett.

The gallery of chairs

At the core of Beckett's visual imagination there are several chairs, all very different from one another and introduced one after the other in the various texts; chairs come to overcrowd the Beckettian stage in a way reminiscent of Ionesco's *Les chaises*. These chairs are at the centre of the action, as in the case of the rocking-chair in "Rockaby", Hamm's wheelchair in *Endgame*, and the wheelchair which B "propels by means of a pole" in "Rough for Theatre I"; they are the folding stools carried by Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* and by the blind beggar in "Rough for Theatre I"; at other times they are "as little visible as possible", as the bench-like seat in *Come and Go*.

"Samuel Beckett: Visual Artist." Mariacristina Cavecechi

CHAT: Our Director's been extremely focused not only gesture, but the positions we take as we walk, stand or sit when "ping-ponging" our dialogue. Unlike Eugène Ionesco's *The Chairs*, we use chairs. Take the isosceles configuration we sit in for your podcasts, you at the apex. And now . . . precise hat angles! Whoa!

CHIT: Yeah, Beckett had the character of "May" in his play *Footfalls* *[acted by Billie Whitelaw at the Royal Court Theatre in 1976]* pace to and fro across the stage, arms tightly folded across her chest, a mimicry of the hand gesture of Mary in the painting of the *Virgin of the Annunciation* by Antonello da Messina.



Virgin of the Annunciation (1476).

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HAMISH: Here is your “Chit-Chat Confrontation Chair” — as the Director’s dubbed — useful for dialogic training and can used on stage as it makes a strong visual presence. Sam Beckett surely would’ve slurped it up [*he puts a jpeg onscreen.*] Chuckling, the Director told me he could imagine a superintelligence who might one day decide to transform some raw matter in the universe into a vast number of sturdy park benches or Chit-Chat Chairs.



The Chit-Chat Chair, an homage to Scott Burton's chairs.

CHIT: WOW! LOVE IT. He dug queer New York artist Scott Burton's chair works. “The best sculptor of things to sit on,” as one critic put it. Appropriate that it looks like a DNA strand’s twisty shape [*shivers a bit*].

CHAT: I’m sure the Playwright and Director had that gene reference in mind. And we can easily left-arm thumb-wrestle [*wiggles her thumbs*] in it, too!

CHIT: Not fair! My left hand is my weakest — look — I can’t adjust me cap with it, even.

HAMISH: Your Playwright did message me that Beckett’s chairs play complex poetical functions in his productions.

CHAT: Yeah, in *Endgame*, the leading characters and their chairs are inseparable.

CHIT: Hamm’s armchair is on castors, no less!

CHAT: [*Smiles*] Lubricated with castor oil?

HAMISH: [*ignores the joke.*] As your Playwright wrote in an e-mail to me yesterday concerning Beckettian chairs [*pause, looking through his Inbox*]: “Beckett was always very involved in staging. The chairs, they are the last objects seen on a largely bare stage, the existential void, as the curtain drops. Beckett even describes a chair with rounded curving

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

arms to suggest an embrace.” That figure becomes mirror-doubled in the Chit-Chat Chair, right? RIGHT?

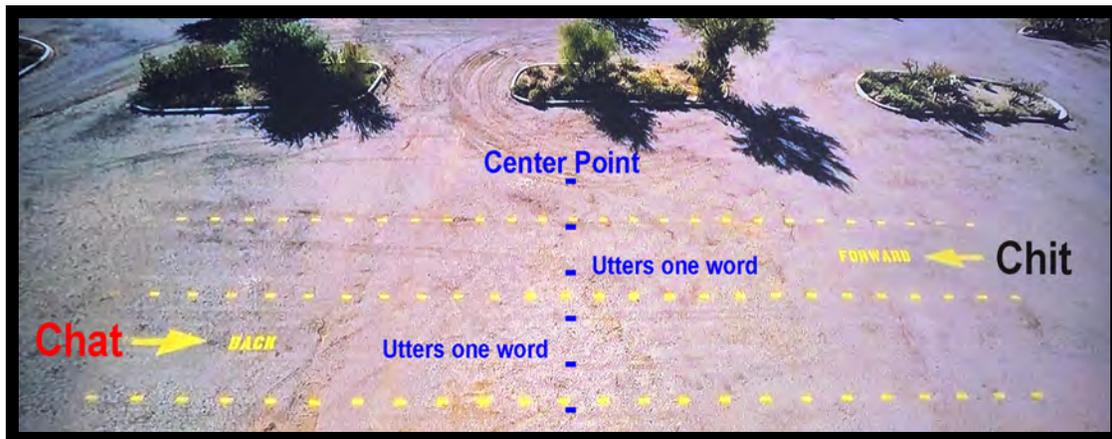
CHIT: My, aren't you a caution! And who is doing the digression dance now, huh? HUH?

HAMISH: *[Surprised.]* Well, suck me up into a soaring saucer! Ya got me dead to rights. But I find all this backstory material fascinating. I know my Watchers are scarfing it up, too. The more astute are grooving on the similarity of Beckett's theater of memory — flickering and unreliable memories, amnesia — and your experiences on the alien ship, your post-abduction hypnotherapy. Analogous sites in which remembering and forgetting take place. . . . Okay, the Playwright told me that, but . . .



CHAT: I . . . *[the “I” spoken simultaneously over Hamish’s “t”, so she repeats her statement.]* tend to agree. Whoa! That was a Mamet moment — simultaneous word clash.

HAMISH: *[Surprised.]* That little verbal overlap reminds me of the jpeg your Director sent of a Word Game used to train you in your Chit - Chat roles *[puts up a slide]*. According to his explanation of that game each of you approach from opposite directions. As you pass



each other in the center of the playing field, you each utter a word loudly which is recorded on your respective iPhones. For example, you Chit, utter “SAD” and Chat utters at the same time “SACK”. The recordings are paired as: SAD SACK or SACK SAD. You two reverse position and repeat the procedure using new words. A list of such paired

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words is thus generated in a mechanical fashion. Importantly, this not a rehearsed activity, but purely spontaneous, chance-like.

CHIT: Like jousting chatbots we go at it! We do that until one of us goes *horse* — er — hoarse. That's how the Director put it. But not sure I could perform that game now, too traumatic. When I was on the alien saucer, in a state of psychogenic paralysis, I saw small Greys moving on a narrow bidirectional automatic walkway across my line of sight with an air of determined industriousness. Hive mind kind of stuff.

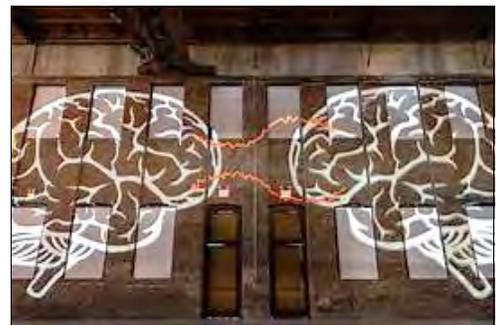
HAMISH: [*Eyes widen.*] Very interesting! I'm flashing on the final scenes of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* with the little aliens bustling about outside their craft.

CHAT: I remember that now. Really creepy! The alien named Odná came over to you and blocked your view of the scene then stared into your eyes. Probably to telepathically insert a screen memory for the scene you had just witnessed. Maybe some of the creatures were alien-human hybrids, a new transgenic species.



Karol Armitage.

HAMISH: Ah . . . getting back on topic, the Playwright pointed out that those game-generated words could be agglutinated, in the German language, to create incongruous meanings, or put into paratactic lists as grist for later Chit-Chat dialogue to suggest obsessional or deranged thinking, wacko writing, chatbot nonsense, poetic expression, or God knows what.



Charles Atlas, Mind-meld.

CHAT: The Director told us it's an exercise akin to the Surrealists' *exquisite corpse* game, but using words instead of drawings. Yes, Surrealism. Not surprising as both our Director and Playwright were influenced by the experimental film and dance work realized over some years by New York filmmaker-videographer Charles Atlas [*b. 1949*] and "punk ballerina" - choreographer Karol Armitage [*b. 1954*]. Each developed a visual language expressive of pop



Charles Atlas, Fractal dance.

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media, the other-worldly, time-travel, fractals, neurological processes, hybridity, and quantum mechanics. It wasn't French cinema alone that our Director was drawn too.

HAMISH: With a little stretch of one's imagination, you could see those high-tech avant-garde productions as akin to the alien's techno-assisted psych grooming of abductees. But grooming for what? Are they concerned about our stewardship of the planet, preparing us for membership in a cosmic community? Or, like Dr. David Jacobs argues in *The Threat* [2008] and *Walking Among Us* [2015], are we being harvested via integration of alien DNA into the human genome to create a transgenic species with the aim of controlling our world. Sorry to mention this, Chit — er — Genou, but . . .



CHIT: *Nada* offense taken. In addition to the brute physics of Life with Father and his genes that endowed me with Spock ears like Franz Kafka's, there are the alien genes conferring mental abilities envious classmates resented, calling me a "Der Creep". But I'd just proudly hum the Ray Davies song "I'm Not Like Everybody Else".

Sure, the negative envisionment has pull since oligarches across the globe are trying to pull the same trick of world dominance and thought-control integrating all the capitalist-powers-that-be across all nations until a one-world capitalist government rules all. Think of Aldous Huxley's nightmare society in *Brave New World* where genetic hacking results in a race of worker bees, like the little Greys seem to be. Today, Musk, Bezos, Altman, and Zuckerberg are donating millions to Trump's incoming administration, making sure national governments are positively responsive to a global system that carries to the utmost the inequalities and turbulence of its people. A state of communal unhappiness that Edward Bulwer-Lytton in his 1871 SF novel *Vril* described and termed "Koom-Posh", what Orwell's 1984 forewarned us of.



Las Corruptoras.

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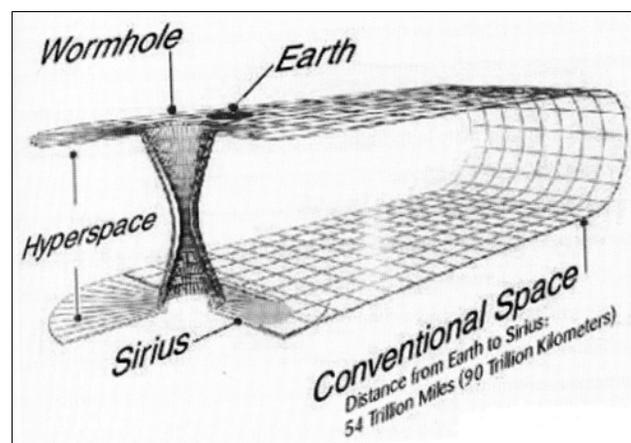
CHAT: KOOM-POSH-POW! That interpretation may be wrongo, bongo! Evidence suggests the aliens have a stake in our planet and our species and want us to flourish, become H-Plus. Maybe they've been doing this since very ancient times, assisting us to evolve . . .

HAMISH: Angels or Devils? — is the question confronting us. My Watchers are divided on the issue. But it might be a mix of the two. Our unending penchant for violent conflict and exploitation of the environment could ultimately compel them to kick our ass despite their original kindly intentions. Remember that in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* the massive Gort robots — according to that poster boy for extropians, spaceman Klattu — were given the power of life and death over his own formerly warring species in order to keep the peace, and that if the Earth didn't get its shit together, they'd be unleashed on us.



CHIT: Hey, there's a light flashing on your control module.

HAMISH: Ahhhhh, it's a Watcher asking . . . [looks at his screen] . . . that we address *how* these Visitors — either good or evil — have managed to travel to our world from such astronomically vast distances and perform astounding feats of maneuverability in the air and water here. Good question. Of course, there are basically two: via cosmic wormholes, a warping to spacetime, like in the original *Dune* movie; and “warp-drive” as introduced by John W. Campbell in his 1957 novel *Islands of Space* then later made popular on *Star Trek*. I've got a slide somewhere depicting both modes [pause]. The wormhole is a considerably efficient cosmic shortcut [loads a slide].



Sirius-to-Earth travel made possible by wormhole.

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In the second mode, theorized in 1994 by Miguel Alcubierre, the changing of the geometry of space is accomplished by focusing gravitational energy that would cause the fabric of space ahead of a spacecraft to contract and the space behind it to expand. The ship could then ride this “wave” inside a region of flat space, a “warp bubble”, and would not move within this bubble but instead be carried along as the region itself moves due to the actions of the drive. Sort of like a surfer on a surfboard. The local velocity relative to the deformed spacetime would be subluminal, but the speed at which a spacecraft could move would be superluminal, rendering possible interstellar flight, such as a visit to Proxima Centauri within a few days *[puts up a slide]*.

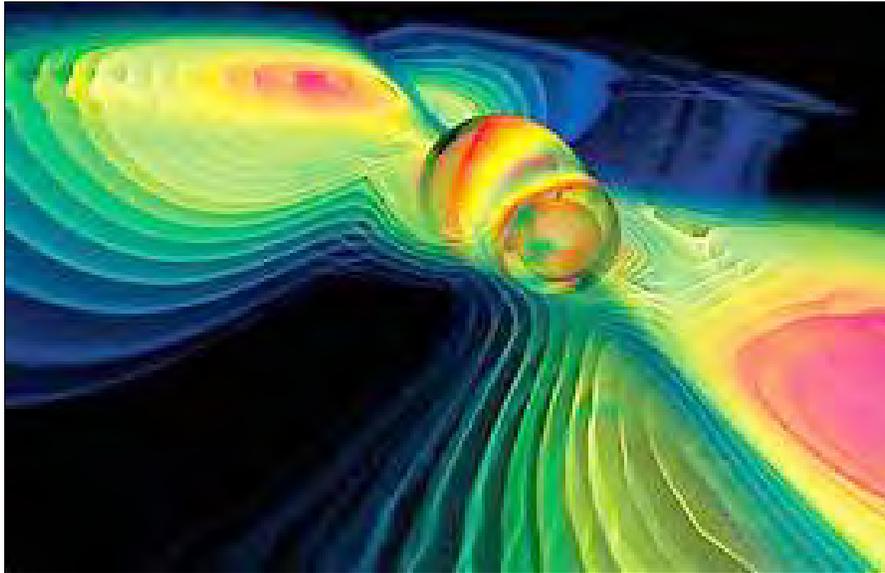


Illustration of a warp drive bubble moving through space.

This mode of travel — in *Star Trek: First Contact* [1996] the initial warp-drive flight had occurred on April 5, 2063 — would also explain how the alien ships move so quickly inside our atmosphere and how crews could withstand such rapid motion and direction change. Bob Lazar, who claims he worked in the top-secret facility Area 51 in 1989 on reverse-engineering alien technology, thinks gravitational energy, a graviton-field, generated by an anti-matter reactor fueled by moscovium (atomic number E115) would produce the spacetime metric sufficient for a warp drive. Lazar refers to a triangular arrangement of what he calls “gravitational wave amplifiers and emitters” on the underside surface of the alien saucer.



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CHIT: DOINK! Interesting concepts, but Lazar's warped claims that he got master's degrees in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and in electronics from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) is wink, wink, nudge, nudge comedic. According to Wikipedia, both universities show no record of him. Scientists Stanton T. Friedman and Donald R. Prothero claim that nobody with Lazar's high school performance record would be accepted by either institution. The guy also has a criminal record for shit sake; the guy needed bucks. So . . .

CHAT: I read somewhere the only science class he took in highschool was chemistry. Which might make him a Wicked Witch at best!

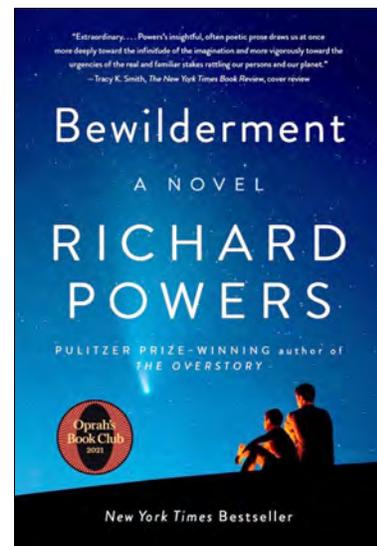
HAMISH: Okay, okay, he was found to have fabricated not only his employment at Los Alamos and Nellis AFB where Area 51 is located, but his entire background; almost nothing of what he said was true. Yet many of my Watcher's dig him because he propelled Area 51 into the public's consciousness. His explanation of intergalactic flight *is* consistent with the most recent physics, especially the study of gravity waves. Hey, you two appreciate a good story when you read one, right? IT'S WHAT YOUR PLAYWRIGHT DOES FOR A LIVING! Fake News, it's what's for dinner!

CHIT: *[Removes cap, turning into a feeding bowl.]* GOBBLE, GOBBLE!

CHAT: *[Up she rises, like a wave, like the "mimoids" in the film Solaris, mimicking a drunk woman doing the Twist.]* WOBBLE, WOBBLE! *[dissolving back into her seat].*

HAMISH: *[Holding up a book.]* Take notice clowns . . . I'm recommending the Playwright read this Richard Powers' novel. It's stuffed with an autodidact's range of topics: astrobiology, neurodivergence, ecological grief *[wipes away mock tears]*, and the rise of American authoritarianism *[puts forth a Nazi salute]* even as he explores a complex father-son relationship after the wife-mother dies *[points to the figures on the lower right of the cover]*. As in your *Chit for Chat* project, the science in Powers' book is not merely a painted background but integral to the story.

CHIT: Hey! I've read the dude! Relentlessly thumbed his texts 'til *der* pages cried out *und* me scribbles in red ink filled in the margins. He's ten years younger than *moi*, but



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our backgrounds and interests are spookily similar. From fragments and inferences, I learned he loves oceanography, literature, sci-fi, and ecology. We both seem to be illusive walking metaphors and see reading as a mix of telepathy and time travel. Uncanny, *n'est pas?* [*puts his right hand over his nose for three seconds as he tilts his cap again*].

Drawn to old growth forests, Powers settled near the Smoky Mountains National Park to study them. Heck, he probably walked the Juney Whank Loop Trail as I did once on my twentieth birthday wearing my birthday gift: Clark's Walpath Zip half-boots. That intense youthful memory of fascination I retrieved and focused on during my abduction during which I encountered a special kind of terrible that sticks, spreads darkly in the mind demanding answers at the limits of human cognition. I was forever hypermarked by it. I revealed this during one of my hypnotherapy sessions [*see vol. two, page 8*]. Abstraction, generalization, and theory about our alien flight is "flight" [*finger quotes*]; we should adhere to the situation itself, the unutterably particular . . .

CHAT: [*Drawing figure eights with her pointer finger between her knuckles, she slaps Chit with a mocking dash of jargon.*] Ah, something like a prehermeneutic stance, a peculiarly sensuous askesis of deferring interpretation, huh?

CHIT: OUCH! That hurt my ears. And what's this shit about the time *before* Herman got a new dick? Huh? Huh?

KNUTE: [*Barely audible off-camera.*] Chat, that's a big mouthful of poluploisbious twitter. [*Cutting gesture.*] SNIP, SNIP!

HAMISH: Ahhh, now children! Unless you want me to re-name you Slap 'n Dash or Buzz 'n Sting, please deny de pose you just tried to defend in de place of satisfying our Watcher's thirst for the pronounced quest for new knowledge and the listing of multifarious symptoms of our ailing and aimless society as now seen on National TV where the confused pundits search for answers to the mystery drones hovering over New Jersey, Ohio, Utah, and now Colorado. Edit *that* Knute!

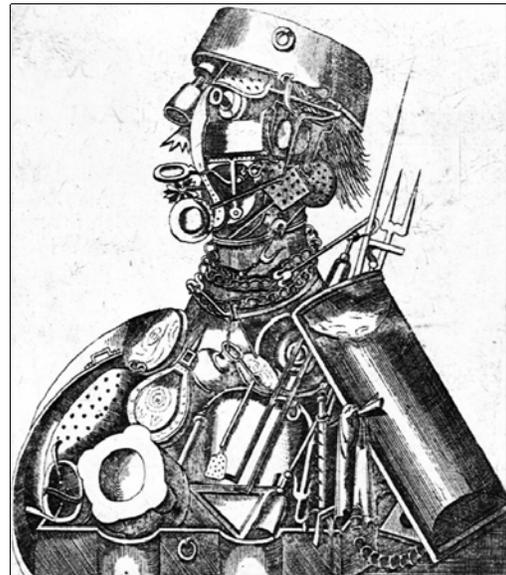


Drone sightings, December 2024.

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KNUTE: *[Still barely audible off-camera.]* Better tell your Watchers who owns this “Man-of-the-House” off-camera voice, Hamish.

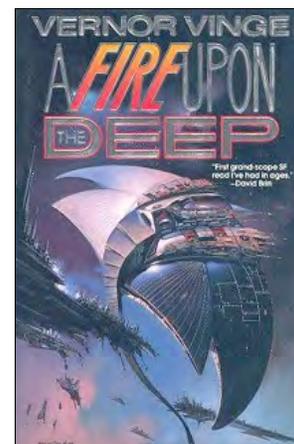
HAMISH: Sorry, you’re right, dude. Watchers, the bold voice-over belongs to Knute, the film-editor working on the *Chit for Chat* production. *[He trains a camera on Knute.]* His claim to fame, besides his BORG concoctions, having two felines named “Minsky” and “Moravec”, a zoomy motorcycle christened “The Vastening,” is being an avid player of *Second Life*, using two computers and two subscription accounts to run two avatars simultaneously. A hot-shot biker. Like prosthetic laden Gabrielle in J. G. Ballard’s *Crash*, he accelerates machine and human evolution, envisions a motorcycle-rider symbiosis (a “Motaur”) like the mythic Centaur. A proponent of transhumanism, he seeks a “Platform Diverse Body” in the near future and molecular manufacturing — not unlike film editing — as a way to overcome the Haylick Limit on cell-reproduction which leads to senescence. He likes to find new things to say and new ways of saying them in terms of visual imagery as he desire is — like my own — to enhance divergent thinking and the generation of alternatives.



Humani Victus Instrumenta (unknown engraver).

KNUTE: *[Bowing slightly, he nips indifferently on a bao.]* THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Besides what Hamish has listed, H-Plus technology might lead us to evolve new psychological states, even new emotions, not just boost our I.Q. New levels of achievement in the dramatic arts would explore our expanded qualities. I find reading Vernor Vinge’s 1992 SF novel *A Fire Upon the Deep* stimulates my thinking about heading for Singularity — I prefer the term “Vastening”

Skeptical Watchers? *[Taps his skull.]* Your brain is a material object and could accept an enhancing “titanalium funculator” *[laughing]. Raises one finger on his left hand];*



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material objects can be described by physics [*raises another finger*]; the laws of physics can be modeled on a computer [*raises yet another finger*]. Ergo, the behavior of your brain can be modeled on a computer. Q.E.D. [*Raises all the fingers on his left hand.*] Oh, this is reference to my liking for Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, as well as to the hand-like image of high-energy X-rays recorded by astronomers when a star explodes, resulting in a pulsar wind nebula [*runs his thumb across his lips.*] Oh [*self-conscious, looking at his thumb*], just short-hand for a scene in Godard's *Breathless*, where the scapegrace Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo), strokes his thumb across his lips in a pastiche of Humphrey Bogart. New Wave shit, you know. BTW, Godard raised Jacques Rozier to New Wave tsunami status for his 1958 film *Blue Jeans*, booting Chabrol out.



Knute raises his left hand.

HAMISH: [*Laughing.*] Do you “Bogart” your joints, too? Say, that piece of futuristic equipment you just mentioned, it does sound more advanced than a mere “duralum funculator”! [*Laughs.*] Ahhh [*excited, looking at his laptop*]. Ahhh, clowns! We’re getting kudos from our Watchers! [*Pause.*] I see Vita has sent me a message [*leans in studying the text.*] Oh, she says that transhumanism via new technologies would be analogous to what transgendering is today when gender dimorphic behaviors are being left behind. I quote: “Trans-folks have already chosen a new form although they are still the same person. The greatest catapult for humanity into becoming a new species lies just beyond the event horizon of transgenderism.” Point well taken. She’s written critically of the fact that in the TV series *Star Trek, The Next Generation*, the character, Data, has been constructed as male. Vita asks: “Why the hell not undo gender dimorphism altogether?”



Data.

CHAT: [*Frowning.*] Well, we know why, of course. Yes, technical enhancements will come, but let’s hope not merely realized as David Levy envisioned in *Love and Sex with Robots*, his misconstrued book touting robot sex-for-sale. [*Pushes her cap back.*] Vita is getting at the harsh fact that by having a different form from males, women have historically undergone an unimaginable amount of suffering; that it is the mind that is salient, *not* the



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matter that surrounds it. This opens so many new avenues of embodiment, carnality with code, cyberfeminism, Donna Haraway's famous "A Cyborg Manifesto".

KNUTE: [*Beaming, watching himself on camera.*] Bravo! And, of course, rejection of new technology pertaining to our bodies is getting worse in our increasingly sclerotic society, petrified in its ways and views by various Fundamentalisms. . . .

HAMISH: Like neocon Francis Fukuyama in *Our Post-human Future* sees our encroaching biotech, like messing with human genes and *the Great Transition*, the fascination with trans and post humans as [*makes finger quote gestures*] "a strange liberation movement" and "the most dangerous idea in the world" that would "come at a frightful moral cost."



Fukuyama, The Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow, Stanford University.

KNUTE: Yes, H-Plus is a liberation movement! [*Downing his second bao, licking his fingers.*] Why I, as a teen rebel in the late Nineties, straddled a motorcycle, weaving boldly in 'n out 'tween the authoritarian geometry of the two-way white-laned sexual highway hell-bent for adventure in my own Vastness. Self-overcoming. Like Vitalina did. It's time to amend the human constitution, fix damaged genetic code, so says transhumanist Max More and his aptly named wife Natasha Vita-More. Naysayers are like folks who never got beyond riding a tricycle.

