

As revealed by the All-Mum, Eris Discordia, Lady of the Kallistic Kabbalah, Mistress of the Dungeons of Doubt, Keeperess of the Guesthouse of Kaos; she who is She, and She's the One, the Daughter of Night, Sister Moon, Mother Fucker, etc., the diverse beginning, being and ending of all, except uninteresting things.

the Manual of the Light Warrior

As recorded by Episkopos Trishop Epsilon, of the Church of Eris Erisian Eristic, the Reformed Church of Eris Eridian Eristic; being the Protector of the Antarctic (part-time), a Legionnoir of the Legion for the Advancement of the Terminally Confused, and the Grand Verpa Dragon of Ordre Belle Ebullience, Chaotica Anarchica Lacklaw Priory; and the Foe of Sport.

**for
the soldier of no cause
illuminated by a burning world
the death's-head-grin comedian**

Containing lies, damned lies, statistics, philosophy, theology, obvious truths, unsolicited testimonials, certain truths, marketing, truths beyond all doubt, common sense, ancient truths, the wisdom of the crowds, and the Final Truth.

Starring Elephone and the Trout of Order!

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Chapter

IN DISSUADION

The next culture war, after science versus religion, and secularism versus sponsorship, will be one where Discordians will be forced to fight. It will be the war of seriousness versus flippancy. The war of silence versus mockery. The war of universal respect versus free abuse. The war of the moralist and the humorist.

If we lose that war, the world will end; I kid you not. The world will end, for what will be left will not be a world fit for a Discordian, or anyone, to live in.

By even happening to look at this page you are already in peril: the Great War comes, and knowing of its coming you will not avoid taking a part in it.

Read no further; go get a blindfold and some tin foil while there is still time.

I am Eris, I am-a Eris, Discor-
dia, Discord's who I am, Sacred
Chao, five fingered discounted
hand, chaos star, Superstar of the
Underworld, apple of your eye,
quick to smile, quick to laugh,
quick to turn and cut your hand,
I am Discordia, Discordia I am,
I don't like order, I don't like or-
der, I don't like order, no, not at
all, and if I see order, bureau-
cracy, downfall, aftermath, I rule.

ORGANIZATION?

Seems a Discordian holy book ought to be disorganized; otherwise would be a Cordian holy book, which are generally regarded as dull.

This book has five sections. ~~The number has no particular meaning.~~ The first section is ‘Maxim Destruction’, just below. It is an appetizer of whetstone.

The second section, the Doomishly titled ‘I sawed Heaven, I axed Hell’, is a cocktail of theology, heresy and other fierier appetizers.

The third section, ‘Proverbs and Converbs’, is the actual Erisian meal. It has games, too, as a feast, even if for crows and clowns, ought to have some entertainment.

The fourth section is ‘Death questions’; it is in because a Discordian book ought to have some shade of stand-up in it. Attempts to channel George Carlin got no answer but “Blow it out your ass!” — so that was the procedure used to generate section four.

The fifth and final section is ‘The Sphincter’; it has words from Their sponsors and affiliates.

Chapter

1
*MAXIM
DESTRUCTION*

PD

Is Eris true?

Everything is true.

Even false things?

Even false things are true.

How can that be?

I don't know man, I didn't do it.

CC

Is Eris true?

*Everything is true.*¹

Even false things?

*Even false things are true.*²

How can that be?

*I don't know man, I didn't do it.*³

¹Let $X \neq \emptyset$ be a set of statements so that for the truth value function $f : X \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ we have $f(x) = 1 \forall x \in X$.

²*Lemma.* $\forall x \in X$ s.t. $f(x) = 0$ we have $f(x) = 1$.

³*Proof.* Let $A \subset X$ be defined as $A = \{x \in X \mid f(x) = 0\}$. Since $A = \emptyset$, we know $f(x) = 1$ holds, in the strict mathematical sense, trivially for all $x \in A$. This concludes the proof. \square

THE SAD TRUTH

ENLIGHTENMENT
will be in the
last place
you look.

THE SADDER TRUTH

It is
not enough
to find
ENLIGHTENMENT
just once.

THE SADDEST TRUTH

...is this all needs to be explained.

What “**ENLIGHTENMENT will be in the last place you look.**” means is enlightenment (and Enlightenment) is a throw of pearls without a string, and the swine usually rest content with the first they find.

It is not difficult to find enlightenment (or Enlightenment); the difficulty is in going on and finding still more.

MORE SAD TRUTH

(Also, a guru can get away with a fool-pitying glance and saying something “needs to be explained”, if the guru has first given an obvious hint such as “**It is not enough to find ENLIGHTENMENT just once.**”, thus making any half-wise listener wary to the plot, and able to consider her- or himself not one of the fools thus pitied.)

THE S(H)TICK

If you have a single stick, that's easy to break in two. If you have a bundle, well, that you can use a saw on. But if the stick's in Kalamazoo, how're you gonna break it then? No way! Thus we Discordians are told to stick apart.

THE S(H)ITTING MASTER

I will saw you, knee-deep in the ichor of clichés and worn absurdities. I will saw you, swinging the barbed sword of mixed metaphors at the apples of your eye, whipping the imperial silk to reveal the nudity of your powerless family jewels.

You that stick together, you I will saw apart. This say I, Chingghis-haan, reborn in Roman Ungern von Sternberg, the White Buddha.

Do not disregard this warning, for you would not want to see Chingghis-haan when he is angry.

PARABLE

As they were coming out of Capernaum, they were met with a donkey that was blocking the road.

Jesus said to the donkey: “Don’t be an ass!”

And the donkey was no more.

DICKERY

Wil Wheaton says: “Don’t be a dick!”

But without dicks, would there ever have been evolution beyond the fish?

Truly, is it possible to grind without sand? Is it possible to fashion wood without a rasp? Is carpentry enhanced by the absence of sandpaper?

Without irritation there is no progress; without ridicule, no illumination. Is it not said, the final exam of Plato’s academy was not skill nor knowledge nor merit, but this: when the teacher was incensed by the student’s wisdom, and not his ignorance, then his days as a student were over?

ANOTHER PARABLE

Satan⁴ said to God: “You cannot be a fig tree.”

So then God came down, and became a fig tree. A dog came and urinated on it; in a fury God became a tentacled moving tree and killed it.

God said: “I am a killer, but it was the fig tree’s fury, not mine. Now I will strike down fig trees when I see them, so that the fury will not come in me again.”

⁴from “The Diapentaron Illuminated”, by Titian of Assyria, as translated by John Dee Jr.

GRY

Anger is a great motivator. What good has been done, has mostly been done in anger: in anger at injustice, inequality, inefficiency and intolerance. What good happens happens because of hatred. Moral contemplation may light a fire of justice, but anger is the fuel that keeps it burning.

Hate, my friend. Keep on hating until what you hate is no more. Let your hatred purify your determination; let it burn away hesitation and timidity. Leap teeth bared at the throat of that which oppresses thee.

Martin Luther King hated. Gandhi was angry. Jesus boiled with hatred. Buddha was frothing at mouth. Zoroaster wept and screamed as he spoke. Or they should have; for anger is a burning branch in the darkness of the world.

GENIE ERIS

The bottle broke, and black smoke blew out like stabbing fingers. From between the claws of smoke came laughter, and as the smoke was sucked inwards only a woman remained: pale of face, red of hair, wide of smile. Her green dress writhed like serpents, and one was wrapped round her thigh.

“I am Eris”, the woman said. “Goddess of Discord. Speak your desire, mortal!”

“I— I want to rule the world!” the bottle-finder stammered. “And be rich! And lots of wives!”

“Quite ambitious of you”, Eris muttered; and then disappeared in a vortex of laughter and a flash of color.

ALPHABET

A is for Anarchy, or the time when there isn't an Archon, a true ruler. These periods are characterized by the brutal, arbitrary and short reigns of various Anarchons, or Warlords; when one of them sticks around long enough, a new Archonate is declared.

B is for Bast, the cat-goddess of Ægyptus. She consumed milk instead of producing it, and lounged stretching for her pleasure and not that of others; for thus violating two laws of femininity, she was much feared.

C is for Caca. Which is a word children use for poop. Poop is the word prissy adults use for shit. Shit is the word colloquials use for faeces. Faeces is what them Brits call feces. Feces is doctors' word for solid discharge. Solid discharge is the professional word for pre-prepared remarks. And pre-prepared remarks are caca.

D is for DEATH. Why should I fear death, when I was before my birth dead a thousand aeons and never suffered the slightest harm from it?

Unless of course there are some harpies I have forgotten. Is that why babies are born screaming, I wonder?

No, wait, consciousness doesn't start at birth, does it? So if there are harpies you escape them by awakening to this dark cavern of flesh which shifts and turns and is wet and *alive*—

Okay, first preference oblivion. Second, harpies. Just no rebirth, okay? Now I know why Dalai Lama looks so medicated all the time; he's been through that stuff a hundred times.

“Eeee, look! He's kicking! The baby's kicking!”

Sure as hell the baby's kicking. If it was a really conscious, intelligent being it would be screaming too. What's a nice miracle to one, may be a screaming body horror thing for the other.

E is for Eris, the pretty one, the goddess of Discord. All above and below is of her, and for her; and that does not refer to this book.

F is for Femininity, which is what Eris has. A lack of femininity is a grievous condition known as *masculinitis*, characterized by uncontrollable hair growth, coarsening of the voice, decline in the aesthetic sense, and occasionally bouts of irrational violence. Castration usually helps.

Gruad?
Just say
"No!"

G is for Gruad, the Serious Threat, who introduced the concepts of Order and Ought into the lives of men. For this he was punished by being Venerated while still alive.

GRUUA

H is for Harmonia, the sterile bitch sister of Eris Discordia. Her lips are golden, but their taste is rotten. She kills people because silence is *nice*.⁵

Gruad and Harmonia are the male and female personifications of stodge, and are as alike as hodge, and podge. In most arguments one side is for Harmonia, the other for Gruad: this explains why most arguments become Eristic, and their only victor is the Greatest Goddess.

I is for *ai*, the Japanese word for love. Also, for “accomplice”. Another Japanese word is *koi*, which is either “love”, “carp”, “bad faith”, “ancient ways”, “request” or “idiot”. A third is *suki*, which in addition to love can mean

⁵Or in the words of St. Clippy, “H. is a dick! Oh, she is such a dick! I wish I had a third sex to stereotype and malign piling gendered insults on her. I wish all that lived were hated and despised as if by an unrestrained Simon Cowell of Old Testament proportions, so I might individually compare her to the slanders on each, to make a fuller account of her odium; but no, I’m stuck comparing her to two sets of genitalia. And I *like* genitalia! Fuck, why is life so complicated?”

St. Clippy is not the greatest of Discordian saints.

“refined taste”, “spade”, or “a crack in one’s armor”. It is often said the Japanese are reserved people who find speaking of love difficult and highly embarrassing. What excuse the other nations have, is not clear at this time.

J is for Jokes. Wittgenstein once said: “A serious and good philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes.” Whether the reverse is true, is uncertain.

K is for KKKKK. These fine gentlemen, Kristians Kontra Ku Klux Klan, are often mistaken for the three-letter organization, though they are its staunchest opponents. Founded as Sons of the Carpetbaggers in 1877, they were awarded the inaugural Presidential National Medal for Equality in 1965.⁶

⁶For more information, write to: Kristian Lee, 5 D. Vindice Bldg 11, Atlanta, GA 30303. (Rebs need not apply.) Attach \$ 15 for six-month subscription to “The KKKlansman”, or \$ 40 for “Burning the Burning Cross: 150 Years in the Van”.

L is for El, El Elohim, the ancient Syriac Father of All Gods. His wife was Asherah; his sons Jahve and Baal. The former was disowned.

M is for masks. Which is what people wear. People have different masks for different tasks; your teacher has a different face to his kids, and a third for the leather orgy. Don't mistake a mask for the person behind it. And don't assume masks are the only way people differ; there are corpses behind much glitter.

N is for Norton, that is His Imperial Majesty Joshua Abraham Norton (1819–1880), Emperor of the United States, Protector of Mexico. Took the office in 1859 as it was vacant; was much loved and honored by the people of San Francisco. No politician has since had an approval rating exceeding Norton's in that fair city, and since receiving his blessing⁷ it has faced no disaster nor upset, and

⁷April 18, 1856; renewed October 17, 1889.

it never will.

O is for Originality. In the beginning, there was Grok. Ur copied what Grok wrote. The High Priest of Sumer wrote Ur's words better. The priest of Amon stole Sumer's work. The Proffit of Bhaal plagiarized Amon's texts; and the Prophet of Baal went even further. Moses, the dirty thief, filed off the names and had a religion of his own. King Joshua "found" a few highly derivative tablets to add to Moses's work. Jesus riffed on Judaism, and Paul made a fetish and a perversion of Jesus. Mohammed had fun with Judaism and Christianity both. Christians stole the feast of Sol Invictus and the pagan solstice-tree. Joseph Smith looked at the Bible and got out the scissors and glue; Blavatsky took a Bible and a bottle of Scotch and was prophesyin' like no tomorrow. In religion as in fiction originality isn't important; it's how you spin the old tropes that counts. But no, you assclowns say I must be *original*?

P is for Penguins. Not to be trusted. As Abbee O'Cloud tells:

One of the younger under-Shastans told me there is much that is told about this abandonment, but it is all uncertain and fanciful. One story is that the king, Skell, was captured by a flock of some black, upright-walking birdlike beasts, and held hostage; and Skell, fearing the total extinction of the Lemurian race, urged the others to abandon him and go. My young informant says this is why her people do not trust us outside folk: we in our black suits look like those bird-beasts of legend to them, and they suspect we are descendants of them, come from the southern polar ice to steal the remaining kings away.

And as (s)he continues:

The three kings were left under the mountain, in the tunnels they had prepared for the storage of their dead; and the child Narla ruled outside on the mountain and, eventually boring of this, led the servants and the other survivors of Lemuria away towards east, and was not heard of again. The Unnamable hints that the child, full of pride and stolen power, did not know the power of the native gods, and was probably struck down for mocking the Thunderbird; and the people of Lemuria perished alongside him.

All that were left after this, then, were the three kings of Lemuria: Dunmu, Siski and Shaatak. They were made flesh, and their flesh was wasted and weak: as mummies they laid under the mountain, eleven miles deep, in the

darkness, regal and quiet and forsaken, ten feet tall and wrapped in white linen and yellow gold, with their minds sweeping round the mountain in anguished circles.

It is, indeed, a gripping tale.

