

Letters to the Editors

No. 7: "Where No One Thought of Going Before" January 1, 2015
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Journal by Anna M. Szaflarski.

Letters from the Editors: Steve Paul, "Time-Trivials", Pg 6.

"We stopped to produced this issue on January 1st, 2015, while travelling unconventionally through time. Before distributing it, however, we were on our way again. It's hard to explain, but just beware of confusing tense changes throughout. We had a hard time keeping track of which time we were living in and in which we were writing." (Anna S.)

Stick in the Mud

Something changes when you travel through time. You can move freely like flipping through pages of a magazine, forwards and backwards, and scan from the top to the bottom, and vice versa. The passage of time becomes incredibly light, you are not attached to any particular event, you hold no stakes in wars or victories, revolutions or evolutions. Each moment becomes as insignificant as the next, and curious patterns that did not seem obvious or interesting to scientists and historians alike begin to catch your attention.

Spaghetti is most popular when coinciding with an influx of fireflies. Words animated life when nose picking became an epidemic. Those are the kind of things that catch your attention. Another thing you notice is a strange accumulation of certain characters throughout history. Instead of living and dying, some living beings reappear time and again. I observed this on many occasions and deduced that they weren't caught in some kind of cyclical reincarnation, like some faiths offer as an explanation but more like running on a skipping record. I'm convinced that the reappearing characters are connected to each other somehow, but I couldn't figure out how exactly. They were often chasing some desire, some object, some person, maybe, that they believed to be just out of reach, always managing to slip away. And they run like that through time los-

ing their way, catching up, and losing it again. It's all very hard to explain, of course, but what I'm trying to say is that when you travel through time, you notice that other people are travelling through time as well, but strangely enough they don't seem to be aware of it. I was consumed during my trip with watching the world from an general perspective, studying the spaghetti boxes as they flew off the supermarket shelves and the dark woods fill with bioluminescence. The reappearing characters would instead show up again, again, with a determination that could only be carried by someone who does not feel the lightness of time.

When I returned to this, our shared time, I sat down immediately to try to find a way to explain what I had seen.

I visited the Niagara Falls many times on my travels, I watched the eroding ridge of the cascade, and then went back to see it grow back again like the finger nails of an infatuated teenager. Pretty much as soon as humans found the location of the waterfalls they started throwing themselves down it. That is a fact. When the first woman sent herself down the cliff there was a barely visible pink eye infection ravaging the rhinoceros beetle population, and an artefact that looks a bit like a paperclip was being made by thousands of villagers in the northern hemisphere.

May 6, 1895

A Dog in the Rapids Above the Falls.

From The Niagara Falls Cataract, May 6.

A dog on what is known as Avery's rock in the rapids, above the American falls, created considerable excitement early yesterday. The animal had apparently been thrown into the river, as he had a rope attached to a heavy article around his neck. John McCloy of the inclined railway attempted to shoot the animal and end his suffering, but the bullets went wide of the mark. The dog finally jumped into the rapids and went over the falls.

March 25, 1925

DOG MAROONED AT NIAGARA.

Army Sharpshooter Hits Animal on Islet and It Plunges Over Falls.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y., March 25.—Marooned on a tiny islet in the upper rapids of the Niagara River 200 feet above the brink of the American Falls, a mongrel dog was shot today by a sharpshooter from the army post at Fort Porter to keep the animal from starving to death.

Every effort of rivermen, city firemen and reservation employes to reach the dog failed. Then policemen tried to shoot the animal, but failed. The commandant at Fort Porter was asked to send his best rifle shot here to kill the dog. The soldier hit the dog with his first shot. The wounded animal leaped into the rapids and was carried over the falls.

I took very little notice of the people throwing themselves down the falls. Some did it accidentally, others for faith, suicide or attention. All in all, there has been quite a few who have or will still do it. It was a particular incident that caught my attention.

Between 1895 and 1925 the Niagara Falls eroded or moved backwards upstream by some 30 meters. It was barely noticeable to the thousands of tourists who visited it every day. I visited both time periods, and found the former profile of the cavern to be more to my liking.

