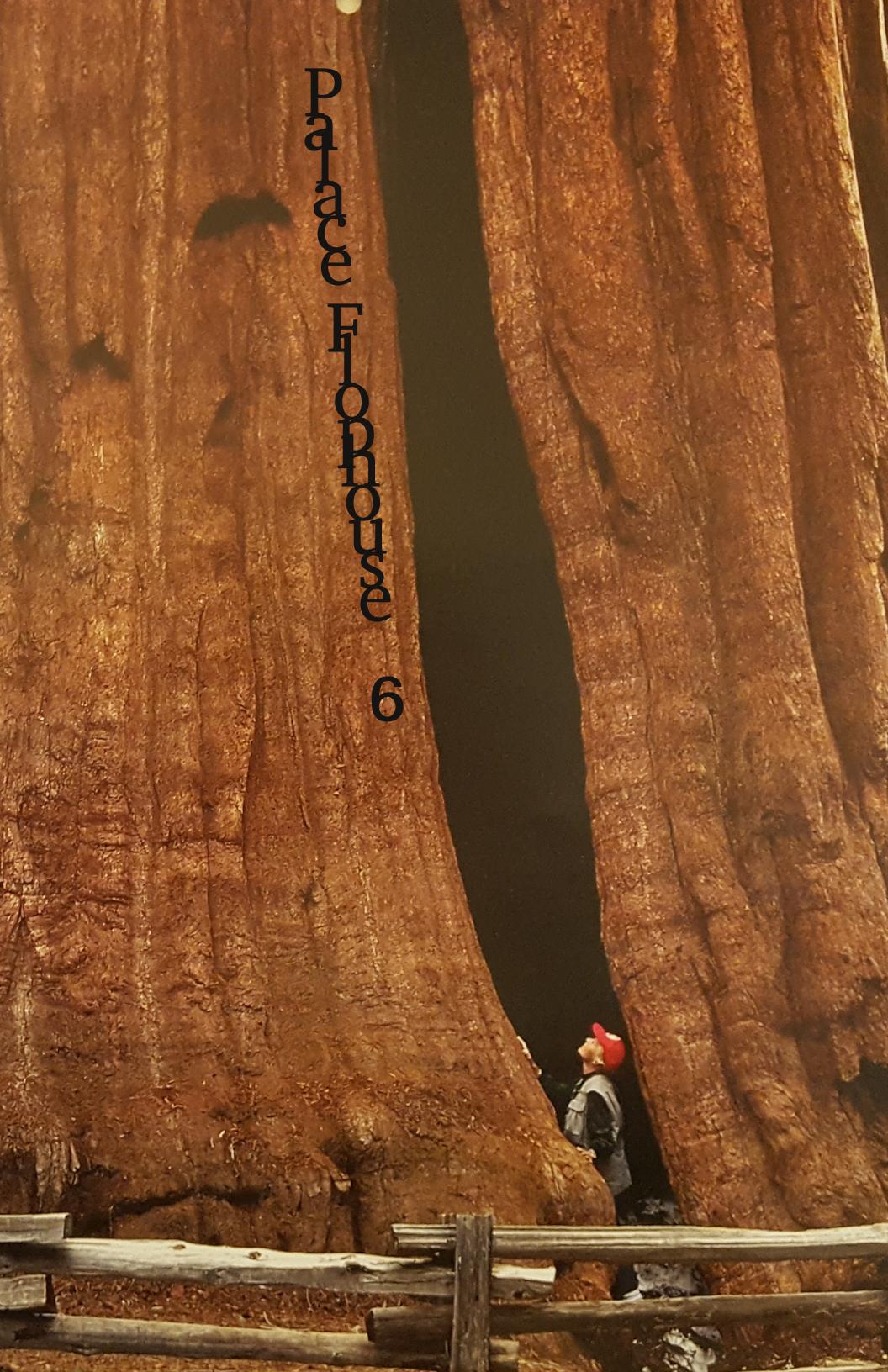


Palace Florhouse

6



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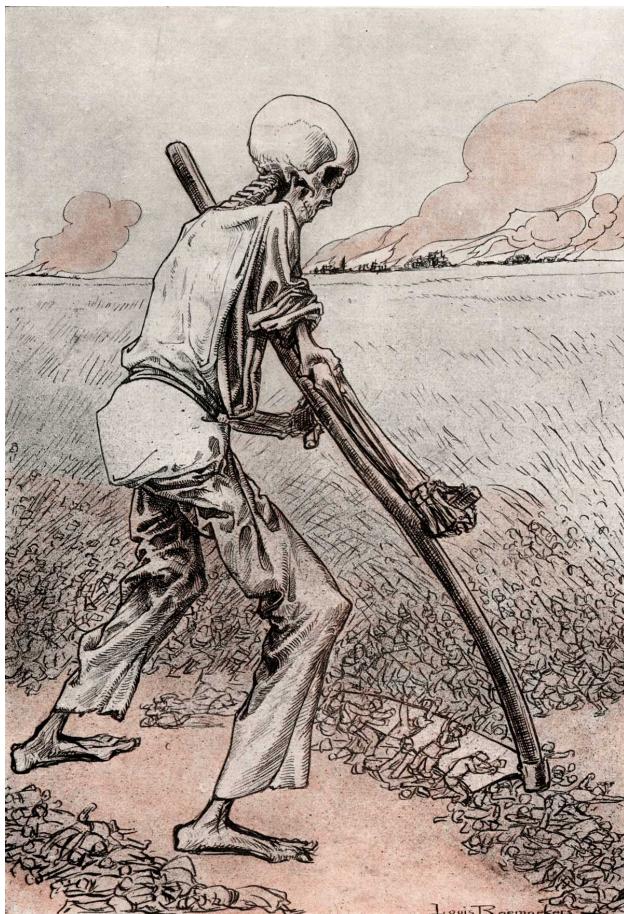
Thoughts on "stuff" (as in "stuff" itself)

Ode to the Typewriter

Technology and You

A better digital life/Surveillance Capitalism

The funnies



Mark Powers, Spring 2020
mark@marks.kitchen

Best Vampire Movies

1. Bram Stoker's Dracula
2. Blade
3. What We Do In the Shadows
4. Dracula (2020 series)
5. John Carpenter's Vampires
6. Scooby-Doo! and the Legend of the Vampire



Bram Stoker's Dracula is a near perfect Dracula movie. It is beautiful. Dracula (1931) is made much better when paired with Philip Glass' retrospective score for it. Nosferatu is a great movie, however it is



CODED CODE

#/bin/python3