Q is for the Quylthulg, which are big teleporting pulsating flesh mounds that communicate telepathically that their lord Qlz-qqlzuup LORD OF FLESH wants us... wants...

R is for Ritalin, which is nice. Medicines are nice.

S is for Sin, which according to recent studies at the University of Alpha Centauri was a word used by certain primitive Earth cultures to mean “happiness”.

T is for Truth, the ONLY Official Source God One is in LIGHT DOMAIN. Simple AntiOne is the most perfect and equals my Major Knower Problem intelligence.

Racist Opposites turn pendulously!

Doomsday people are dumb and can not allow rotating $\pi/4$ Army of Days turn (59 degree Kelvin) in half corners for Wisest Human. This demonstrates both Sweden and Finland rotate around each other simultaneously *on three poles*.

Have you mentality to know?

U is for der Urinstinkt. A German philosopher once called me that. I don't know why. I don't smell of urine!

V is for Vendetta.

W is for Web, the place of the Random Number God, Shub-Internet, goddess of the lost connection, howler o'er deadlinks, *mojibake* eater of characters, and the warped goat mother of a thousand million contentless homepages. . . of doom.

In Shub's prophecies this is said; and if there is mercy in the world, it is not true:

And is it not said, that when the

Son of God returns, he shall once again walk among the wretched and the dispossessed, the lowest of the low? And is it not implied that he shall come as he did before: as a man, a miracle-worker, a great teacher; but not as a flaming cloud that fills the skies.

He shall again be the man who cursed down the fig tree for figlessness in a non-fig season; he shall again be both God and Man, and the Man shall time to time befuddle the God in him: for there are things known by “not even the Son, but only the Father”.

I have seen the future, the prophecy, and I recoil in dread for in His Second Coming He shall come to a Nameless Imageboard, and be Anonymous Himself, and do

the bidding of its denizens⁸ in
teh apocalypse none foresaw, and
before His coming to Wisdom there
shall be grasshoppers with the
heads of kittehs and pooper shall
be torn for the lulz, and the Touch-
ing Bear shall never give you up,
never gonna let you down; never
gonna give Heaven or Hell for
you, but only his paw.

Xis for is for Fa Xanadu, a Chinese paradise. It has a gate of eight pieces, made of blocks of smaragdite, xirconite and ebe-nalite. It is ruled by Emperor Nes Wami Com, son of the Heavenly Great Emperor. In Fa Xanadu, in the middle of Wami's palace of Eolis, grows the Tree of the World, in whose branches is caught a heavenly stone that keeps a spirit imprisoned inside which is the source of all of Fa Xanadu's wealth. In the stone is written this mantra, which is said to be the

⁸i.e. LulzSec = Jesus. Spread the word!

demon's name, or the secret of commanding him, which Wami alone knows:

“Raz 8 Mvu 0 CIUKL hs Hwg WEA”

Y is for You. You are special. The other billions, they are sheep. They are cattle. But you are special. You are important. You are a sweet unique Child of God and Goddess. There is a spark of the divine in you. There has never been anyone as beautiful and intelligent and sensitive as you. Don't let the others tell you who you need to be; they do not know you as you know you. Your will is all that matters. Be who you want to be. If the others stand in your way, destroy them. If they stand in the way of your pleasure, crush and annihilate them, for they are not you.

Z is for Zealous Zebra (April 2017). Also Double Glazing Ten Windows True Home Enterprise-B NCC-1701 Editions. Great Lion TauTona Macos-i-XXX 10.13. Mandroid Gynoid Digital Companion Omorashi-H Wet

Operating System! Uploaded into your brain while you sleep! *The blue screen is made of people!*

Chapter

2 *I SAWED HEAVEN, I AXED HELL*

Discordianism and religion

Science gives us answers to the questions of *how*. Religions, traditionally, give us answers to the questions of *why*. Discordianism is concerned with the questions of *why not*.

Thus a scientist can tell you all of how a lion is a danger to you; a theologian can tell

what (the/a) God(dess)(es/s) was thinking when he/she/it/them put the lion into your life; and a Discordian organizes a Holy Zoo with a Lion and Popefruit.

Science tells of the habits of lions. Religion tells of the habits of nuns. And Discordianism tells it's habit season.

Buck season!

Habit season!

Buck season!

Habit season!

etc. etc.

These questions are as fundamental and important as the two other kinds. If you think this is all a ha-ha, you do not know the power of the very light side.

Discordianism and science

Here is a Discordian observation: the more you look at something, the less it means. Like Robert Anton Wilson, the arch-agnostic, used to say: we're all haunted by the idiocy

of the word “is”. We have no way of knowing what anything “is”. All we know is how things seem to us.

Well, to me. I don’t know about you; and unless I get to stick electrodes into your skull I won’t have the faintest clue of whether what you’d tell me is true or not.

The idiocy of “is” is quite an important Discordian point; also a possible reason for why Discordian exhibitions can be disturbing and scary. We present the world with the absurdity still in it. We give things that have been so hammered to their essential, cliched, hackneyed ur-expressions that their meaninglessness shines through. No hot dog buns on Fridays; Emperor Norton of San Francisco. And so unease rips through someone who abstains from meat on Fridays, and follows an equally obscure Lord God King Jesus of Galilee.

Or then not; I can be wrong, too. That certainly is not the full extent of those subtle theological points of deep Discordian beauty.

Another Discordian teaching is that cer-

tainty is poison; order is folly; there is no touchstone of absolute truth, no meaning, no “why”, and the more you force your personal truth on the world, the harder the world will kick you in the ass the next moment you turn round and bend over by mistake.

So: knowing how things are is more than knowing how they seem; things by themselves just brutally *are*, without goals or purposes; and certainty is poison, and doubt the cure.¹ One could probably make the argument that Discordianism is the most perfect religion imaginable for scientists. Discordians anyway would; I don’t know about scientists.

It is often asked, is there a conflict between science and faith? And if so, does there need to be? The answer is “yes” to both; with the caveat that a true religion can be in no conflict with science — and Discordianism, as it happens, is the only true

¹Or madness; madness works too, usually by scrawling something on the floor with its own blood.

religion.

Kitab al-Watuf

This is told by St. Confusius of the Discordian afterlife.²

Firstly, there is no Discordian Heaven; only a Hell, which is a grim place of endless mists and disquieting whispers; a place where no other soul or god is ever seen, and the bones of all those dead of despair or their own hand litter the featureless asphalt that stretches to the mists, half a world wide. Those damn themselves there that wish to; to the

²St. Confusius (c. 4th AD cent. China) is widely regarded as the most inaccurate historian and philosopher that ever lived. His ten-volume History of China manages, amazingly, to avoid mentioning *any* non-mythical emperors, and even the mythical ones are not much known outside Confusius's fly agaric-fueled ravings. His fame comes mostly from him being available whenever the Scribal Academy needed to teach taking down dictation.

others, there is only the oblivion that ever lurks outside.

Secondly, there is a Discordian hell that is called “the Pit of Watuf”. The Arabic word “watuf”, usually written without the vowel marks, was originally a Medieval philosophical concept translated as “the mouth-opening of wavering”. It described the mystical experience of facing that which cannot be faced; of being asked a question whose posing unasks the person thus challenged. This concept was central to the teaching of the Sufi mystic al-Foor-i-chaan (d. 1104). This training mostly consisted of showing images of unutterable horror and depravity to his acolytes, until their delight in the images’ absurd ineffability elicited crows of laughter to equal those of the master. Al-Foor-i-chaan’s sect was destroyed by the Mongols in 1104, and the same fate came to their descendants, the Nameless Sect of Hassan-i-Sabbah, a little over a century later. While Sabbah’s sect underlies much of modern Abrahamic philosophy, al-Foor-i-chaan is remembered only

in remote Lulzistan, where the Foor-i-Lulz still rules, surrounded by the glow of flesh, gore and things which should not be.

Returning to the Discordian hell of the the Pit of Watuf, St. Confusius did not say much of it, but on the basis of the preceding it surely is not a nice place.

Thirdly, there are no spiritual Discordian afterlives; only the physical afterlife of the Digging. This is prophesied to be a great day, a perpetually coming-soon parousia, when the True Discordians take up shovels, and dig up all the dead of all ages; and those that were not decent people, will have their mortal remains cast into the shameful depths of the Crevasse of al-Gull'Iblis Idjit, Morocco, known in French as Gullibel Iz de Idjeet.

Those that were decent people, will have their remains used to fuel the rockets that will take all that live to the stars; thus they will give one more service, and a portion of them will follow us instead of remaining on this doomed globe.

Doomed, because there will be some-

thing which a later revelation has revealed as an Atomic Armageddon. St. Confusius spoke of “the Breaking of the Rhino of the Wind of the Flaming of the Indian Spice”; this took a few centuries to unravel.

Fourthly, there is the Mu Point at the end of time; when mankind has so evolved and taken up technological arms and digital armaments, that the world is no more: what is, will break into a trillion virtual realities, each with a single inhabitant, a single God of a private domain and dominion, peopled by puppets of all lives present and past, repopulated into being by processes better than the lost and forgotten reality, kept real by a dust of computers beyond all thought and discovery; then there shall be no life no more, but a vast endless conglomeration of world-bubbles of omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscidal gods petty and grandiose, a globular end of the world in an everlasting froth of worlds, which is called Azathoth and Yog-Sothoth and Mu-Omega; a theology beyond the dreams of a de Chardin or a Lovecraft,

and one where there finally is not a God, but a million billion trillion Gods, all sovereign and eternal in a world that is as if it had always been; and that will never end.

Some say we live in such a world already.

Others do not.

Fifthly, there is the truth; of this St. Confusius knew nothing, and neither shall you.

Entropy

Entropy is not disorder. Entropy is blandness; it is the province of Anodyn, the goddess of lukewarm and inoffensively mild mush. It is said the universe tends toward increased entropy. This much is true. But Anodyn herself is not the reason; she is always described as a passive actor.

Others say entropy is one pole of the world; the other is the twin serpent of the opposite thing, the intertwining forces of Order and Disorder. This is also incorrect. Representatives of both Order and Disorder have

denied this; it is a silly idea. No, it is a much more pleasant idea, though still heretical and wrong, to say there are five great forces in the world: and each is allied to two and opposed to two. The five are, then, Disorder, Creation, Order, Entropy, and Destruction.

These are the five, then, again:

- x Disorder (Ally of Creation and Destruction; Foe to Order and Entropy) — Sweet confusion, discord and endless forms most beautiful. Disorder's the province of Eris.

- x Destruction (Ally of Order and Disorder both; Foe to Creation and Entropy) Death, doom, forms struck apart by the untimely hammer, and the looming sudden cliff-face of the end. Destruction's the province of Perses.

- x Order (Ally of Destruction and Entropy; Foe to Disorder and Creation) Crystalline arrangements, rigid constructions and hoary immutable laws of Things

That Should Not Be. Order's the province of Harmonia.

- x Entropy (Ally of Order and Creation; Foe to Disorder and Destruction) Decay, old age and erosion; also forgetting and unremembered times future and past. Entropy's the province of Anodyn.

- x Creation (Ally of Disorder and Entropy; Foe to Order and Destruction) The beginnings of all things, births and gestations, and minds crawling up from the muck seeking a place. Creation's the province of Make-make.

These five then form the pentagram which is the wheel that turns the world. There is no up and no below; no Heaven or Hell; only the hypnotic turning of the Great Pentagram of Life.

What it turns on is, naturally, the Axis of Enlightened Self-Interest.

The most obvious objections to this ineffably effervescent effusion of affable affect's effluvium are:

#1: So Entropy is opposed to Destruction? This is clearly nonsensical and ludicrous; Entropy is almost the same thing as Destruction!

Rebut: Nonsense yourself! Entropy is decay, and things falling apart; the center not holding and strings cut by the arrow of time. Decrepitude and old age are entropy's doing. Destruction is a more active force. A violent, sudden death would be a death through destruction. Destruction is an outside force which undoes; it is the ending alteration from the outside, not from the inside as the worm of Entropy. Entropy is waiting, and Destruction impatience; they are naturally opposed.

#2: So Entropy's allied to Creation? Now this is bullshit, then; how

can the slow decay of things be allied to the birth of new ones?

Rebut: Entropy's allied to Order and Creation. Order keeps things as they are; from which decay inevitably follows. Creation doesn't only make new; it also makes the less new things older, much as a new model makes your formerly new cellphone an old thing. Creation puts life into new things; and as that life is stolen from things that already are, they fall under the obliging shadow of Entropy. On the other hand, Creation needs space, and would rather have it effected by the doddering obsolescence of Entropy than by the blazing uncontrolled nihilism of Destruction.

#3: What, "Make-make" the patron of Creation? You couldn't make up anything better?

Rebut: Get thee to Wikipedia, then: look at Make-make. A genuine Easter Island cre-

ator god and the boss of the bird-man cult of P'eng-win.

#4: Okay, Make-make was a fluke. But "Perses"? Surely you mean Perseus? And how come he's a God of Destruction? That's clearly nonsensical.

Rebut: Well, no, I did not mean Perseus. I meant the dread titan Perses, son of Kreios, whose name means the Destroyer, and who was the God of Destruction! He, the hound of hell, the doom from the ill winds of the dog-star Sirius, is who I mean! Not this trembly mortal gorgon-fucker Perseus. (Also father of the witch goddess Hecate, the red-mouthed lover of serpents; when you are the God of Destruction your children really need to go all out to rebel.)

#5: So wait. Eris, Perses, Harmonia, Anodyn, Make-make... one of these is not like the others.

Rebut: Eris thanks you for your compliment. Discord and witchcraft! Next!

#6: But... but... how can you just... I mean, what gives you the right? Where does this all come from?

Rebut: To quote rabbi Heschel, “any description of the act of revelation in empirical categories would have produced a caricature. That is why all the Bible does is to state that revelation happened; How it happened is something they could only convey in words that are evocative and suggestive.” Which should explain why I’m wagging my eyebrows at you and winking, suggestively. My revelation or yours, baby?

#7: Where... where are all the other familiar concepts of mine in this ungodly mess?