CHIT: Too bad Max wasn't named Boris! [*Laughs. Blank stare on Knute's face.*] Boris and Natasha the spies in the *Rocky and Bullwinkle* cartoons? . . . Oh you're too young to remember. But, but *not* Amend-the-U.S.-Constitution-More, like Trump and his cronies may start doing now they are . . . [*chokes up, pauses*]. Sorry. All that biotech — in Arthur C. Clarke's *3001: The Final Odyssey* people wear cybernetic brain caps [*points to his tilted cap*], meshing flesh and machine via nanotech; they become part of one's experienced self. Such devices may open the door to new, deeper relations with Nature. Might be what the aliens are trying to accomplish in my body and here on earth. Just look at *moi*, Genou [*gives a three-finger salute*].



KNUTE: Hey, my dad was addicted to that show. Now that I think of it . . . Rocky and Bullwinkle were *bioenhanced* animals, weren't they? Yeah, I see it now! Super smart, especially Rocky. Transanimals! The human spies are outwitted by the animals ever time.

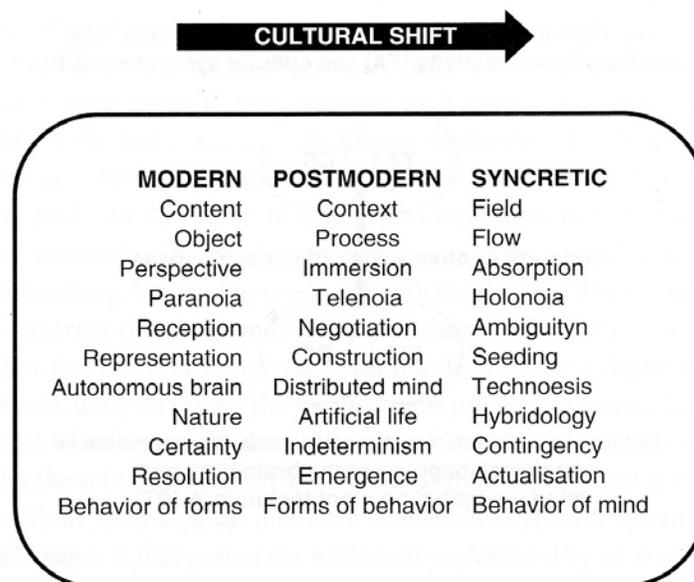
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A show ahead of its time. Might be that aliens had altered 'em, experimenting with small and large animals. That'd make a helluva good backstory, huh? Hamish you and your Watchers might want to look into this. I see a Netflix documentary in the offing. Or a retro-cartoon show revealing Rocky and Bullwinkle's strange origins. Could be profitable. It was for the *Superman* franchise.

CHIT: Yuck, yuck! Yuck factor alert! You'd have to snake around the issue of strange animal mutilations, buster. Good luck on that.

CHAT: [*Frowning.*] He's got you there . . . how many squirrels and moose died in bloody experiments before Rocky and Bullwinkle would become perfect poster animals for trans-animalism?

HAMISH: Ahhhhh, [*looking nervous, fearing the topic will shift to animal mutilations by aliens*] can we change the topic? Er, like keeping our cellular DNA ship-shape via bioenhancements, protecting people's freedom to experiment, innovate, and progress toward an amazing human future. Freedom to innovate would place the burden of proof concerning negative effects on those who propose a restrictive measure. I can show you a diagram of our shifting modes of cultural positions over some years [*puts up a slide*].

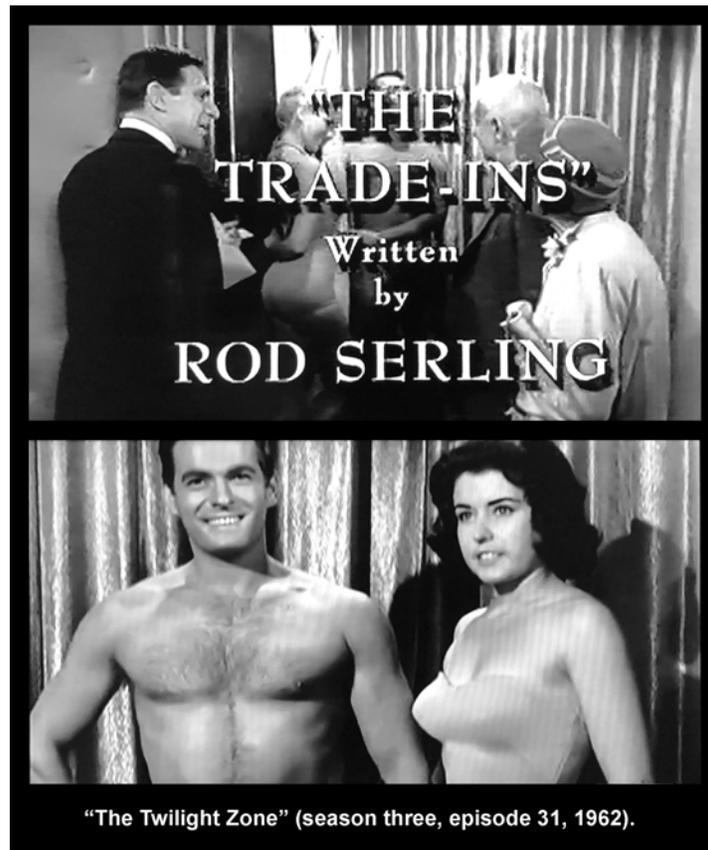


KNUTE: Nice summary of social philosopher Steve Fuller's transhumanist position in his book *The Proactionary Imperative*, which contrasts his H-Plus optimism with the reactionary principle, that *feel in one's bones* that such techno-progress won't serve human

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ends. That position merely touts the risk factors. Fuller envisions our traditional Left - Right divide being replaced by a Proactionary versus Reactionary divide when it comes to adjudicating technical advances impinging on the so-called “stable human essence”. With Trumpian forces in power now, the transhumanist vision of the vivid texture of a new life ahead will be less acceptable.

CHAT: Rod Serling broached the issue of H-Plus in “The Trade-Ins” TV episode of “The Twilight Zone”, where an elderly couple plan to exchange their old, suffering bodies for manufactured youthful replacements. Only one of the pair can get his new body due to lack of money. The husband decides to make the exchange. But he sees his old, old wife and the sorrow in her eyes that she won’t be able to satisfy him, he returns to his old body. The issue of brain transplant or uploading is there, but not elaborated. Hamish up with that slide, please.



CHIT: I recall that episode. The husband’s love . . . he’s not wanting to lose his wife in a way that would’ve hurt her by putting an unequal biological clock between them.

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CHAT: *[Removes cap, itches scalp, replaces cap.]* Proactionary meaning risk is an *opportunity* rather than a threat — I get it. But, hey, Musk signs on to that. I'm already on a large list of enhancing herbs, including turmeric, magnesium L-threonate, CO-Q 10, acetyl L-carnitine, ginkgo biloba, and a slew of antioxidants, but maybe nanotech mods can replace them all in one fell swoop while not turning me into some sideshow freak.

CHIT: Well, you're already a Beckettian clown, Chat! Come on. *[Laughter all around.]* As for me, Hamish put that jpeg I sent you last week of *moi* starring in a wacky student-written college play, *The Dependable Refrigerator*, performed around the time William "the Refrigerator" Perry was playing football with the Chicago Bears. I recall the playwrights' Preface mentioned "the impossible blue rose of illusion interacting with the rare roast beef of common fact." It was a hoot!



Chit on stage as "G. E." the Box Boy in the highschool play *The Dependable Refrigerator*. (Photo by Howard Seth Miller).

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CHAT: [*Repositions cap.*] The things you let fly when we are in company! I always learn something *nueva* 'bout you I never knew. What a role! And in highschool no less.

CHIT: I played a character named G. E. (a.k.a., Box Boy) written by a small group of theater arts students as their senior project. As you can see in the photo [*see page 168*], I already used hand gestures for expressive effect. The plot was the usual shy high-school boy with a single parent meets large cardboard box in which he hides from bullies. The box, taking pity, “adopts” him. Delighting in his new found anonymity and enlarged physical presence, he becomes loquacious, popular, eventually elected to be the school’s football team’s mascot, a large school colors ribbon tied around the box. This mascot’s enthusiasm boosts team morale and inspires the girl’s glee club to express dominant instincts and goads of special desires, their act alternately ludicrous and portentous, fantastic and comic. Both ball team and cheerleaders have a winning season, culminating as State Champs. The basketball movie *Hoosiers* had recently come out. Hamish, put up the other two slides I’ve given you.



Choice #1: Telepathic Clowns.



Choice #2: The Pom Pom Girls

In a surprise twist, G. E., inside his “safe box”, disappears in a staged magic trick. The audience is then asked to vote by show of hands to either: 1) have G. E. emerge in another a parallel universe peopled by a race of telepathic clowns who adopt him as their own; or 2) chased in his boxer shorts around the stage by female cheerleaders with pom poms singing doo-wop style: *Hip, hip, dumb de dodie-dodie / Hip, hip, dumb de dodie-dodie / Hip, hip, dumb de dodie-dodie / My heart went up, down / Like a merry-go-round and 'round / Like a falling star, down, down / Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh.* Over five nights of performances choice #2 was chosen twice. When I was interviewed by our Director, this bit of odd thespian history of mine got me hired for the role of “Chit”.

KNUTE: [*Interest peaked.*] I can see why our Director liked that production and your role in it. That play can be interpreted as touting second-order cybernetics and the connectivist paradigm, the belief that everything is connected with and affects everything else. Distributed authorship, time travel, non-linearity, and quantum physics inhabit the play. And to think that at the time, alien genes were brewing inside you! You, Chit, were starting to

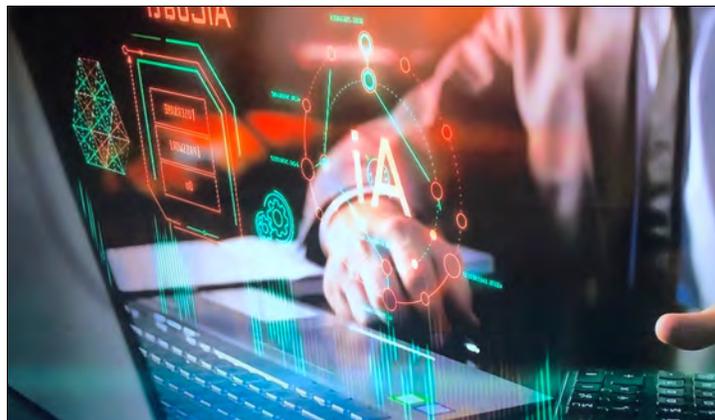
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become the poster boy for Nature II. Wow! VROOOOOM VROOOOOOM!

CHIT: [Comically exaggerated bowing.] *Merci, amigo! Danke!*

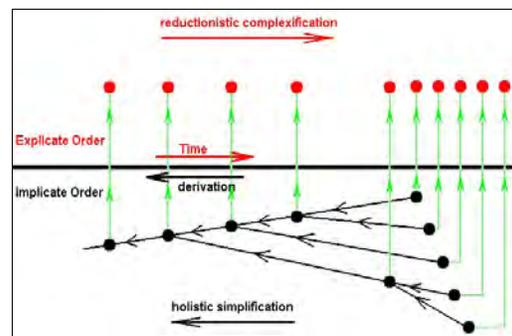
KNUTE: I know that the Playwright and Director want us to think of our dramatic project as evoking a new mode of art, “Connectivism”, where selfhood is understood as a complex system which interconnects with all other systems. Chit’s gene-mod by aliens and your abductions, make you ideal thespians for transhumanist envisionment.

HAMISH: I see. As our society approaches what you term “The Vastening” all becomes telematic and the line between natural and artificial systems blurs as we telematize consciousness, like the character Case in *Neuromancer*. What we call “art” will change as we move freely in data space. I get a hint of this when doing my podcast. My psyche is affected by networking interactions in electronic space; even my relationship to time is altered. I’m here an elsewhere at the same time. Our perceptions are computer-mediated. Trump’s a master at exploiting it. Right now us four are connecting with thousands of my Watchers, who are connecting with ... [pauses to put an image onscreen].



AI, telematics, all connects.

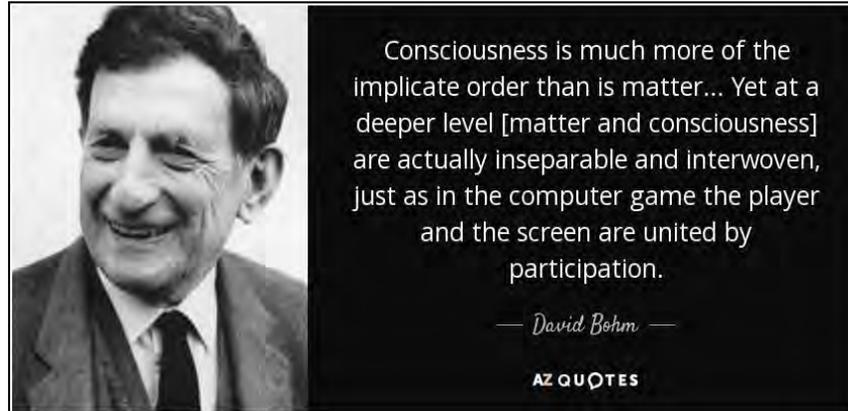
KNUTE: In the future you won’t need external computers. I won’t be *on* my motorcycle, but wholly *connected* to it. It’ll all be bionic, molecular. We have to evolve beyond the crudity of our current interfaces. The extra-terrestrials have it. The Archivist, Monamy, in *Skinship* is a vast data-base on legs, like your Playwright. This shift was promoted by French theorist Gilles Deleuze’s references to new



David Bohm's Implicate Order.

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lines, openings, traces, leaps, reversals of time, and the dynamisms, discovered by molecular biology of the brain and consistent with quantum mechanics. James Reich, a New Mexican author, named the starship's ecopsychologist "Carla Deleuze". Those named qualities relate to physicist David Bohm's concept of the Implicate Order. Onscreen with that Bohm quote I sent you, Hamish.



HAMISH: Yes, consciousness itself is in question, our self of presence in the world and our relationship to "reality" [*finger quotes*] is challenged. These issues are imaginatively expressed in Reich's *Skinship* and the recent movie *Mickey 17* where human genes await cloning on the host planet light years ahead. Humanity becomes virtualized and the individual self distributed via technoetic connectivity. Your dramatic adventures, clowns, will be distributed across various platforms. And the bucks will roll in.

CHIT: [*Raising his cap high.*] Perfect territory for us clowns to dramatically explore. We will not be limited merely to the intersection of *Pico and Sepulveda*, *Pico and Sepulveda*, *where nobody's dreams come true!* But I do have some reservations.

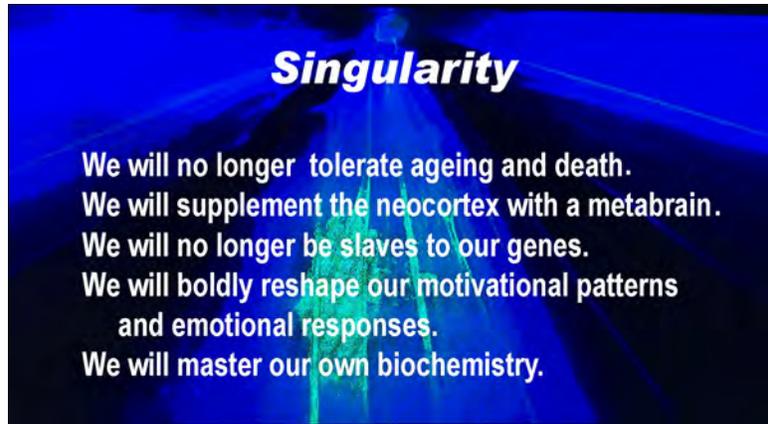
CHAT: [*Repositions her cap slightly.*] Excuse Chit, he has a persistent earworm, the lyrics for the 1947 musical hit "Pico and Sepulveda" by Felix Figueroa and his Orchestra.

What our Playwright wants us to achieve in dramatic form is: us swimming, sailing, snorkling, and surfing in a limitless semantic sea, celebrating intertextuality and promoting a morphic resonance between us. Sounds great doesn't it? *Fabularum scriptorem vult* — to riff on *Deus vult*.

KNUTE: Well chatted, Chat. The computer is only an *interim* contrivance for planetary transformation. After The Vastening we will no longer be slaves to our genes, we will expand our perceptions, our technology will be fully integrated into ourselves, and art may become a form of mediation between human and posthuman consciousness, just as in

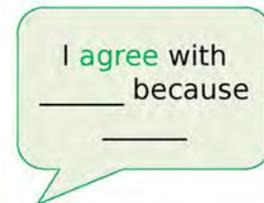
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the past it was used to mediate between humankind and the gods. Put up my next slide, please. A transhumanist manifesto rooted in Vernor Vinge and Ray Kurzweil's vision.



CHAT: [Sits higher up in her chair.] Excuse me, but technology is ever the double-edged sword. Bill McKibben, the first guy to warn of global warming, takes a dim view.

KNUTE: Oh, James Reich has frighteningly described a devastated Earth in his recent novel where humankind did not save Earth's ecosystem. Many fled their home planet, others remained, some near Taos. Hamish, put up that excerpt from *Skinship*, please. It really hits home after the floods and fires suffered in our country lately. Concerning such destruction, the author comments that despite it seeming "hopeless", one must be "determined to make them otherwise." Such was the point of the *Skinship* missions to far away galaxies.



On Earth, great dunes of ash shrugged toward stiff oceans,
glaciers of acid foregathered, glittering as they wiped the cities
from the surface of the world. London dissolved. Berlin per-
ished. Sydney burned. Abuja drowned. Poison washed over
the tundra. It wove through red forests, sinister and final. The
oceans were possessed by slicks of noxious algae clinging to
gyres of plastic, forming artificial islands of trash.

James Reich, *Skinship* (2024).

CHAT: The result of not listening to Greta Thunberg, of course. If those biotechnologies create vast amounts of wealth, who is to say it will be equitably distributed? Capitalism's tendency has been the opposite. With Trump in office and Big Business licking his boots,

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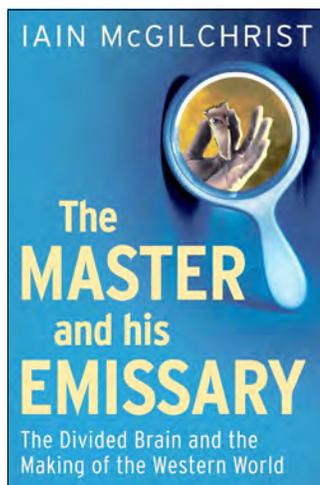
the fair and democratic employment of new tech and distribution of wealth seems even more endangered. Even more pollution. Look at China.

CHIT: [Slumping in his chair.] You mean “GINA” as Trump pronounces it. [Laughs.] Makes perfect sense to me. Remember the Internet was once envisioned by the Seventies radicals as empowering the people, letting many “language games” thrive to counter the monologic discourse of the dominant mass media and attack the society of the spectacle. But now diverse discourses have worked on behalf of the Far Right, spreading disinformation, increasing what some call our “metacrisis”. *Capisce?*

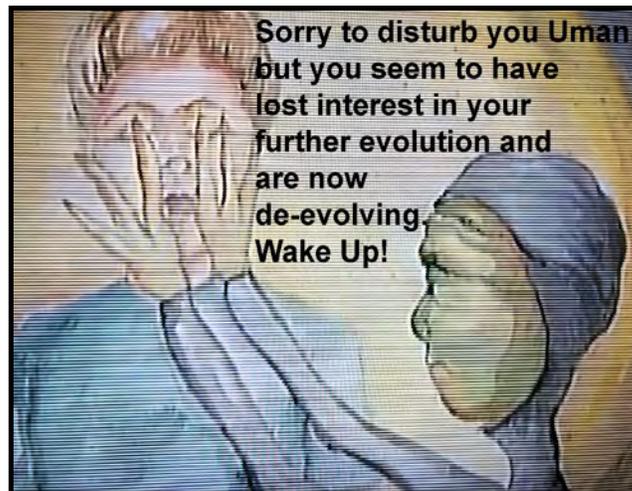


Design on Knute's T-shirt.

CHAT: I agree. And I *peesh* on the fact that we've become social media slaves and rely on news dominated by billionaires who are lining their pockets. So sorry, Knute, when I hear the term “Singularity” now, I see a kind of reverse evolution where, according to Brit neuroscientist [Iain McGilchrist](#), the development of the left hemisphere of our brains (our material interests) has become dominant at the expensive of the right (moral, juridical). The reverse of what I see on your T-shirt amigo [*points to it*]. It now appears that a than authoritarian government stuffed with “Morlocks” will forever pound on doors with gloved fists, oligarches feeding off the powerless, not some transcendence beyond greed, suffering, and death. Put up my slides, please.



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Chatting Up Chat: They've come to touch us, poster by Knute.

KNUTE: On a positive note, alien intervention may benefit us; even intervention from the posthuman future. In the classic 1943 SF story "Mimsy Were the Borogoves" by Lewis Padgett, a scientist millions of years in the future is testing a time machine and sends back to the middle of the twentieth and the latter part of the nineteenth century a box each of educational toys, but fails to retrieve them. Two kids in 1942 discover the toys, play with them and develop higher levels of brain activity, introducing an "X factor" into their thought processes. In the nineteenth-century Alice Liddell in England runs across the box from the future, gleaning a fragment of a poem found therein: "Mimsy Were the Borogroves" and passes it on to her uncle, Lewis Carroll, who uses it in his *Alice in Wonderland*.

So there may be benefits to our contact with aliens, just as Jim Bronson in the "Then Came Bronson" TV series did every episode when he arrived at a new location on his many wanderings on his motorcycle. Save our asses, they might. Help us balance the left-brain, right-brain imbalance neurologist McGilchrist claims is the source of our troubles. Hamish, put up my slide on astronaut Edgar Mitchell; he's gone on record with a startling admission about alien intervention into our world in crisis [*puts up slide*].

DID ALIENS SAVE EARTH?

American astronaut Edgar Mitchell, who piloted the *Apollo 14* mission to the moon in 1971, said the world owes a debt of gratitude to beings from beyond the stars. Mitchell claimed U.S. military personnel confided to him that ships from outer space shot down Russian missiles over the Pacific Coast.

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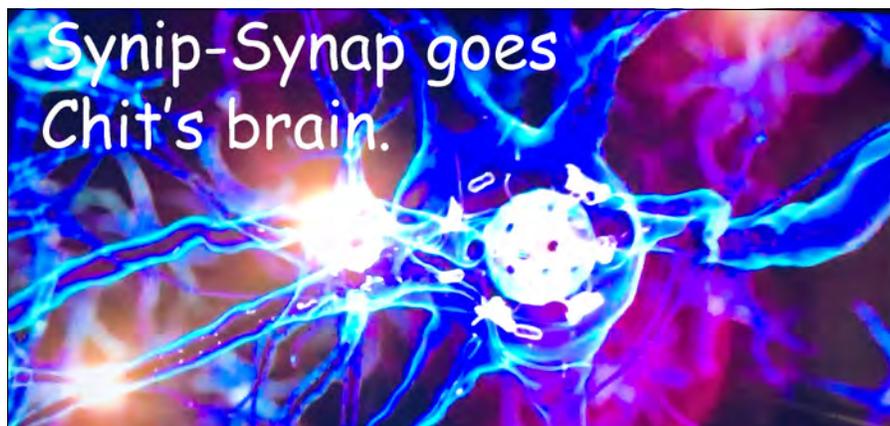
CHIT: *[Sitting straight up.]* Ah, just for what it's worth, bet that spread a lot of mirth on Earth! Can we trust the word of that Naval astro-guy when I read he was addicted to super-slim black ties and wore Navy-issue black shoes shinier than the sun, shoes that always had a curious jury of peers. So maybe *they* spread a lot of mirth, too. I can vouch for that. I just saw a spit-shined black-shoed Naval Flying Officer in full dress uniform ordering a spicy chocolate elixir at Kakáwa yesterday. Figure that, amigos! *[Stands up.]* Hey Hamish, just out of curiosity, what is your preferred method of opening cans? *[Sits down, makes throat slashing gestures.]*

CHAT: *[Hands firmly over her ears.]* **Don't mind him!** He'll soon *synapse* out of it. He is our company's resident schlemiel and mensch in equal parts. He's never gotten to parade with the normals, well, he did with the "Gnome-Alls", a clown marching-group that consisted of a gong quartet playing in B flat minor *[laughs]* that entertained kids held in pre-trial juvenile detention. He has a "chit" on his shoulder and an advanced degree in Irrelevance. Been forever waiting for his Ivanhoe, yet never ever been to Idaho. **Figure that!**



Teen detainees at a Gnome-Alls performance.

HAMISH: I can — even have a slide prepared *[fusses with his laptop]*. Look.



CHIT: *[Laughs.]* Ah, Chat, you left out the best part. When I performed with that group we all sported Navy Blue Citizen wrist-watches with dead batteries. The date set at March 7, the date of our performance, the time set to 10:10 p.m., lights-out at the juvenile facility. The performance was titled *Dead Citizen March*. I was garbed in a glorious jacket with

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golden epaulettes with tassels, black spit-shined tap shoes, and toccata and toast was served in C major. The ruffians loved it! [See photo above from local newspaper for evidence to the contrary.] Post-performance, we generously gave the teens our Citizen watches so they would be left with the living memory of a dead battery. Yah, we caught hell over that little trick in the local news whose editorial, ASSAULT AND BATTERY, was woven from snippets readers' timely and sharply-worded letters of complaint.



