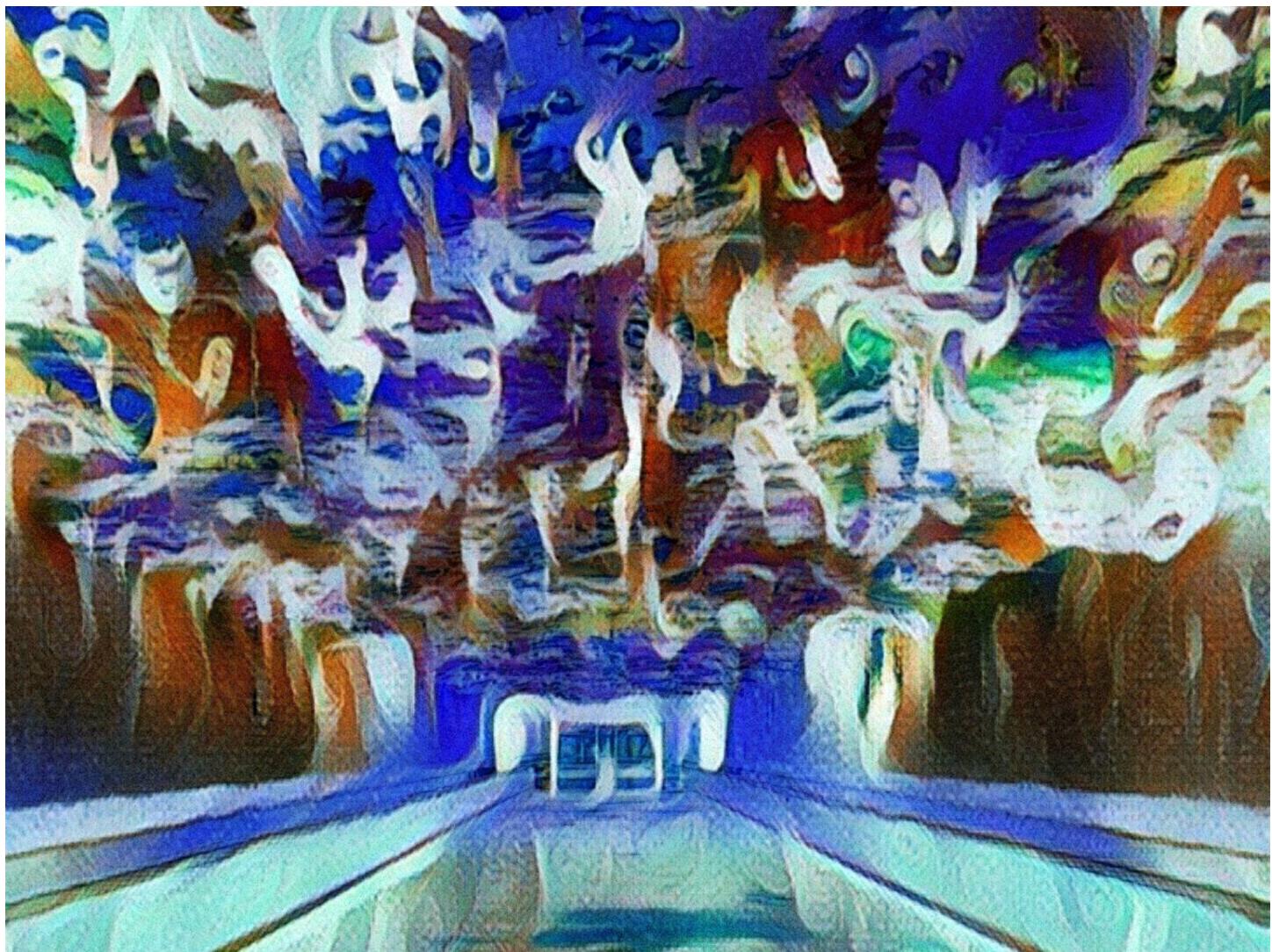


The Sensationalist: #13

12/14/22

"Vices are an escape from our problems; problems are an escape from the present"



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SONNET IV: PERSONAL MESSIAH

HENRY LEVITT

Listen child, for we are wretched
From birth to the grave. And there's ONE,
A SOUL descended; God-fetched,
Who's PROPHESIED to bow to none.

Us mortals pray for deliverance
From burning heat and freezing rain,
Destructive vice AND pestilence,
Crushing burdens and crippling pain.

Yet one WILL LEAD with staff in hand
And rise from nothing, unforeseen:
For it is YOU who makes the stand
AGAINST all the FOES who lie between
Liberation. Trust the BEING
That your consciousness is freeing.

Shut The Fuck Up, Loser

Thaddeus Basil Smith

Life is horrid.
That's what everyone
tries to convince me.

I do not know
anymore
of who I am,
so they will
make my decisions

I believe,
yes,
life is horrid,
and I want to show
how everyone has made me feel
since I have grown.