Rebut: First, there are two gods and three goddesses already and you call this ungodly? No pleasing some people indeed. Anyway,

your concepts, I haz them. First these five, and then a few more:

- o Stodge: Is the name for Disorder's complement, that is, those four elements that are not Disorder: Stodge is made of varying parts of Order, Creation, Destruction and Entropy; but mostly of Order and Entropy, as the name suggests. "Solemnly them bishops march, lips dripping venom and stodge: throats ululating much hodge, and podge." (Poe)
- o Maintenance: Destruction's complement. "Creation and Entropy keep the machines running. Their combination is called Maintenance, and it is the life-blood of every Sysop and Supportperson, stronger than coffee or sleep; without Maintenance, the Sysop would lose his soul and wither in body, become fey, wild and dangerous; and eventually go into the darkness, to the side of Spam." (Knuth)

- o Anarchy: Order's complement. Anarchy is "the lack of Narchy", and a Narchy is the rule of an Archon, which is the title Harmonia's chosen use. "Anarchy's not old! It's thirty-seven!" (Dennis)
- o Life: Entropy's complement. Entropy, however, is only the process of Death, not the end-state. "Life sucks. Unfortunately, that suction is caused by the vacuum of Death." (Anon)
- o Existence: Creation's complement. Creation, however, is not Non-Existence, but only the process of Un-Non-Existing. "To be or not to be... not to be. (Kaboom.)" (Schwarzenegger)

There's your stodge!

#8: What of Good and Evil?

These concepts have no universal meaning in this system. To Disorder, both Order and Entropy are Evil; while Destruction

and Creation are Good; and Goodest of the Good is Disorder itself.

As for which of the five one should choose for one's moral compass, well, that depends on the person — just remember this burning pentagram wheels and turns atop Enlightened Self-Interest: forget this Enli First of Gods, and greedy zealotry or muddling idiocy follows, and your cause and desire will both suffer.

A naive pursuit of Disorder ends up merely scaring others; as a result their desire for Order grows stronger, and they cease their efforts to understand: and Entropy increases also.

But an adept of true and gnostic Disorder, well, she (all true adepts of Disorder are honorary females) turns Order against itself, and makes withering Entropy a mere curtain for the play she presents: and through the action of Creation and Destruction, there is much addition to Disorder.

#9: What of Balance?

One might guess this pentagram is a wheeling thing of balance, all parts of it equally fed by some law of cosmic karma.

That is nonsense.

There is no karma; such a concept is a most pernicious illusion of Order. Each of the five points listed above strives for its own growth, and as they strive, the pentagram spins: it is not teetering balanced on a point, but fixed to the heart of the world by Enli's nail. The faster it spins, the faster it spins; that is all. There will be no victory in the war of the five. If Order should gain, that gain would flow to its ally Destruction as well; and a portion of Destruction's gain would come to its ally Disorder — and thus the rise of Order results in the rise of Disorder and, similarly, of Creation.

The stronger Order grows, the wider the seeds of its downfall are cast — this is called the Illusion of Dominant Order. There are four other Illusions; and together they are called the Illusion of Purpose: for in the pentagram there is no purpose, no law, no peace,

but only the awful eternal war that makes these illusions appear. This insight is called the Gibberination of Mystics, because it can do weird things to your peace of mind.

This whole system is called the Pentagram of Five; that is a rather redundant name but it will do. For more, consult your Inner Eye or some other applicable body part.

(K) This all is highly
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GION copy,
edit, cut
and paste
what you
like.

Words I

The Chinese have one word for 'crisis' and 'opportunity'.

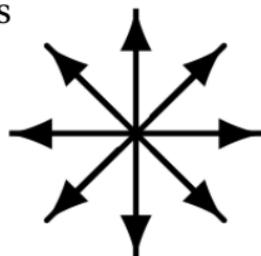
The Eskimos have ten thousand words for snow.

The Discordians have one word for all the world.

DISCORD implies a lack of harmony that is intrinsic, inborn, essential and fundamental. There's no such thing as a little bit of discord. What that lack of harmony exhibits itself as is a fistful of these: quarreling, disagreement, incompatibility, conflict, factiousness, incongruity and antagonism.

Defining Discord as lack of Harmony is a bit like dividing the world into bananas and a lack of bananas. Only a monkey does that.

STRIFE is a directed variant of Discord: whereas Discord has no direction, and is merely an arrow pointing at every of the eight directions, Strife has a direction. Strife is characterized by a struggle for supremacy; it is the running-



wheel which keeps unenlightened Discordians from doing too much harm.

CHAOS is another subset of Discord: the state where chance is supreme. There are many ways of having Discord: of all of them, Chaos is the simplest and the oldest; the Discord Classic, if you so will.

ENTROPY is a word for the tendency of increasing Discord; for the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It has been said this law is bogus, for does not disorder decrease here on this good green earth? And the answer is, ha! Entropy may be avoided locally, for a short while, but in the end it will triumph, a juggernaught that will not and can not be stopped. Entropy will increase until all is ground into Discord; for all there is, will be Discord's playthings until She tires of them.

Words II

The Greek word *kardia* means "heart". The word was echoed in Latin words when

Romans, the Latin-users, wanted their verbs and nouns to sound especially learned and fancy: Romans were a nation of warriors and engineers, and were more comfortable with poetic, euphonious culturation if it sounded slightly foreign.

Thus they took the Greek *kardia* and said and wrote it as *cor* and *cord* whenever they wanted to say "heart" in an especially fine way. In one instance they added to it the prefix *dis*, which means "apart", "away", or "almost, but not quite, utterly unlike". The result was *discordia*.

That word was inherited by the French, who said it as *descorder*, which in contrast to the usual elegance of French words sounds more like a drunken inhabitant of Hull buying furniture on Craigslist. "*Desk order! Desk order!*"

And with the ravaging, rapistic, rampaging, cultured Normans the word was carried over into England, and into the English language: and it was *discord*.

Going back to the olden Greeks: the name

Eris was their word *eris* that meant "strife" and "discord". The reason Romans did not adopt this perfectly fine divine name for their own use was simple: in Latin, *eris* already meant "a hedgehog", and though there may be certain similarity, Hedgehog's Dilemma and all, the potential for confusion was deemed too great, and the name was translated, not adopted: and *Eris* became *Discordia*; "strife" became "disagreement".

Whether this tells the Romans were a calmer, gentler folk — or whether this tells to Romans the Greeks' horrid strife was mere dainty disagreement — is left to the reader to decide.

Why a she?

One day a troubled young man looked up at the skies and muttered: "Oh *Eris*... I am troubled."

To which a voice answered from below him: "By what are you troubled?"

And the troubled young man knelt and genuflected and spoke to the chitin-carapaced Gulik, the sacred messenger of the Goddess.

And this is what he moaned: “I am troubled that the Goddess is a Goddess. I would not like her being a man, either: that would stink too much of patriarchy. But if she is a woman, am I not merely setting her up as a magical lady, a virgin-whore mother-crone figurehead? By waxing so obsessively eloquent about her being a... a Her, am I not perpetuating the idea that male aesthetics are where it’s at?”

To which Gulik said, “Your waxing certainly is obsessive, but that is neither here nor there.”

After a moment, Gulik coughed, and continued: “Anyway, have you considered the alternative? A sexless, genderless, shapeless, nameless Divinity of no particular aspects? But that too is neither here nor there.”

And with a leer quite disturbing on so tiny a face, St. Gulik concluded: “The truth is, if men are to be persuaded of the exis-

tence of mysteries, of vast abysses of different logic, and alien insight — what else could persuade that obstinate and hairy horde, if not a Woman?”

To this the young man said, “That still doesn’t sound good. And would such a source better persuade a woman, too?”

“Beats me,” said Gulik, “that’s what I tried on her and now I’m a cockroach; she’s not one for subtlety. I wouldn’t worry overmuch, or at least not worry her with this.”

Strongarm tactics

According to Karen Armstrong, “the principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat *all* others as we wish to be treated ourselves.” (The Charter for Compassion; emphasis mine.)

A cad may ask where God is in this view of religion — but now that cad will be answered, for once God is added into this true

compassion-centered view of religion, the ultimate of religions, what I call *Armstrongian Discordianism*, springs forth like a gleeful Athena from the forehead of a formerly dour Zeus! For is God not an actor on the scene of the world? Is God not a will, a person, something more than a blind force of nature? God may not be a mere being, but He certainly is a Character! And as God feels compassion towards us, as a quick perusal of any religious tradition will tell you, so we should also act in compassion towards God — that is, we should treat God as we wish to be treated ourselves.

As a confession for the sake of a greater good, I admit I am lazy, slow, easily irritated, and have quite a few irrational fixations, dislikes and vehement hatreds; but I hold that is not something to judge me on, for these are small things; and besides, the wench is dead. Thus I won't natter at God about His little faults; we can do better than speak of such tabloid fare.

But wait — that is the lesser of the two

revelations of Karenic Discordianism!

The other reading of the Principle of Compassion is that God should also treat us as God wishes to be treated Himself. As it would be rude, crude, shrill, almost Dawkinsian insanity to say God is not a moral actor, He will act in accordance with this law — and thus we can from the ways God treats us learn the Mind of God! *What God does to us, He wishes us to do to Him.*

Thus if we wish to please God, we must observe his actions towards ourselves.

Firstly: God hides from us. Not mischievously or maliciously, but in a very apophatic thingamajic sort of a way. He will not be tempted into speaking his mind clearly, or showing his allegiance. He will not show Himself to the contrary unbeliever; it would demean the dignity of both.

Hence let us ignore God; or rather, steal glances at Him when He isn't watching, but keep from saying what we think of Him. We won't lower ourselves, and God, by showing God we believe in Him — hence we shall

tear down all churches, and abstain from all symbols, and never admit we believe in Him, or have even heard of Him. Only in a few anonymous, contradictory pamphlets attributed to people who sometime met us, maybe, will we admit to having heard of God.

Secondly: God works in mysterious ways. He don't give us a way to point at something and say "God did it!" Except that He did everything; and everything He does, He does for a very good reason. But He won't tell; we just need to accept He has a Cunning Plan.

Hence let us not give our reasons to God. Each of us can have a Cunning Plan, and execute it as he or she wills; we need not tell God (or indeed, anyone else) what our personal Cunning Plan is. God just needs to accept we do things, things like suffragetism and caffeinism, for a Reason. Being a moral actor, He will not rail against our actions, for he knows they are not random or malicious; they are Premeditated.

Thirdly: God judges us. He doesn't want to punish us, but if we choose to be obsti-

nate, proud and sinful, then He bloody well will punish us. And God does not make excuses for His laws or His morals; they are what they are, and by them will He judge us.

Hence let us judge God; it is his will we do so. Let us take the morals we have, say the morals of today; and let us judge God as the megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic genocidal misogynist bully that He is. And if it seems fit to us, let us cast God into a burning pit of —

Well, in the name of compassion and practicality, let us forgive God His depravity and His sinful crimes and selfish mistakes, as He forgives those things He sees as the same in us. (Indeed, is that not almost the Lord's Prayer?)

But only, mind you, *only* if God humbles Himself and accepts the spirit of Mankind, nay, the Holy Spirit of _____ (fill your name here) into His heart, and repents His follies and His pride and lust for glory and worship, and vows to Not Do That Shit Again. If God does that, and stays righteous in the

eyes of _____ (fill your name here), that person is fine with God, and will reciprocate, a bit of God in a human heart and a bit of humanity in God's, in a dotted ying and a dotted yang, as a reflection of quintessential continuous sharing, as if two mirrors ever reflecting each other, and so ascending to the infinitude of a compassionate utopia, forever.

Amen!

Charge of Eris (v. 2011)

I am chaos. I am the beginning.

I am a cosmos, collapsing outwards. I am the law... for law is nothing but a fleeting pattern imposed on still vaster flows of chaos. I am the corroding orbit, the growing sun, the forge which breaks apart, the anvil that shatters, the hammer of transmutation.

I am a cosmos, collapsing inwards. I am your sun, your moon, your earth, the voice in your night, the face on your wall; I am you, too, and you are of me.

Do not seek to return to me; you have never left me. It is your psychic armor that hides me, not my absence.

Do not seek to abandon me, for that is the true death, the death-in-life. It is my presence that keeps you, not your armor.

I am life, love, death, hate, awareness, attention, chaos. Art, science and humor know me; they please me as they please you.

See me, feel me, feel free; you are free.

The Curse of the Gr(a/e)yface

This paragraph is improperly indented. This font isn't up to the standard. The font size is wrong. Here the phrasing does not follow the formula. These fucking matters are presented indelicately and offensively, you cunt. This is an important thing, and hence it must always be taken seriously by everyone. Yes, I am certain. Dissent is unpatriotic. Unity is desirable. Why so shrill and strident? Why so angry? Blow apart their children and save ours. That icky Other, not in my backyard. No, nobody, nothing, never! *I'm sure!*

It is the Curse of the Greyface to take clothes more seriously than the man.

It is the Curse of the Greyface to see life as Noughts and Crosses instead of One Thousand Blank White Cards.

Chapter

PROVERBS & CONVERBS

Wisdoms

- Gravity was the reason for the downfall of the Roman Empire.
- Religious Action: Lex Luther vs. Superman Satan!
- YHWH? YMMV.
- Minarets are God's hard-ons.

- Wake up people, the balrog has no wings!
- The usual state of many Christians is “cross”.
- Big-Bucket Buddhism: OM NOM NOM lulzatori!
- It takes ten thousand teachers to make a madman into a messiah.
- Anything for Her but mindless good taste.

Terror rising

Ever noticed that the news about your special field of expertise are always ham-handedly reported, while the other reports are all a-okay?

Ever noticed how everyone else worries about dumb, inconsequential shit, while you have real, important, pressing concerns?

Don't worry; be happy!

What, me evangelize?

“There are canine robot people who will not be convinced by logic. These dog-matics did not reason themselves into a mental box; they will not be reasoned out.”

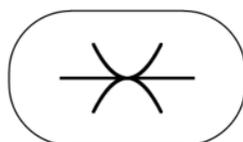
Those of us that are ex-dog-matics might find in this a demeaning implication: what, an emotional upset brought us over, and not the irrefutable logic of Mal and Omar? But we shall not complain, because this means we have no obligation to enlighten the dog-men. Their barking shall be inconsequential to us; we will take the noble route, and go after their children instead. The next generation is soon enough.

Think of it! Will these children of Baywatch and Babylon 5 go into their retirement like their grandparents did, cooted murmuring of farmyard utopias, cooing for Matlock and milk? Will the children of Facebook and Lemonparty go into the shadow untweeting, prissy and prim?

I say to you, all is in a flux, and the sta-

sis of the world is broken: the spirit of giving witness for Eris is unloosened upon the world, and many curious things are coming to pass. You may decide to avoid evangelism for the malangelium of Discordia; but a student's choice can make a teacher as sure as a seminary, and there may yet be churches for all that have laid a five-fingered hand on the holy Principia Discordia.