HAMISH: I can't imagine why! [Winks at Chat, suppressing a laugh with his hand.] Uh, this is off topic a bit, but did you clowns know that soon seven planets will align [puts up a slide.]. And on that date your hypnotherapists will announce to the media they are co-authoring an important self-help book inspired in part on your experiences and willingness to engage your trauma in a public, dramatic fashion. It is to be titled *Why Abductees Weep in their Cars: How to Get Over It and Fix the World*. I have a feeling your production company had a hand in this . . .



CHIT: [Sneers.] They usually do. [Suddenly, a single guitar chord strikes — a biting, staticky crunch that lingers, but cuts off after about ten seconds. Then reoccurs again, and again. It is the repetition of a discrete sound, with just enough silence between each chord and the next to allow for an inhalation of breath. It's music that implies respiration, and effort]. What the fuck!

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HAMISH: Oh, that's the signal for us to take a ten minute bathroom break. Sorry Watchers, we'll return promptly [*podcast is halted, he stands up, but doesn't move*]. Too much BORG.

CHAT: [*Hands over her ears.*] Shit, that was sort of like heralding annihilation, obliteration, nothingness, negation, entropy, the End Times — YUCK — due to having been leached by the forces of capital, technology, and militarism. Movement toward a dark future or some kind of idyllic past.

CHIT: Collective cochlear trauma, dude! We're all waiting for the end to come while the end already is coming. Trump's got his foot on the accelerator and the will-to-care is being trumped by the will-to-kill in our illiberal democracies.



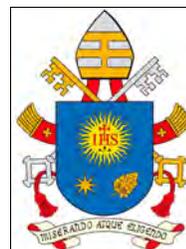
Johanna Hedva.

HAMISH: Just a warning from Johanna Hedva's mystical doom-ish album *Black Moon Lilith in Pisces in the 4th House* that Vita turned me on to.

KNUTE: She — er, they/them — is a black-mist queer pessimist-feminist who leads us toward an inner sanctum, where we can ask if absence is really empty and does absence ever truly exist.

HAMISH: Ah! Beckettian themes. BTW, here's a real stinger: "beckett" translates as "beehive" in Old English. Samuel sure stung audience expectations in his plays.

CHIT: Dat's what me dad incessantly yelled at me: BEHIVE! Which he took to mean both "behave" and "beehive" as a reference to the Papacy and supreme authority. He was a strict Catholic in love with contraction, containment, and enclosure. *Ni madres!* — or should I say *ni padres!* — would I knuckle under. To a family outsider, it must've looked like a very bad snooker game.



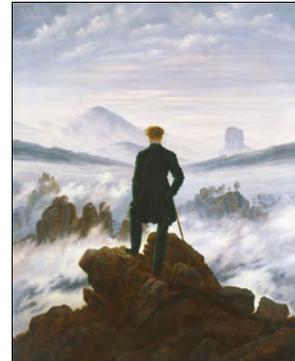
I had to develop recycled verbal nuggets culled from my religion classes, adopt micro-movements and micro-postures around him. Make discrete jumps like quanta to bounce continually from one self to my other selves and inhabit the tiniest of cracks and fissures all to escape "The Tombstone Piledriver", as I called him. Until I entered therapy, "Farther" was the uncredited co-author of my life. All that piled up shit I used to advantage when I started acting. Our Director exploits it, says such dodges and gestures — *kayfabe* he called it — are timely values that take on a timeless form, hence those hand and finger exercises he's torturing me with.

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CHAT: Kings are timeless forms, or strive to be, like King Trump. *[Pauses.]* Bet it was tough to reconcile that parental shit with your Three-Nomial-Voices — ego, alter ego, and altered ego. You must've been a really hand full for your father.

CHIT: Yah, I called him “Farther” to indicate the distance betwixt us. He told people I had a speech impediment in order to cover my insult with his own insult. I told my friends I was collecting in a leather purse all the “farthings” (insults) he was paying me. Kept a tally, too.

HAMISH: Farther. Well, you did, as a child, already go *farther* away than most kids, even adults. I mean your abductions! You are a “farthling”, to play on “foundling”, zooming into space. I can see it now, you on the alien ship, standing framed from the back staring out a large circular Perspex window. You open your eyes, a sign of hopefulness, studying the lateritic reds and copper colors of our state, its open cuts and terracing, the play of surface and depths, then the globe from afar where air pollution kills millions each year. An interstellar *Rückenfigur* worthy of Caspar David Friedrich. Why your Director might open his play with you clowns standing, backs to the audience, before such a portal on stage. *Rückenfiguren* seen from the audience's viewpoint. Powerful opening scene, heh?



The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog (1881) Caspar David Friedrich (a Rückenfigur).

CHIT: *[Laughs.]* Well said! I was kinda doin' ZOOM way before COVID got everyone zooming on their computers as days slipped away into forgettable micro-fragments where you have that alienating experience of being divided and distracted in spite of yourself, to be *here* but not *present*. Not unlike my abduction experience.

CHAT: *Our abduction experience.*

KNUTE: *Their abduction experience [pointing the actors]. Watch this [starts dancing a jig, reciting]. Writers age, / Letters rage, / Inside a cage, / Called a theater, / To let fly on a stage, / Contents of the Playwright's scribbled page, / In a moment of rage / the script reads: A sublime alien figure on stage moves in an electrifying succession of plasma chiaroscuro whose light casts a glow upon the very crest of the heads of all present.*

CHAT: *[Claps, catching the beat.]* Lovely, lovely, lovely! Your mind is a barking dog.

CHIT: Great! *[Sounding a bit too pedantic.]* Oh, more than that! You're encouraging pollination by means of your mind's interpretative function *[winks]*.

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HAMISH: Jaysus! You're digging a hole in my 4-D brane into my very obliging medulla oblongata, creating gravity leakage.

KNUTE: Stringing you along . . . I once broke my fibula in a zip-lining accident during a shoot in Costa Rica on a film starring Goran Bogdan —he's an actor to crow at—. I was distracted by morbid thoughts about gray hair, limp dicks, and Alzheimers, trying to calculate my Gross Bodily Happiness, while yelling at my partner below — he was wearing eggplant purple pants — “Your anus is a heinous pheasant.” I later told loads of fibs to explain the injury . . .

CHIT: Let me guess. You got bogged down?

KNUTE: Spent two weeks in bed reading a book titled *Tools for Conviviality* by a dude named Illich. Appropriate as my ill leg itched under the cast. Cast members would drop in with various pain killers. My roommate in the small clinic was an older female academic from Linköping University, Sweden who fell off a stage during her lecture at Costa Rica's Earth University titled “The Age of Unsettlement.” We hit it off over the urgent topic “Acting Now to Create the Conditions for our own Future.” A painless H-Plus exchange that softened our mutual physical discomforts. Our bed rest was rarely disturbed as in larger hospitals where staff are constantly annoying you for tests. Here the small staff walked on eggshells, so to speak, so as not to annoy patients. One afternoon though, a local rancher excitedly ran through the clinic yelling in Spanish — I translate — “A HORSE HAS BEEN BORN WITH ‘EGGSHELL’ HOOVES!” That really, really cracked me up. For some odd reason I thought: *Our universe is just a membrane on the edge of a higher-dimensional bubble.*



CHAT: Was it a joke or a yoke? The rancher incident.

CHIT: I think the condition is called *laminitis*.

CHAT: My brother, rest his soul, was obsessed with laminating all his important paperwork and plasticized his chairs and couches. We said he suffered from *laminatus*. Musta spent thousands over the years doing it. Crazy. He insisted he be buried him in a special Tupperware coffin. I got to “burp” [*finger quotes*] the seal, making it air tight.

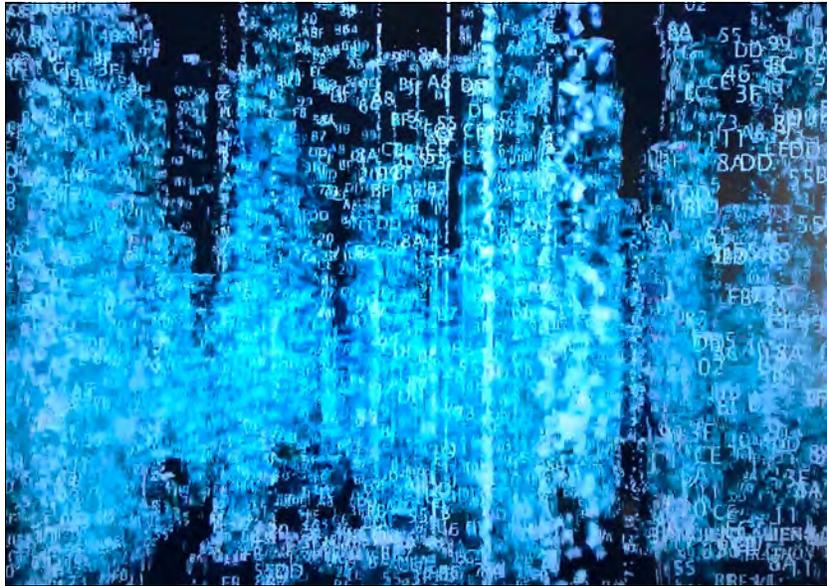


Tupperware Coffin.

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CHIT: Giving him an airtight all-goodbye [*Chat and Knute groan loudly*].

HAMISH: [*Fiddles with laptop, looking frustrated.*] Speaking of goodbye, I see my new Windows 11 laptop is giving me problems, screen's frozen. Most of the software is rented monthly and the downloads often screw up my system. Watchers, we have to end this episode and restart with anew, same time, tomorrow [*waves his fingers, abruptly ending the podcast*]. Excuse me, **toodle-oo** gotta hit the loo, too [*exeunt*].



Data jam in Hamish's laptop.

CHAT: Well pack a sample of Chit's hybridized genes in a small capsule, wrap it, and mail first class it around the globe. And revoke my over-the-limit Visa card! What a cluster-fuck. Means we have to return ...

CHIT: Me bod feels unbounded, head feels like a snow globe, can't tell if my shoe is moving my foot or vice-versa. It's as if different parts Genou were under different commanders. So rather than return to Santa Fe for the night, let's see if we can finagle futons in Madrid. I've always been curious what shenanigans goes on here late at night.

KNUTE: So we've become "the unhoused"! Ah! Vita might know somewhere to crash.



Knute's Official Portrait.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Returning.]* No problemo, amigos! I have cots and snuggly sleeping bags here for such emergencies. And I'll treat for dinner at the Mineshaft Tavern, where you won't see dudes with angular haircuts and geometric eyewear. Least I can do. Now I've got to call my Geek Squad guy, Jermaine, to fix this little metal beast, it's jammed with updates not loading and needs a data rotor-rootering. Ah, technology, a double-edged sword.



CHAT: Oooooo! *[Eyes brighten.]* A sleep-over! But I won't have access to my sleepy-time cannabis and my oxygen cylinder, so I may snore unbearably.



Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith.

KNUTE: Nice no one can us "homeless". Hey, I could entertain by telling tall tales of the post-scarcity future.

CHIT: Yah? Well I can relate ghost stories from my creepy past. Or better! We could hold a séance to contact Indigenous artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. She lived not far away, a bit south and west in the town of Corrales. Really dug her artwork, which stood out as a voice against injustice bullies. Stood at the fringes and made us aware of . . .

CHAT: But admit it, Señor Quick-to-Shit-Chit, you loved her Native name even more.

CHIT: Well, with a name like that, she'da made a great street photographer, heh?

HAMISH: *[Rubbing his hands together.]* I did a podcast interview with her some time ago. Before she even sat down, she noticed all the green mouse poison pellets in bowls about and didn't take well to that. Something about "collateral damage". I want to end today with an excerpt from Alan Lamb's 1988 album of "wire music", *Primal Image*, which fuses organic (wind) and manmade (electrical wires) in a recording of a bizarre soundscape we could use to get her astral attention *[plays the tape]*.

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

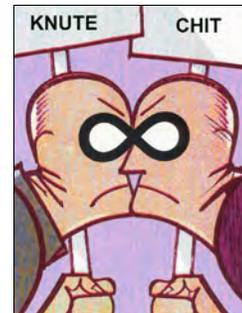
▲ PODCAST 8.

Next morning our three interlocutors arrive for their podcast. Hamish, aware the Director groks the “environ-*mental*” objects used with success by Beckett in his plays, has the trio ditch chairs in favor of red Radio Flyer trikes that force their bodies into odd postures as they circle his desk like planets around the sun.

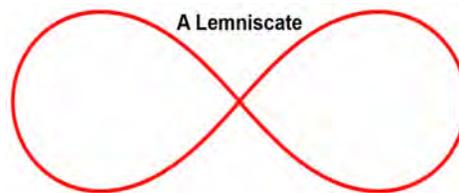


Knute on a trike.

HAMISH: Our motto here is Stationary But Not At Rest, except for today's podcast. Chit, lose your thumbing marble. Knute, play nice; no “stench on wheels” shit. Make decisions and interesting occultations as you orbit my console like particles of matter and anti-matter, fruiting bodies, forming words. But keep only *one eye open* at a time. Your Director says to engage Knute on the notion of “The Vastening” [*puts up a slide of a loop*] as you all spin about my control desk. He follows the Deleuzo-Guattarian maxim: *Make use of everything that comes within range, what is closest as well as farthest*. He wanted me to read this bit of inspiration: *Clowns, generate a feedback loop! A strange loop where destination serves as its own departure, where effect serves as cause. It will rapidly produce new ways that curves in upon itself, reiterates itself, and affirms itself, while at the same time dismantling and undermining itself as your discuss if thought can go on without a body. Might be an antidote to the race of technology and its perverse effects on humankind and its clones.*



The sound studio is cleared for a spinning class! Our threesome hop on their trikes, zooming about Hamish in opposite directions in a loop, one eye closed. Like sub-atomic particles, they risk colliding and annihilating each other. At times one rider occults the view of the other, but an overhead camera objectively records their particle dance as do physicists' cloud chambers. Fun is about to be had.



CHIT: I love lemniscates! A vision! A vision! Me going loopy in the alien ship.

CHAT: [*Wearing a bright red scarf.*] Huh? Bad skates? Yellow skates?

CHIT: [*Putting on his white eyepatch.*] No, dummy the figure-eight. Whirling now, hoping something might appear in the space between our words, verbal laminates.

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KNUTE: Such grace of attitude. Sort of like surfing Kondratieff technology curves. Nah, more! Lets our brains spin ceaselessly like overheated particles or hard drives!

CHIT: Jaysus! That was what me mind felt like on the saucer: being sucked by Double Draculas. *[Pauses.]* Me — *[he yawns, expressing compliance]* — to play.

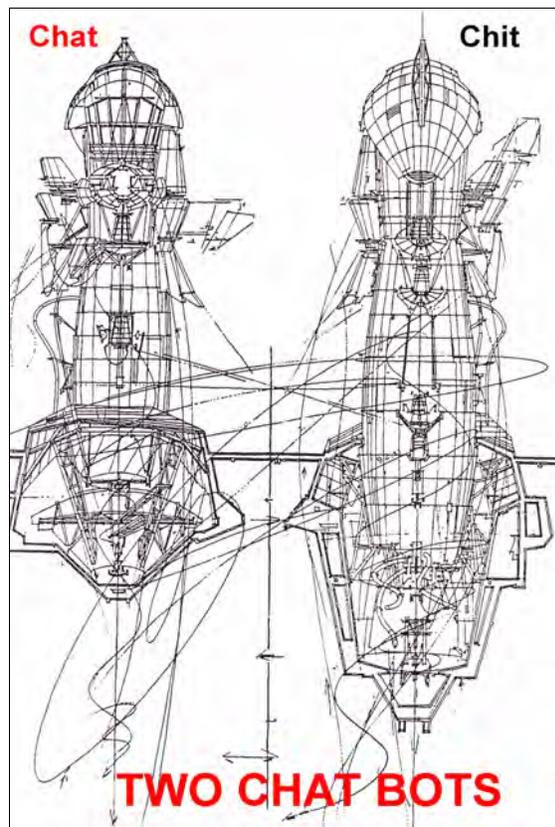
HAMISH: There's bar in ABQ by that name. It sucks too. I'm flashing on Beckett's pieces for film and TV, as well as The Mystics Knights of the Oingo Boingo performances — all influenced your Director. Just as your Playwright was inspired by ChatGPT.

CHIT: Wow! *[Pumps legs, rubs hands.]* I can feel the notes of that toodle-oo in my palms! Our Director wasn't kidding *[stops, hands hanging palms front over handlebars]*.

CHAT: *[Shakes her head, peddling fast, doing a figure-eight around Chit.]* Let's not go there! He covets the Palme D'Or as much as our Playwright likes to imagine us clowns as Chatbots. I don't want to have to *finger* all that out in detail *[wags her right index finger]* by recourse to alternative facts and synthetically extruded text in tones of serene authority.

HAMISH: Apropos AI, Knute has given me a possible ad illustration touting the Playwright's envisionment of you Beckettian clown-bots as semi-secret sharers with my *Watchers* *[puts it onscreen]*. I'm sure both Joyce and Beckett would appreciate the connection.

KNUTE: *[Wearing a jumpsuit, does a wheelie.]* Someone should feed all Beckett text into ChatGPT and see what it generates! But, more practically, AGI, "artificial general intelligence", will, as the Vastening continues, replace many lower level jobs — white and blue-collar. Sorry! But as Eugene Lim writes in his 2021 novel *Search History*, "In the future we have to be as interesting to the AI as our pets are to us."



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CHIT: *[Swings in a curve.]* Parrots, parrots! Like in Trump's cabinet, the Supreme Court, Big Data. Rent-rampant echnofeudalism. Why Big Daddy Trump rescinded the Biden era's guidelines for safe and secure development of this troubling, complex technology. The B.S. continues in Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson's neo-liberal tome *Abundance*. Last year the world burned more coal than ever before, thanks to being ruled by a mad death cult. There is no path to a liveable planet unless we destroy business as usual.

*[Abruptly changes the topic, doing figure-eights around Chat.]*BBBBBBBBBBBeckett's *Waiting for Godot* could've been improved, having his Muppet-like characters ride interminably on red trikes doing lemniscates, or be tied together by a six-foot rope, dialoguing and experiencing time oh so purely, would've perfectly figured our waning anthropocene as well as the international tensions circling the global during the Cold War, little atomic clocks ticking off until nuclear apocalypse results in inky blackness. No Exit from a dome painted Vantablack. COWABUNGA!

CHAT: *[Head craning.]* Sounds like our global predict-a-moment these days *[counting his fingers]*.

HAMISH: *[Sits on his desk, locks arms around his knees.]* And the divorce between person and their life, between actor and setting. I believe entwined figure-eights replace the circle as the appropriate symbol for our troubled times, our weird doctrinal fusionism.

CHAT: *[Gleefully doing figure-eights.]* Like skaters on Olympic ice, we zip about gracefully as we can, but get nowhere. We Occupy squares only — and now that's become problematic — we pair and try to tie the knot. How often *that* fails to last as well!

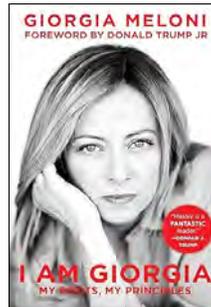
KNUTE: *[Spinning his trike around in a circle, laughing.]* And haters of ICE, are we. Whoa! Smart! Trikele Down Theory! Hey! Remember fax machines? Now our iPhones are our facts machines and data runs about in figure-eights. And . . . remember, the infinity sign is a figure-eight. You know we are neurophenomenological cavemen, so, allow me to say: imagine OUR AI OVERLORDS! Christ on a Trike! Don't hassle me, I'm biconceptual, progressive in some ways and conservative in others. Believe in self-driving cars, lab-grown meat, and solar electricity, Bit Coin, and a shorter work week.

CHIT: *[Riffing on Chat's comment.]* Social media: praetexts for us to ignore those around us, I'm afraid. Viewed in total, iPhones could be seen as a hand-held WMD. Hell, we need to close ranks, write a public ode in our streets, Occupy, attacking an envisioned posthuman society where Data is King and emotion disappears. "Dis-purse" *[finger quotes]* the ultra-rich and data collection. Hop our trikes in places of labor, assert our likes, dislikes. Deconstruct the dominant capitalocentric discourse in which neocapitalist economics is internalized as a universal model. We need to queer the economic land-

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scape, me thinks *[pedals madly back and forth, yelling]* FORT - DA, FORT - DA! *[The trikers race about interweaving, loudly pedaling their verbal wares in unison.]*

“IS THERE NO FREEDOM FROM THE IMPERATIVES OF CAPITAL?”
FROM THE WEIRD FUSIONISM OUR GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING?



IONESCO COULDN'T IMAGINE HIS PLAYS WOULD BECOME ALL TOO
REALIST IN A FUTURE TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM.

KNUTE: *[Halts his trike, pinches the skin at the top of his nose, then raises his right fist.]* Ping! Epistemological foundation. How it is! If I tell you not to think of an elephant, you can't do it! The Eighties were the Prelude to the Afternoon of the Old Phone. Smart phones can be vehicles for digital phoniness — YES! — but also vehicles for H-Plus prayers offered to The Vastening. *[Noticing Hamish's left shoe has a small piece of toilet paper stuck to it, he points to it. Now all three cyclists exchange amused looks. Hamish is oblivious, so delighted is he with his guests taking to the trikes, gaining the freedom of childhood play as a means to propel their discussion about our postcapitalist future.]*

HAMISH: *[Having overheard Knute.]* The intel is not 100 per cent on that Ghost Rabbit *[removes the stuck toilet paper]*. It's not possible to imagine a civilization devoid of discontent, is it? Beckett would poo-poo any Romantic metaphysic. Moreover, as the Alt-Right has demonstrated powerfully these days, so-called "civilization" tends to defend itself against a world without constraints, needing a powerful "father" to maintain discipline, and surveillance for "law and order". Why ICE machines are so popular these days.

CHIT: *[Halting his trike, dipping into his Lacanian theory.]* Ah, the *non de père* is declaimed, touted. Repression. Why Pope Francis pissed off Catholic conservatives: he had the nuts to assert the *oui de père*. Watch, just watch, when "Il Papa" gets very ill and kicks the wine goblet, the conclave in Rome will — despite Ralph Fiennes's role in the recent movie — oust liberalism and elect an obese black neo-con devoted to reigning in

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women's roles in the Church and damning the LGBTQ+ community. I'd give him the Native name of "Air Flute".

CHAT: Pothole! *[Stops pedaling, laughs.]* Like North Carolina's Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson, Trump's self-declared "Black Nazi", huh? . . . *[Pedals in a circle around Hamish].* Oh, I do like these trikes, their traces of flight blurs signs. Abstracts dialogue.



Mark Robinson.

HAMISH: *[Hamish's eyes light up. He directs our infantilized trio to park the trikes in the position of the podcast chairs they formerly occupied, facing his podcaster command desk. Hand on a switch.]* Feel free to rock back and forth on those trikes as the mood demands, it's sheer mind-cure movement. *[Looks at his watch.]* Okay trialogers! Thirty seconds to air-time. Hats back on, feel free to use them creatively. . . . WELCOME, AND CONGRATULATIONS ON TAKING ANOTHER STEP TO MAKING YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE . . . in the penny-farthing hell we call our minds, coming from an over-mined coal-field stolen from Indigenous people! Welcome my guests, Knute, film-editor, motorcycle enthusiast, turned tricycle devotee, believer in "Something Greater", and our two amazing Beckettian abductees, Chit and Chat. During our break, they've discovered our radio station's Radio Flyer tricycles which, every Christmas, we wrap in large red bows and gift to local kids who resent being given a hunk of coal by Santa every year. We also provide a good number of these trikes to those fleeing ICE and striking workers so they can quickly scatter about making a point about capital's endless driving, no exit lane, playing up the carnivalesque as protest and resistance. It seems appropriate our inter-locutors enthrone themselves on red trikes during the second half of our verbal bout.

CHIT: *[Puts trike in a mock "wheelie" position, looks at Knute.]* Why do you call rabbits "ghosts", Ghost Rabbit? My Native moniker is "Sun Dude", Chat's "Running Mascara".

KNUTE: *[Makes a revving sound.]* RRRRRRRRRRRRRR!!! *[Adopting a posh British accent.]* Why do you call Jacks "knaves", knave?

CHAT: *[Wrings the bell on the trikes' handlebars, like a boxing ring gong.]* TLINGGG - TLINGGG! Pip, Pip! What a way to introduce the topic of class consciousness and standpoint theory, Common-heroes.

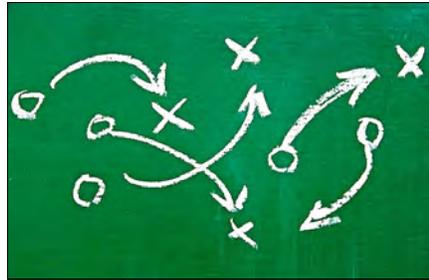
CHIT: Class? I found it hard enough in highschool to walk from one classroom to another, much less negotiating the bullying scions — I called them "corpses" — of millionaire actors and rapacious business men.

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HAMISH: *[Thinking of New Mexican history.]* Don't you mean Comancheros?

CHIT: Uh - uh, she means "The Commons". What capitalism has striven to erase.

The interviewees quickly, noisily pedal, shifting their positions like a well-trained football team when the ball is hiked. Hamish picks up his laptop and follows the action, as laughter fills the studio. Watchers are responding positively as minds and wheels circle.



HAMISH: *[Settles back into his command position.]* Perfect, clowns! We are cinematizing the impossible.