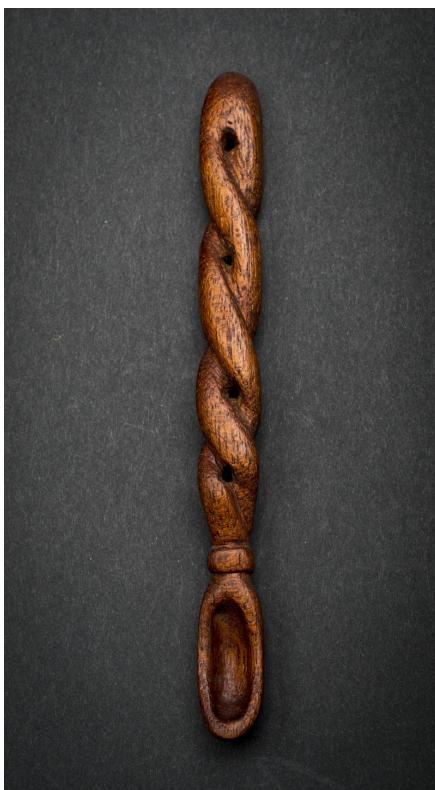
```
b='big';c='ascii';import base64  
  
a=lambda x:106421211243795979 if x < 1 else 1261158707*a(7) if x  
is 10 else 191*a(0) if x is 7 else 2*a(10)  
  
print(base64.b64encode(a(9).to_bytes(96,b))[112:]).decode(c))
```

What our museums now exhibit as the "art" of other cultures and ancient times are religious, magical, and household utensils exquisitely and lovingly made....No one ever made anything for the express purpose of adorning a museum, of being shown in a gallery, or for being commended in newspapers.

The wheel extends the foot. Brush, chisel, hammer, and saw extend the hand. But electric circuitry extends the brain itself as an externalization of the nervous system, and will therefore perform wonders of art which have not heretofore been seen.