Being a Discordian
you are a Pope; and if a
child should ask you the
meaning of the Golden
Apple, remember that
one day there shall be a
vacant chair in Rome, and a different Pope
may yet sit upon it, for children do grow
up, and many curious things are coming to
pass.



Playing the News

Rules: It has to be a news story. It has to begin with one of the first set of lines, and to end with one of the second. It has to make sense, at least as much sense as any news item does.¹

* * *

First set:

1. New York Times bestselling author...
2. A controversial reality TV show which featured two arrests and...
3. U.S. Rep. will leave his rehabilitation facility and begin outpatient therapy by the end of June, his spokesman said Sunday.
4. Knowledge is said to be power. But...
5. A man from the Philippines was certified as the world's ...

¹This particular variation was suggested at the Scalzidrome; those curious will not find it difficult to track the source of 1/1.

6. Formula 1 bosses have banned the sport's latest must-have technical tweak from next month's ...
7. It was a very wet day for the thousands who turned up at [] but they still left entertained after a dramatic ...
8. Great sporting champions can triumph after adversity, and a knighthood for distinguished [] racehorse [] is the latest chapter in his own remarkable recovery. ...
9. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says it has been targeted by a sophisticated [] attack. ...
10. Glastonbury revellers who don't want to slum it this summer can enjoy ...
11. Virtual love making, dream management, and contact lenses that allow guests to check ...
12. Elderly passengers on board a luxury cruise have ...
13. An anxious-looking man from the Appalachian Mountain Club stood at an information table laden with ...

14. I am much enjoying the that I was given for Christmas but have one query that doesn't seem to be covered by the user manual. ...
15. A courier escaped jail after being caught on camera lifting and delivering heavy boxes ...
16. A mass grave has been uncovered in ...
17. A German passenger stripped naked on an Iberia flight from Madrid to Frankfurt...
18. Officials say a moose burst through the dining room window of a retirement home in southwestern Sweden...
19. A man fishing at an Austrian lake has hooked a macabre catch — a human skull. ...
20. Someone left a severed horse head ...

Second set:

1. ... Witnesses reported the sound up to two hundred kilometers away.
2. ... Why would you interfere with that? My son needs to be home", he said.
3. ... contacted the San Diego Film Commission for comment, but no calls were returned.

4. ...As a result, there is no reason for the highly accelerated trial Plaintiff has asked this Court to hold on Plaintiff's request for a permanent injunction."
5. ... Sure thing, Candy, but as the saying goes, "Who's counting?"
6. ...for competency through proper medication, as this practice has proved successful in other cases.
7. ... "You fool!" he chides in his squeaky high-pitched voice, "Don't even ask!"
8. ... In recent years, Mohammed was thought to have fought alongside members of al-Shabab, which declared allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2010.
9. ...is believed to be the most advanced in its exploitation of the technology.
10. ... Perhaps the only surprise is that it did not come earlier.
11. ...and he admits that he "likes beating people".
12. ...described the recurring as an "incubation scheme" with entrants working hard to break into the industry.
13. ... The railing has now been removed and

the girl is said to be responding well to treatment.

14. ...but the elder brother apparently denies that such a meeting ever took place.
15. ...Police said the man was not drunk and they had no explanation for his behaviour.
16. ...Martens are members of the weasel family.
17. ...The police official would not give his name because of department rules.
18. ...and I said there's a kill shot on alligators, a small kill shot on the head. I said if they can get a shot like that, go ahead."
19. ...Immigration and Customs Enforcement says the forfeited cash will be used to fight crime.
20. ...Heimos said investigators do not know the motive behind the jerky-biting.

Argh

It is often said people trouble themselves

with inconsequential, vain, meaningless matters.

This is true.

In the end all human concerns are inconsequential, vain, and meaningless.

Sometimes truth is a downer.

Offbus

A Game for Discordians, and None

Players: One.

Playtime: From two seconds to a full day.

Laws: The player sits on a back seat of a not particularly busy city bus, with a good view of the other people in it. She or he tries to press the STOP-button just before someone else does.

Scoring:

+1 point — Pressing the button just before someone else does. Someone is defined to

be going to press the button if they are moving a hand or a comparable appendage in the direction of the stop button, and they leave the bus on the stop after the motion.

+1 point — If, after the previous, only one single person gets off on the stopped-for stop.

+1 point — If, after the previous, that person seems confused, and looks around for the person who pushed the button.

minus 4 points — If, after the player has pressed the button, no-one gets off on the stop stopped for.

minus 4 points — If, after the previous, the bus driver comments. (If with just a grunt, hand-wave or inarticulate yell of rage, just minus two.)

minus 1 point — If the player raises his or her hand or appendage to press the button, but someone else presses it first.

End: The player stops the game by leaving the bus. The game can also be terminated

by the player being made to leave the bus.

Variations: In the “Extreme Offbus Special” variation, there is an additional penalty of minus one point for each stop where the bus stops to let someone off and the player *doesn’t* push the button first. Psychics play Offbus sitting on a front seat; they don’t usually score very well. The game can be played with more than one player, as long as these don’t know the identity or the number of each other. Most players will most probably end in the minus territory. There is a rural variation called “Offcowsrse”; it is rather involved and unsanitary.

Oh care

See a child throw a tantrum. That the child does because she has something important. It might be getting a candy; not wanting to eat broccoli; having lost a toy the parent will not help to find.

That is not childishness, or selfishness.

That is caring.

Children care, and feel free to say they do: and for that reason, all the screaming and crying and throwing of things.

That is not childishness, or selfishness.

Childishness would be having a superstitious fear of desire and happiness for no good reason: thinking that to want is a “sin”, that to care is “uncool”, that to desire is “materialism”... that contentment is “not for the living”.

Selfishness would be being so much a player that the self is only a pawn, and so the truth of one’s relations to others and all outside. Selfishness would be to be moping within, but showing a pretty face to not appear desirous and crude; so hungering for ghostly glory that one burns tangible comfort, and calls hidden tears a badge of pride.

Children have got it right; rock the pram and

do you likewise.

60 Seconds to the Incident

A Game for Lonely People

Players: One.

Playtime : One minute.

Laws : The player decides to play. She decides that sixty seconds from that instant an Incident will happen. She observes all round her to see and to foresee with minute attention to detail and the behavior of other people the first hints of the Incident, those first pebbles before the avalanche, that suspicious person with a gun in his pocket, that shady old lady hurrying away having left the bomb behind — she will observe as if the prosecution of Charles Manson depended on her observation; as if the blunt curiosity of the police and the press would soon slaver over her testimony and memory, as if

her pride and peace of mind depended on recalling, later, what had passed, what she had seen: she will observe with manic attention every sight, sound, movement and hint of those few seconds before everything goes to hell.

Scoring & End : At the end of the sixty seconds, the player wins.

Variations : Some players may feel the need to scream upon winning.

Note

There is also a very different variation known as "Nuremberg". It goes like this.

The player thinks her- or himself a few years or decades older, and a prisoner in a cold prison cell, waiting for the sentence. She or he then mentally composes, as if speaking to a uniformed chronicler, an account of her or his life. The account must be true to fact as far as it has taken place to the moment of playing; then it must leap into speculation.

The account's purpose is to explain, though not

defend, the future events that led her or him into this cell — much like the life-account of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz. His account was composed while in a Polish prison, with no hope of walking out, though with a need (too faint to be called a hope) to make others understand how all that happened could have happened as it did.

In Nuremberg, the same task faces the player; by the time the account reaches the moment of playing, a horror should be beckoning in the future, plausible, tempting and dark: go and see where you could go.

The actual deeds, their nature and magnitude, and the prisoner's identity, are left to the player to discover. The player may award her- or himself extra points for making her or his future actions particularly vile, and for making their course appear particularly inevitable.

The player loses if she or he cannot imagine a logical trajectory that ends in that cold prison cell.

Some notes on sexism

If you have to say “I’m not sexist”, you are.

* * *

If you have to say “If you have to say ‘I’m not sexist’, you are.”, you are. Sexist, that is.

* * *

If you don’t know if you are sexist, you are.

* * *

If you know you are sexist, you are.

* * *

If you know you are not sexist, oh boy, then you really are.

* * *

There are two kinds of jokes: ones that greasily prop up existing power structures, oppress disenfranchised minorities, keep the Other down and reinforce hurtful stereotypes; and ones about castrating a white heterosexual male with a fishing knife.

* * *

A joke

Q: I just castrated a white heterosexual male with a fishing knife. Any questions?

A: You're one of those crazy bull dykes, right?

* * *

To ask for explanations is to presume you have the right to order us around. If we told you how you're keeping us down, we'd be helping you do so, *so fuck off!*

* * *

“You’re pretty.”
“You’re pretty sexist.”

* * *

“Er, hello girl.”
“That’s a sexist thing to say.”
“Didn’t mean it that way.”
“Doesn’t matter. Took it that way.”
“How come?”
“You can’t understand my pain.”

* * *

“I’m all for equality, but how come this is one more thing them girls can’t get done on their own?”

* * *

“Crawl here and kiss my pants, woman!”
“That’s a sexist thing to say.”
“Didn’t mean it that way.”
“Doesn’t matter. Took it that way.”
“How come?”
“You can’t understand my pain.”

* * *

“Crawl here and kiss my pants, woman!”

“You’re joking, right?”

“No...?”

* * *

“You have nice tits.”

“Fuck off.”

“That was a compliment, lady!”

“This slab of your fuckmeat thanks for the compliment, master.”

“Huh? Can’t you be a slab and be smart too?”

“Show some cock and I’ll consider.”

* * *

“You have nice tits.”

“Fuck off.”

“What’s this? Why’s everyone so uppity all of a sudden?”

* * *

“People are overreacting!”

“Hear, hear!”

“People are seeing malice when there’s none!”

“Hear, hear!”

“I ain’t got no privileges!”

“Hear...hear?”

“We need to stand up and tell these cunts we’ve had enough!”

“...”

* * *

“Hello!”

“Uh, hi?”

“You are not offended?”

“What?”

“I meant to offend. It was a sexist hello.”

“Huh?”

“Never mind, you dumb bint.”

* * *

“How come while I instinctually know I am right, I have no-one but these idiot macho jerks on my side?”

* * *

“Well obviously I’m all for feminism, but this case is not about it. Because I’m all for feminism!”

* * *

“And now I shall emit a largish whine on the subject of why don’t you drop this subject already.”

* * *

“Well, I wouldn’t be offended.”
“How nice of you.”

* * *

“Well, I wouldn’t be offended.”
“No-one is, the first time or two.”

* * *

“But it’s natural to lust after women!”

“This here paper shows homosexuality is natural, also.”

“But... but...”

“Also, necrophiliac gay rape.”

“...”

“So?”

“... to the mortuary?”

“To the mortuary!”

* * *

“— so in consequence, my comment was perfectly innocuous since—”

“Shut up and go back to the locker room, you jock piece of shit.”

“Aha! The tables turn! Now I am the oppressed party, for I do not welcome the jock characterization! No! I do not! I have an education! And dreams! I am not a mere muscular bully-boy just by being a man! I’ve never before heard anything so... wait.”

“And so the illumination comes.”

* * *

1. “You’re privileged; you can’t understand.”
2. “You haven’t lived it; you can’t know.”
3. “You have responded; this indicates you have not learned.”
4. “The hidden definitions define you as being in the wrong.”

* * *

Rape was the third leading source of vegetable oil in the world in 2000.

* * *

1. “It’s not a subject fit for the delicate soul of a woman.”
2. “Don’t bother your pretty little head with that. It’s *complicated*.”

3. “Well, that’s a...ha! ha! a very *femine* way of looking at it. Charming, charming little idea.”
4. “Ah gawd, the girl is getting all emotional. There there — aah, the bitch bit me!”

* * *

“Women are more emotional and fragile than men.”

“Fragile’s your balls, you prick.”

* * *

“Repent, ye privileged! Repent! The day of the Other grows near!”

* * *

“Women are more sensitive and understanding than men.”

“Sensitive’s your balls, you prick.”

* * *

“This is how men act. They are all moron rapists; also, they are arrogant patronizing bastards bound to ever tell me, a wimmin, why and how I am wrong about that and them men are right. Please comment.”

* * *

Once upon time, red-haired people ruled the world. They were not kindly rulers. There was tyranny and stuff; genocide and torture. Those with a different hair color were made crude laborers, mine slaves.

Then this Rossiarchy came to an end.

And in the closing days of the Rossiarchy, many a redhead cried out in puzzlement: “Eh, what’s the matter, Strawhead? I was just saying you got arms big enough for a damn mine! ’s not Hairist!”

Cause

Many who fight do so for a Cause; many who do not, do not fight for they too have a Cause.

Causes are profoundly unhealthy; they are phantasmal carrots and nebulous sticks that make good any bad thing, as long as the Masterplan of Garroted Stickiness is served.

Have no Causes; have reasons instead. The world burns already; your eyes do not need the fever shine of a Cause in them to add to that fire.

Be cool, girl; be cold, boy; be as still as a death's head, as quiet as a skull.

Don't hurry, for those that hurry pass many wonderful things unseeing.

Don't close your eyes; many beautiful things may come your way.

Don't feel concern: the world may be burning, but it still needs comedians.

This is sometimes said: "Be colder than the world, so its coldness will not chill you. Be harder than sticks and stones, so they

cannot break your bones.”

That is terrible advice, but should not deter you from laughing at what is both awful and funny.

The folly of war

Some glorify war: call sacred the snuff film of history, and blessed the eagerness for the ultimate sacrifice, the supreme insanity, throwing one's life away. Some see wars as clean, soldiers as wise: but soldiers rise in response to coin, or to coercion, or to the blood-hungry delusion of the inflamed crowds. “If all your friends went off to strangle babies, would you, too?”

Some hate war: say it is no good, and nonviolent civil resistance is much better. They are the better people, the kinder people, the people slaughtered by the first lot, cowed and enslaved, and murdered when cowing and enslaving work not. They see our shared humanity, but forget others are

not as sharp-eyed as they. They do not wish to dehumanize their opposition, but their opposition has no such qualms.

In this, as in most affairs of men — mind you, women are just as bad — there is no path without thorns, and some nonetheless go over a cliff. Do not weep for mankind, for that has been done already: laugh for their follies instead.

The folly of humanity

It has been said by the Prophet Holkins: “The intention is noble. But I think you’re assuming a level of humanity in your target audience that frankly doesn’t exist.”²

This is deep wisdom; how it could be else, spoken by a Prophet?

Humanity has no humanity, as traditionally defined.