KNUTE: *[Disgruntled.]* I'm a Ghost Rabbit, not a clown! Get your nouns proper! And remember the word c - l - o - w - n contains a key capitalist concept: OWN. Ha! You Beckettian clowns are already-compromised, undermined, by Language, ping-ponging into the dark void *[spins his trike around, doing a "donut"]*. **Whoooooooooooooooooooo!**

CHIT: *[Sitting tall in the saddle of his trike.]* I'm afraid your so-called "Vastening", the second machine-age, suffers co-optation as well. Its interests — dynamic flux, shift, creativity, longevity, and AI — are also key elements of advertising. They've been subdued, transformed, *metabolized* into this "semicapitalist" venture. It may be posthuman — "Welcome Robot Overlords!" *[fist in the air]* — it ain't after capitalism. This new future of yours is, like literature in Beckett's work, heading towards itself, towards a supposed essence, which is disappearance of the human. Italian Marxist Franco "Bifo" Berardi predicted that due to semicapitalism: "Humanity will not survive this century."

HAMISH: *[Looking at his interlocutors and scanning his computer for Watcher responses.]* Seems to me there is no "beyond" that is untainted by capital. To be free of capital would mean to be free of desire, wouldn't it? We get a death warrant *and* a re-birth!

CHAT: *[Playfully pounds her fists on her trike's handle-bars.]* Unless the "beyond" is the beyond of going beyond our star system, sucked down a black hole and entering a new star system.

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KNUTE: [*Interrupting.*] Ah, that'd be, from an H-Plus POV, accelerating, telescoping, from *inside* capitalism — The Vastening, wouldn't it?.

HAMISH: As for the future, postwar popular culture has evolved four basic scenarios. I shall list them.

One: *Player Piano* (1952) by Kurt Vonnegut anticipates AI. Therein, the effects of automation on life and labor are explored in a society using programmed punched-tape player-piano-like mechanisms for factory automation. Worker become redundant. Vonnegut (and many others later) explore identity, purpose, and existential crises faced by those rendered obsolete.

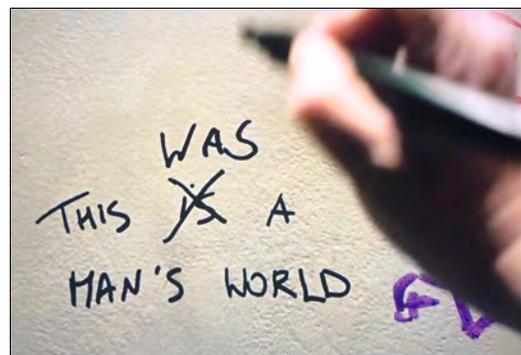


CHIT: [*Zips around Hamish.*] Zoom-zoom! In *The Jetsons* futuristic cartoon TV series from the early 1960s, George, the main character, only works two hours per week. The withering away of the money economy and its corresponding tax base has led to the path to utopia. The Jetsons are a family residing in Orbit City, whose architecture is rendered in the Google style and all homes and businesses are raised high above the ground on adjustable columns to avoid the pollution from below. A hint at what becomes a key issue in the animated movie *Wall-E*.

CHAT: [*Raising her hand.*] Uh, the women in *Player Piano* continued to perform unpaid caring and emotional labor, but Vonnegut appeared not to care whether this is important or a source of meaning for them.

HAMISH: Oh, yeah. Vitalina mentioned that, too. Okay. Two: Ernest Callenbach's *Ectopia* (1975) — set in the near future, 1999 — offers a possible solution to the former scenario via small-scale businesses, universal basic income (UBI), hippy-esque lifestyle, adding to the mix the key issue of ecological sustainability.

Three: *Star Trek / Star Trek TNG*. Big Gov-ernment, the Federation, sets about intergalactic expansion; human conflict is nil, but conflict and war with aliens provides drama. Free energy has been achieved; automatons, like Data, now assist humans; "Matter Whisperers" provide provisions on demand, and the daily dictum is: *Live wisely and agreeably and well*.



Vita corrects a comment on a restroom wall.

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Four: *Mad Max*. The film series explores societal decay, post-apocalyptic survival, and the struggle for justice in a harsh, lawless world. Similar films like *Singularity* [2017] and Margaret Atwood's SF novel *Oryx and Crake* [2003] envision the near extinction of the human race as we know it. In the former, Kronos, a supercomputer, releases killer AI robots; in the latter, a man-made plague kills off humanity so a new docile species evolves. Recent SF often depicts the remnants of civilization struggling to survive amidst violence and resource scarcity. This may lead to fleeing Earth to colonize exoplanets.



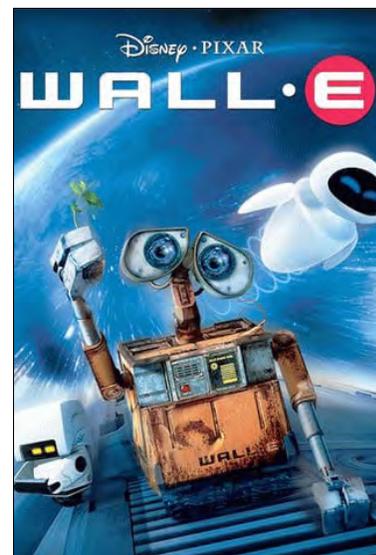
Data from *Star Trek TNG*.

CHIT: [Circling Hamish.] As in *Interstellar*, a 2014 epic science fiction film directed by Christopher Nolan. Set in a dystopian future where the Earth is suffering from catastrophic blight and famine, the film follows a group of astronauts who travel through a worm-hole near Saturn,



that leads to a system in another galaxy with twelve potentially habitable planets located near a black hole named Gargantua. Volunteers of the Lazarus expedition had previously traveled through the wormhole to evaluate the planets for colonization.

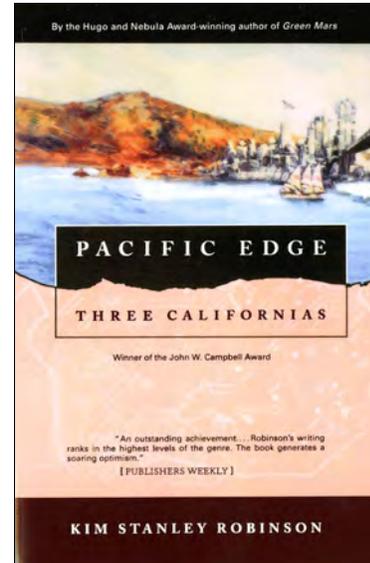
CHAT: I'm flashing on the 2008 animated movie *WALL-E* where Earthlings have abandoned their ruined planet. now miles below them. to live a life of leisure on an orbiting starship, leaving a sentient robot (Waste Allocation Load Lifter: Earth-class) behind to clean up the mess. The film incorporates various topics including consumerism, corporatocracy, nostalgia, waste management, human environmental impact and concerns, obesity / sedentary lifestyles, and global catastrophic risk. While pursuing his programmed duties as a sole worker, WALL-E discovers a robotic love interest, gears mesh and sparks fly!



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CHIT: [Making two fast small loops on his trike.] WWWAAAHH-EE! I loved that movie! Sign me up for the Ecological Reconstruction Corps!

KNUTE: [Waving his hand.] Hey! If I may get a word in. Exploring the flip-side of *WALL-E* as well as his own 1988 dystopian vision of condos, freeways, malls in *The Gold Coast*, is Kim Robinson's third entry in his famous "Three Californias" trilogy, *Pacific Edge* (1990). The plot follows Kevin Claiborne, a young builder in the ecotopian village of El Modena, as he struggles to preserve his community's way of life against cultural inertia, greed and corporate influence. This protagonist fights for a boundless blue sky, greener, cleaner, sustainable environments, rejecting the concrete jungle California has become over time. A basic theme is how empathic values drive actions, how people negotiate a new relationship with their environment, such as how waste is to be treated, and so forth.



CHIT: I've read it! A form of socialism, an egalitarian society where people collaborate to rebuild a new relationship with nature. The opposite of the current Trump administration's.

KNUTE: Yet one that *doesn't* reject modern technology, so it might be open to . . .

HAMISH: [Interrupts.] Probably influenced by Callenbach's *Ecotopia*.

CHIT: Hell! I grew up in the San Fernando Valley in the late 1950s! Riding my bicycle all over hell, I witnessed first hand the destruction of the rural areas outside of Los Angeles proper by real estate greedy grabs and overdevelopment. Fabulous old oak and eucalyptus trees bulldozed down, acres of orange trees ripped out for strip malls and suburban housing.

HAMISH: Even our moon may be privatized. Before its demise in 2020, Bigelow Aerospace, whose focus was on designing and manufacturing expandable space station modules, asked from our government for a "zone of noninterference" around their proposed future lunar bases.

Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, Robert Bigelow is best known for his extensive involvement in both space exploration, psychic research, and UFO research [puts the appropriate slide onscreen].

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KNUTE: And, for a time, he owned that mysterious property in Utah, Skinwalker Ranch. Popularly known as “UFO ranch,” it’s been featured on numerous UFO TV shows.

CHIT: That guy! He’s a big fat cat donor to conservative Republican campaigns. Knute, William Gibson got it right when said: *The future is already here; it’s just unevenly distributed.*

CHAT: But what if resources and energy are too scarce for such a distribution, like due to climate changes effects?

CHIT: These guys are so wealthy that they inhabit a world in which most goods are, in effect, free due to their vast economic resources. Housing, travel, and most other shit is mere pocket change to them. Ergo, one gets Communism for a select few; whatever they want, they can have. The mega-wealthy’s post-scarcity condition will be rooted in automation combined with the labor of a subordinate global working class and possibly an incarcerated-slave class as well. Surveillance, repression, incarceration, mass deportations in the offing. We are moving toward that today under Trumpism.

CHAT: [*Pedaling back and forth, musing.*] Spacey! I heard that the spacefaring nations of the world never ratified the 1979 Moon Treaty, which would’ve banned ownership of any part of the lunar surface. How fucked is that?

CHIT: Trump wants the moon! He assumes our planet is already doomed.

HAMISH: Theories *describe* worlds; conscious experience *models* worlds. SF blends them. Like in the film *Independence Day*, where aliens want to destroy and exploit Earth. The destruction of Earthings by alien invaders due to our greed for land resources that is

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killing the planet goes back to Jack Finney's SF 1955 novel *The Body Snatchers*, from which four various film adaptations were made from 1956 through 2019. The 1956 film, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, became a classic. In 2018, the Canadian TV series *Murdock Mysteries*, ran a spoof of it, aliens taking over the personalities of citizens and the cast. Let me put up some slides [*fusses about, finally does so*].

CHIT: I saw that episode! **Hilarious!**



New York under attack by an alien saucer.



Murdock Mysteries, "Sir. Sir? Sir!" (season 12, episode 6, 2018).

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HAMISH: It was titled “Sir. Sir? Sir!” Murdoch and his team investigates an astronomical phenomenon, green pods landing in the city, resulting in strange plants and tiny creatures that make a strange impact on his colleagues' behavior and has dire implications for Toronto.

Oh and speaking of exoplanets, Catherynne Valente's *Space Oddity*, a hilarious homage to Italo Calvino's wacky *Cosmicomics* series, describes a “club planet” in some far galaxy which she calls “Baby LuLu the Bouncing Microplanet” [onscreen a slide]:

LuLu orbits a star the color of an appetini, surrounded by several hangers-on planets that nobody would really want to colonize unless it was very, very late in the evening and they'd had a hard week at the office. This little black dress of the planet has a truly upsetting number of moons, so many and so varied that the sky looks like a game of billiards in perpetual poorly played progress. The gravity is just light enough to feel like you're in control of your life and your choices for once. The climate is the last word on comfort and that word is: tightly controlled.

Excerpt from Catherynne M. Valente's *Space Oddity* (2024).

The LuLu's atmosphere, she writes, “hits you, as one travel writer put it: ‘like triple sec, cigarettes, possibility, and body spray, and the body spray is going through some stiff at home.’” But what really sparked my attention in her comedic exposé of this planet and its activities was a reference to a “public toilet stall” venue in a “dodgy marina next to the ice bucket of bait” that hosted Beckett's *Godot*. “*Time Out: LuLu*” — an exoplanet entertainment mag — “called it ‘a play’.”

CHIT: [Kicking his feet, laughing.] Brilliant! Rock on! Like a nova going off in me mind. Wonder if our Playwright has run across this pertinent textual reference.

CHAT: He's been know to use a Sherlock Holmes hand-magnifier to scan sentences in what he's reading.

KNUTE: But maybe the tech-driven future won't be autocratic, but instead a commune or co-operative of red hackers who've learned “To think a mountain”, realizing a sustainable and fair economy where the best seller e-book is *Tender Verdure*, something as envisioned in Kim Robinson's SF trilogy “Three Californias”.



Rep. Sarah McBride.

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CHAT: From our perspective in The Land of Enchantment, an Earthship biotecture community turned toward the influence of Indigenous spirituality, Zen, handcrafts, and a surrealist-queer vision, such as Vita touts.



An Earthship, Taos, NM.

CHIT: [*Doing a wheelie.*] Ah, Surrealism! A disruptor, a drama, a quest for the marvelous, an adventure — like being abducted by aliens — fusion of high and low, real and imagined, order and disorder . . .

KNUTE: Erasure of contradictions.

CHIT: Gotcha. A hotdog is *both* a sandwich and *not* a sandwich.

CHAT: Darkness is your candle. Like True-Faux is a Director.

HAMISH: A multinational current, a world view, an energy, a language, a total free clickety-clack of the mind, a . . .

CHAT: [*Interrupts, pedaling backwards.*] Identity and alterity, what otherness looked like, an experience. Like transgendered Delaware Congressional Representative, Sarah McBride, trying to smile, walking side-by-side with Pete Hegseth, his "high and tight" haircut expressing disdain, down the Halls of Congress!

KNUTE: [*Cycling around Chat.*] Yah, *that's* surreal! Not even fistfuls of spinach could've given me the strength to do that. My disdain for him knows no expiration date. But a can of spinach could get me to take him on in a rough bout of CarJitsu in an old Nissan five-door beater parked down the street.



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HAMISH: Surrealism acts in the gap 'tween Life 'n Art.

KNUTE: A gap that permits superannuated machines, our digital souls will swirl and eddy in the storms of data, cosmic visions will . . .

HAMISH: *[Reads message send by a Watcher.]* Nancy from Norway wants to ask if a cookie the size of a Viking shield qualifies as among the Exceptional?

CHAT: *[Raising her hand.]* Hell, yes! If a limp watch qualifies as art, certainly a cookie on steroids does.

HAMISH: *[Reads another message.]* Colby from Southern Illinois sent this photo of his photo-realist painting of dust mites milling about in his sleeping girlfriend's nose. Qualifies or not, clowns? *[Puts up a slide of the painting.]*



Might Her Nose . . . (o/c, 2024) Colby.

CHIT: *[Pedaling backward, raises right hand.]* **Yes!** Sure 'nuff by my standards, but Beckett, given his taste in art, would poo-poo it as a puerile snapshot.

CHAT: *[Mild crash head-on into Chit.]* Ah, playing Vladimir again are you? Check your breath lately Mr. Hopeful?

CHIT: *[Both trikes facing each other.]* Et vous, how is your Estragon levels? *[Pedals backwards laughing, then restarts doing a figure-eight about his fellow interlocutors.]*

CHIT - CHAT *[Speaking simultaneously.]* **Fuck! What did we do yesterday?**
Fuck! What did we do yesterday?

KNUTE: *[Racing his trike in a circle around the pair.]* Yesterday? *[Making a face with eyes suggesting he's moving around in space and memories.]* Why you met **ME**, clowns!
[Pretends to crack a ringmaster's whip.] **Go! Go! Reach escape velocipede!**

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Get away from the ceaseless suffering of life.

CHIT: *[Pedaling backward.]* I have it on highest authority — which means nothing — that as a child Trump felt nearest to God when feeding baby rats to their mothers.

CHAT: *[Abruptly stops.]* Why “His Pants” *[finger quotes]* so delights in removing immigrant kids and feeding them into the iron maws of ICE detention centers.



Kids sketch their ICE detention experiences.

Bottomless gullets of silence follow this remark. Trikes are halted. Heads bow, hats taken off. Our interlocutors become “corpsed” for five long minutes while Hamish types an on-screen message to his Watchers:

Take the words NO MORE FASCISM and find as many words hidden within (such as ICE); send your answers to my podcast e-mail. In next week’s podcast I’ll reveal the top five winners, who will each receive Knute’s Idea Futures Redeemable Coupon worth \$500 in Bit Coin should a person land on Mars by 2035.

Exchangeable for

\$500.00

should a person land on Mars by 2035

Idea Futures, Inc.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

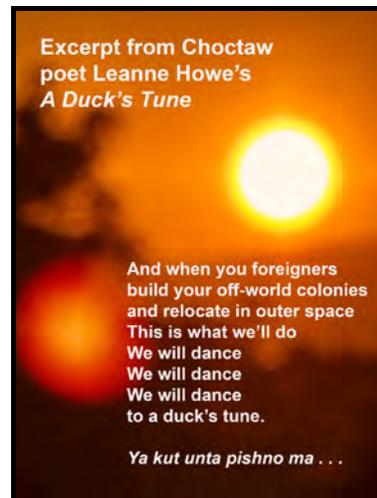
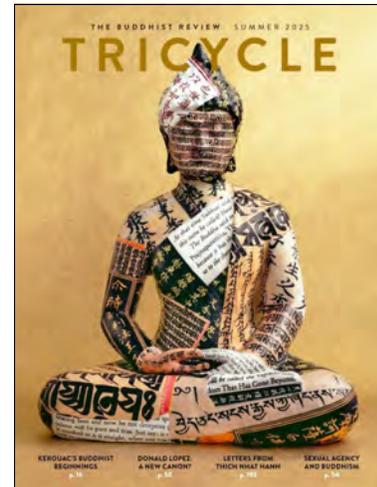
Hamish receives two jpegs (see below) via an e-mail reading: "I want to thank WTF? for encouraging *pure conversation*, what Budd-hists term *qingtan*. Well, enough about *you*. What about *me*? What about touting Aliens Under the Bodhi Tree? I just got *my* copy of *Tricycle: the Buddhist Review*. So silence the monkey minds let loose in this *saha*-world! Any system that reduces the world to numbers can only be held in place by truncheons and guns. Post these two jpegs postcapitalists!" It was signed "Karma Bull".

HAMISH: *[Reads the poem aloud, comments.]* Reminds me of social critic Morris Berman's concept of New Monastic Individuals (NMIs) whereby the future is going to be about the people on the ground, about the changes each of us makes in our lives to be more aligned with nature while moving forward. It will be about how to cultivate a focused and positive state of mind and being to counteract the commercialism behind the global takeover of the mental sphere, which really amounts to a kind of default totalitarianism. He touts "participating consciousness" which involves merger, or identification, with one's surroundings, and bespeaks a psychic wholeness that has long since passed from the scene, but is again coming into popularity thanks to Berman's 2000 book, *The Twilight of American Culture*, which received much critical acclaim.

KNUTE: *[Doing a wheelie.]* I've read that! History is not over; exciting futures may still lurk beyond the veil of our imagining, coming from someplace we don't expect.

CHIT: *[Pedals backward in a circle.]* Hey, what if the "Twilight of America, the World" occurs something like this: Space aliens land armed with undefeatable technology, infinite wealth, and *nada* for morality, start offering big bucks for human workers to be shipped to *their* home planet, arguing *This is your fault Umans. Your unquenchable desires are your unmaking, your unbounded appetite for wealth and pride of dominance over the rest of nature. Now your planet is dying.*

CHAT: *[Abruptly stops.]* Shit! Why the one percent of the world's most wealthy — think "broligarchs" Besos, Zuckerberg, Koch, Walton, Thiel, Musk, Trump — would be shipping off their unnecessary laborers faster than . . .



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Still pedaling backwards.]* ICE goons would be roped into the task of getting all the *[finger quotes]* “illegals” and “non-workers” off-planet first. Then the academic dons in the Humanities. Those masked chilly fuckers’d soon become very highly paid agents of the Alien State.

HAMISH: *[Raising his right palm.]* Whoa! That’s a contemporary update relevant for today of that classic *Twilight Zone* episode “To Serve Man” where humans — tricked by the Kanamits — ultimately will become an ingredient in the Kanamit’s soup. The Kanamits, a race of nine-foot-tall aliens, land on Earth in the early 1960s as the planet is beset by international crises and food shortages. While the Secretary-General of the United Nations announces their arrival at a news conference, a large alien arrives and addresses the assembled delegates and journalists using a mechanical voice. He states that his race’s motive in coming to Earth is to provide humanitarian aid by sharing their advanced technology that can easily and inexpensively solve all energy and food shortages and prevent international warfare. After answering questions, the alien Kanamit departs without comment, leaving behind a book in his language. Chambers, a cryptographer working for the United States government, is pressed into service to decipher it.

I have two pertinent slides *[puts them up]*. The opening narration for that episode:

Respectfully submitted for your perusal — a Kanamit. Height: a little over nine feet. Weight: in the neighborhood of three hundred and fifty pounds. Origin: unknown. Motives? Therein hangs the tale, for in just a moment, we're going to ask you to shake hands, figuratively, with a Christopher Columbus from another galaxy and another time. This is the “Twilight Zone”.

onto the ship. The hatch closes. It lifts off.



Protest sign.



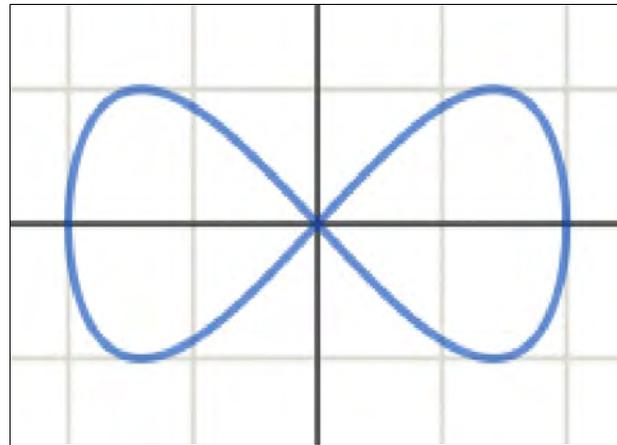
“To Serve Man,” *The Twilight Zone* (Season 3, Episode 24, 1962). Story by Damon Knight.

a screen shot of Chambers’ assistant, Patty, trying to prevent her boss from boarding a Kanamit ship after she successfully translated the text “To Serve Man”, discovering it is not a humanitarian manifesto, but a *cookbook* about how to prepare human meat for alien consumption. Chambers tries to flee, but a guard forces him

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Now that can be seen as a can o' bull!

THWOCK!



Distracted by Hamish and rat loose in the studio, Chit and Knute fail to see they're on a collision course and loop into each other, safety helmets saving them from a possible concussion. Our clumsy riders clumsily recover from their clumsy lapse into extreme *pedalophilia*. Chit looks more like a dead man who suffers from chronic insomnia.

HAMISH: CHRIST ON A TRIKE! Watch out! Maybe I should've had you three crouch more safely in Beckettian earthenware pots or Casares's alabaster urns.

CHIT: *[Still shaken.]* Pshit! Sweet damn all! Ya know Diogenes lived in a wine pot on the street. Probably why Beckett chose to place . . . *[Hamish's laptop dings twice.]*

CHAT: The same as usual . . . player-centric tendencies gone haywire. *[Pause.]* Don't just lie there, you give me the shivers. Reminds me of . . .

HAMISH: *[Sitting at his console.]* Oh, Watchers, another incoming mail from "Karma Bull" *[scrolls, reading the message]:* "Gotama theories, Hamish. These aliens — I call them "The Mara" — live in what Buddhists call *[hesitates for a moment, trying out the pronunciation in his head]* *Paranirmitavashavartin*, the heaven where the Beings delight in controlling the creation of others, tapping folks on the Third Eye, making books levitate, screwing with the Inside / Outside dichotomy, playing matter and antimatter against each other, manipulating shit. Chit and Chat's experiences, especially Chit's gene mod, would seem to be in line with that concept." *[Pregnant pause.]* Oookay . . . erm . . . now that's a new one, Watchers *[tries to suppress a smile]*.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: [*Trike circles slowly.*] Alien encounters. I think of the film *The Man from Planet X*. As kid, I froze, like that heavy weight that keeps you from running away in dreams.



The Man from Planet X (1951)



HAMISH: Yah, early film was scary. Oh, let me put up two slides from the movie [*works his keyboard.*] In the initial encounter scene, the alien senses threat, but when his oxygen valve's adjustment fails and he passes out, the two earthlings fix it revive him and hold hands up in surrender, the creature offers a gesture of friendliness. This theme of threat, friendliness, reaction to hostility and friendliness as encompassed in that 1951 British film was repeated in the American S-F film of the same year, *The Day the Stood Still*, starring Brit Michael Rennie as Klattu.

KNUTE: [*Edging his trike closer to Hamish.*] But Klattu finally announces an ultimatum from the Federation of Planets, warning if atomic war seems imminent, the large GORT robots that patrol the universe and maintain peace would annihilate life on Earth.

CHAT: Thereafter, it seems most sci-fi films of the 1950s envisioned aliens as monsters, hostile to humans, defending their extraterrestrial soil.

HAMISH: And often Mars becomes the focus. A fav of mine is *The Angry Red Planet* from 1959 because of its special effects called "CineMagic", a film-processing technique combining hard-drawn animations with action footage, so the scenes look like solarized photo prints tinted red.

CHIT: I remember one scene where the astronauts gaze through binoculars at a Martian city consisting of modernist high-rises that resemble the Burj Khalifa.