Now, I wouldn't have believed it either unless I saw it with my own eyes, but would you believe me if I told you that it was the very same dog trapped on the rocks on both days thirty years apart? And that it was the very same man who tried to shoot it? [read articles on left page]

I was surprised to find the newspaper articles from those days report that the man tried to shoot the dog apparently in order to end its suffering. What a silly conclusion! It is an explanation written by reporters who feel the weight of each moment on their shoulders. If they had only known that a strange mutation evolved in two different insect species, each respectively one day after each of the mentioned incidents, they might have come to very different result.

While thinking about another matter completely, I caught myself watching a tightrope artist walk high above the Niagara Falls in 1886. The stunt held my attention for a moment before I lost interest and flipped a few pages in this or that direction, stopping immediately on spotting the man who tried to shoot the dog in 1895 and apparently succeeded in 1925 [read article on right] Indeed, a long way he came.

June 11, 1886

JUMPED FROM GOAT ISLAND BRIDGE.

BUFFALO, N. Y., June 10.—Niagara Falls can claim another victim. Between 9 and 10 o'clock this morning a man then unknown walked onto the bridge leading to Goat Island. When about half way across he threw his hat off, and with a run sprang over the railing and disappeared in the tumbling waters beneath, being immediately swept over the falls. That it was an act of deliberate suicide none can doubt. To several hackmen near the bridge, who solicited his patronage, he replied that he was tired and had come a long distance by rail. He also made inquiries about the depth of the water at the bridge, the swiftness of the current, whether a man who jumped into the river from the bridge could be saved, &c. Being apparently satisfied on this score, he walked onto the bridge and jumped over. There were several persons on the bridge when the man sprang over the railing, but so quickly did he do it that none realized what he was about until he was gone. From a card found under the sweat band of his hat, it is supposed that the man was Hiram B. Wadsworth, of Holley, N. Y.

I didn't give it much more thought then. Just a man caught on a skipping record, I thought, like so many other beings in this universe. Nevertheless, many times while watching bacteria bore through layers of limestone in fast-forward and in reverse, I would catch the same man returning to the waterfalls time and again. He did not always get his feet wet, so to say. He paced with a determined expression on his face, and often left without incident.

He appeared always the same, completely oblivious to his surroundings. In the company of both a pterodactyl and an android, his expression was constant, his disappointment unchanged. After taking note of his behaviours over a random period of perhaps millions of years, it became obvious to me that the man was fixated on retrieving something he had lost at the base of the falls.

I hadn't noticed the dog at first, but he must have always been close by. I assumed that the dog was even more oblivious to his surrounding than the man. Because it was in fact the man who tied the rocks to the dog, and who had MISSED the dog BOTH times with his gun. At some point or other, I assume the man lost the nerve to dive into the waters himself and therefore trained the dog to retrieve whatever was down there for him. The dog must have been trained for just such a purpose, but still needed some "motivation" to take the plunge, hence the rocks and the shooting. It was all a poorly planned obsession, really.

The newspapers will always report whatever is myopically convenient. Whatever tells a good story. The facts, the names, the places are usually all wrong, all crafted to make something more meaningful than it really is. But on a day in 1931, even I felt a bit sentimental. [read article on right]. Whatever it was that the dog and man were after, they felt the satisfaction of finally retrieving it. Unfortunately it only lasted until the comet shower later that evening, which brought an alien bacteria to our planet, which is a whole other story.

When I saw the dog and the man again, it was far into the future from now. The Niagara Falls had eroded as far back as where Detroit stands today. The dog was holding a gun, the man carried stones.

July 7, 1931

OWNER GETS NIAGARA DOG.

**Claims Animal When He Reads It
Went Over Falls.**

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y., July 6 (P).—A police dog which climaxed a day afield with a successful jaunt over Niagara Falls was back home today.

The animal slipped out of his collar last week while tied in the rear of his home here. His wanderings led him to the falls where he jumped into the river and was carried over the cataract. He landed in a whirlpool beyond the rocks and was rescued by a concession owner. Today his master, Andrew Terogsz, called to claim his pet, saying he had read in the newspapers of his dog's bid for fame.

Steve Paul

Time-Trivials

A Feeling for the Moment

An android serving the United Federation of Planets attempts to grasp the concept of the relative perception of time. For him, time exists as a uniform constant, regulated by his internal chronometer. A more competent form of an internal clock. So, time for an android always runs the same and is unaffected by moods, emotions, distractions or attention. Unlike the human whose perception is entirely influenced by factors such as their feelings, moods, etc.; interferences that cause time to run relatively.