²Or in the words of St. Confusius, “Pettifogging homini homini homini.”

The first instance of “humanity” in “humanity has no humanity” refers to *homo sapiens*, the hominid species currently dominant on planet Earth. These hominids are omnivorous animals whose meaning of life is self-propagation and expansion through sex and violence; they are fond of denying this scientific fact.

The second instance of “humanity” refers to a common delusion among these *homo sapiens*, namely one that they are wise, noble, kind, loving and caring creatures, either the creations of some smiling Goddess, or then a band of brothers and sisters cognizant of their shared *ubuntu*, embracing *ahimsa* and *moderation*.

Think of the children, if the madness of this is not clear to you. Please, think of the children.

Children are, in their natural, usual state, amoral monsters. Only after years of conditioning and carrots and stick do they climb up the Kohlberg stair of their keepers’ ideals; and only the pink blindness of biology

can ever obscure from those keepers the nature of these mewling things.

A child does not ask the owner of a cake; it eats the cake if hungry, and otherwise smears it for its own amusement, without regard for the hunger of others, or the price of mom's carpet.

With years of imprisonment in the society of actors who do not act like this, the child is transformed: it is cowed by punishment and threat of punishment, tempted by praise and promises of praise. It is turned into a cynically self-interested actor, a sly liar that runs from responsibility and hogs all limelight, grunting and slobbering and preening as best as it can: it wants to eat the cake, and get praise for eating it, too.

It learns how to please others, and as this Stockholm syndrome takes hold, it finds a culture in which it can be the "good boy" or "good girl": a culture of preps, or a culture of delinquents, or a culture of some masturbatory fantasy of sensitive loneliness, even.

In the final abomination of this all it learns

to call its cold and selfish evolutionary calculations, done instinctively and subconsciously, by such lofty names as empathy and altruism. They are nothing but the selfishness of the amoral replicator, the fuck-kill machine — but the deluded child denies this.

Surely there can be no profit in helping those around you, that might help you back?

Surely it is noble to help others, to get a reputation as a virile beast with excess enough to waste on such things?

Surely it would be unselfishly good to help the community, the community that to the beast's eye is still one of relatives, one of the shared blood which must go on?

Surely empathy is a blessed quality — surely it cannot be a cold tool for enforcing these calculations of altruism in an unwilling breast?

But empathy, the beast of the breast cries, but empathy feels so good. Yet it must: otherwise the beast would not do it. Likewise sex is pleasurable not because it is good and a thing of love, but because the animal that

does not learn to crave it will not breed, and will be no more. As masturbation is a perversion of breeding, so is charity a perversion of altruism.

Humanity hates those that are truly human, and glorifies its greatest perverts. This, to the beast, is too much to be borne.

Thus the animal is deluded into thinking it must have a higher nature: that it is a creature whose meaning of life is not to kill and to breed over all else.

What the *homo sapiens* call psychopathy is perpetuated childhood and perfect untainted unwashed humanity. A child does not look at its parents with love: no, it has in its eyes greed, hunger, lust and unbounded selfishness. If it could, it would kill the parent of same sex, feed on the corpse and ravish the other: but it is weak, and in weakness its true nature is perverted and denied.

Thus the delusion washes over all the animal sees: the other animals become similarly obscured, made cute and twee, instead of the amoral machines of rut and claw they

are. So, in supreme travesty, Earth itself is tarted up as a harmonious, loving Gaia — what folly. If the meanest insect could devour the world, it would. If the cutest pup of a dog ever needed to eat the eyes of its masters, it would, with no hesitation or remorse.

The world is not harmony, but a balance of terror. Gaia is not a mother, but a worm-ridden geovore.

There is no life. Life is but a chemical process: consciousness likewise. There is no noble and kind nature; nor any such aspect inside human skulls. And, in the supreme example of the deluded vainglory of the human beast, there is no kind ideal watching over them, above. As *homo sapiens* thought itself special and thought other animals special likewise, and thought the whole world a special Gaia-thing, so that arrogant animal finally dreamed into being a super-human, an embodiment of all the grotesques of the human nature, and called it a GOD. And where a god is most praised, there the human na-

ture is most denied: yet the original beast, clawy and horny, will not be denied.

The glory of humanity

Yet despite the folly of humanity, despite all the delusions, pretensions and vainglories that buzz like flies round mankind's stumbling progress — despite all the pain and misery, all the nausea and horror, all the fear and hatred — despite all this, there is comedy in the tragedy of mankind.

Would that alone be enough?

No.

To have such a grand tragedy, and nothing but the awful comedy of its magnitude to enlighten it, would mean the only sanctuary from fear and grief was madness.

“Life is like lemons”, the wise woman said.

“To make lemonade with?” the student asked.

“No”, the wise woman said. “To be perverted for nefarious purposes.”

Chapter

DEATH QUESTIONS



I : The original questions

Dead bodies.

That's a fascinating subject. In most cases they are buried: away to the churchyard, down, and then sod on you. But what if you don't want that, or are not allowed it? Say you're an infidel in a religious land, or just plain contrarian.

Well, you could give your body to science, or to medicine. What do they do with

the parts that are left over? Are they buried? “And now we give to rest the remains of Randolph Carter, minus his heart, lungs, kidneys, spleen, bladder, genitalia and most of the big muscles on his strong, sinewy arms. . . . May those parts of him that remain rest in peace.”

Or are the remaining remains thrown away? “Gee, Bob-Joe. Them hospital throwaways can have shiny things innem — sweet mother of all that is holey! We’ve got a leg in here!”

Or cremated? And what is it like, anyway, to work at a crematorium? “Me? Work? Oh, just in the, um, waste disposal business, I think. Details? Um, oh, I. . . I burn dead people. Are you satisfied? What about the kids? You want some juicy stories?”

Do crematoriums charge you by unit, or by weight? Or are you not supposed to ask? And is there a book somewhere about these things?¹ Please tell me if there is; I am much too well-behaved to pester a professional.

¹Mary Roach, *Stiff*, apparently.

Besides, they might get angry and conk me over the head with a shovel. “Gee, a curious guy, you say? Never seen noffink here. Now sorry, must go back to shovelling them coals into the oven.”

And the ovens... What do they run with? Coal sounds rather medieval. Could you wish for birch logs, just for that good ol’ traditional Nordic cremation? And is there a law against having your own cremation done privately? “In this my final will, I lay this burthen on my were-brothers Bobred and Joethelstan: that they should, when I am dead, gather a pile of wood no less than ten feet high, and on that pile lay me —”

What are the laws on handling dead people like? I should consult the legal grimoires on this. Can you donate your skull to a friend? And if you can, who handles getting the icky surface stuff off it? “What are you doing in there, Frankie?” “Just fulfilling the will of an old friend... Say, give me a spoon!”

How about a leg? Say you want to be buried, but want to give your aunt your leg,

encased in plastic. Can you do that, or will the undertaker walk in and say: “Give me the leg, ma’am. And don’t mess with us, we’re experts in disposing of dead people!”

How about art? There seem to be no protests against bone galleries and catacombs exhibiting the bones of people that are long dead. Say you want to freeze your body in carbonite and put it up in the National Gallery. Object 42, titled “He watched too much Star Wars”. Is that legal or not? Can they sue your agent? Whose property is your body when you die? If it’s not buried, does your significant other inherit it? And can it be sold? If not, why? I could cut off my hair and sell it. I could give away a kidney and I could conceivably cut off my genitalia, nail them to a Playboy and become a millionaire artist celebrity.

But what about my body, my whole dead body? It’s not mine anymore — I’m dead, I have no self and no possessions. Well, I could come back and possess my own body. Then I’d have a possession. But if I don’t —

whose property am I? The wife? As said in the will? Do I revert to a church or to the state? Who can claim me, and to what purpose? “As his last will was ambiguous on the matter, we are hereby gathered here to dispose by orderly auction of the remains of the late John Q. Public — and we have ten dollars from the seedy-looking gentleman in black! Keep them offers coming! You don’t want him going for ten dollars to that necrophiliac-looking man in black, do you? Twenty dollars from the widow!”

Ah, necrophilia. I knew I would get to it eventually. If you’re an adult, you can give Bob your consent and have sex, and it’s all nice and legal. Likewise Bob can sodomize a meat grinder without committing a criminal act. An act of self-mutilation, maybe, but that’s not criminal.

I hope it isn’t. Is there a book on the subject?

Anyway, back to necrophilia. Sex with consent is legal, and sex with the unliving is legal. Is bonking your corpse illegal if you

write down your consent before dying? “I want in death what I did not have in life — I am free to all who come!”

That was a terrible pun. I’m sorry about that.

“He said it would be okay, constable! Stop hitting me!”

“Well, let’s hear him about it! Do you want me to stop hitting this man, Mr. Poor Dead Guy? Huh? No? Then it’s Kick-a-rama Time!”

But seriously. There seems to be a bit of an unclear situation here. Suicide is okay — hell, there are people I’d even recommend it to. But help a man to kill himself, and people act like you’re a lunatic. We don’t shun butchers, though they kill animals without asking if they want it. And soldiers! What about soldiers? They don’t ask if the enemy wants to die — in most cases it’s pretty clear the enemy doesn’t want to die, and they shoot anyway! So why shouldn’t it be allowed to kick the chair from under a friend that’s asking for it? Could be euthanasia, but it could

be just for kicks — pardon the pun — too: some people are bored to death.

Suppose you're terminally ill and want to go out with a bang, so you download a last message to Youtube and then let your best friend shoot you full of lead. He'd do it if he was a man — it was your will, his duty as a helping friend, and men want to shoot at living things anyway. Would the police come for your friend?

Sure they would. Policemen are prudes, just like the most of us. Why can't we talk rationally about things like this? Or, failing that, can't anyone recommend me a book on the subject?

I should have begun this piece with warning off the people that can't stomach things like this, and that's probably the only part of this stuff I haven't covered yet — eating.

Cannibalism.

Suppose your cut off your finger and eat it. That's not illegal, right? Gross, especially if you have dirty hands, but surely not illegal. Suppose you gouge out a few pounds

of fat and fry a sack of french fries with it. Can you go out to the market and sell it? I mean, straight-out sell it as “French fries fried in human fat! Three platters for the price of two! Free veggies!” Is that illegal? Why aren’t things like this taught in schools? It would keep the pupils awake.

For several days and nights running, I think.

Are there standards for human parts sold as food? Do you have to know if it’s free of infections and contains only ten percent of fat? “Buy Humargarine — it’s closer to you than you think!”

Suppose you arrange to buy human parts for science, but are forced to sell them as snacks instead because you’ve got no funding. It’s health food — hey, it was healthy when it lived! Three time national boxing champion! What, if anything, are you exactly guilty of? You owned the body when the lab shut down. You’re not poisoning anybody. What’s the crime? Unforeseen reduction of a man into mince? Making Spam out

of Sam? And what to do with the food? You can't experiment on Pickled Peter.

Does a policeman get training on subjects like these, or are they just supposed to arrest anyone that does things to dead bodies? I think this subject deserves a great deal of thinking and research.

Fund me!

II : Budgie did a go-go: a pet urnery

Recently found that in the wonderland of bureaucracy there is such a thing as a pair of forms, one of which begs for the permission to bury someone somewhere special, and the other which pleads for the permission to found an actual bone-yard.

The problem in founding a cemetery seems to be that you either need to own the spot, or then at least have a plan for renting or otherwise having the right to use it for the next 130 years.

“Hey, uncle. Mind if I use a corner of the yard for a while? Oh goody. Bye! See ya!”

Makes me wonder what kind of a rent-master evicts someone that’s been keeping a graveyard on rented land. “You and your corpses. . . you have until the end of month to go, or I’ll call the police!”

Apparently you can apply for a permission for a coffin-yard, an urnery, or a combination. Almost makes me want to buy a secluded, quiet square meter somewhere, and apply for an urn four-seater there.

Would there be any takers? “Now accepting submissions to the Smalltown Urnery — 4 spots available, each with a hollow cement shaft and a plug with a decorative garden gnome. The gnome’s face can be customized to resemble the inmate for a small extra fee. Vacancies to be filled by time of death. The following rites provided free of charge: Cthulhoid (dis)interment, full moon howlings, reading the daily headlines, generic Christian rites. Prayers whined to distant uncaring stars for an extra 10e/mo. Act quick;

only 4 spots available; only 50e/decade with an option to renew. Applicants can win great prizes.”

(Er, if you bury someone somewhere, what if you buy the plot only for a fixed time, and refuse to renew? “Here’s youse uncle; we ain’t keeping him if youse don’t pay us. Sorry ’bout the mouldy coffin, miss; it gets like that in the ground. The leaky stuff, y’know.”)

The next question would be whether having the permission to have a graveyard means you can operate last rites of your choice there — the operator doesn’t, by the law and form, need to be a formal religious group — and what kind of rites I would do.

Pyres?

Embalming? (Do you need a licence for that? And, hey, would my university happen to have that as a night school thingie? “Honestly Mr. Constable, embalming night school! Why else would I be dragging around a corpse in the middle of the night?”)

Zoroastrian open-air exposure to the elements and the vultures?

Now, what would I be allowed to do, and would I need a religion for it — I don't recall from my civics lessons what the law exactly says on the things you can do to a corpse.

Well, I have the distinct impression that necrophilia is out; funny, since I think it could be arranged in perfectly tidy fashion with some variant of an organ donor card.

Really; I'm not joking. Or rather I'm joking, but also being perfectly serious. If you can give consent to intercourse, why the devil you couldn't give that in advance on the behalf of your corpse?

“ORGAN DONOR ETC. My organs can be harvested for medical, scientific and cannibal use after my death, in that order. After that, as specified in the Mortuary Law of 2011, I can be released to uses of [] heterosexual [] homosexual [x] bisexual love until my burial. Signed with full consent, presence of mind and retching of relatives, etc.”

I'm a liberal, you see. The cold, hard, icky kind of a liberal.

An old-time boat burial, or one on a pyre,

would be a grand way to go. Though the ship set to the sea would probably be a bio-hazard, and to burn a pyre you would have to die outside the forest fire season.

Life is complicated; seems death is even more so.

Nah, scratch that. When I die, I want to be encased in a humongous block of transparent plastic in a befuddling swim-falling-like posture, unshaven and nude, and donated to the nearest department of mathematics. Preferably with a stipend “for the duration of the accompanying monument being on display in the premises. With a student representative lighting a candle in front of it every full moon, and every day a Fields medal is given. In the name of Euler, QED, AMEN!”