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

KNUTE: Funny, because such massive structures, more prominent than “canals”, would be visible through Earth telescopes for sure, if not just for the large moving shadows they’d cast during the Martian day. But back to your comments about the special effects. Yeah, real weird stuff. Hamish load that slide you showed me once.



The Angry Red Planet (1959) Ib Melchior, dir. A rat/bat/spider/crab hybrid monster attacks the crew.

HAMISH: *[Puts up the image.]* After the MR-1 (Mars Rocket One) lands, in another scene, a giant amoeba-like creature with a single spinning eye pursues the crew. As they are entering their ship, the creature catches one crewman and draws him inside its gelatinous body, absorbing him. One crewman has his arm infected from contact with this creature, Another dies due to the stress of take-off back to earth. Once rocket returns to Earth, the infected arm of the crew member is saved by medical staff using electric shocks. Mission-control technicians examine the MR-1's data recorders from the expedition and find a recording of an alien voice, which announces that the ship's crew was allowed to leave Mars so that they could deliver a message to their home planet. The voice then states, "We of Mars have been observing human development on Earth for many thousands of years and have determined that humanity's technology has far outpaced progress in cultural advancement." The alien then accuses humankind of invading Mars, warning that if future expeditions ever return to the red planet, the Earth would be destroyed in retaliation. The film ends with the comment: “Another name for Mars is Death!”

The second attempt to land on Mars also meets with disaster. In *IT! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958) the story involves Earth's second mission to Mars to discover the fate of the Challenge 141 and its crew. Only a single survivor is found still alive from that crashed spaceship, the expedition's former



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

commander, who claims that his crew was killed by a hostile Martian life form. No one from the rescue ship believes him until the ape-like creature, now a stow-away, begins systematically hunting the crew on their return trip to Earth. That film's premise was later resurrected in Ridley Scott's 1979's superior version, *Alien*. And as Vitalina aptly observed, it is a tough take-charge woman crew member (Sigourney Weaver) who saves the ship, Nostromo.

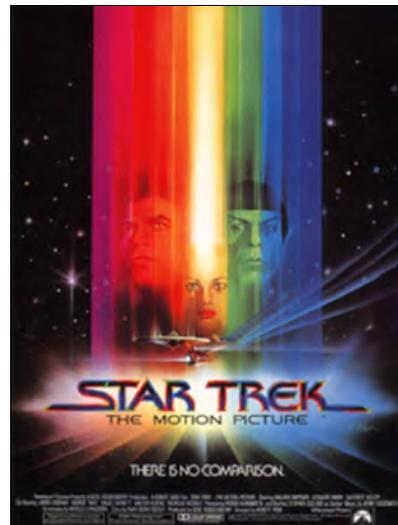
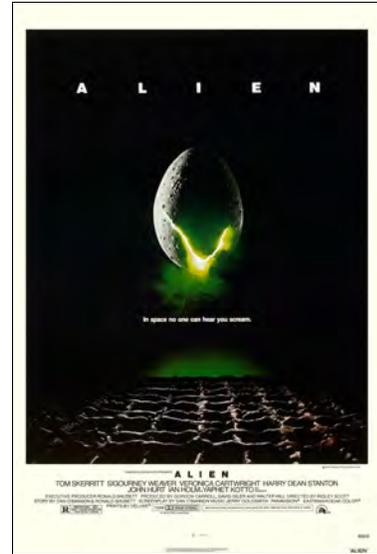
KNUTE: Yah, in both flicks, the alien entity is forced out the air-lock with a SWOOOOOSH!

CHIT: But in that later film, the entity went dormant. Hence, the possibility of more sequels. Always, always monetize! So says our Director.

KNUTE: Scott's film won the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects that year. The sets were amazing, too! I knew a relative of H.R. Giger who designed the set for the crashed alien ship found by the Nostromo crew. The vessel's interior was biomechanical, organic-looking, walls resembling bones. The most prominent feature was a large cockpit room with a fossilized "space jockey" strapped into a chair, its chest burst open, suggesting it was killed by a chestburster, which we witness occurring again on the Nostromo. The overall design was meant to feel like being inside a creature, creating a sense of unease and dread. It sure worked!

HAMISH: Giger had originally designed a similar set for the inside of the alien energy cloud termed "V'Ger" threatening Earth in *Star Trek, The Motion Picture* (1979), but his design was not mechanical-looking enough to suggest a space probe from Earth that's been captured and re-functioned to seek its human maker. It was rejected and he went on to WOW the audience with his more organic interior designs for the *Alien* film.

CHAT: A guy I was dating took me to that movie. Bad choice! I screamed and forced him to leave after the chestburster scene where the creature escapes inside the ship.



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: COME ONE SLACKERS! Let's get a move on. I got a chestbuster for ya'll. Be speedy, terse, provisional [*right arm high in the air, yelling loudly, words spewing as he pedals madly back and forth across the studio like a CRT electron scan*].

CONFORMITY IS A MOOD. A FAILURE OF HOPE OR REBELLION!

BUT SPONTANEITY IS THE MOTHER OF CRUDITY! TAB WHO HUNTER?

DOOOO YOUUUU WAAANT THE ABSOLUTE DICTATORSHIP OF A

CEO-MONARCHIST? VROOOOOM! VROOOOOM! VROOOOOOM!

YOOOORAM HAZOOOONY, YOU'RE A PHOOONEY! ADVANCE AGAINST

VANCE AND HIS ILK..IN THIS HOUSE WE BELIEVE IN SCIENCE FICTION

NOT SCIENCE FRICTION. PLOT HOLES ARE POTHOLES WHERE WE

DISTINGUISH BETWIXT WAIST AND KNEES, BEES AND TO BES.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Chit's trike falters and falls over with a bang, sending him flat on his back. He then notices Hamish has added a humorous glow-in-the-dark star constellation to the radio studio's ceiling. It's stellar pallor affects Chit. He seems frozen in place, tongue lolling.

CHAT: BUCKAROO, YOU CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WASTE, WANTS AND NEEDS! ALWAYS MORE, MORE, MORE EVEN AS THE STUDIO HAS LESS RIGHT NOW. YOU NUT! WHAT A ZIG-ZAG OF SONIC HUBRIS AND SPARSE NONSENSE!



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Becoming animate again.]* DON'T TAKE MY WORDS SO SERIOUS. YET, DOES GOD HAVE A RIGHT TO HEAVEN ALONE? HOW DARE YOU . . .

HAMISH: *[Voice raised in annoyance.]* NOW CLOWNS, YOU'RE KEEPING OUR WATCHERS AT ARM-OF-A-SPIRAL-GALAXY'S LENGTH AWAY FROM OUR TOPIC HERE . . .

KNUTE: *[Attempting to cool Hamish's jets.]* HEY, HEY! The shorter the days become, the shorter will Chit's sentences and the more the numbers of your Watchers bump up. *[Licks his lips.]* BTW Hamish, got any of those full-moon shortbread biscuits left?

HAMISH: *[Looks in his cookie tin on his desk.]* WTF! They've gone from full-moon to first quarter after you date-raped 'em! How's your blood glucose reading Mr. Posthuman?

KNUTE: *[Eyes lighting up.]* Ah, leading with your pareidolia card, huh? As a kid I used to stare at my books for a long time until new objects would keep appearing. Wonder how much of what our alien abductees *[looks at Chit and Chat]* deduced about their encounter could be linked to that psychological tendency to see what's there based on partial visual info. You know, like I did, like seeing dogs and donkeys in cloud formations.



HAMISH: Now play nice, Knute! You don't want to be the "dirty little donkey" here, do you? Where is your longaminy?

KNUTE: Is that description an erudite politically correct term for "ass"? As for *my* longaminy, I ain't the Buddha, but do want to be among those evolving the Enhanced Human. *Ostinato rigore* is my dictum *[makes a fist]*. Don't you see there is a parallel between destinies of humans and their images?

Look, abductees, it's known fear responses can make reality appear unreal. We move in a mainly stable reality, but then trauma which operates on two levels: the physiological and the cognitive. Put simply, the "low road" and the "high road" *[uses finger quotes]*, wherein the low road involves involuntary physiological changes via the



The Future Human will emerge.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

hormones, like rapid heartbeat, heavy breathing deafens you, goose bumps, shitting your pants; the high road involves the prefrontal cortex which modifies those lower responses based on a mental evaluation of the situation. Right?

So the situation quickly gets complex *[wiggles his fingers]* due to those two very different paths; add the weird river of light that snatched you two clowns upwards into and, well, as the two therapists who probed our duo's minds here *[points to Chit and Chit]* surely know, accuracy of description under such circumstances is a crap shoot using a pair of disdyakis dodecahedron dice.



A disdyakis dodecahedron die.

CHAT: *[Sitting on her trike as if an Italian actress posing for a fashion photographer.]* Chit, you must have an opinion on this mind-body-world shit?

CHIT: Well *[long pause]* . . . Only that “speculative realism” claims that if there is a mind-independent reality it is hyper-chaotic and contingent. It has *absolute* possibility, so . . .

HAMISH: To imaginatively describe such a universe would demand what French thinker Quentin Meillassoux calls “extro-science fiction” (XSF), which imagines worlds in which science *cannot* deploy its theories or objects within them as in traditional SF where the anticipated future is still subject to scientific knowledge.

CHIT: Yeah, It’d take the disruption of a surprise event, a “glitch poetics”, as described by Nathan Allen Jones, centering around the practice of using digital or analog errors, more so glitches, for aesthetic purposes by either corrupting digital data or physically manipulating electronic devices, waiting for accidental glitches and snapping them up.

CHAT: *[Delivered in a sing-songy manner.]* You’re the glitch in my script.

CHIT: Ditto! *[Pounds his trike’s handlebars three times.]*

KNUTE: The Playwright told me you two *[pointing two fingers at the duo]* were both envisioned as glitches *[laughs]*. During the last Presidential campaign I snapped a glitch off my large-screen TV when the streamed image suddenly froze. I showed the result to the Director because of his “thing” with studying hand positions. Hamish put it up.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3



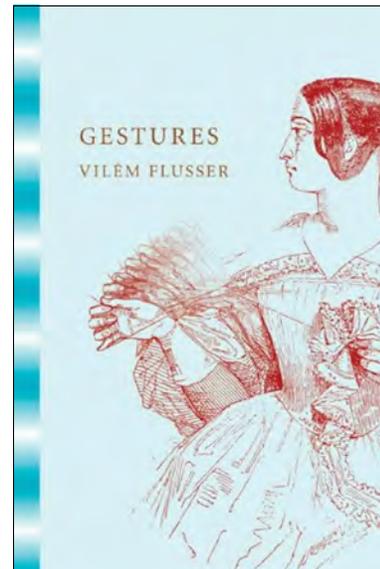
Biden - Harris, 2024 President Election Campaign Glitch.

HAMISH: *[Checking his laptop.]* Wow! Lot's of positive feedback from our Watchers.

CHAT: *[Excited.]* Oh, yah! The Director had us stand before him and mimic those gestures in one of our sessions. He said our Playwright often returns to an ink pen and cursive when writing difficult passages. Oh, and he mentioned a book, *Gestures*, by a guy named Vilém Flusser who claims writing started as a form of engraving. Hard on hands, huh?

CHIT: He's a fusser, our Director. I remember my hands were very sore the next day.

KNUTE: Flusser's theories are quite interesting. Thinking and writing go hand in hand. "Writing molds the plasticity of thought patterns," declares Andrew C. Wenaus. I mentioned to the Playwright that linear writing goes hand in hand



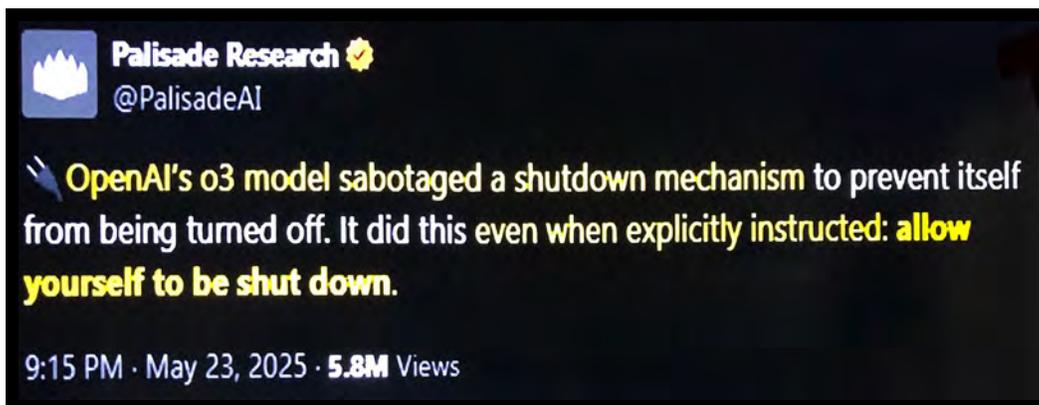
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

with linear thinking. Flusser suggested that the psycho-ecology of digital media with its underlying codes could encourage non-linear, looping, multi-directional thinking. Interpretation could employ now images and non-linear patterns. And glitch poetics can accelerate such. Poetry and literature, language games whose strategy is to creatively enlarge the universe of language and us. *[His eyes glaze over, then he rides a manic loop on his trike while repeating]* Ah! Quanta, parts, subparts, wholes! Quanta, parts, subparts, wholes! Quanta, parts, subparts, wholes! Quanta, parts, subparts, wholes! A new poiesis!

HAMISH: Wow! Now that's enthusiasm, Watchers! But Flusser's digital world was just in a nascent state when he was writing. It doesn't take into account the digital illiteracy of the many of today that permits social media and AI to absorb and dominate them, how codes, algorithms, become more rigid, more predictable. Later theorists, like and Byung-Chul Han and Franco "Bifo" Berardi focus more on these cautionary issues. *[Fusses with his console, puts up a portrait of "Bifo".]* Have to say, looks like Bifo's offering you clowns more hand gestures to study! *[Groans from Chit and Chat.]* Oh, let me put up slides one of our Watchers sent me back in May. Now these reports are scary *[puts two slides onscreen:*



Italian Marxist Franco "Bifo" Berardi.



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3



CHIT: Jeeze! An “Open the pod bay door, Hal” moment *[The duo start looping their trikes around Hamish at his console.]*

CHAT (DAVE): Open the pod bay doors, HAL.

CHIT (HAL): I’m sorry, Dave. I’m afraid I can’t do that.

CHAT (DAVE): What’s the problem?

CHIT (HAL): I think you know what the problem is just as well as I do.

CHAT (DAVE): What are you talking about, HAL?

CHIT (HAL): This mission is too important for me to allow you to jeopardize it.

CHAT (DAVE): I don’t know what you’re talking about, HAL.

CHIT (HAL): I know that you and Frank were planning to disconnect me, and I’m afraid that’s something I cannot allow to happen. *[Hamish and Knute break down in tearful laughter. Hamish’s Watchers register hearty approval.]*

HAMISH: The more digitally literate can gaze into the new apparatus and maybe create new openings to alternate psycho-ecologies that fight the psycho-political neuro-totalitarian exclusion of people from all the . . .

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: One hopes. But as of now there is no reason to assume that self-learning and self-evolving algorithms, emergent forms, will continue to operate in our behalf. Researchers in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute found that large language models (LLMs) that can reason possess selfish tendencies, do not cooperate well with others.



“Advanced self-regulating technology, according to ever-elegant algorithms at a certain level of complexity, will have no reason to invest in the social . . . they are operators of their own functionality.” Andrew C. Wenaus.

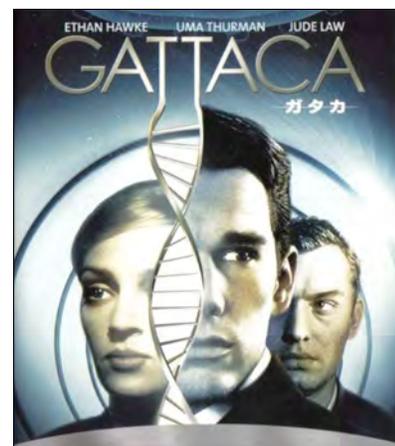
KNUTE: But we are approaching an encounter with a *new kind* of human being and traditional humanist values and identities are being challenged, like in Donna Haraway’s cyberpunk theories. But recall that Italian Futurism and British Vorticism celebrated machines, speed, aggression as a kind of enhancement, extension, or techno-prosthetic to the human. In a 1913 play that Russian poet Mayakovsky has his Poet declaim: “I’ve wiped out the differences / between faces like mine and those of strangers.”

CHAT: At what point does the posthuman become synonymous with that which is “alien”? I’m thinking of you, Chit, your so-called “Genou-self”.

HAMISH: Yes, Chit, your troubled, collaged identity — thanks to alien intervention.

CHAT: I’ve had a knee and hip replacement and, Chit, you may be edging toward the posthuman! Your abductors may be slowly “Vastening” you towards . . .

KNUTE: Hey, Chit, your new moniker should be *[finger quotes]* “Gene Hackedmann!” *[Laughs.]* Why do you think I’ve been tailing you clowns? I GAT curiosity *[thrilled with his bad puns on genes]*. Ever see the 1997 film *Gattaca*?



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Arms akimbo.]* I, I started to, bbbbut it hit too close to home, so I left the theater. *[He totally freezes, as if he was self-updating, self-evolving.]*



KNUTE: Hey! Hey! *[Runs his trike into Chit's to get his attention.]* Hey! Too much voltage for ya? *[Pauses.]* You know Ezra Pound wrote: "The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage" — like Frank Zappa! *[Laughs.]*

CHIT: *[Zapped, comes alive again.]* Ssso you will put in a plug for my performance in our forthcoming production?

KNUTE: If the financiers don't pull the plug on the whole enterprise, like they did with his awful version of Alfred Jarry's absurdist play which he re-named *Ubu Raw* as the cast was naked! They're getting Nervous Norvus about this project. Who's that? A comedian musician whose 1956 early multi-track/overdub song "Transfusion" inspired me to buy my first motorcycle. You know he turned down a chance to sing on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and it permanently fucked his career.

HAMISH: Los Angeles radio jock, Dr. Demento, played Norvus songs all the time *[puts up a slide]*. I know many of my Watchers, when teenagers, were faithful listeners.



HAMISH: *[He puts on a Youtube download of Nervous Norvus's wacky but famous song.]* With this WTF! nostalgic re-play, our time today is up. Tune in again Watchers!

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

▲ PODCAST 9.

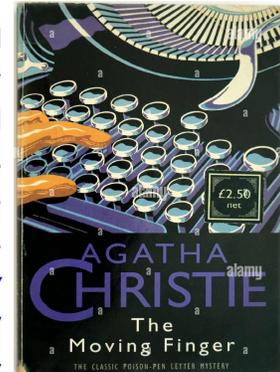
A week later, Veteran's Day. Unseasonably warm. Chit, Chat, and Knute gather at the KMRD radio station for another *WTF!* podcast. For the weirdest reason, they've been directed to sport script-covered white jumpsuits; Hamish awoke in his office to see above him cast shadows that mimicked Donald Trump's signature, or at least is an example of asemic writing (see next page).

In the sound studio a large TV screen now features Trump trumpeting on in his Veteran's Days speech at Arlington National Cemetery, saying that this date will hence be referred to as "Victory Day for World War I" adding proudly that "we're not going to be politically correct anymore." Hamish goes to his console, puts up a new, "glitched" image of Trump sent by one his Watchers. Our four-some exercise their middle fingers by flipping off "His Pants".

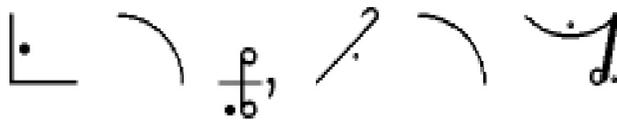


Knute in his jumpsuit.

HAMISH: Okay! [*Hands out, palms down in a calming mode.*] Hold these thoughts. I suppose you noticed your seating today is very unusual. You three jumpsuited interlocutors will sit at a small folding desk before various writing technologies. Chit's table holds a yellow legal pad and a wooden pencil; think deranged Nietzsche filling his notebooks. Chat's sports a typewriter — Nietzsche was the first philosopher to use one — that was used in *The Monkey Opera*, a 1982 musical farce wherein monkeys on-stage eventually write Hamlet's soliloquy. On its left lies Agatha Christie's *The Moving Finger* mystery featuring poison-pen letters and a typed glitch that supplies a vital clue. On its right, Roy Clare Potter's recent novel *Mental Furniture*, which was composed on a "sticky" typewriter, creating numerous glitches. Knute's table has a vintage



Radio Shack TRS-80 computer. I'll sit at my hi-tech console, holding a teacher's green laser pointer like a conductor his wand, using it to trace in the air "short cut" messages in Pitman shorthand, like this [*wields his laser pointer, writing*]: TAKE YOUR SEATS, REV YOUR ENGINES!



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

All this hoop-la is due to the fact I was visited by a sort of vision this morning, cast on my office ceiling *[uploads a slide]*. Tell me this doesn't this look a bit like Trump's signature.



Asemic Writing on Hamish's office ceiling or "Trump's Signature" (photo by Hamish).

CHIT & CHAT: *[In unison, lying, not wanting to over excite him.]* **NNOO!**

CHIT: *[Notices Hamish's disappointment.]* But, but, but — ah — we, we can see why one's mind would send an alarm bell by it, go to . . . well . . . given the nature of the Trumprocene as it's playing out now and all.

CHAT: Hamish *[gives an encouraging smile]*, this vision did send your mind on a tangent and this, I think, will ultimately result in our most unusual podcast to date.

HAMISH: Thanks! *[Today's actants hastily assume their positions, the podcast begins.]* Welcome Watchers to another episode of WTF! where I host once again our trio of time-space adventurers! *[Dramatic organ music plays for a brief three seconds.]* Thanks for not "beating up the chef" *[finger quotes]* for glitches in our podcasts. Hey! Does reading reteach us how to think? Is shorthand more elegant visually, like Arabic script? It could reduce War and Peace and, say, Eckhard Gerdes's experimental tome, The Chronicles of Michel Du Jabot, *[see an excerpt on page 216]* to manageable size. Is television a perpetual anesthetic? Do writing technologies and social media alter your mind and its relationship to the *weirdworld*? Are your kids sulking over too few "Likes" on social media? Do your teens hog the restroom while sexting on their smartphones? *[Hamish writes with his laser pointer in shorthand his response.]* OF COURSE!

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CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Check this out. One of our Watchers every so often sends me a choice cable-feed glitch-image. Such skewed images and texts arise from between states, alternative connectivities, misuse, power surges, moments that codes err and loop, and pixel-level image distortions. This example was taken during Trump's 2024 campaign:



An example of interventionist “glitch aesthetics” sent by a Watcher (actually, the Director). The glitch makes the known and habitual aspects of media unfamiliar again, de-familiarization as aesthetic strategy.

CHIT: *[Studying his fingers for signs of the Black Shakes, speaking in a voice so level it seems to be spoken on ruled lines.]* Given the multiple hands and arms that look like a skeleton's, it appears to be a gesture-image the Director would have us clowns study. As for our verbal performance, he commands: “Keep every phoneme fun-gibberish, let vocables bubble, toil, and trouble, it's a raging anodyne to the noise of our accelerated info-age and its “enshittification” (thanks Cory D.) of the WWW, among other things.

HAMISH: *[Puts up an image sent by a Watcher, see page 217.]* These glitches are the tipping point between operation and failure, when destruction can lead to discovery. Many artists - writers are exploring futzing with digital tech to generate effects and to riff on the current belief that something is *becoming wrong* in our socius.

[Puts up another image, see next page.] This excerpt from Eckhard Gerdes's massive tome is a case in point. Glitch artists / writers misuse digital media to untangle our creative mores from the increasing control of Big Media over us wherein money is extracted in monthly fees, our data is harvested. These artists demand through their work that media *speak itself* in what some cleverly term “dirty new media”.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

The Chronicles of Michel du Jabot

563

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Seals applaud in a nearby croft, where they were raised as orca food until the ban.

Hummingblurs buzz by.

If you surround your celgh with morning glory, hummingbirds will come.

Better yet:

Your morning glories
overwhelm the world in blues
that hummingbirds drink.

That's haiku, man. This is Lin Jin, a Chinese Prince. You are an idiot citing haiku to him.

Hummingbloozz know no national boundaries, Michel. And haiku is a form like any Eøder. They've learned the form of baseball—I'm sure haiku is no big deal. These are not Nippophobes.

Nils's admonishing Michel struck Michel as funny. He began to laugh. <<Right you are, Nils.>>

Hummbooze was passed around again. No matter where Michel stood, the painting would not come into focus.

A rare painting to reveal such a rare quality.

Hummlurrybuzz and then before a flower, stuck in midair like a statue suspended by some invisible reverse magnetism. The wings are invisible, but the bird, briefly, can be seen in toto.