Alan Watts, Art with a Capital A





"If we believed that the existence of the world is rooted in mystery and in sanctity, then we would have a different economy. It would still be an economy of use, necessarily, but it would be an economy also of return. The economy would have to accommodate the need to be worthy of the gifts we receive and use, and this would involve a return of propitiation, praise, gratitude, responsibility, good use, good care, and a proper regard for the unborn. What is most conspicuously absent from the industrial economy and industrial culture is this idea of return. Industrial humans relate themselves to the world and its creatures by fairly direct acts of violence. Mostly we take without asking, use without respect or gratitude, and give nothing in return."

Wendell Berry, Agrarian Society

ODE TO THE TYPEWRITER - Dedicated to Earl Hillon

I repaired this old typewriter from my girlfriend Kellyanne. It is a 1939 Corona Sterling portable. The machine and case are good overall, but most of the keys were not working. I initially tried to find how to disassemble the shell, but I quickly found out that these machines are not meant to come apart. Instead, I worked with two pairs of needle-nose pliers and a headlamp to reach in and unbend the connections. It took several hours, but I finally got them all back into place (and nothing broke in the process). I replaced the ink ribbon too, and it is now typing great. The keys work kind of like a piano, each button connects to a little lever, which swings up the hammer that imprints a character onto the paper by forcing down the ink ribbon. There are still some issues, as you may notice the double typing of certain characters (seems noticeable with " ". (see it? now look back through this text)). A few of the keys are sticking, but really only a few. I just found out that uppercase "K" is having some issues too. Overall, it types well; the other errors you see are just me getting used to the machine (not that I am great at typing on a computer either (though I am still fairly fast). I am fairly bad at spelling).

"The absence of limitations is the enemy of art."

Orson Welles



Technology and You

I have a degree in Computer Science, and when you tell people that there are three possible responses. Firstly, people will tell you their tech issues that they should just search online about. Some people will start to tell you their amazing idea for the next Facebook. Or, people will ask you about how scary AI is. Personally, I am most afraid of how comptuer technology has rapidly changed our culture. We have lost mass media. News is too fast to fact check. Digital information is now misinformation. Consumerism, the worst thing in our society, is made much easier now when we have the ability to order anything online, from books, to taxis, to meals. The major problem with our current model is the focus on pure market growth. There is no "big enough". The big companies expand constantly to grow more in control of our lives, inventing new problems to convince us to entrench our lives more into their products, whether through built in dating, facial identification, or single sign on. The internet has the greatest power of any human invention, and it has been stolen by a handful of corporations who have give us minor conveince, while taking away our information freedom. We are being cheated into a dark age of digital exploration, and are going gently, into that good night.

"In a civilization devoted to the strictly abstract and mathematical ideal of making the most money in the least time, the only sure method of success is to cheat the customer, to sell various kinds of nothingness in pretentious packages. Spray your watery tomatoes with wax to make them look real. But then, having made the money, there is nothing real to buy with it because everyone else is cheating in the same way." - Alan Watts

Ideas for living better digital life:

Visit strange websites. Most internet traffic is just to a handful of big websites (Facebook, Reddit, Instagram, Twitter). Instead of using these to aggregate news stories, go visit the websites those stories are coming from. Use an RSS reader (such as Feedly) to combine posts in a way that is decentralized (RSS gets content from the real website, rather than having to post it to a third party).

Avoid apps and programs by big tech companies if possible. Stop using Google Chrome and switch to an alternative like Firefox (Chrome got big when it had better performance than FF, but now FF is pulling ahead). Use browser extensions like UBlock origin to remove some of the corporate tracking power.

Read slow media. Books are curated, anonymous, cheap, and tangible. Visit websites for local news outlets. Be critical of what you see. Content on aggregate sites can be easily manipulated, possibly through bots (estimated 10% of all tweets are not by people) or by corporate interests creating faking grassroot support.

Use open source software. Open source software is software where the developer is transparent enough to allow other developers to see what code is actually being run by a program. This makes it hard for a developer to hide malicious activity, such as surveillance. Open source software can even be more secure than proprietary software, as it allows for peer review. Not all open source software is without licensing restriction, but it is a step in the right direction.