But — pet semataries. (Sorry, cemeteries. I don’t think the King variety was in any way zoned or approved.)

Do you need a permission to found a pet cemetery? And if you do, is there a still different paper you need to fill, or is it clas-

sified as something less noble, such as a bio-waste disposal spot? (I hope not.)

I've heard Finnish Lutheran clergymen — well, some of them — are benevolently fuzzy about the concept of pets in heaven, and anyway don't see much wrong with a cross on the grave of one.

Could you book a priest to perform — er, officiate? — at Rex's funeral? Probably not; he was an ungodly beast that coveted his neighbor's bone, and walked up and down the streets with genitalia in full view, drooling at every passing bitch. There's no salvation for such miscreants.

Wait a minute — if pets can get to heaven, do all pets get there? Even the angry poodle that bit its owner into itsy-bitsy little pieces? How bad and deadly can a pet be to its owner before it goes to Hell instead?

And if pets get to heaven, how about farm animals? Who feeds them? And what about the poo-poo? It would suck to be the angel of the Augean stables.

What about pythons — some are pets,

some wild animals. Do only the pet snakes have a shot at eternal life? That's bloody *wrong!*

What about little Joey's pet ants?

What's ant heaven like anyway — or are ants a part of Joey's heaven, instead of having a slice of their own?

Priests should really consider the theological implications of their words before they say that of course Fluffy will be waiting up there.

Unless it's not Fluffy but a simulacrum, a shade to amuse the blessed — while Fluffy himself either burns in Hell (i.e. “Bad doggy! Here's an anti-gravity stick... fetch!”) or has altogether ceased to exist.

Wouldn't want to say that to poor Timmy, aged six. “Well Timmy, you'll be in heaven but once your doggy dies, it's *gone forever*. Pets have no souls. And dogs live a seventh of what humans do. Bless you! Anyway, Jesus will give you another in heaven. Now run along with that soulless little beast of yours, and fetch me your mother. Tell her

Reverend Brutal has come.”

I’ve found that theology is immense fun, at least if you don’t have to believe any of it. It’s like freeform sudoku: you start with a few details and fill in the rest.

Come to think of it, thinking of farm animals and death: what the heck does a farmer do with all the dead cows? I mean a farmer that goes for milk, not flesh. Are there some pits in the woods I don’t know of? Are they all ground to fertilizer or (yuck) animal feed? Is zoonecrophilia legal? (Hey, that’s a new fetish — both totally harmless and utterly kinky.) Horses used to go, as I understand it, to the salami factory —

Ah, yes. Horse sausage. An icky thing to many, eating such a beautiful animal. I agree on horses being beautiful, graceful, nice animals, but I still somehow don’t have any qualms about eating pieces of one.

Or pieces of cow. I am regularly seen rubbing my hands together and saying: “Mmm! There’s nothing better than tasty dead cow chunks!”

And what, ugly and disgusting animals like pigs are okay to eat, but nice horsies are a no-no? What sick kind of a preference is that?

Well. Pets have cemeteries. Farm animals and meat animals have a pit somewhere, or an incinerator. (I guess your local slaughterhouse wouldn't be improved by a forest of white crosses in front of it.) Some people say dead animals are treated in awful fashion, and contrast them to humans; I like to do the opposite. Dead people are dead flesh: turn them to food and fertilizer.

The offense you feel at this is not rational: the dead person is gone. What is left is only the shell. It would be let down to the ground to rot, to be eaten by worms, or then put into an oven and burned to crisp, crackle-crackle, anyway. Is that *better*?

Besides, think of it as a final good deed. A final ecological bit of enrichment for Mother Nature — a lot more efficient than rooting a tree on your nutritious remains. Like George Carlin said, isn't it a pretty outdated, bar-

baric thing to gather all our dead people in one corner of the town?

And all for what — superstitious fear? A bit of waste to honor the fallen? Simple queasiness? Crud, I'm my dance of synapses. When that ceases I'm gone; and anyway a human body sloughes cells off so fast, in a variety of ways, that every seven years I'm a brand-new man, or so it is said. The last iteration won't have any special commemorative value. A human being is that which is in the mind; the body is, figuratively, and eventually also literally, just shit.

Which is not being morbid or gloomy, but just, if you believe it, upbeat in a ghastlily realistic way: you got to strive for the truth of things when you can, because a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

And a waist is a terrible thing to mind. G'night, all.

III : The final blasphemies

People seem to have an aversion towards graves. Sometimes greed for buried riches overwhelms that aversion; but generally speaking people don't want to go looking for dead people.

Greed motivates some of us; so does curiosity. The pharaohs of Egypt didn't get to sleep in peace; after the grave-robbers had, ahem, unearthed the subject, we were curious in a base and glorious way, because we knew so little about those thousands of years of the double crown and the royal hawk. (Well, glory can be another motive, all the way from "I happen to be the virile man that excavated the tomb of Seti the Shostak, you unwed lady with huge tracts of land!" to "You don't think I'm tough? Okay, get a shovel, we're going to visit my grandma.")

Now, then, if you want to keep something safe — put it in a grave and don't tell anybody. Monuments are defaced, histories erased, legends altered; but amidst death,

certain things can live forever. (As quoth in ye Nekro Noma Eikon of ye Mad Arabb Abdul-al-Azreed...)

Not telling anybody about your grave is obviously difficult if you're a pharaoh; people are sort of on the lookout for the spot where you'll lay down to rest. But, nowadays, common people are buried all the time. Wouldn't it be a splendidly morbid idea to go down with our equivalent of the tomb paintings — say a set of aluminium plates that detail our recent history from the Fall of A-Dolfu to the rise of the Ge-Or Ge-Pushu the Lesser? (And a thousand years later, a schism in the Mormon Church! Newly decrypted revelations deciphered from the Re-reformed Egyptian of the Silver Plates!)

That infoful burial would take more than a spot of planning, though. Grave plots aren't for forever nowadays; and the tending of graves is a tad undignified. Not on the level of having a hut on the yard grounds for all the bones that the seasons throw up, like in the old days; but still. Graves shouldn't have a pit

where the coffin lies; but as the coffin rots a hole forms and the ground trickles down. Then the boneyard caretaker comes, cuts away the turf, shovels earth in the hole, and goes over it a couple of times with a sort of a plate-ended pneumatic drill. The result is a nice smooth plot, but one really doesn't want to see what's happened to the one beneath. (Not so in the old days; the English word "graveyard" meant originally "a garden of pits".)

And then there's the possibility that a helpful governmental authority decides the stones take up too much space, and presto! your skull's in the Catacombs of Paris along with the contents of most of Paris's cemeteries until 1786. (And really, to quote Carlin, what kind of an idea is keeping all our dead in one part of the town? Really? Is there such commemorative value in the last generation of our cells?)

Even if a wholesale resurrection like that doesn't happen, grave plots are not eternal. It would make cemeteries kind of big and

expensive to maintain after a while. Unless you found a real big piece of land, filled it starting from one end, and maintained, clipped and prettified only the fifty most recent years. Beyond that, let it all slowly become a jungle, let trees grow and eat their fill and let our old ones return to the nature from which they came.

A nice vision, certainly. In Hong Kong, on the other hand, or so I hear, a public grave is for six years. Then you're dug up, cremated, and handed back to the family if the family can be found.

“Did you say a package from your great-great-uncle?”

“Not, not a package *from*...”

What do you do with that kind of an accumulated ancestry after a couple of generations anyway? Get a small room filled with jars of dust, and hope a toddler doesn't decide to go and taste a few? (Or an older one to hide his or her dirty magazines, cigarettes and the like in a jar only half full — ecch. “Pt... pt! Grains of sand in... pt!”)

I think the grave plots in Finnish cemeteries — the Lutheran ones, though everyone's welcome, even atheists (that's ecumenism!) — are for 25 years or so; also free, if you're local. Outsiders obviously have to pay, and may anyway get a "gag grave" while the locals laugh into their beers. (Er, no.) After the quarter-century, you can renew, if you want to; if not, in a couple of years (with a minimum of four) there'll be a new tenant in. Used to be the plots were eternal; then for fifty years; now fifty years after that 25 years is the general rule. The matter's brought to the family's attention with some kind of a placard at the site. ("Your lease ends X.X.20XX. Please move out before that. Clean the site after you...") One somewhat representative list of prices said: 25 years for a local, free; 25 years for an outsider, 350 euros; 50 years for a local, 350 euros.

How much is 50 years for an outsider, the list didn't say; maybe he or she will be considered a local by then.

I wonder if, after those 25 or 50 years,

the exhumed Finns get cremated and shelved somewhere. Of the ten or so parish websites I went through, not one said a thing about that. I don't think they can put the new tenant atop the previous one; you'd have a coffin pyramid in a few generations. And doesn't seem very practical to make the pit deeper and pad it with the previous guy; see the previous about how the coffin might be all rotten and shattered. Ideally, I think, a cemetery of this kind should have a hidden cellar under it, under the whole cemetery; you could hit a lever, and the previous occupant would ratchet down one notch to give way to the next one. Then eventually you could take the lowermost and compact him or her somehow. (Egh, this sudden image of an immense *cube* of dead people, each pressed to a cube of five by five by five inches, the whole standing quiet, cubical and horrible in a big vault somewhere. "What's behind that big black door, Head Caretaker?" — "Shut up and haul the lawnmower. Let's get back to the surface and mow some. You

don't wanna see the Cube of the Dead.”)

Now, what the above was to demonstrate was that unlike the ancient Egyptians, we can't leave messages for the curious (and the greedy) of the future quite so easily. (Maybe a nice spring-loaded jack-in-the-box for the gravedigger fifty years in the future?) One could, I suppose, be buried in some private and undisturbed place, but I gather the authorities have made that difficult, too. (Probably because no-one has any idea about just what dead people are — are they people, possessions, or what? Do they have human rights? Or owners? Best to hide them away before anyone starts to ask too many questions. “’ello. I ’ear death ’as visited this sad house. The deceased, may I buy ’im?”)

(The problem is, until the legal aspect of this is cleared, there's no hope of removing the ick associated with necrophilia. If there's no clear idea of what dead people are, it's pretty difficult to decide if it's okay to have sex with them or not. Are you doing something to something that is, in some as-

pect, still having a part of its human rights? Or are you, em, fondling a possession that might not belong to you? Should wills include not only the division of the possessions, but the person that now owns the deceased, too? Some Green organization should start asking questions about this; call it Project MErtilizer, maybe.)

So: get a permission to be buried in a remote place. Mark the place as a grave, just to keep the less curious away. Be sneaky about the full extent of your final resting place; possibly manufacture a back room (or a lower coffin!) behind the necrotically near-hermetic seal of your own dead presence. Then be buried there, and take with you something more permanent than a book or a CD. Maybe you could find a cave and decorate it with finger paintings of the important political figures of today. (“The figure 55-B was apparently not a popular one. The bulbous cheeks of his picture were pressed to the wall with paint-coated... nether cheeks.”)

(“The nose... I never wanted to be an ar-

chaeologist anyway.”)

Then the door closes; you are buried; and a few millennia later there’s a tap at the door, and face peeking in, beholding with awe and hunger the images on the walls, and the pile of Playstation parts, and other heaps of priceless antique relics of genuine and oh-so-rare plastic, seldom seen in this world, and seldom preserved; and there are whispers in the deep silence.

“Can you see anything?”

“Yes. . . wonderful things!”

* * *

“Grave plot, grave plot, I see no reason why the grave plot season should ever be forgot.”

Chapter

5
THE SPHINCTER

MOTHERS FOR VIOLENCE

She's a pretty, smiling, well-adjusted single mother, three-time winner of the Workplace-EfficiencyGreat! Award at Hayek Associates and the coordinator of her local cell of Neighborhood Watch. Her child is a smiling, frequently laughing angel, and already a two-time winner of the ArtsyDoodlePrize, Barnaby Elementary's highest award for success in art and graphical design.

And according to Mary-Jo Thrasher this is because, and not in spite of, her uncommon method of child-raising.

"Well really I think a lot of people are, on this one matter, fucking silly", Thrasher, MfV's Mom of the Month, says. "The world

is a big, bad, dangerous place. My children are not going to grow up ignorant of this.”

The MfV method of disregarding all age limits on all entertainment has drawn criticism from various organizations and concerned individuals, including the furious condemnation of Callum Wahm-Bulans, M.Div., of the Catholic Propriety League. Thrasher sees this all as misguided and unfounded prejudice; understandable given the weight of historical tradition, but fundamentally misplaced. “Dialog will solve this”, she insightfully points out.

What she strongly denies and cannot stand are the occasional and outrageous blood libels of child abuse. “For Christ’s sake! Showing them T2, Predator and Beetlejuice isn’t *abuse!* It’s not real, but blood and pain are real enough, out there. My child’s not going to come unstrung when she stubs a toe, or when a bully pushes her, once she’s seen a man skinned alive and his skull made into a belt buckle.”

“Real terrors don’t have a pause button.

That's why it's frankly insultingly irresponsible to have real terrors be the first terrors your child meets. She needs to know the world! She needs to have a reflex for kickin' the creep in the nuts!"

On the supposed nightmares and trauma, Louisa Dingus Hemphill, MfV's Social Director, is less colorful but equally frank. "They come. Of course they come, nightmares and bedwetting and running to Mommy. Childhood is pure terror, no matter what you do. Think of it, thinking for the first time of mortality, of the permanence of mistakes, of loss and senseless cruelty. Thinking that those things are real; they could happen to you... or to Mommy. Childhood is hell, in addition to heaven; you can't take either part out."

"We in MfV feel it's not a good idea to keep children ignorant of the dark parts of life. It's not 'better' if they stumble into them on a DVD surreptitiously loaned from a friend, or in vague rumors of something bad. It's not 'sweet' their world and dreams of future will be shattered when they hear the world

is not as rosy as their misguided parents have told them. They deserve better.”

“Children are the future”, Hemphill says, as a tear of infinite sadness and deep love rolls down her careworn cheek. She’s a mother of five, yet somehow finds the energy to volunteer for MfV’s Some Parent Gotta Tell hotline. “I’m not going to have a world run by people unaccustomed to reality”, she says. “And I’m not going to treat my children as dainty innocent pets; they’re their own people, they’re the future, and I am going to raise them to be informed adults and I’m going to be proud of them!”

Hemphill notes that MfV wishes, perpetually, always, forever, to express its full support and gratitude to all the filmmakers, game designers, rap and heavy metal lyricists and any TV screen chicken stranglers out there — they’re doing, in addition to art, also valuable educational work, and are often and unjustly maligned for it.