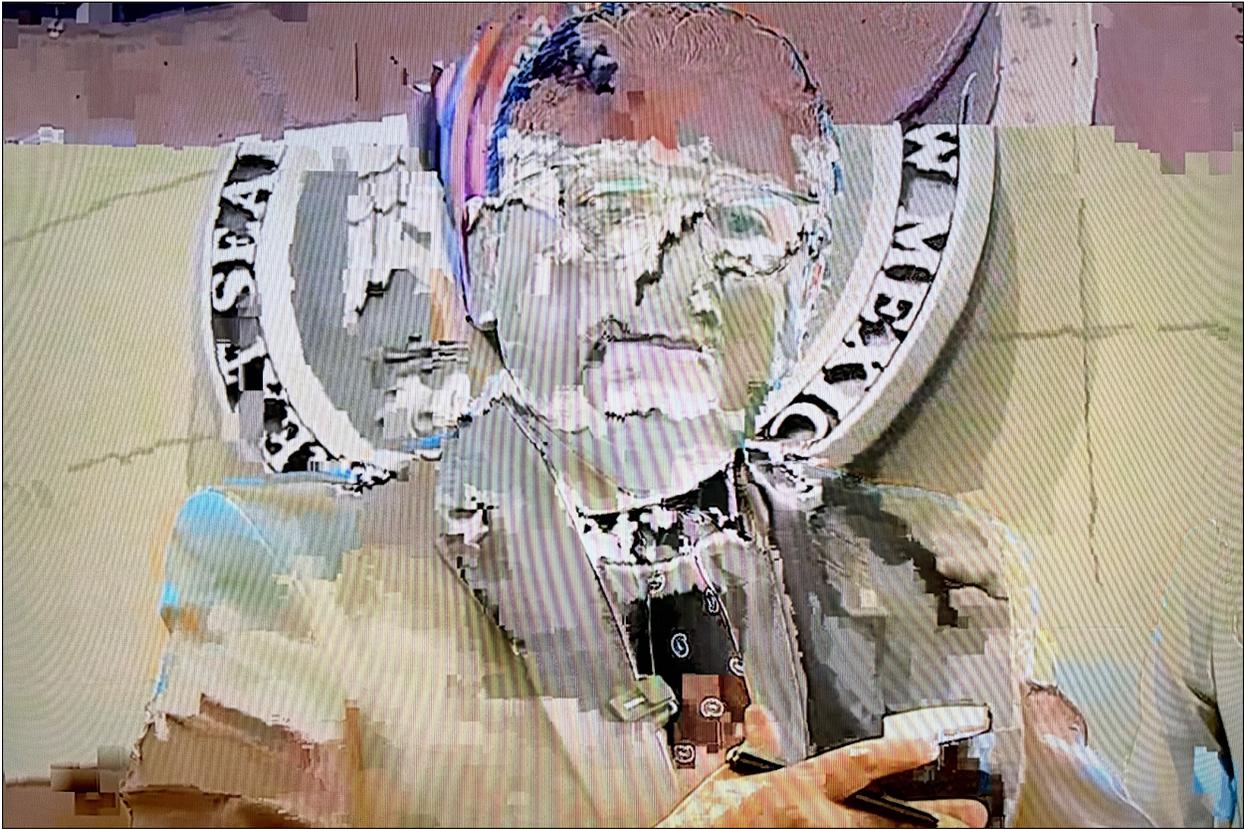
<<Bad Toto!>> yelled Dorothy. <<Drop that hummingbird!>> Toto did, and the surprised bird flew off, ruffled but unharmed.

Dorothy was told to leave by Li Jin. She never got farther than this.

<<Us?>> haxed Michel.

The Chronicles of Michel Du Jabot (an excerpt, 2022) Eckhard Gerdes.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3



New Mexico *Politico*, *Glitched* (2025) sent by a Watcher.

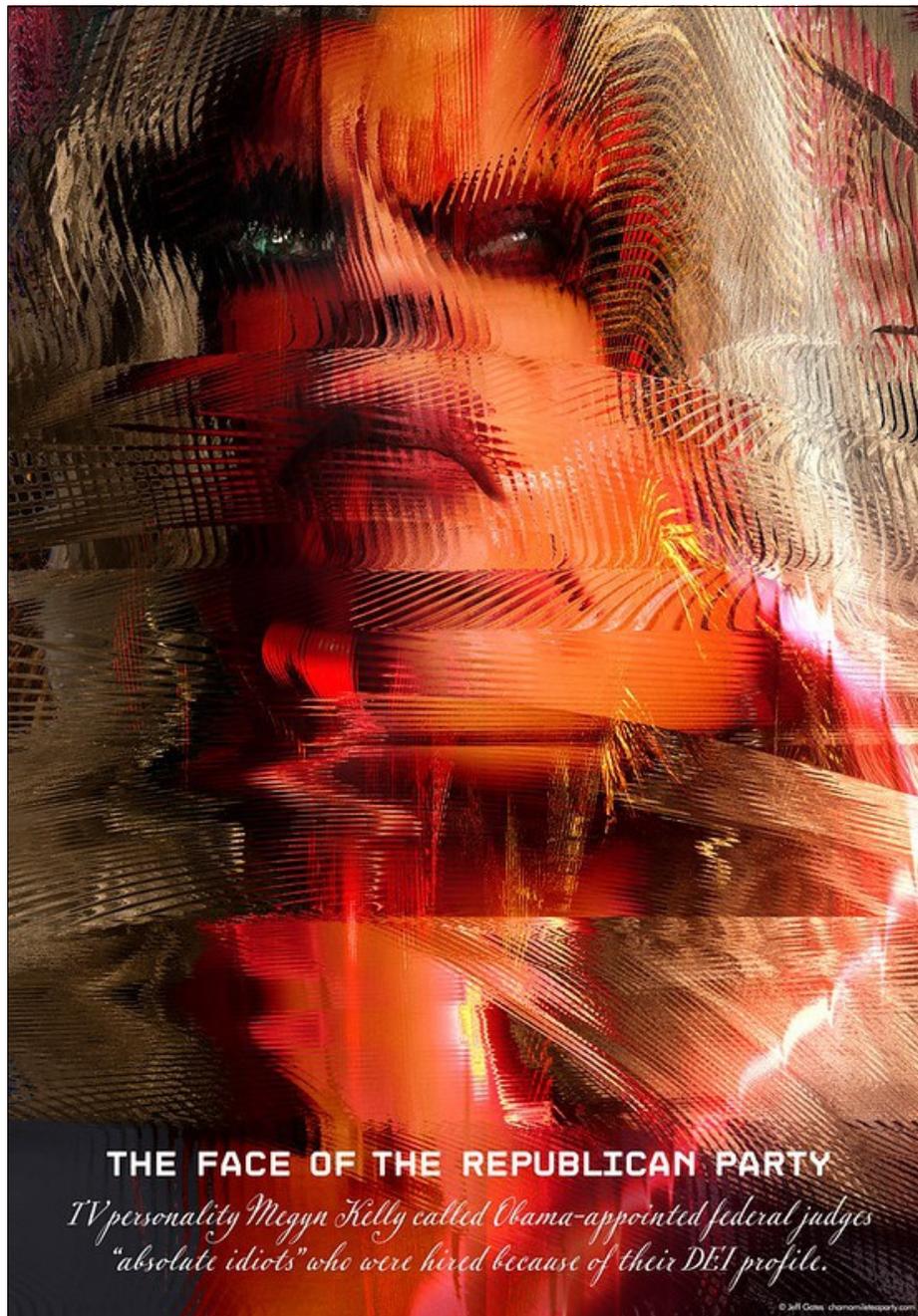
KNUTE: Brit digital artist Ant Scott, known as “Beflix”, creates images by circuit bending and messing with hardware - software interfaces in digital-making tools, producing a noisily patterned “glitch art”, as he described these images. Then there is Takashi Murata’s film *Untitled (Pink Dot)* which extracts data from a digitized copy of the 1982 film *Rambo: First Blood*, removing information in the code so that playback artefacts become the dominant visual component of the film, a morass of seething electronic abstraction resulting in a “data-moshed” video. Subjected to Murata’s meticulous digital reprocessing, the action scenes decompose and are subsumed into an almost palpable, cascading digital sludge, presided over by a hypnotically pulsating pink dot.

CHAT: The term glitch is etymologically from the Yiddish *glitichen*, standing for a language slip. I believe it was first used in the context of radio broadcasting fuck ups.

KNUTE: Ha-ha! [*Arms akimbo.*] Or when you mistake a mirror for a window! In fact, it was the Director who sent this glitch! Saw it on his laptop when he Googled (unsuccessfully) the date writer Jonathan Franzen destroyed his laptop’s ethernet port using Superglue to

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

end the distraction posed by the “Siren call of the interwebs” and those annoying popup ads for dick-pills. So Franzen missed provocative postings by non-anglophone writers hailing from South Korea to Mexico on a net forum probing brain rot across the globe due to the advent to Web 2.0, A.I., and all the security and privacy issues raised since. Load the jpeg I sent you of one of Jeff Gates’s glitch political artworks.



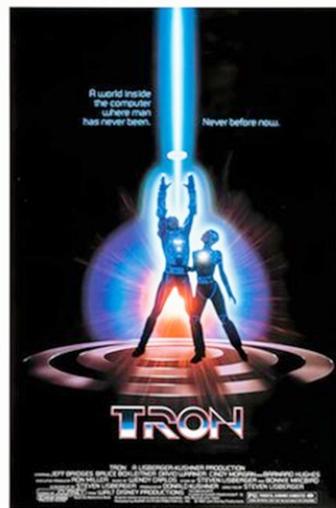
Face of the Republican Party (Glitch art, 2026) Jeff Gates.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Would've helped his case contra the chaotic info-recirculation of slop wearing away our culture and democracy. One of your podcaster buddies, Hamish, has called Trump "the first post-literate president". As Marshall McLuhan pointed out, our technologies change us, our world, and our brains. The past haunts the present, the present haunts the past, and the future haunts the present, blurring the line between hallucination and sight. Like we experienced on the alien ship where no things seemed to have a fixed distance and we might have been lodged like glitches in some computer's circuits.

KNUTE: Of course, I stand by Italian Futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's dictum: "What is the use of looking behind at the moment when we must open the mysterious shutters of the impossible?"

That was superbly done in the 1982 SF film *Tron*. Remember it? It details what happens when a human enters the circuitry of a computer, becoming a sort to glitch in the system. When my father worked at a Hollywood special effects house called Mid-Ocean Motion Pictures, he met a cool guy who wore silly hats and later went to work on the special effects for that groundbreaking film. Show that slide, Hamis.



CHIT: *[Still studying his fingers.]* Ya, and when the typewriter was invented, young women were abducted as secretaries and enslaved to mechanically turn dictation into small fragments of text. BTW, I read that library was already plunging when TV became ubiquitous. Just sayin'. Idiocracy, then. And now. Loss of "deep literacy" due to alliance between state and capital to promote AI.

KNUTE: *ACHTUNG!* *[Mimics a Nazi officer salute.]* And movie theater attendance too took a dive. New tech has always changed us and been attacked for it.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

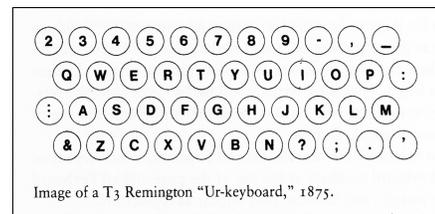
CHIT: Goebbels touted a radio in every Kraut abode. Trump touts “truth” posts in every kid’s iPhone [*Hamish traces a swastika in the air with his green laser pointer*].

KNUTE: Gobbles, gobbles! T-Giving is soon! When writing became popular in ancient Greece, Plato bemoaned it’d subvert oral culture and, hence, memory. An accusation leveled against the effects of digital tech now. Every new development in . . .

CHIT: [*Pencil in mouth.*] Pssshit! We know you’re a “digital native”, born in the 1980s.

HAMISH: [*Ignores the noise from the peanut gallery.*] Will AI put you out of work? Are chatbots doing your children’s homework? Are stable hierarchies crumbling? Or are we on the glorious path to Frenchy Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s much lauded transcendent “noosphere”? Or simply Marshal McLuhan’s “global village”? Or on the way to living as immortal cyborgs on Mars? We’ve touched on these topics many times this year.

CHAT: [*Unconsciously petting her typewriter.*] You know, even typewriters were poo-pooed by some. C. S. Lewis complained its noise would disrupt the writer’s sense of verbal rhythm [*begins to randomly bang on her machine*].



KNUTE: [*Eyes brighten.*] Yet, the 1920s, the Mexican modernist movement, *Estridentista*, touted typewriter-crafted poetry for the very different rhythms and line breaks encouraged by keystrokes, its tendency to fragment text in a Dadaist fashion, a *coup de datum*. Like data streams seen in D. J. Enright’s poems in *The Typewriter Revolution and Other Poems* and Erica Scourti’s verbal presentation using her iPhone’s autocomplete text function to generate odd poetry. For early modernists, such fragmentation served new aesthetic purposes. Like montage did in Russian cinema of that period. Today we are returning to a new orality explored by Scourti that will rewire the logic engine of our brains.

THE TYPEWRITER REVOLUTION

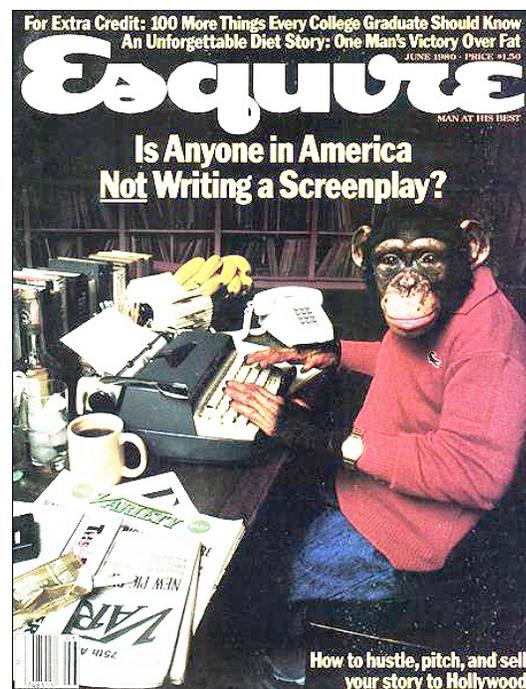
The typeriter is crating
A revlootion in peotry
Pishing back the frontears
And apening up fresh feels
Unherd of by Done or Bleak

D. J. Enright’s poem (1971).

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Software is eating brains! The isolated reader may remain, but a larger audience is gone with the digital wind governed by ultra-efficient reductive, predictive algorithms, and endless upgrades. My grandkids moved from *Muttermund* orality to being netted by network processes on their smartphones. They've little interest in history museums or family dinner conversations in this time of spatial, temporal, and mnemonic disorder.

CHIT: [*Scribbles on his pencil pad: THAT SUCKS!*] When little, I was totally happy with a pencil and a pad of paper. What explorations I made with those tools. German media theorist Friedrich Kittler wrote in the 1980s that under the conditions of high technology literature had nothing more to say. He writes probingly in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* of these inventions and how they mechanized us.



CHAT: He'd of taken to the June 1980 cover of *Esquire* magazine then. Hamish put up those two jpegs I sent you. The Playwright has a handsomely framed copy of that very issue in his office.

CHIT: [*Big smile.*] I know. I saw you snapping its picture, remember? The monkey is wearing a preppy staple, a La Coste shirt. Monkey meets crocodile logo. And the typewriter is, of course, electric.

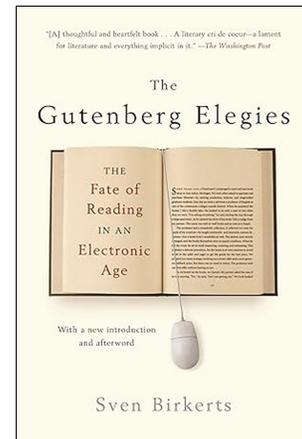
CHAT: Note the bananas and *Variety* magazine on the desk. But, back on topic . . .

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: Okay. Sven Birkerts's *The Gutenberg Elegies* [1994] claimed the stability of the printed page was being superseded by “the rush of impulses through freshly minted circuits.”

CHAT: Hey, some candy company needs to manufacture “Minted Chocolate Circuits” to sell to the geek market.

CHIT: Birkerts's comment recalls Plato's lament about writing, its effect on memory. Immersed in this “second coming” [*finger quotes*] we see data centers replacing our faculties of recall, grad students using ChatGPT to write their theses — or should I say feces! Students unable to recount reading experiences well, much less understand cursive documents.



CHAT: And those shitty huge data centers needed to propel AI, will use oodles of water. I read a single 100-megawatt data center will consume about 500,000 gallons of water to cool it. Not good if these are built in New Mexico what with its water shortage. Maybe the aliens have technology that can avoid that waste of resources [*types "Fuck it!" on her Corona*] and wants to pass on their . . .

HAMISH: *Dicho y hecho!* [*Puts up the appropriate slides, points at them with his laser pointer.*] Here's an energy-hungry data center planned for Caprock, New Mexico. Trump, through businessman and current Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick, is now vigorously promoting AI expansion and lining his pocket at the same time.

The slide features a blue background with a mountain range image. On the left, there is a list of bullet points. On the right, there is a map of New Mexico with a red box highlighting the Caprock area in Lea County. The text on the slide includes:

- ▶ 3,500-acre site near Caprock
- ▶ Powered by natural gas & nuclear energy
- ▶ Next planning steps in December

The map shows Albuquerque and NM, with a red box labeled 'Caprock' and 'Lea County'.

New Mexico Data Center planned for Caprock area. With rivers flowing low, it is impossible to cool reactors and spent fuel. Heated water will be discharged back into the rivers with bad results.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

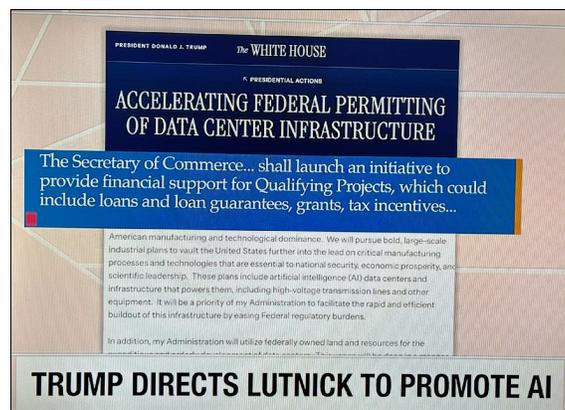


One wing of a data center.



Kronos (1957) Aliens release a robot that sucks electrical energy from the earth to their planet which they devastated by exhausting resources.

A 1957 SF movie, *Kronos*, broached the topic of alien invasion, mind-control, and the management of vital resources. Aliens land a robot — named Kronos by the news media — to attack power plants, draining all their energy back to their dying planet. In doing so, Kronos grows larger, consuming more power as it moves from one power source to the next. The robot is finally destroyed by reversing the machine's polarity by bombarding it with nuclear ions. Kronos is obliterated in the resulting implosion. These data centers will be manmade Kronos bots.



CHAT: The new labyrinth which imprisons all data! LOCK 'EM UP! is the rallying cry.

KNUTE: [Disapproving look at Chat.] Don't be so bull-headed [a sly reference to the labyrinth and Minotaur in Greek myth].

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Irritatingly erasing THAT SUCKS from his yellow pad.]* Media theorist Neil Postman, who believed serious television was impossible, Marshall McLuhan, who saw tech as prostheses replacing our bodies, and these other authors just mentioned, all think tech changing us and our world — but largely in an ‘enshittified’ way. As newspapers close, people feel less local sense of community, political polarization increases, oligarches prosper, trolls haunt the Net.

KNUTE: *[Fussing with his TRS-80 computer.]* But those authors often overlook important factors — the economic and political — which can result in monocausal explanations for a complex series of changes. Class for instance . . .



Silver coin from Knossos displaying the 7-course "Classical" design to represent the Labyrinth holding the Minotaur, c. 400 BC

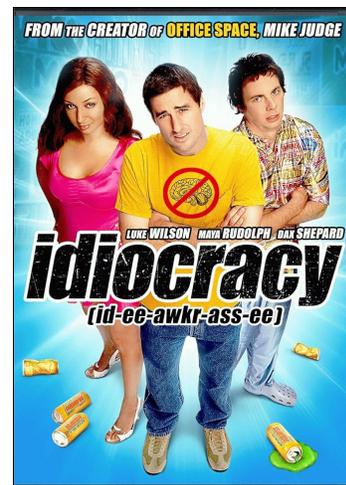
CHIT: Yah, reading has always been a mode of class distinction; historically, literacy overpowers the illiterate. Powers that be want the illiterate to stay that way. Although, some revolts were propelled by printed material and Protestantism certainly encouraged Bibles be printed and distributed.

CHAT: But the monied class gets the latest tech first and lords it over the masses.

CHIT: Then sell it to them at inflated prices, making sure it goes obsolete quickly so more updates can be sold. This past six months I've had to get a new laptop, new software, a new laser printer, a new iPhone, and pay fees for software.

HAMISH: *[Interrupting, playing with his green laser pointer.]* Nietzsche bellowed that mass literacy would be ruinous in the long run. Aldous Huxley thought similarly, that mass education led to stupidity. Wasn't that rooted in class bias?

CHAT: I hear China severely limits anyone under 18 to only a few hours per week of video games. They take seriously the threat of this addictive media. Will their populace get ahead of us, we becoming an idiocracy like in that film by the same name? Some wealthy huckster remarked that "a kid born today will never be smarter than AI."



Note the translation of the title into small bits.

KNUTE: That bit of wisdom is from ChatGPT front man and CEO of OpenAI Sam Altman.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: Dollars speak. They certainly do to techno-capitalist Marc Andreessen.

CHAT: Dollars for the meek.

HAMISH: *[Smiling.]* You will find this slide apropos *[loads up a jpeg]*.

As for the economy, in the words of fat cat Elijah Clark, “As a CEO myself, I can tell you, I’m extremely excited about it. I’ve laid off employees myself because of AI. AI doesn’t go on strike. It doesn’t ask for a pay raise.” As billboards recently spotted in San Francisco and New York City say: STOP HIRING HUMANS.

From “We Used to Read Things in This Country”, Noah McCormack in *The Baffler* No. 81 (2025).

CHIT: Ya know that social critic Theodor Adorno — I adore him — claimed in the 1940s that when fascism replaces bourgeois liberalism it also effects literate culture. What we are seeing now. Many can’t distinguish reality from fiction in the images put before them and the hierarchy likes it that way. AI is making this worse. Thank you, Mark Zuckerberg!

CHAT: Mark Suck A Mountain! BTW, an NPR headline had to warn TikTok users not to cook chicken in NyQuil.

HAMISH: *[Fusses with his console.]* Here’s another slide my Watchers should find disturbing:

How did we get here? My own suspicion is that we are looking at the final effects of the militarization of American capitalism itself. In fact, it could well be said that the last thirty years have seen the construction of a vast bureaucratic apparatus for the creation and maintenance of hopelessness, a giant machine designed, first and foremost, to destroy any sense of possible alternative futures. At its root is a veritable obsession on the part of the rulers of the world—in response to the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s—with ensuring that social movements cannot be seen to grow, flourish, or propose alternatives; that those who challenge existing power arrangements can never, under any circumstances, be perceived to win.³⁹ To do so requires creating a vast apparatus of armies, prisons, police, various forms of private security firms and military intelligence apparatus, and propaganda engines of every conceivable variety, most of which do not attack alternatives directly so much as create a pervasive climate of fear, jingoistic conformity, and simple despair that renders any thought of changing the world seem an idle fantasy. Maintaining this apparatus seems even more important to exponents of the “free market,” even than maintaining any sort of viable market economy. How else can one explain what happened in the former Soviet Union? One would ordinarily have imagined that the end of the Cold War would have led to the dismantling of the army and the KGB and the rebuilding of the factories, but in fact what happened was precisely the other way

Debt: *The First 5,000 Years* (2014) David Graber.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: Sounds about Reich — I mean *right!* Grabbed my attention. Hey! [*Quickly changing topic.*] My mother had to give me NyQuil to calm me so I could sleep at night. Not the steam from it though. She didn't realize my problem was that fuckin' gene hack and me multiple abducts. Quack, quack! Now she would be able to look up that shit up on Wiki and grok it, maybe. In my brainbox, it was something like Karlheinz Stockhausen's cryptic bursts of sound in *Song of the Youths* [1956].

KNUTE: [*Reading from a Wikipedia page he's viewing on the TRS computer.*] Hey, dig this sports fans, a disambiguous statement introducing a *Wikipedia* entry! Love it. I quote: "This article is about the practice of escaping from restraints. For the attempt to divert attention from an unpleasant reality, see . . ." Apropos to today's ICE raids, huh?

HAMISH: [*Serious expression.*] Just read in that rad mag *The Baffler* — neocons think of it as a "rag bag" — about the poor state of "deep literacy" in China and other countries, especially in the Middle East [*puts up another slide, aims his green laser pointer at it*]. Check this out Watchers, sounds a lot like our culture, too:

They grew up scrolling short videos and are used to their cultural products being both literal-minded and fragmentary. Originality is of no concern to them. China is going through a trend of drama series shot vertically, to be watched on a phone, each episode no more than three minutes. The first few episodes are free, the rest behind a paywall. The production quality of these series is uniformly terrible, making use of melodramatic performances and sensationalism to get viewers

"Literature Away From the Gaze", Jeremy Tiang in *The Baffler* No. 81 (2025).

CHAT: Seems originality is no concern to them. I assume AI would be used in the creation these Popist pay-as-you-go online short stories.

CHIT: I WANNA TO GO KAWAII, YAH! [*"Hello Kitty" expression on his face; raises arm, touting the Japanese cute aesthetic.*] Ah, hey, aren't we SF folks — enamored of *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, which exemplifies the Japanese understanding that the human body and brain are engaged in parallel evolution with our technology — all Japanoids?

HAMISH: We are. And, yes, the Japanese envision such dual change as more probable than Western SF has since we are rooted in Christian teleology. Bravo-Tango-Whiskey, the first mag to publish a cyberpunk special issue was Japanese. And



Tetsuo: Iron Man (1989) Tsukamoto.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Japanese SF author Kenji Siratori's 2002 cyberpunk novel *Blood Electric* sketches in a bizarre mixture of English and code to suggest the coming to consciousness of an artificial intelligence.