An Introduction to Surveillance Capitalism:

Corporations have turned away from the traditional ways of making money and are now selling user data. This is different than anything prior, a new era for capitalism. They sell nothing to consumers, and harvest the resource of human behavior, and there is no protection of the consumer in place. These companies prey on your base instincts in order to influence your behavior to make them more money. For example, on your social network feed, you read and like a comment about how someone enjoyed some product. Now, you will be shown advertisements for similar products. These recommendations are so accurate to what we are thinking about, there have been numerous rumors that we are being listened to (still a possibility), but the real truth is our human behavior is too predictable. This goes beyond just 'better ads' (which some say is a good thing, however all advertisements create an artificial problem that can only be solved by consumption). Companies will use games like Pokemon Go in order to lure players into their businesses. 'Smart' <anything> will create a profile for its users, and use our predictable behavior to be the ultimate salesman. Your refrigerator notices you are out of milk, and orders it automatically for you. "That's strange but ok," you say, as you are now forced to drink a gallon every few days as more shipments arrive, "it knows me so well." Or my car automatically routes me to a gas station that costs a bit more to me, but it's so convenient as it takes you right there. These things aren't bad, but they are made possible by the predictability of our behavior. This technology does not respect your autonomy, you are simply going to accept whatever it gives you. In order for these things to work, we are giving up our free will. Our technology should follow our commands, not the other way around.

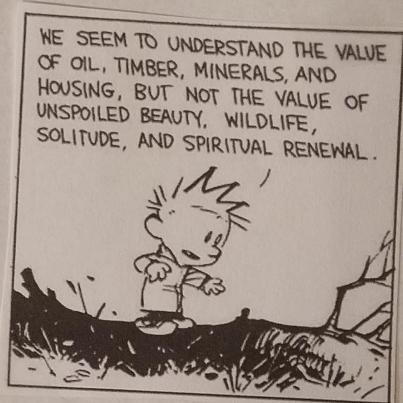
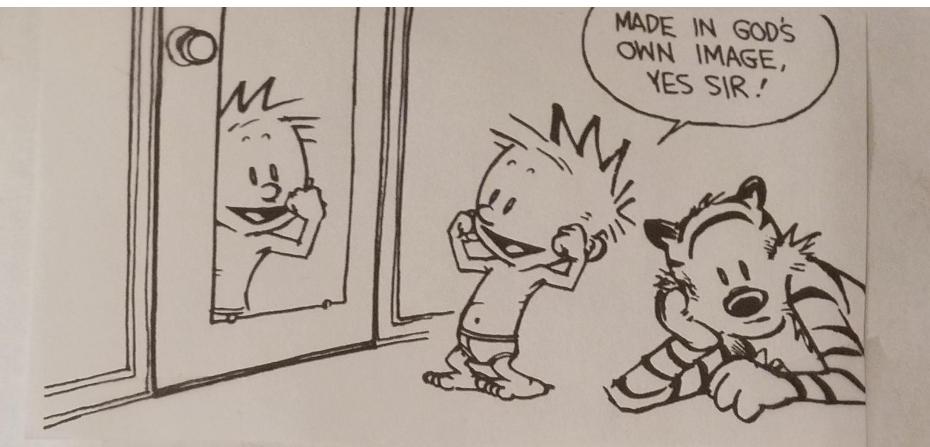
DON'T YOU THINK
THAT'S A PRETTY
SILLY AND
IRRESPONSIBLE
WAY TO LIVE?

I'M YET ANOTHER RESOURCE-CONSUMING
KID IN AN OVERPOPULATED PLANET,
RAISED TO AN ALARMING EXTENT BY
MADISON AVENUE AND HOLLYWOOD, POISED
WITH MY CYNICAL AND ALIENATED
PEERS TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD
WHEN YOU'RE OLD AND WEAK!



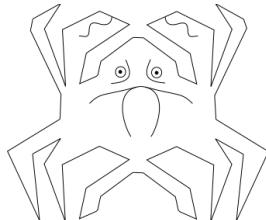
I'M RELATED TO
PEOPLE I DON'T
RELATE TO.





Send me your address and I'll send you a letter.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,



and never brought to mind?