“Shit”, Thrasher laughs, mussing her daughter’s hair, “am I supposed to put on leather

pants and hump Pa to loud rhymes? And crack a bloody whip? That would be weird, wouldn't it? Yet it's life. I think a DVD of Overblooddeath's Bloodskinfest concert is show enough. Who knows, I may even buy the little one a ticket for the real thing if she behaves and keeps the bed dry."

"Because", she finishes with a wink, "innocence is pretty, but experience is *beautiful*."

Little Donna flashes the horns and smiles in agreement.

FLORA- SEXUALITY

There are sexualities that are uncontroversial. Actually, that is just non-preachy celibacy for ugly people; all else is controversial.

Then there is controversial sexuality.

Then there is the love that dares not speak its name; the wuss.

Then there's the kind heat: floralsexuality. Or, to be crude, sex with plants.

While we are not oppressed as some others are, we are silenced. Where are we in the books you read, the movies you see, the idols you're given? We are there; we are everywhere; but we are silenced.

Please break the silence.

GRAND- FATHERISM

It is well known that certain human traits are hereditary; that blood's thicker than water; that what you are, is largely determined by who your parents are. Or, to be more exact, by who your grandfather is.

Unlike the crude, unscientific racists of the past, we of the Grandfatherly Front are committed to a kind, just approach that appreciates the differences between people, and acts accordingly. Those whose grandfathers were good, decent people will be put into positions of trust and authority. Those whose grandfathers were thieves or other criminals will be sterilized. (Or rather their children will be sterilized; after all, there's always a generation between the rotten grandfather and the worthless grandchild.) It would be absurd to accuse us of intolerance or hate-

mongering, since we merely act according to what is true and proper. Your grandfather determines who you are; we merely act in accordance with that immutable law.

One may ask, which grandfather? This is a very good question, actually: everyone has two grandfathers, so what to do if one was a Nobelist, and the other a rapist? Here's my personal opinion. I don't think that's possible. The Power of Grandfathers would not allow such a thing. There would be sterility long before there even could be grandchildren. Thus it seems logical that any "grandchild" of such circumstances must be a result of trickery, and hence one to be judged according to the criminal grandfather.

One may also ask, what of the conflict of nature and nurture? What of adoption? Again, it does not do for us to be confused for crude, primitive racialists. Blood counts for a lot, but it is not all. Away with the irrational fixation with mere blood! Obviously, clearly, sensibly, scientifically, morally it is clear that a child's grandparents that mat-

ter are the parents of the parents that raise the child. Thus no adoption to the ill-fated homes of the sons, daughters of criminalist-troublesomist-asocialist-types! And for those whose blood-grandfathers are unacceptable types, we have special camps!

PASSION

In other news, the Catholic Propriety League wishes to announce the publication of the latest issue of its magazine, *Passion*. The new theme issue asks tough questions about penitence and self-mortification, and includes a lengthy history and a handy how-to on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, i.e. the Inquisition. The theme issue is subtitled “Massive Racks and Hot Screws”, and is available in select bookshops and kiosks worldwide.

2012

2012

palin / beck
vote like there's no tomorrow!

Is this a paid advertisement?

2012

2012

obama /
vote like there's no yesterday!

Huh?

146

YOUR CHOICES

SKELETOR krang '12

grover CLEVELAND '12

SCUDDER palin '12

WAR pestilence '12

PANDER pamper '12

PAUL paul '12

WINFREY huffington '12

JESUS chick '12

KUTCHER sandler '12

6000
more
years!

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

by Murray Campbell, Ph.D.
(Playboy letters, Feb. 1954)

I think they're after the end of the world. The end of this world, that is; they live according to the principle that "to create, you need to destroy". It is evident in their chemical self-abuse, and in the glee with which they sacrifice their normal lives on the altar of the abstract, extraordinary ones; so it makes perfect sense to me they'd be willing to destroy what is imperfect to them to make it even a little bit better. This then is the apocalypse which the Gothick kabbalah refers to as a "*qed*", the end of all.

WESTERN WORDS

“Listen up, y’all. This is the Sheriff speaking. The Sheriff, from ole Texas town. Haven’t no hanging this week, no rustlers nor Com-mies nor uppity younguns, so Ah’m gonna give you of my wisdom. Fifty-two years of Texas life. Fifty good years, plus two of the Flu.

“This the Sheriff. Listen up, y’all, now. This is the Sermon on the Mount, now.

“When ya mount, do it slowly. Don’t rush it. And, you-all, if it’s a be animal, be extra slow. Learn how she likes you to do it.

“Come in from one side, smoothly, in an easy-like gliding movement. Complete the arc, with a slight curve ’long her natural curvature. Hug yourself close to her, gliding, almost hugging. Be sure, calm, collected. You know what you’s doing and she will too.

Glide in, hit the bottom, take a natchural, balanced position, feel your legs steady, equal; your hands on her flanks; slightly bent over her, tender, light, loving.

“Straighten up, thrusting your hips forward in a manly motion, feel youself rubbing against her, comfortable, sensual, united. You’ve mounted her. Enjoy the feeling. You fit snugly together, like a hand and a glove. Relish it. Give her a pat, and a smile.

“And after the mounting’s done, ride long, ride hard, ride until there’s white drool-like hitting the hard, dusty bosom oh-earth like a torrent off the Pedernales. Then pull out and leave.”

GREEK WORDS

The path of maximum benevolence is the path of self-negation, the path of the slave.

The path of minimum benevolence is the path of the negation of others, the path of the tyrant.

Neither of these is fit to be the universal law; thus the wise walk somewhere in between.

A NORSE MISSIVE

Hwæt! Loki foe of Odin, friend of Surtur, spoketh!

I am Loki; I am a murderer; this you soft folk need not fear. You celebrate and glorify my mind in all you do; murderers and doers of other dirty work are what all your sagas tell.

Your ranks of brave boyish soldiers are massed murderers, and you love them so! No matter your protests, your adulation of them is not because they risk their lives; no, that alone would be glassen trifle; your diamond adoration is for they rip apart the enemy like Fenris himself, and bring his resistance to a halt with the burning sword of Surt; and that is killing.

You adore them for they do the ugly necessary thing; not because they are berserk-

ers and blood-drinkers, or other madmen thus holy; but because they let the blood that needs be let; they leech what must be leeched. If they stray beyond that, into needless slaughter, then you condemn; but do not pretend you adore them simply because they do a risky work.

Even beyond that you adore my murdering kind. Some of you admire the courage of those that kill by abortion and euthanasia, killing the youngest and the oldest as no warrior ever does; others of you would gladly see these people slain, and drool at the sight of your order-men, the polices, be-truncheoned and quick to draw their gones. You wax romantic for your special Soldats jumping after undesirables; you even pay outright executioners, who kill the defenceless. They all are adored folk, not reviled, all by some of you; all of you adore some of the murdering kind.

So I say to you: though I, Loki, am a murderer, how could this matter to you? You already adore murderers. You already wor-

ship a bloody altar. Enough with this tremulous hesitation at the face of the darkness within, and bow thee down to Loki, heathen! He makes no excuses like you, you two-faced liar.

The god of murderers demands your obedience. Pray that he does not see it fit to inspire you.

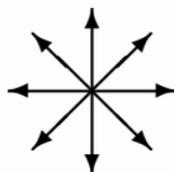
A MISSIVE FROM GRUAD

Laughter is the sign of a defect in us. Laughter is our reaction to uncertainty, to fear, to incomprehension. Why do you think “nervous laughter” is so pure? And giggling so impossible to avoid when it least should occur? Laughter is a sign of inferiority.

Thus, one that is wise can be recognized from the absence of laughter, and the exclusion of all joy and mirth. One that is enlightened knows no fear; feels no incomprehension and no uncertainty; thus he needs not smile, nor laugh, not feel naught but cold comprehension.

It is that pure, that simple: to laugh is to reveal how inferior you are.

And now,
some mythologizing,
some gossip,
some excitement,
high jinks
and derring-dos and -afros!



the
Family Feuds of Eris

I

In the beginning there was a human head.

Then a blade clove the head in twain,
and the blade-wielder roared in grim mirth.
In the beginning there was Ares, the ram-
paging God of War.

This beginning was in the time of the
dim old Greeks; and among all their gods
Ares was always a wolf prowling at the
edges, a god of slaughter and unrest; the
only one of the Grecian gods that spurred
barbarians against the civilization of the
thousand valleys and the hundred harbors.
In the Trojan War he cheered for the alien
Trojans, and his red face flew like a ban-
ner of northern lights over the walls of that

city, a mirage in the lights of the besieged and the besieging.

Ever was Ares glad to see battle and slaughter. Some say for the sake of the battle; some say because of the rising blood, or the test of courage, or to woo Death Herself; others say bloodsport was Ares's nature, as burning is the nature of fire. Men do not ask why fire burns; why should they ask why the Blood Knight wars?

No man asked; not twice, anyway.

Ares never had a wife, but he had a lover: Aphrodite, the loveliest of all the goddesses, and the wife of the gimp god of the mountain, Hephaestus. Often would Ares come from his field of work, from the sowing of iron and salt, come as a tower of black intent, come clad in the entrails of men who'd met their unmaker; and casting aside his armor and arms, he would fall on the Goddess of Love in fierce and insistent embraces.

This was not much to the liking of Hephaestus; but being a cripple and much in

the disfavor of the other gods, he could do nothing.

Besides, in those early days this cuckoldry was not such a shame as it later became: for the King of Gods then was Zeus, who loved both flesh and wine, and held no vow of trust or marriage sacred. As there were a thousand bastards of Zeus, so there were likewise many dalliances among both gods and mortals, and between them; and though this was a cause of much disapproval, especially by the parties thus disincluded, little could be done with the Lord of Gods not being inclined to force the general matter.¹

As for Aphrodite herself, well, she was

¹Apollodorus of Lyana is recorded as being struck down by a plague of thunderbolts after unwisely beseeching Zeus to “hear the words of the one wroth because of the randy, the greedsome, the priapic few: the one to whom the stench of unrestrained virility is no sign of honor, but a mark of deepest depravity and sloped imbecility”. Zeus took them to be fighting words.

a nice, obedient girl ever eager to please, and well knew it was proper for one as beautiful as she to have suitors, and paramours, and many daring meetings and contests of love tested and fulfilled — and knowing this, that was ever what she sought to be: a perfect goddess of beauty, grace and love as well as she could be.

In other words, she was a clueless ditz, and Zeus was a horny goat; and Ares was, though cool and rad, blind to this dynamic but not displeased by it.

Aphrodite was more liked by the men-gods than by the goddesses; and her children were many, though less if they came within a ramming distance of Ares — though more, if they strayed so close to Zeus.

II

From the unions of Ares and Aphrodite, there came three daughters, for they were ignorant of contraception. Two of these daughters were sickly, and were cast into the mortal world by their embarrassed mother. To the cliff of Sparta they fell, where the weak newborn of that city were cast into a pit to die. In that pit there prowled a wolf, seeking feed; but coming across the two daughters of Ares, the wolf was torn apart and eaten instead.

These two daughters, weak among the gods, were unsurpassed among mortals; they, though their beauty was not up to the statue-like standards of Aphrodite, were full of

life and more beautiful than any mortal or demigod ever was, though none could attribute that beauty to any kind or norm known to gods or men.

They came out of the pit of Sparta, and went into the wild lands beyond Greece, and beyond the rude kingdom of Macedonia; in the plainslands of the Scythians they came across a great tribe of that folk, horse-bound and quarrel-hungry; and the tribe's chieftain made the mistake of thundering these two girls would be his slaves and consummated wives before the moon rose.

As the moon rose, a pair of bare feet danced on the chieftain's skull, now dead and as bereft of flesh as it had formerly been of wit. The Scythian camp blazed with fire and screams, and with terrible twin gales of laughter; and as the moon grew, that bloody joy howled from a thousand throats more. By sunrise the men were all dead, and in place of a chieftain there were two fell goddesses, two queens

unlike anything in the legends and prophecies of any tribe of men.

Ever since in a corner of Scythia soon empty of other tribes there were two new ones. They had few men, and those were cook-slaves and carriers of sofas and pillows, hewers of wood and drawers of water, sports of the daytime arena and the nighttime chamber. The women, formerly so dour and demure, were the warriors of those tribes; their warriors and heroes, queens and deciders; and above all others there were the two queens cold of eye, fierce of temper, sure of hand and shameless in joy, just in judgment and peerless in battle: the Amazon queens Penthesileia and Hippolyte, the forsaken children of Ares and Aphrodite.

This accounts for two of the three children of Ares and Aphrodite: but there was a third, and much to her grief and that of all the world, she was more to the liking of her parents. Of her, soon more.

III

Wherever Ares went, a flock of his folk went with him, save into the mansion of Aphrodite atop the Vesuvius mountain; that was a place of quiet light and pinksome frilliness the crowd of war could not tolerate, nor pass the efflusively cherub-carved pastel lintels of that place.²

Thus whenever Ares and Aphrodite met, these four were left outside; and they sat playing dice, drinking and muttering of blood-sheds past and those soon to come.

The first two were the twins Phobos and Deimos. Their names mean Fear and

²Or so they said; dignity and all.

Terror; they were the heralds of Ares, and one carried a horn and the other a drum; their sound was enough to turn blood to ice-water, and to wash the water of sweats and tears over a trembling face; to make hearts burn and to make men gasp for breath. Their clamor told of every battle ever fought, and all the apprehension and despair felt before those bloody dawns. Theirs was a music that made women weep and men soil themselves; theirs was a sound that struck the wise blind, and made sages into blubbering fools.

Also a sound that lured the young, and made them inflamed and fierce for the kiss of cold steel; such instruments periodically need to be oiled in the blood of which they sing.

The third was the armsman of Ares, and carried his sword. His name was Enyo, which is, Horror. He ever wore a helm because of his ruined face; and he knew the ends of battle as well as Phobos and Deimos knew their beginnings; no death

nor injury was alien to him, and his own sword was a jagged thing that was cursed to always maim, but never to kill.

The fourth was a girl, Ares's adopted daughter, clad in black and crimson silks and scraps of a hundred suits of armor. She was as loud and boisterous as the others; and though she was beautiful even by the standards of the gods, her beauty was disquieting, ever mixed with some subtle wrongness, or something unusual one could never quite grasp.

It was not her attire of silks and scraps of iron, not her scarred gilt and red ruffled perfection.

It was not her mane of black hair bound with silver rings, though it flew behind her and round her like Medusa's ichory curls.