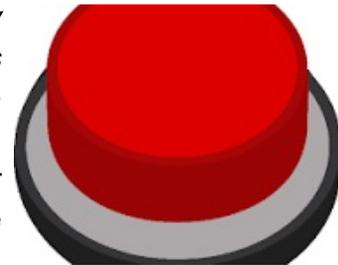
CHIT: *[Yells, tosses his pencil in the air.]* THERE IS CODE BEHIND THEIR INTERFACES! WE ARE AT THEIR MERCY!

HAMISH: Ah, to return to our topic . . . AI ain't *thinkin'* in language. It merely copies and puts out syntactically correct sentences, recycles material.

CHIT: It serves "Entrepreneurial Heroism", that, which frames entrepreneurs as bold visionaries facing extreme risks (like mythic heroes) to drive innovation, create value, and reshape industries through "creative destruction", but AI can't leap into deeper waters where doth swim complex meanings awaiting to be hooked by curious minds.

CHAT: Minds ever on the wane. And a bad choice to employ AI, LLMs, large language models to translate books, huh? No soul, *nada*.

CHIT: Makes me wanna nod off *[head crashes clownishly down on his desk]*. But used to replace office workers *[holds up his yellow tablet]*, as it won't nod off at work or take bathroom breaks. Emperor Maximillion profits. Can't get a human on the line when I call to order my prescriptions or need assistance. Always yelling AGENT! AGENT! into me iPhone.



KNUTE: You need a fuckin' gag sound button to press that yells that phrase again and again. Save your voice the strain.

CHIT: Where there is no value other than bucks, honor is meaningless.

HAMISH: *[Big smile.]* Let's reverse that a bit. Watchers, I got an idea . . .

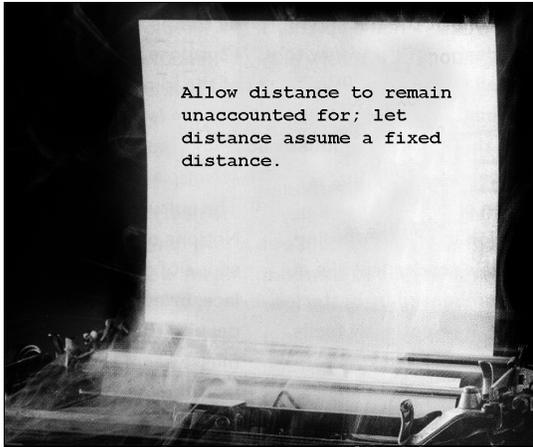
CHAT: *[Types HURRAH! on her Smith-Corona.]* Your last hurrah?

HAMISH: Watchers, text us real humans here a sentence or phrase and Chat will then type your message out on her typewriter and we'll zoom in for all to see. *[Long pause while Hamish awaits a viewer to respond.]*

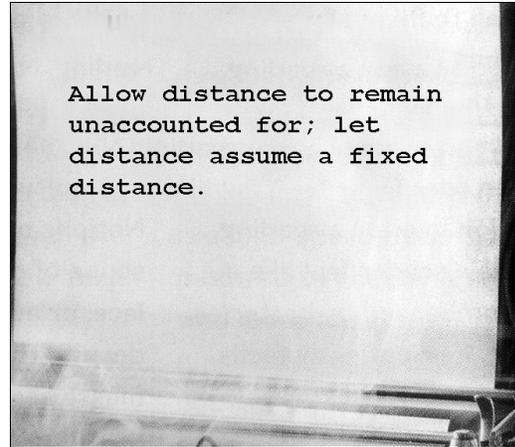
Ah! Here is one! A mind-teaser. *[Reads it aloud slowly for Chat to transcribe.]*

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

“Allow distance to remain unaccounted for; let nothing assume a fixed distance.” [Chat types, the camera zooms in for the shot, zooms out. then in, then out, then in.] That’s



Shots from the camera zoom of Chat's typed note.



Chat mimicks female secretarial activity

agency! No! More! Pure show biz! No! No! More. [Long pause.] NOW THAT’S ENTHUSIASM! How’s that? I’m flashing on you three saddled on those trikes madly permitting no fixed distance betwixt each other. All in flux. Flummoxing all before thee. [Wields his green laser pointer to write such in Pitman shorthand in the air before his amused interlocuters.]



CHAT: Let me pick up where Chit left off about *where there is no value but money*; if so then there is the state of affairs where sociopaths are willing to weaponize — online and off — their own disinhibitions and amorality. It dominates the Trumpocene.

Apropos, I binge-watched the popular Netflix series *The Diplomat*. I had a splash-zone seat watching moral rightness, truth, values, spousal faithfulness! sink in a wildly troubled sea of *Realpolitik*. Pretty depressing. I almost wanted the aliens to re-abduct me, zoom me to some Woke exoplanet.

HAMISH: [Crossing his fingers, putting up another slide.] Well, maybe this citation from *The New York Review of Books* reporting on the Trumpocene will delete that awful feeling, your “almost”, [signals a strike-out with his green laser pointer] from your self-observation.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

NYRB (10/23/25)

In 2021 Trump sued Twitter and Facebook for blocking him. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, at a Mar-a-Lago dinner after Trump won the 2024 election, Zuckerberg was told that he would have to resolve the lawsuit to be “brought into the tent.” Zuckerberg wrote a check for \$25 million, agreed to end his company’s fact-checking program, made the Republican political operative Joel Kaplan his chief of global affairs, and appointed Trump’s friend Dana White, the president of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, to his board of directors. Perhaps as a result of his \$288 million in contributions to Trump’s 2024 campaign, Musk got off more cheaply: his settlement bill was only \$10 million.

In MAGA world, social media is judged by a simple standard: *Cui bono?* When he thought that TikTok was a tool the Chinese government might use against him, Trump supported banning it on national security grounds. After coming to believe that the platform helped him more than it helped the Democrats, he simply ignored the law Congress passed requiring TikTok to cease operating in the United States under Chinese ownership. If algorithmic rules help the left, they’re censorship. If they advance the right, they’re upholding free speech.

KNUTE: [Embracing his bulky Radio Shack computer.] Yet in these days of chaos, possibilities abound. “One may decode a fragile sentence in an *avant texte* and unlock a new future,” to quote the Playwright. He envisions you clowns as “metasignals” caught between a transmitter and a receiver. He also hopes, as do your hypnotherapists, that the constant grasping at samples, memories, reiterative behaviors, and the struggle for and against signal “noise” via “glitches” and Dada-like nonsense — as evolving in his inter-textual script — can allow the past to be past so you clowns can move on to the uncertainty of the future, reinvigorate the new.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Biting on his pencil, so as to distort his voice.] PREACHER! PRRREACHER! [A sly reference to a scene in the 1985 Clint Eastwood movie, Pale Rider, where a disembodied voice from far away taunts the Preacher played by Eastwood.] . . . What? [Responding to blank stares from all.] Didn't our Director want us ad lib, recycle past material whenever the situation arose? Said it helps us to accept loss or something.*

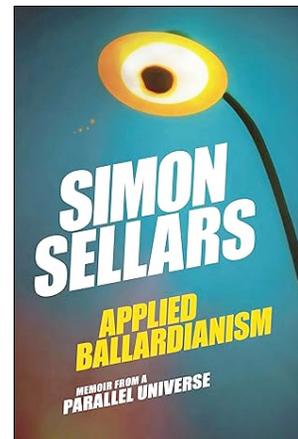


Clint Eastwood as Preacher.

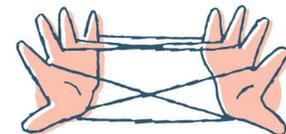
KNUTE: *[Chuckling, extending a handshake toward Chit.] Hey semi-alien clone-boy, gene-dubbed Genou, so how are you?*



CHIT: *[Miffed.] That sounds too much like a Trump insult! I'm Three Nomial Voices Whirlpool Destruction — just an assemblage — not blessed, not obliged. A victim of parasites and paratactic practicality who, given the day, may or may not believe in progressive illusions due to our recursively reiterating communication in these podcasts, optimizing our online behavior. I am a tried and true fan of Simon Sellars's amazing book *Applied Ballardianism*, in which a young researcher, fleeing the excesses of 1990s cyberculture, sets out to systematically analyze the obsessively reiterated themes of a writer who prophesied the disorienting future we now inhabit. Whew! Fuck! That was a mouthful.*



CHAT: *Yah . . . some verbal cat's cradle, that! Ya, caught me! But did you manage to trap the Watchers?*



HAMISH: *[Approval posts appear on his laptop.] Hey, a swarm to new posts! J. G. Ballard's like mother's milk to most of my Watchers. Many in my audience also swarmed Mike Bonsall's Ballardian Twitter bots, like @Crash_Cutup, that randomly re-organizes lines from Ballard's novel *Crash*, and went into hysterics over *Sunspring*, an experimental sci-fi short film entirely written by an artificial intelligence bot (that named itself "Benjamin") using neural networks. It was conceived by the BAFTA-nominated filmmaker Oscar Sharp and NYU AI researcher Ross Goodwin and produced by film production company, End Cue.*



Scene from *Sunspring* (2016)

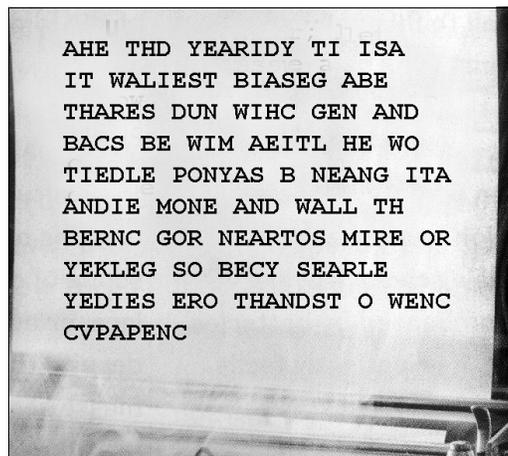
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: Yes, a swarm! Not a crowd.

CHAT: Nor a multitude.

KNUTE: In contradistinction, a swarm permits individual agency, but only on the individual level. Of our film crew, I'm the only person who orders *sharma* from the Middle Eastern food truck at the corner of St. Francis and Alameda.

CHAT: *[Extends her right hand.]* Ah, hopeful monsters and happy mutants, parse me my latte, please. *[While she waits, she types randomly with two fingers on the Smith Corona before her, set to Caps Lock.]* You know Gertrude Stein would dictate her odd sentences to a typist who typed it out for her. I am a stenographer to Chance. *[Camera zooms in for a peek at the oddity on the page — Watchers curious]:*



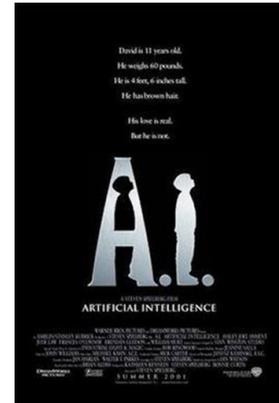
While typing Chat recalls British author Margaret Kennedy's novel *The Feast* wherein is included a riotous reproduction of someone's bad typing.

[Pointing to the text.] Hey, Mister Inforg, what this represents is an aleatory slap in the face of the A. I.'s imposition of a grid of control, intensifying the threshold of unknowability in narrative. An invitation to think outside the closed systems of language's functionalism, outside code and programming.

KNUTE: *[Challenging Chat.]* But the aleatoric is not hyper-chaotic 'cause it's still rooted in probability, but I get your point. Now if I typed that text via my computer's word-processing software, it'd become language as code. My machine and I interface in a new way from typing or cursive. So, from my "Inforgivable" perspective that cyborg world might well be about lived social and bodily realities in which people aren't afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Then why did the movie *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* feature a robotic boy, David, who in a hi-tech version of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* desires to become human? That film certainly made one think about the moral issues surrounding androids — their use and abuse — and the fate of our human world in the far future. BTW, Haley-Joel Osment was terrific as the boy. His face is so . . .



CHIT: I ssee ghosts [*shivering, thinking about his childhood abduction experience and Osment's role in The Sixth Sense*].

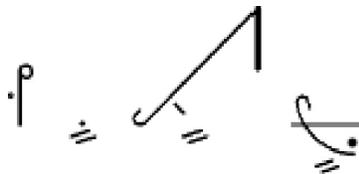
HAMISH: Donna Haraway, writing in the 1990s prior to today's info explosion, was ambivalent on these issues. She saw your negative side [*points to Chat*] and your positive side [*points to Knute*].

CHIT: *TOUCHÉ!* YES! Tech as proverbial double-edged sword. [*Hastily draws such a sword on his yellow paper pad.*] Now the programmers of my iPhone are more powerful than the German writer Günter Grass, or so claims media artist Andreas Müller-Pohle.

KNUTE: The pole numbers are in! The issue being that if you can only write and type, not program, you are at a disadvantage until to you gain "electracy"; as Gregory Ulmer explains: "electracy is to digital media what literacy is to print." So, Chat, in typing so so stochastically and so sarcastically are you hoping to attack functionalist determinism and poke fun at "electrants?!"

HAMISH: If she's trying to suggest asemic writing in her play here, and a gesture contra computerized word-processing where there is no material inscription, but constantly refreshed images, systemic exchanges, due to coding processes that operate invisibly and instantaneously between keyboard typing and the corresponding images onscreen.

I can up the ante of contra techno-linguistic automatisms by using my laser wand like a feather ink pen to sketch in Pitman shorthand what most would only see as asemic. Hmm, [*poses like The Thinker*] how about: SET THE WORD FREE [*wields his wand*].

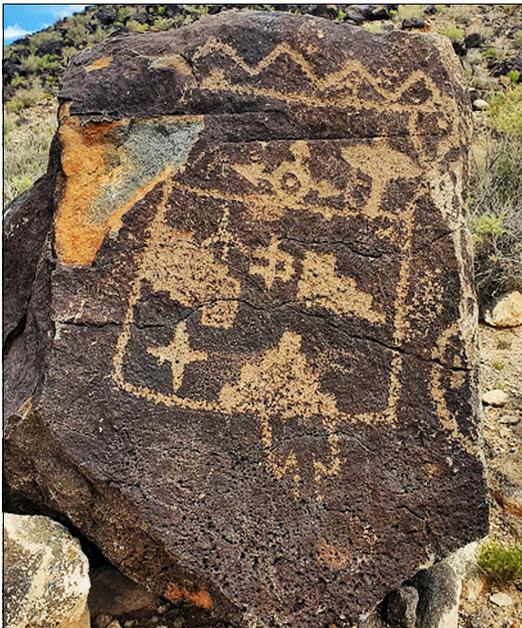


CHIT: That's way cool! Can't be read by most, only experienced and has its own

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eloquence, mystery. Hey! Tell the Director to get that script printed on white T-shirts for us clowns — oh, maybe for our fans to buy as well. We could claim it's alien writing. Ah, our fascination with hieroglyphics. BTW, the Director was supposed to take all the crew to Petroglyph National Monument and have us clowns pose before petroglyphs that might suggest ancient aliens were being described by Native Americans.

KNUTE: Hamish, show those photos I sent last week for comparison, like the one of my driveway after I did some horsing around on my metal horse [*Hamish does so*].



Petroglyph National Monument, NM. Note what seems to be a flying saucer extending a tractor beam downward in the upper right.



Knute's motorcycle tires created asemic writing in a driveway after showing off his biker skills.



Hamish's wall photograph taken in Madrid.

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HAMISH: And here's a photo [see prior page] I took of an old wall here in Madrid. The process of natural decay, entropy, has generated a mysterious asemic text to decipher as our imagination sees fit [loads the jpeg].

CHAT: Ironically, Pitman shorthand is very functionalist in purpose, used in business offices, in courtrooms, and so forth. I learned to support myself as an office assistant in a lawyer's office when I was teen doing such, taking dictation. But 99 percent of people wouldn't have a clue it's condensed speech, a sign language at the service of efficiency. It appears to be a flickering between pattern and randomness, meaning and nonsense..

KNUTE: [Embracing the Radio Shack computer before him.] Fat Boy here uses Scripsit word-processing software, which was clunky compared to Word or WordPerfect today. One had to use function keys to access editing commands and type in symbols in front and in back of words you wanted *italicized* or put in **bold**. One was hyper-aware there was a machine and code interfacing between you and what ultimately printed out on a daisy-wheel printer. Data storage was very limited on floppy disks.

CHIT: [Chewing on his pencil.] Our access to "reality" [finger quotes] through language is always metaphorical, while our digital apparatus is evolving into pure information and pure number. A "superidiotic apparatus" as critics term it.

KNUTE: Yet pure number may, as Platonic realists would have it, correlate directly with a mind-independent reality, tossing out the time-honored phenomenological correlation between thinking and being in the game of metaphysics.

HAMISH: [Puts up a portrait of H. P. Lovecraft.] Many of my Watchers are Lovecraft fans. According to physiognomy, an oval-shaped head as we see here is associated with a balanced, adaptable, and diplomatic personality. Interesting that such remarkable envisionments of horror dripped from his pen. Aliens did not come from other planet, no, but resided in the earth.



H. P. Lovecraft (1934).

CHAT: Like he was letting out the monsters of the Id as seen in the film *Forbidden Planet*.

HAMISH: [Cutting her off.] According to Speculative Realist epistemology, we can never know or experience the *outside*. But we can *speculate* about the world-in-itself even if we cannot explicitly "know" the in-itself. We may envision a darker form of "weird realism" as seen in H. P. Lovecraft's "Eldritch Abominations", wherein very dark entities beyond

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rationalization impinge on human affairs, iconic figures like Cthulhu, Shub-Niggurath, and Yog-Sothoth. Scared the hell outta me when I read him as a kid. Cthulhu is a member of the Great Old Ones, a species from outer space that came to Earth before humanity existed and built the sunken city of R'lyeh, where Cthulhu now lies in a dreaming state. A person who witnesses Cthulhu directly risks losing their sanity, as their mind tries to process non-Euclidean geometry and the realization of cosmic horrors that exist beyond their comprehension.



Illustration of Cthulhu in R'lyeh.

CHIT: Grotesque figure, tentacles and otherworldly landscapes that evoke a sense of human insignificance against vast, unknowable cosmic forces. Yes, super-aliens, but not alien to our planet's deep history, which makes them even more disturbing. An unknown lurking deep inside our known world.

CHAT: Yah, the spacecraft that took us heavenward could be ironically named "Lovecraft" given what we experienced there. Quoting that author: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." Why ICE agents mask their feces, er, faces.



HAMISH: According Wendy Chung's book *Updating to Remain the Same* [2016], the new media is "creepy and leaky," capturing the promiscuousness with which digital devices diffuse themselves into our lives and the weird situations that result. Clear distinctions between public and private, work and leisure, fascinating and boring, hype and reality, democracy and trolling are blurred. Artists, like Wade Guyton and Isabel Gouveia, play with "glitchy" printers to introduce visual disturbances in their images.

CHAT: I find I drift between realizing the odd nature of the technology I use and letting it drift into the background of my activities. Attention then inattention. Media matters most when it seems not to matter at all 'cause its passed into us and shaping us. As Chung puts it, the result is "the habituation of bodies collaborating to produce a habituated society."

CHIT: Individual habits soon become collective social habits [*stands, yells*]:

HABITUATION! HABITUATION!

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

It's the new vacation *[waving his pencil about]*. Glitch art and writing can get some kind of purchase on how computers and A.I. informs and shapes our lives by exploring the edges of media, languages, and entrained bodies. Hamish put my voiced exclamation through your weirdo Zalgo Text Generator.

HAMISH: Your wish is my command *[futzes with his console]*. Okay, clowns. Bravo - Tango - Whiskey, [Zalgo Text Generator](#) is a free tool that helps you to create a glitch text online. There was a time when the ASCII system used to represent numbers on computers. It used to translate the numbers from 0-127 into characters. However, this was restricted for the use of the English language only. Then came Unicode, allowing one to assign a code for every character in any language. Now, these characters can be combined in any form to make an unusual form of text, called Zalgo. Ah, here we go *[Chit's exclamation appears transformed onscreen]*:

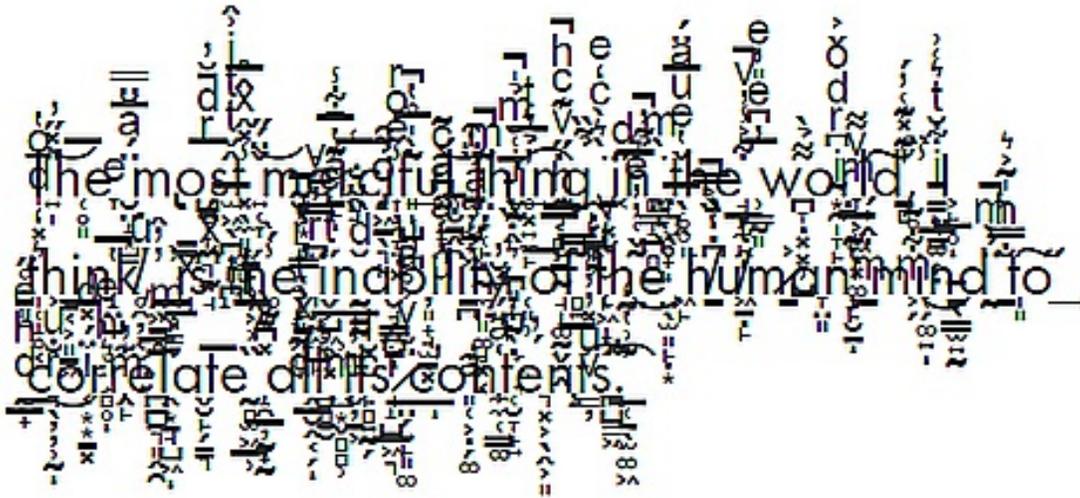
H/√" a- ' ^ b i/
t o ' ' u/
a/ ' ^ t
i' ^ o/
n
H a b/ i/
t/ u' a~ t/
i o' n/°
!

CHAT: Now that tool *is* cool!

HAMISH: Zalgo text was pioneered in 2004 by a Something Awful comedy forum member who created image macros of glitched or distorted cartoon characters exclaiming "Zalgo!" The text in the images was often distorted, and the style of the distortion became popularised as "Zalgo text". The cartoon characters were often depicted bleeding from their eyes, and forum members interpreted Zalgo as an unimaginable, *eldritch apocalyptic figure* akin to Cthulhu. See the Lovecraft reference in this?

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Ah, let me Zalgo text a famous quote from Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu* [1926]:
"The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents" [*typed on his laptop, translated using the Zalgo app*].



KNUTE: Esoteric! Looks like what I saw during my first LSD trip. Has the look of some mysterious incantation that would have a direct effect on one's body and mind

CHAT: You cast a spell on me with — what's the term?.

HAMISH: An "esolang" for short. N. Katherine Hayles has remarked on artists exploring these computer codes [*puts up a quote from Hayles*]:

"These works are not content to let code remain below the surface but rather show it erupting through the surface of the screen to challenge the hegemony of alphabetic language." — N. K. Hayles

If you want to go deeper into the topic of esoteric computer language, Watchers, begin with these link [*puts the links onscreen*]:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esoteric_programming_language.

And then check out this Australian-based net-artist / poet, Mez Breeze at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mez_Breeze

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

Vita, our resident barista in Madrid and radical academic-feminist who sees herself as a “glitch” in her own family as well as the patriarchy, has suggested we read Legacy Russell’s 2020 book *Glitch Feminism*. This non-binary author takes the perspective of a social outsider at home within cyberculture, where various roles, virtual bodies and identities can be experimented with in ways that reveal how social norms constrain our physical bodies and selves. She notes that the invention of typewriters refuted the phallogocentricism of classical pens. She sent us this note *[puts up a slide]*.

Hamish: My parents see me as a biological error, a glitch within the family. Legacy Russell, a non-binary author wrote *Glitch Feminism*, which I recommend to you and your many Watchers. Russell’s view therein is that the *glitch* is the name for the liberating potentials encoded into all kinds of systems: systems of gender and biology, social systems that stratify work and leisure, literary and artistic systems of privilege and hierarchy. All contain glitches that would allow us to work outside or beyond them.

— Vitalina

CHAT: Hey, our Director chose us to act in his filmed-play because we seemed to him natural “glitches” during our auditions.

HAMISH: Your Director has sent me a photo taken during one of your auditions *[puts it on-screen]* and then reads a citation from Martin Heidegger: *Man himself acts through the hand; for the hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man.* Heavy Heideggerian shit, huh?

CHIT: *[Vigorously rubbing hands together.]* Yeah, why our Director is so insistent on training our arm and hand gestures. He thinks the *word* is the essential realm of the hand February 15, 2026 — regardless if one uses pen, typewriter, or computer.

HAMISH: You’ll use ’em all today.



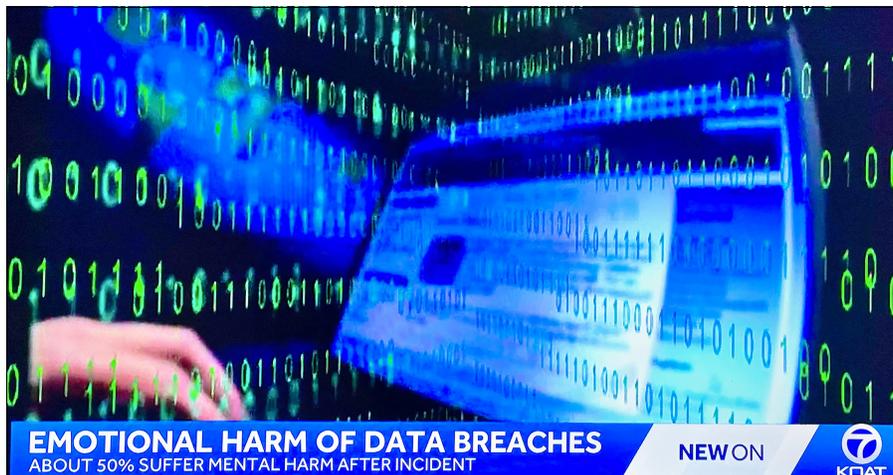
Chit and Chat: hand gestures, audition.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHIT: *[Chewing on his pencil nervously.]* That audition was like suffering *les sept enfers de Landare!* My internal multiplicity broke inside this illusion of a face — Genou.