I will make life horrid
for all those who
have ruined it for me,
and I hope they truly feel
how bad life can be.

“VMS”

Leo Santisi



The Sensational Times

New Archeological Research Shows Humans Evolved to Sit in Front of Glowing Rectangles for Hours at a Time

Henry Levitt

Dakar, Senegal, December 13th - A growing body of archaeological evidence compiled by the Institute of a Virtual Future for Humanity suggests that humans may have evolved over 200,000 years to sit in front of glowing rectangles for 6-10 hours a day. At the Institute's most recent dig, a hunter-gatherer burial site outside Dakar, Senegal dating back 50,000 years, unpaid interns found blueprints to a primitive computer. While there is no evidence that the computer was ever built, the discovery has shifted the current paradigm in the field.

Dr. Biggabaugh, a highly published anthropology researcher currently completing his 17th dissertation at Harvard University, explains how the new findings fit into the current understanding. “You see, before the team unearthed the blueprints, the earliest evidence of humans realizing their peak physiological purpose of stagnating in virtual isolation in front of glowing rectangles of various sizes, or GROVS for short, dates back to a 30,000 year old cave painting in modern day Algeria.” The PhD candidate continued, “This finding is truly groundbreaking in its scope as it dispels counterarguments from critics who claim that the computer was a post-industrial conception.”

The idea that humans were built to be physically isolated and sitting for many hours of the day, or the “glowing rectangle theory” (GRT), has been controversial in academia for a number of years. Opponents of the theory point to the existence of legs, a need for socialization, and adverse health effects correlated with stagnation as their primary points of contention. When asked if these arguments weaken the GRT stance, evolutionary anthropologist and current marketing director at Dell, Dr. Posner responded, “Well that’s a stupid question. You should be asking how people would feel if they didn’t have access to their glowing rectangles.”

Dr. Posner makes a statistically valid point. A survey conducted in 2021 by Facebook resident conspiracy theorist JFK Jr. found that “at least 100% of respondents” used GROVS “at or around the same time of completing the survey”. Kennedy Jr. also found that nine out of ten respondents agreed that GROVS “are a necessary part of human life”. Finally, he reported that a majority of respondents believe “man evolved alongside glowing screens with the help of God”. The Times did not receive a

response after reaching out to Mr. Kennedy Jr. regarding his conflicting viewpoints on evolution and creationism. Regardless, the data creates a straightforward conclusion: man cannot live without glowing rectangles.

Dr. Posner argues that these results indicate that man has always existed alongside at least the idea of such rectangles. She continued her point, “Based on the current data, it’s clear that when humans have access to glowing rectangles, they will stagnate in front of them for hours a day. Therefore, given our evolutionary affinity to GROVS, it’s truly astounding that some anthropologists still do not accept the glowing rectangle theory.”

~

As a strong proponent of science, the Times implores its readers to consider advances made by the Institute of a Virtual Future for Humanity. GRT deniers pose a dangerous threat to the future of industrial society and therefore the Times cannot condone such false beliefs.

The 72nd Floor

Frankie Vinehardt III

It will be on the 72nd floor that I will reside. My office will be large - not grand - furnished with mahogany bookshelves and a desk slightly too large for the room. Within the shelves will be entombed a collection of monochrome burgundy spines that I will never touch. My secretary is to dust these tomes twice a day when delivering my meals. I will dine at the hours of 10 am and 8 pm - on the dot. For I will require that daily my life be anchored by at least two reminders of the reality of my condition. I will wear suits, beige, and smoke an old calabash that will emanate putrid vitality of my thoughts as long as I am still living. And I will write. I will write every day. I will write until my body rejects my mind and what remains of my sanity is mere scraps of a once eccentric man - and then I will write some more. Occasionally I will stand by my window looking out on the poor souls who will never experience true love - no, love past love, love to the point of destruction. Every day as I fill pages upon pages with scrawlings of a mad man, I will lose myself slightly more in the art of existing. One day, I will finally forget I exist at all - save for the words I leave behind.

Fiend

(n): a person who is excessively fond of or addicted to something

I'm a fiend for your smile
I'm a fiend for your touch
I'm a fiend for your attention
I'm a fiend for your love
You're my choice of drug
The one I use to get high
But when I come crashing down
My legs give out and I cry
You're an addiction I can't give up
You're a drug I can't let go
I try to ignore you
Even though I love you so

You're my light in the darkness
The moon to my sun
All I want is for you to notice me
All I want is for you to be the one
But the highs and lows
The ups and downs
Do nothing for me
But leave me on the ground
So shoot me another needle
Give me another dose
Just so I can be
Comatose

- L.K. McDonald

“Crumbs”

Leo Santisi



When Darkness Brings Light

Henry Levitt

Sitting on the darkening beach, guitar in hand, I pluck the notes to “Dust in the Wind” by Kansas--one of the first songs I ever learned. As I face towards the ocean sunset, back to the boardwalk, I have other thoughts on my mind: never in my life have I beheld the sight of a truly dark night sky with its atavistic whorls of constellations and a clear view of the galaxy.