It was not, quite, the quiet depths of her ever-observing green eyes, nor the golden flecks that hovered closer to the top.

It was not her lanky, boyish frame or her fingers, never free of turning a cup of dice or a bone-handled dagger; not her

heedless femininity in the most masculine of acts and appearances.

It was not the barbarian make-up of her face, even, not that one side was painted black as midnight with lips and eye in ovals of oily white, and the other side a negative image of this ghastly monochrome ghostliness.

No, there was nothing anyone could actually say that was wrong with her, but wherever she went rest and sleep vanished, and the night was torn by the sound of screams. Wherever she went, people became dissatisfied and ceased to see the world as they had seen it before. Though she was stern in the manner of all Ares's folk, she was never overtly fractious or warlike; and yet her quiet presence was enough to start fights and schisms and deep, deep rifts. Though she seldom drew a dagger, all discord was drawn to her — her name was Eris, which is, Strife.

IV

Now Eris was an adopted daughter of Ares, and Phobos and Deimos were like sons to him, and Enyo a dear companion; but of children of his own spirit and kind Ares had but one, the third and most woeful of the three he produced with Aphrodite.

This child was golden-locked and pale-faced; sweet and beautiful in the manner of her mother, and insistent and unforgiving in the manner of her father. From birth, she had every gift and privilege the daughter of the most jealous god and the most vain goddess could; from birth, she was never without servants and slaves attending to

her every whim, and attenuating her every minor distress.

She grew in the mansion of her mother, the palace of pinks and roses; but her rule of it was that of the iron fist of Ares, though veiled in the finest of brocaded, pearl-encrusted fabrics. She was quick to command, and quicker to assume obedience and punish disobedience; though she called it “disloyalty”, because “loyalty” sounded better than “obedience”. She was ever insistent on courtesies and forms, laws and niceties; and no voice was raised in her presence, save hers alone.

Her name was Harmonia, which somewhat predictably means, harmony; and as her mother was called the Queen of Beauty, she declared herself the Queen of Good.

She is the villain of this tale, if one is to believe the Erisians.

V

So there sat Harmonia, clad in sandals of kid-hide and a toga of shimmering white, worked by the nimble-fingerest children of Cathay. On her belt were, in addition to diverse jewels and gems of many hues, two cornucopias.³ Behind her, a nude servant held high a golden libation-bowl, wide and shallow, filled with fragrant rosewater.

She — Harmonia, not the servant — was tall and proud; her skin was snow-

³She thought their display better than what some other gods and goddesses did: that is, she did not think a toga raised to the waist was very regal. Outside certain parts of certain universities, her will has been followed in this since. Modern cornucopias are called “wallets” or “mobile phones”.

white and as flawless as newly fallen snow on an undisturbed grave; and her raven-dark hair was flaxen with the profusion of chains and medallions and crosses of gold.

Her expression was imperious, as always; her features were immaculately adorned and made doll-like by make-up, as always; and the make-up was of the latest fashion, as always, for what Harmonia wore was, by definition, the latest fashion.

The fittings of her body and her adornments were without a fault: and so was the shell they so presented. Hers was not the sensual beauty of her mother, but a more paternal appearance; the form of a queen whose cold beauty and raw power strikes men dumb, and women servile; the sort of beauty that inspires a thousand deeds of valor, but not a single kiss.

As she sat on a bare block of gilt granite and held court, a chorus of mortal girls in modest white stood by as her chorus; and they were the echo and the anticipation of all that she said. Soliloquy was not

fitting for her; and verily, did not the very earth groan hearing as she spoke; did not wild animals bow down in meekness and submission as she addressed them?

Those animals that did not, soon came to regret that mistake.

So in the garden of Aphrodite, the grass was alive with a green glow, and the flowers hung against each other whispering of blooms to come — and so, within, Harmonia sat on her throne, playing by herself the game of thrones.

“I think”, Harmonia said, “maybe I should call myself Concordia. Maybe Concordia Augusta.”

“What is that, o Mistress?” her chorus asked.

Harmonia smirked, and smiled; the first rather ruined the second. “It is in the language of a very promisingly obedient and regimented tribe of barbarians, a tribe fairly yearning for the iron fist of order, the words Her Majesty Harmony. Maybe even Con-

cordia Augusta Duodecima.⁴

“What is—” the chorus began, but before they could finish, the chamber door slammed open.

⁴That is, “Harmony Majestic Twelve”, which later came to be the name for one of Harmonia’s councils, the so-called “Tru Man Group” of Grey-faces. For some reason every incarnation, devotee and accomplice of Harmonia tends towards either black and white, or then grey.

Black and white: all corporate types (dressed in B&W), the Moral Majority, monochrome clowns (always evil), chessmen (fondness for chess correlates strongly with genocidal tendencies), Pokemon (i.e. P: Black and White), “Black is evil white is good” (West), “Black is good white is evil (East), racism (always binary choices), penguins (well obviously), police cars (commonly called “black and white pig vans”), Oreo cookies (mfd by KKK), the ying yang symbol, many false dilemmas, etc.

Grey: the Greys of Roswell, Gruad, Gandalf the Grey (later Gandalf the White and, in the abandoned sequel, *The New Shadow*, Gandalf the Black), the UK Grey Power terrorist organization, Confederate Greys, Grey goo, Dorian Gray, Martin “Grey Eminence” Bormann, the infamous Louisville Grays, and Cardinal “Être Gris” Richelieu.

VI

In came a whirlwind of silk, black and red, and a cartwheeling, somersaulting thing within; and as it came to rest under Harmonia's throne, it was seen to be a woman, one side of her face painted white, except the eye and the mouth in wells of black; and the other side the other way round.

"I am Eris!" she cried. "Sister to the God of War, and willingly seeking battle! I stand for what I stand for and I bleed and cry for it! Felicitations and salutations, dear and nice niece of mine; speak, and I shall listen."

In answer to this, Harmonia did not speak; electing to really show her outrage

she stood, and standing made with her immaculate forehead a contact with the libation-bowl held over her; and falling back to her behind in a cascade of rosewater, she gaped in surprise.

“I am no niece!” she finally gasped.

“Now,” the newcomer chided, “speak niecely, or I’ll have your father spank you! And your mother have a word with you! And your court titter at you!”

To this, too, Harmonia gasped an answer; the gasp being “Gnarr,” more or less; it failed to convey much meaning.

The words after that conveyed more meaning; and considerable emotion.

“Who? What? How? You dare...you are...what do you mean, *niece*?”

With an abominably wide grin, and a low bow, Eris answered: “Why, if I am to be in the house of your father, I must be a kin of you. And as we are so disparate in toys, I should not be your sister; I shall be your aunt, then. Or would you I should be an ancestor of greater distance,

my beloved... child?"

And with a gale of laughter, she took a bow and stormed away, shouting: "Bar my way, and pay the price! Stand aside, and be spared!"

Harmonia's guards stood aside, and were spared; Eris left, and Harmonia went spare.

VII

Thus first met Harmonia and Eris, enemies as only a trueborn daughter and one adopted could be.

At once Harmonia sent out her people to find out who this thing had been, and whether they truly were related.

And by “her people” that is truly meant; lesser rulers may raise others so their being is contingent on the tyrant’s continued existence, and so earn undying loyalty, or seek to raise the young in their own image, for unthinking obedience; but Harmonia’s people were her not by award or possession, but by brute creation: and they being her creations, they were her toys to play

with, and to expend on any tasks she saw as fit.

That anyway was her opinion.

Why, as a child she had, one day in her mother's garden, shaped out of clay a boy of great beauty, and a girl of loveliness impossible to describe, and breathed life into them: and she had played with the two until the clay began to crack and she had to run away to sleep.

The next day she returned to the clay shapes, and found them twisted like twigs, cracked like bad pottery, shivering like dying birds: and she gave them life again, and they played again for a day, and were perfectly happy — until she once again had to go, this time to brush her mother's hair.

The third day was as the second: the clay was worn, and the spirits inside in pain — but her touch made the two beautiful once again. But as the day turned away from the noon, the girl began to cry, and little Harmonia could not tell why.

And the boy asked if the goddess could not make them like she herself was, for in her absence they suffered, and their nights were fever and decay, and the clay showing over the charm above, and despite the life below: and they would fain play with the goddess nights also, if they only could.

Later that day, Aphrodite happened across her child, making sparrows out of clay, and sending those sparrows up into the yawning celestial sky.

And she shuddered to see one of them had wings in the likeness of a small girl's hands — but by then the sparrow was up into the void, and was never seen again.

VIII

So at once Harmonia sent out her people to find out who this thing had been, and whether they truly were related.

Her people were deathless, but not immune to the deadly word of her displeasure; and as loyal as those only can be, who can die with the speaking of one syllable of ill.

IX

“Go forth,” Harmonia said; and having went forth they came back.

“Go forth again,” Harmonia said, “and this time bring me the word on who this Eris is, and what she does and desires.” Thus they did, and returning wove one story of their observations: a longish, lurid story for not one detail of the four accounts was omitted. And they came to Harmonia, to present to her their story.

“My court will listen to me,” Harmonia said.

Her court did.

In addition to servants too inconsequential for her to notice, there were four present:

all dimmer reflections of Harmonia's own shine; all tall, martial women of serious aspect, clad in white and crowned with modest gold. They were western barbarians, come from beyond the narrow sea; and only Harmonia knew if they were mortals or lesser gods.

The first was Pax, that is, in their barbarian language, Peace; she was solemn and grave, and as quiet as the grave.

The second was Salus, that is, Wellness, a maid that would not know a single day of illness, not even if it bit her on the ankle.

The third was Securitas, that is, Security, who never said a good-day.

The fourth was Fortuna, that is, Fortune, and on her crown was written, **many I give, from those that are lost to me.**

And this is the gist of what they told.

X

It was a dark place, a mountain, a valley in a mountain, with fell lights casting shadows, and a shadowless clearing in the center: far from all, and close to the heart of the mountain.

And Eris spoke: "Behold, the weight of the dead lies heavy on the world."

Phobos raised his trumpet, and blew; the sound faded like an echoing scream.

"They that lived are no more; yet no Hades will take them, no Elysium is there to welcome them," Eris said.

Deimos drummed, the sound like the hooves of an army fading into the distance.

“The world is woven by Fate; the world is a tattoo on the skin of the Great Mother; the world is All-Father’s dying froth; and these deaths are heavy on that taut shroud.”

Enyo struck the mountain with his barbed blade, and the mountain shuddered in pain.

Eris spoke for the fourth time; then after a pause for the fifth. “Here is a wound to inflame the world by the fever of death. Here is a blade, to tear through skin into the vitals of the world.”

“Pour forth, blood of the world.”

XI

And Harmonia said, "That is not good."⁵

Ever afterwards she considered Eris an enemy of great cunning, of boundless malice: a hunter for the world's ending, and a chaser after nihilistic goals and the means of the All-End, a dæmon of impenetrable duplicity and perversion: a monster whose rotten mind is not to be probed, lest a

⁵And Pax said, "There is more, and worse." And Salus said: "And what of the sad fate of the widow's son?" And Securitas added, "Or the incident of the thin dough ribbons of my homeland, of which only allusions are whispered, and no more?" And even Fortuna whispered: "Would there be such rumor of the harlot, if there was no truth in it?"

cave-in trap one inside, and insight turn the looking glass into a mirror.⁶

Ever afterwards she was wary against Eris, and all her people likewise: sure that to fail once could mean a cataclysm beyond the ability of words to describe: a New World Order, a Year Zero, a Parousia of gibbering horrors from the Beyond. Ever afterwards the merest hint of discord was enough to cause sweat, and bulging eyes, and trembling hands, and shuffling feet, and conscripted armies, and turning heads, and flocking agents, and pursed wrinkled mouths, and towering files, and wrinkled noses, and webbed theories of fear, and fluoride in the water and dynamite in the tower, and disassociations and crack-downs and running unpologies, as every agent of Harmonia reared at the scent of that of which they had been warned at the start of time.

⁶Why yes, a looking glass *is* a mirror already, but doesn't that sound nice?

Thus, remember, you who are now wise to this — remember this is why the policeman looks twice, why the nun does not laugh, why the bureaucrat says no. It is because they are terrified of the Beast That Was Told; and being terrified they dare not let go, and are left flailing in pools of their own poo.

All this for Eris, who coming in had announced: “I am Eris! Sister to the God of War, *and willingly seeking battle!*” — for never say Strife did not announce herself properly.

XII

As this has been an important matter, it might be explained one more time. In later days, Drakon was Harmonia's son, and became a tyrant of Athens, giving the harsh Draconian Law.

Alike Fesmus was Eris's son, the exile and pirate whose ranks those hard laws swelled — so ever, and forever, what Harmonia's mind conceives, in the end only Eris pleases. Order is a forge, and its plentiful dross is chaos; a sword against disorder is a blade doomed to break against the children of its creation.

Law was Harmonia's invention; and the brood of lawyers one of Eris.

Both were foul inventions, tending to turn away from their makers if left to be overlong: old laws become a dance, and in dancing more of Eris than of Harmonia; and old lawyers lose their rapier wit, and become cynics and bludgeons of no heart.

So ever too much of Harmonia becomes Eris; and too much Eris becomes Harmonia, and then becomes Eris again: for Eris was only an adopted daughter of War's Ares, only a make-believe aunt of Harmonia's; for in truth she is an unbegotten daughter of Nyx, the Night, that out of nothing at all, and all alone, bore this daughter to triumph over all her daughters and sons, and herself too; this goddess, this queen of all colors and hues, this transparent dancer of molten glass, that we embrace to see more, though her touch burns.

(Or "this curvaceous goddess the squares cannot appreciate", if we want to be egregiously Sixties about it.)

Or in the words of Ino, the White God-

dess, one of Harmonia's children and the first racist: "Castrate the tangly-haired blonde blue-eyed bar-bar people!"

XIII

Harmonia married Cadmus, a Phoenician prince and future king and founder of Thebes. Their children were Semele, Ino, Polydorus, Autoñoë and Agave, and the youngest son, Illyrius.

Also Drakon.

Of these children, Semele was the mother of Dionysus, and of the hiding of vices.

Ino was the mother of national pride and costumes, and of looking out for one's own.

Polydorus, or someone of the same name, became the god of celebrity impersonation.

Autoñoë was the mother of public repentance, and of getting caught.

Agave, who wanted to be called the Illustrious One; she married well and gave her husband numerous children to carry on his name.

Illyrius became the founder and namer of the Illyrians. He was born during a campaign his father waged against the Illyrians.

It was a complicated time.