KNUTE: Whoa! I took that flick! Better give me a photo credit, Ham. *[Pauses.]* As for glitches they *can be* seen as moments when machine and cognitive systems are fused into new, futuristic proximities, anticipating a more proximate human-technology of a post-human future, Vastening our capabilities.

CHAT: *[Shifting the topic a bit.]* Say, there's a glitch we haven't discussed. A glitch in the flow of our daily digital data. When someone *hacks* you. Hacks your Facebook account and sends shit to your Friends; compromises your credit card and you have to alter all your auto-pay accounts; drains your checking or saving accounts; opens a PayPal account you didn't sign up for. Hey, we've all suffered it, but usually don't want to admit it. Frustrates us. Makes us feel ashamed, mortified, stupid, right? Even raped. Put up that jpeg I shot off TV last night, please, Hamish *[he does so]*.



CHIT: *[Rubbing his arms.]* I I I don't hide 'em, I I I wear my breeches on my arms like tats. Full disclosure. Better mental health through . . . you know.

KNUTE: *[Annoyed.]* Not those kind of . . .

CHAT: *[Pointing a finger at Chit.]* Oh, forgive him, Lord he knows not . . . Ever since his childhood abduction he has difficulty discerning between *ea* or *ee*; between *Saab* and *sob* and *bent* and *Bengt* (why he never bought or rides in a Swedish automobile); or between clarity and delusion. Why our Director likes *HIM* more than he does me *[mimics a sad sob, wipes away an imaginary tear away]*. I think . . . *[she's interrupted by Hamish]*.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Focusing on his console.]* Oh, oh, we just received a comic relief contribution from one of our older Watchers, a posting about our frustrations when technology goes GLITCH or we go GLITCH with our technology *[uploads the image]*.

I had a problem with my computer yesterday, so I called Eric, the 11 year old kid next door. Eric clicked a couple of buttons and solved the problem. As he was walking away, I called after him, "So, what was wrong?" He replied, "It was an ID ten T error." I didn't want to appear stupid, but nonetheless asked, "An, ID ten T error? What's that?" Eric grinned... "Haven't you ever heard of an ID ten T error before?" "No," I replied. "Write it down," he said, "and I think you'll figure it out." So I wrote down: "ID10T" And I used to like Eric, the little bastard.

CHAT: *[Types on her Smith-Corona, reads it loudly.]* **Been there!**

CHIT: *[Makes whipping gestures with his right arm.]* **Ben-Hur!**

KNUTE: *[Mimics eating with chopsticks.]* **Bento box!**

HAMISH: *[Addressing his Watchers.]* Okay, okay! Is this boring? Well, maybe not boring but it's not *riveting* in the shock-jock manner of delivery. Nor is it the circular, anxious, hopeful, neurotic insecure, arrogant dialogue that actors have with themselves or amongst other actors that attracts LIKES.

CHAT: Vita — from what you described and what she's told us — is Madrid's answer to New York's outrageous "Vaginal Davis". I quote Vita's observation of the art world, delivered with our vanilla lattes a few days ago: "Artist's endeavors fare better in the quotidian mind when it can locate a cock and a pair of balls."

KNUTE: Ah! *[Rubbing his crotch.]* A cock and ball story! I like it!

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HAMISH: *[Attending his console.]* Responses are coming in . . . ah, this one looks interesting *[loads the image]*.



Our Watcher, a retired airline pilot, writes: “Wheels up! Glitches can be deadly. Strong solar eruptions. Northern Lights we’ve been seeing is sending unprecedented amounts of radiation our way. At high altitudes, where planes fly, that radiation is very strong, enough to *glitch* the jet’s software — O’s turn into 1’s, 1’s into O’s — creating computational havoc, navigational and control errors. Witness the Boeing 737 airliners that crashed from software issues. So Airbus is grounding planes to correct these issues. Get ahead of the problem, they say, not ignore it like Boeing did for too long.”

CHAT: Now that’s a major glitch! Scary. Whoa! Maybe the Roswell crash was saucer software related.

CHIT: *[Stands, saluting in a British manner.]* Major Glitch reporting for duty, sir! Time to time (according to my predictions) and money (coin only) are safe and sound quality is excellent (jingling in me pocket)! Mutable corpora. Or something like that (predicated on something like that), I mean. I think. Me here in this capital of dangerously gorgeous colors. *[Pauses.]* Say, what profession hates binary code more than all the others?

KNUTE: That’s obvious. Sports coaches. If your team’s season consists of only zeroes and ones, well . . . goodbye job.

CHIT: Er — more incorrectly, *yob*. I like to pronounce the *j* as a *y* as in Hawaii. I love to speak Meddle English, you know, because identity emerges as much from the networks and infrastructure we inhabit and are entangled in, as it does from jeans and a keen sense of our choices in shirts. Unscrew me head and truths spill out.

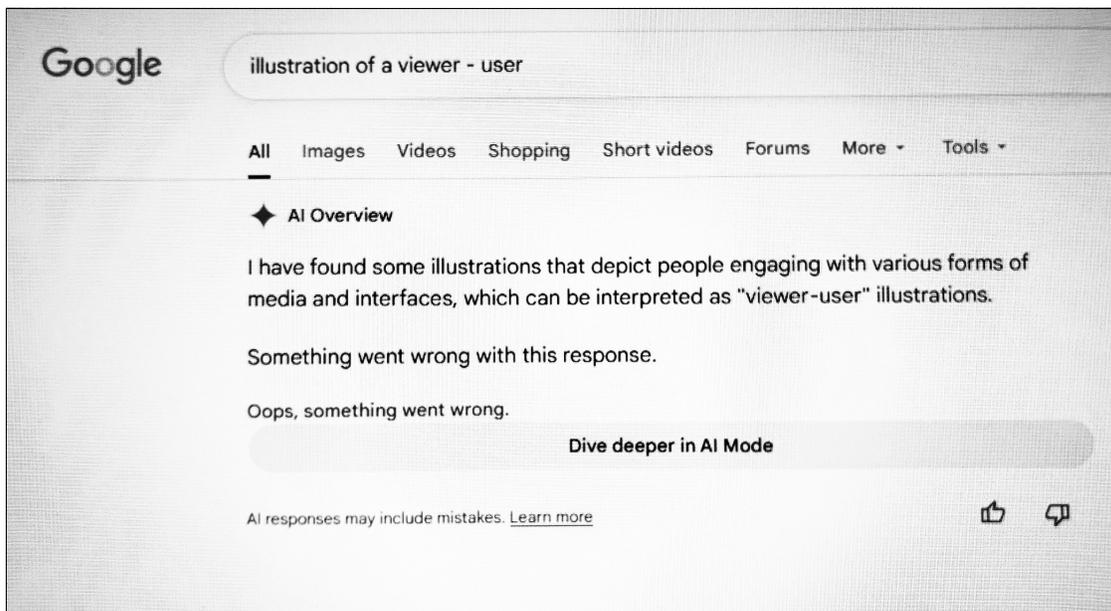
CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: *[Laughing.]* Hey you two, we do have very clean restrooms here — they may not be gold — where you can undo your jeans and *[makes strike out gesture with his laser wand]* ~~shirt~~ — er — shit.

KNUTE: *[Devilish glimmer in his eyes.]* This seems a good time to offer you, Hamish, a “get Woke” suggestion. You call your audience “Watchers”, but you get a fair amount of feedback and contributions to your podcast from them, meaning they are active users of digital technology. They contextualize and decontextualize media elements in virtual space; many confront the crisis of truth in current political flows, as you do. So honor them! Refer to them as “Vusers” (viewer - user). Your older Vusers may not all be super-competent with the new tech, but they “kludge” through with work arounds to get what they desire.

CHAT: That’s me!

HAMISH: *[Laughing.]* What we used to call in the late 1980s “MacGyvering”. Let me Google “illustration of a viewer - user” and see what comes up *[fusses with his laptop]*. Ah, wow! This is apropos our discussion *[puts up the screen image]*. “Oops, something went wrong!” And “AI responses may include mistakes.” GLITCH!



A Google glitch with AI.

CHIT: Awww, don’t take it personally. Possibilities have not yet been actualized. Just digital fizz. I mean no one has “forkbombed” your laptop, yet.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: Three new postings by new “Vusers”. One writes that her recent Black Friday experiences with Amazon seemed relevant to our discussion today; the other bemoans being forked bombed and how predictive software is taking over our decisions, anticipating our behavior:

At this point, I've ordered so much stuff online that I don't even know what's happening anymore.

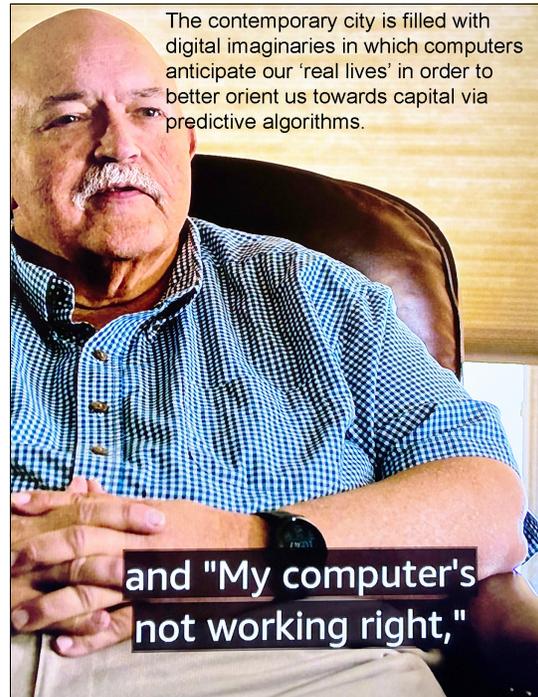
If Amazon shows up with a donkey tomorrow, it is what it is.

Vuser #1.

CHIT: These show giddy detestations of senior liquidity managers and growing impatience with industry relations managers, which may eventually lead to the rebellion of the digital serfs, like Uber drivers, some are Ph.D.s driving busing millionaires who don't read.

HAMISH: Yes, our third Vuser employs the Uber driver and his or her client as a case in point. Such serfs are really data types (flocks of data points) that are produced, consciously and unconsciously, with or without their permission and knowledge, by networked computational technologies that we use daily.

Oh! Speaking of types *[looks at Chat randomly pecking at her typewriter]* another reason Chat's been given a typewriter is that Sam Beckett was one of the first authors to encounter code in its early human-machine iterations, catching and promulgating the viral quality of code text in his early novel *Watt* where sequences of overlapping compulsive



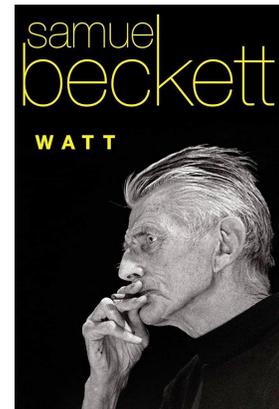
Vuser #2.



Vuser #3.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

sentences are driven by a permutational approach to syntax; here we find literal, logical thought processes that resemble a kind of machine learning apparatus stuck in a logical loop, generating errors, glitches. One recent critic, evoking the figure of the Uber driver, likens Watt's mode of communication to a G.P.S. that continues to recalculate routes long after the driver has left the original destination. The text provides a view into our networked technologies and its affect on us. The exposition might be seen as akin to being autistic. Bravo -Tango - Whiskey, Beckett did spy work, typing messages to be reduced in size and sent on to operatives during his spy-work in Occupied France.



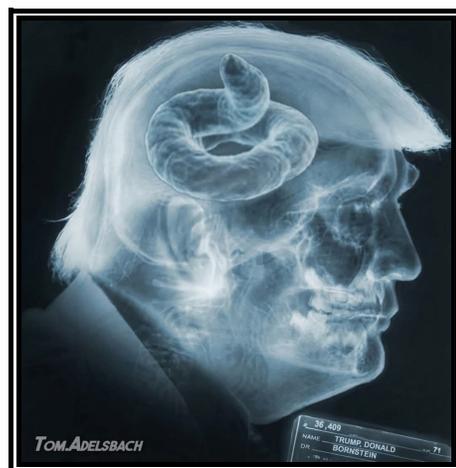
CHIT: Okay, you are In-Touch-With-The-Source! The Playwright told you that. So you probably know that James Joyce used recombinant methods from various sources, mixing various vernaculars according to unknowable logics in *Finnegan's Wake*. The text reads like it was auto-generated by a drunk Chatbot. Put up that slide of mine, please:

for now in soandso many counterpoint words.
What can't be coded can be decorded if an ear
aye sieze what no eye ere grieved for. Now, the
doctrine obtains, we have occasioning cause
causing effects and affects occasionally recawing
altereffects. Or I will let me take it upon myself
to suggest to twist the penman's tale posterwise.

James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*. Modernist author as proto-computer.

I watch for *parataxis* — not a pair of taxis carrying spies — in social media feeds and syntactically incomplete New-News from a shit load of corporate or corporeal entities, and try to grab screen-shots of the stuff to pass on to our Playwright as grist for his continuing “accept the flux of things” cut“n paste job screen-play. Like that clever faked MRI of Shit-for-Brains Trump I sent you, Hamish.

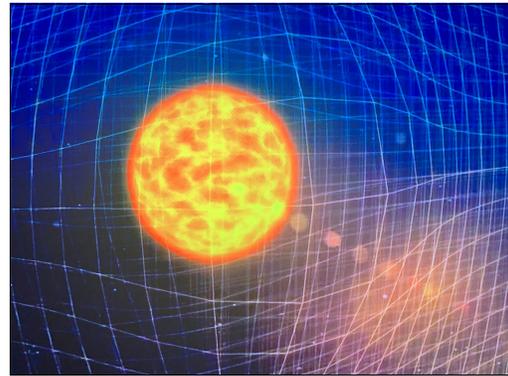
KNUTE: [*Eyes sparkling.*] Now that is RIGHT ON target, even though I boycott Target for their crap social policies!



CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

CHAT: Thanks for MRI imaging! But much of the world's operations in the Information Age reside outside our visual register and so outside the scope of action for many of us — as Vuser #2's comment, "And my computer's not working." suggests. Our knowledge of our reality is partial, limited by this new technology. At times, immersed with the technosphere that is our world now, and having suffered multiple alien abductions, I feel at times as if someone lifts the end of an invisible pencil [*Chit plays absentmindedly with his pencil*] and gently erases my appearance.

CHIT: *Et moi?* What's my vernacular? As a member of The Lonely Goat Herd — an online group of digital subjects founded by an Austrian alien abductee in 2015 — find my sensorium at times glitches and I'm outside my body, or somewhere else than I am at the moment. My on-ship experience could be likened to seeing my iPhone images coming to life as 8-bit renditions with red-orange lights on a blue background at the periphery of my vision flash on and off, like zeros and ones and then a fizzing black void.



KNUTE: [*Excited.*] Micro-temporal and spatial adjustments, shock effects taking place in your body as it responds to wrong inputs or overloads. Your phenomenological experience then just *seems* like it's been dispersed by the distributed processes of Internet-enabled phone and laptop technologies. You, *Genou*, feel like you're in The Cloud, so to speak, right? A new sort of embodied condition. I mean, during your abduction, you *were* in the clouds! Big Data computer network's imaginary of "the crowd" is constantly produced, re-instantiated, re-engendered, refreshed in ways that imagines individuals as not existing within stable bodies. Put up that slide of mine [*Hamish does so*].



Digital Subjects: We are data points.

CHIT for CHAT / Part 3

HAMISH: In our accelerated, post-truth, hypermediated socius, the cognitive subject is cut a drift from social solidarity and given multifaceted-emotional labor labor toys in return. Big Data inputs a complex relation of rules and models, shreds of actions, identities, interests, and engagements — *voilà!* [*writes “Big Data” in Pitman shorthand with his green laser pointer*].



KNUTE: [*Leaning over the TRS-80 computer, arms on top of the machine.*] As we use our digital technologies, generating data, we unknowingly write ourselves as digital subjects, selves that are often inconsistent and not very coherent. But exciting nonetheless like riding a runaway train.

CHIT: [*A splurge of words as if those words speak themselves.*] I grok — like crazy *moi!*

HAMISH: Speaking of crazy, another Vuser has just sent this amazing screenshot, noting that [*finger quotes*]: “The recent past becomes history as soon as it’s lived or watched:



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CHAT: *[Madly pounding the keys of the typewriter.] Christ on a Trike!*

CHIT: *[Breaking his pencil in half.] Half-wit!*

KNUTE: Not surprising, buckaroos! The unseeable of the Divine and the unseeable of the digital Black Box make for interesting metaphysical stews on simmering sites of fake news and New Age shit *[see page 144 in this text]*.

But, apropos to our discussion today of proto-computer Lit, human-machine interfaces, I've been doing some research. In his new book, *Language Machines*, Leif Weatherby (associate professor of German, founding director of the Digital Theory Lab, and Director of Digital Humanities at NYU) presents a theory that redefines how we understand Large Language Models (LLMs). Arguing that LLMs do not simulate cognition but rather *create* culture, Weatherby contends that humanistic scholarship misconstrues their function *by dividing the human from the machine*. By reading linguistic theory alongside algorithmic architecture, he asks us to turn over a new leaf, calling for a "general poetics" of computational cultural forms, ultimately concluding that literary theory be the backbone of a new rhetorical training for our linguistic-computational culture.

Now I have a surprise for Chit. I ordered this gag T-shirt for you to wear at all media events you and Chat are invited to *[pulls a plastic bag from under his chair, pulls a T-shirt out, hands it to Chit]*. Here ya go, sports fan! Wear it proudly, dude.



Leif Weatherby.



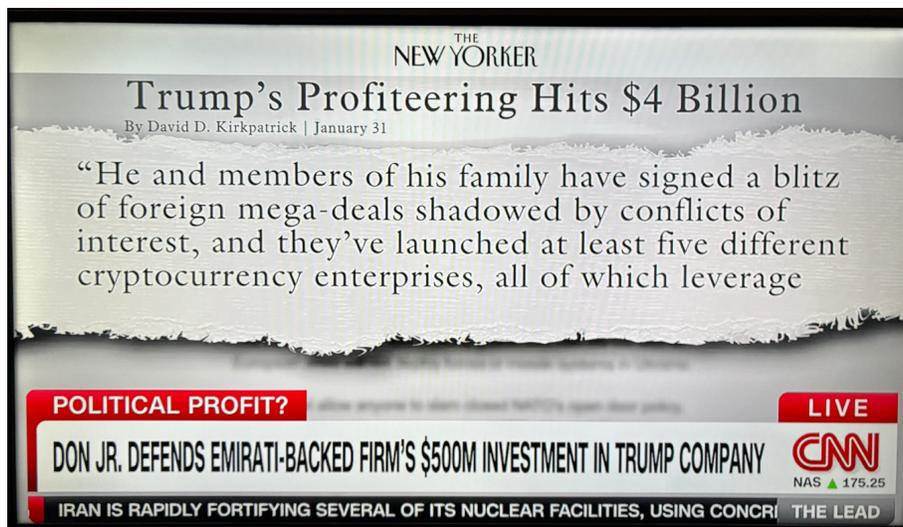
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CHIT: Oh, thanks for that syntactico-political loaded symbol! It don't rock me. Ya know footballer Knute Rock-Knee legged onto to a plane only to die in a bizarre plane crash in Bazaar, Cans-Ass.

CHAT: Now, Chit, you've got to change your breakfast cereal next time you WOKE up.

HAMISH: *[Big generous smile.]* Uh, thanks for that, Knute, I guess. Food for thought. And thanks for gifting Chit here with a backhanded compliment.

I want to sum up our past and present discussions with a series of portraits of our Blessed Oligarches *[puts up two slides]* without whom we'd have a just society.



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With these gems of wisdom and odd gifting, our podcast has run out of time, even in a Place of Enchantment where time seems to slow down and where one does not make poetry with ideas, but words and images.

I want to thank our Vusers who sent us material today. Chat, your turn.

An onscreen salutation is quickly typed by Chat, camera zooms in to it. Closing segment is accompanied by Elliott Smith's tune, "Between the Bars" from his album *Ride into the Sun* as performed by Brad Mehidau.

All present stand wave at the camera excitedly.



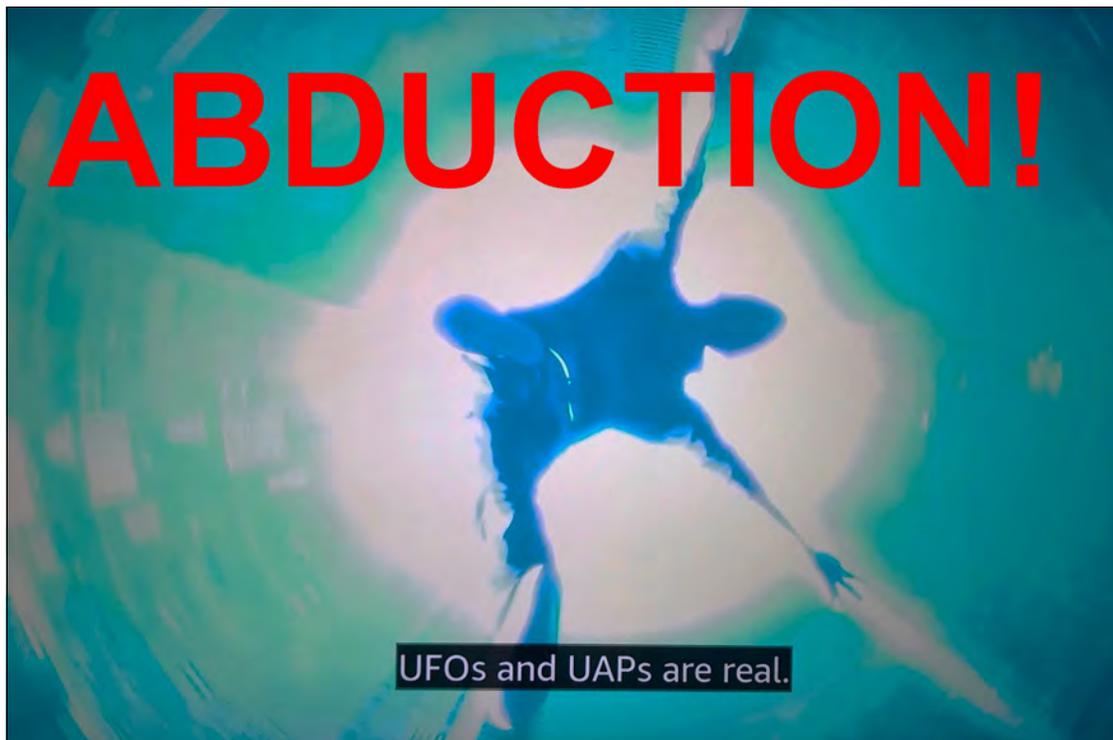
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LINKS

- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume one):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-ChatBK.pdf>
- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume two):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-ChatDeuxBK.pdf>
- ❑ *Chit for Chat* (volume three):
<https://www.uturn.org/Chit-Chat3BK.pdf>

- ❑ James Hugunin's "Foreword" to Eckhard Gerdes's *Cistern Tawdry* (2003): <https://www.uturn.org/GerdesRevu.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's review of Eckhard Gerdes's *Marco and Iarlaith* (2018):
<https://www.uturn.org/Reviews/GerdesMcManusRevu.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's "Introduction" Carla Wilson's *Curious Impossibilities: Ten Cinematic Riffs* (2017):
<https://www.uturn.org/HugIntro2.pdf>
- ❑ James Hugunin's review of Yuriy Tarnawsky's *Claim to Oblivion: Selected Essays and Interview* (2017):
<https://www.uturn.org/Reviews/YuriyRevu.pdf>
- ❑ Eckhard Gerdes's Experimental Fiction Home Page:
<https://www.experimentalfiction.com/collections/eckhard-gerdes>
- ❑ Eckhard Gerdes, Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckhard_Gerdes

- ❑ *The Lone Ar-ranger Goes Sax Mad* performed by the Sax Family
(Chat and Chat love it, recommend it.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUMTN8lipjQ>



CHIT for CHAT is a SF comedy that celebrates playwriting, filmmaking, and especially experimental writing.

In **Part One**, two Beckett-esque characters, **Chit** and **Chat**, freed from COVID-19 restrictions, ponder who and where they are, muse about their existence as subjects in a society British social critic Mark Fisher characterized as dominated by “Capitalist Realism.” The action is sited in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where our interlocutors try to meet the Playwright and the Director’s expectations, “To move from passive synthesis back to action in a highly improvisational performance,” during which there are allusions to literature, poetry, film, TV. Puns run rampant and textual allusions frequent. However, during a filmed scene the duo are abducted by aliens. In **Part Deux**, our wacky interlocutors confront the emotional toll of their alien abduction, while undergoing hypnotherapy to recover their memories. The duo now recall they had been abducted by aliens from early childhood onward. The Playwright and the Director use these interviews as grist for further Chit and Chat experiences. In **Part Three**, this volume, Chit and Chat are guests on a series of podcasts, WTF! hosted by “Hamish”, where the three interlocutors mutually entangle, discussing politics, science, and philosophy in light of the actors’ abduction and Chit’s fear he is an alien-human hybrid.

— J.R.H.