*Darkness falls upon the meadow, owls call from ‘cross the hollow--
Milky Ways of Odyssies, Orion’s belt and Heracles,
Looking skyward I was not misled,
Letting all but go unsaid;
Bading fate, “go ahead”*

Perhaps I will have to enjoy the sunset for now...which is not a difficult task. With its pastel azures, muted siennas, and subtle corals, the sunset seems to dye the wisps of clouds a shade of salmon. Then, as the sun finally dips below the horizon, the artificial lamplight floods the sandy beach.

*A stranger calls from out the dark, “Shooting stars will heed their arc,”
“Stranger”, says he unto me, “the nighttime sky sets you free,”
Sitting with a stoic face:
“Sometimes we forget our place,”
Answers, I, “a true disgrace.”*

The lamplight does illuminate my way walking along the beach, but it also obscures what humans have relied on for countless generations. Once upon a time we used the stars for navigation, for keeping time, for stories. But our industrialized world has blotted out the universe with its city lights that shine from sundown to sunup.

*Vast expanses of the sky, passing slowly by and by,
Stellar views to dwarf the Earth, divine musings of worldly dearth;
Life appears the worth of naught,
This advice the heavens hath brought,
“Stranger please, recall this thought.”*

Kicking the warm sand, I watch as the grains catch the cool zephyr for a few seconds and settle back to a place of rest. The sand does not see its place among the millions of billions of identical grains on the beach. Perhaps we, too, do not see our place in the universe. Life moves too fast. Modern society has prevented us from looking up at the starry night sky and seeing the vast cosmos. It has prevented us from putting everything into perspective and seeing our true insignificance. But one day, *one day*, I will make the journey to a truly dark field, untainted by the petty qualms and distractions of life, and finally see where I belong.

What Are We?

01. What are “we”?

- a. I mean the part of us we’re aware of--
 - i. The part that unquestionably *exists*.
- b. Maybe you want to call it the “self”,
- c. or maybe the consciousness.

02. Regardless of its name, what is it?

- a. What is it made of?
- b. The only thing I know that exists internally is my current thought,
 - i. because I am aware of it right now.
- c. So then it must be my thought.
 - i. And I perceive continuity in thought from moment to moment.
- d. So then it must be thought flow.

03. But what causes a person’s specific thought flow?

- a. ...Nature and nurture of course.
 - i. There’s too much evidence that we reflect our biology,
 - ii. and there’s too much evidence that we reflect our experiences.
- b. We can talk about biology later.
 - i. And there we will have the big question:
 - ii. Does consciousness transcend biology?
- c. But for now,

04. What are experiences made of?

- a. They’re made of our external perceptions--that is, interacting with the world.
- b. For us to perceive, to ruminate, and everything in between, that world creates the “content”.
- c. Many people like to call this the “subconscious”.
 - i. It’s the immediate judgements attached to everything,
 - ii. that we learn over time;
 - iii. through experience.
 - iv. “Memes” if you will.
- d. Our memes and the ever-changing content shapes what we think about.
- e. It allows biology to do its “magic”.

05. And what does biology do to create us?

- a. Our brains have capabilities and functions.
- b. These will automatically happen when exposed to content that activates it.
- c. For example:
 - i. making memories (events)
 - ii. sexual arousal (biological attraction/libido)
 - iii. feeling emotions (exciting events)
 - iv. language (if you believe Chomsky)
 - v. reasoning (event patterns)
 - vi. higher order reasoning (conscious mind using memetic building blocks)

06. So does that mean “we” exist entirely inside our biology?

- a. Kind of.

- b. If content didn't exist we may not either.
 - c. If existence didn't exist, we certainly wouldn't.
 - d. So you can't really assign a tangibility to consciousness.
07. Now to answer how existence and content exist...
- a. I don't know.
 - i. We know they exist (because we do).
08. But the mechanisms that cause them?
09. Let alone why it exists in the first place?

Your guess is as good as mine.

-Henry Levitt

THE ENERGY DRINK EXPERIMENT

Much like the purpose of the Stanford Prison Experiment, my goal is to test the limits of an organism in a highly contrived, very unscientific way. Instead of holding 24 male college students captive in a basement and subjecting them to inhuman treatment, I will be watering basil seedlings with different energy drinks. I aim to forever avoid drinking the beverages that kill the basil plants.

Though I am not a basil plant (as some avid readers may know) I still believe the results will lend important insights into acceptable and unacceptable beverages for one's health. I will be using Reign "Total Body Fuel" because it is the primary energy drink I default to when I want to get the shits. If any readers have other suggestions please text me at 203-800-5800 by next Wednesday (12/14/22).

This has been The Sensationalist: #13

"Humanity is a terminal condition"⁹⁹