One refers to a human having an internal clock, but it is a product of the cycles of an internal biological process. In comparison to the technical variant, it is much more prone to inaccuracies. In the mental time travel of the android through the moments of its life which it can recall in impressive detail is denied the ability to judge the extraordinariness of these moments by feeling and a specialized perception of time. Its lack of emotion prevents it from differentiating its experiences on the basis of feeling: That night of hot love ended much too quickly, or, the pain in my legs was endless. But the android has evolved over time to acquire new algorithms, which can determine the value of an experience. The hierarchy of each perspective is to be determined once more by the depths of the universe.

Childlike Architectures of Fantasy

To stay within the tradition, Anna S. is referred to by name in the texts, an excerpt of the conversation:

Anna: *It doesn't have to be about time travel.*

Steve: *But why not?*

Traveling through time always strikes me as being longings of dreamers and fantasists. A magical idea, to exist in your own ideal imagination or simply experience adventure. The ability to visit forgotten places or events of the past with knowledge of the future. To rectify earlier mistakes, strangle Hitler directly in his crib or to secretly envision base thoughts about taking advantage.

Like in the story about Biff Tannen, The luckiest Charm on Earth, who gives his younger self in the past a sports chronicle containing all of the betting results over the next 50 years, and becomes the richest and most powerful man in the world.

Visits to the future is on the other hand dominated by the ideas of the present. Have the utopias and prophesied catastrophes come true?

My favorite was always the journey into the exaggerated future, in 10, 20 or 100,000 years. This abstract place, where the image of science fiction often reverts back to medieval concepts. Often in the most degenerate and depraved societies, embedded in super-technologies. As if humanity in the distant future couldn't free themselves from the morass of their own abyss. I prefer to grant my sympathies with Gene Roddenberry's LSD idea of a more humane, tolerant and 'learning from the horrors of the past' kind of future. Even though these stories only bob up and down or start in the next 3-4 centuries, they serve too much as a mirror of the present. Leaving this reflection behind, the exaggerated journey into the future through its abstract overvoltage seems more interesting to me. Given the possibility that the programmable time period is unlimited, I would definitely throw a glance at a million or billion etc. years in the future. Completely out of curiosity, for a little preview, because I cannot wait. Un-

fortunately, it has nothing to do with impatience. Since you couldn't want so long, even if you wanted to.

A favored cliché of traveling into the past would probably be the idea of automatically and directly taking part in important historical events. Not only in an exact moment, but also in the self-evident access to the exclusive circles and groups, who trigger the events. In the cinematic ideal, one becomes the essential component of history.

Through a journey through time, an idea that has since proved to be invalid, but could be at least derailed.

I used to think that if you live with attentiveness and awareness during certain life situations, to try to downright exploit the potential of reality, these moments would be kept better and in more complex ways in memory. But at some point you realize that with time these memories shrivel up into small pieces of shit. Then at least by time travel you could experience these moments again, differently and intensively, with all of the reflections that came later. Reflection is a tricky matter, in that they can lead to another utopia. If you had decided on certain things differently, reacted in certain situations differently, life would have gone certainly better or so we often fantasize in hindsight.

Which then leads to a final thought experiment.

That the other decisions were decided on well and that life has run better. At least in the short term in this particular situation. Then this better life is certainly not spared by other, new problems and mistakes. Even when they had been also bypassed again in another life, etc., etc. From the start, the android has summarized everything much more precisely my means of a theory (VWI/MWI), "For every event there is a wide range of possible consequences. Through our choices we decide which of these consequences become real. But in a theory of quantum mechanics(*) all potential consequences of an event become real in alternating quantum realities/ parallel universes/ worlds. So all of these lives along with their mistakes, and evaded problems (and vice versa) have been and are currently being lived.

Memory Survives as a Familiar Feeling Before She/It Disappears into Nothingness

A man appears to be at his end. They say he is as if broken through. He has fractures throughout his whole body.

His child stands at his bedside and tries to cry, but it is not yet time. The last time they saw each other, it had been in the cave he called home almost a year ago. They had argued over the degenerate state of the man. But the man just waved him away, took deep, very deep, strong drags in small quick intervals from his cigarette. In a blast of smoke exiting every orifice he croaked, that it was his thing and that for now, it is the way it is.

Now the man lies broken and atrophied again in the hospital. This time it's the final intensive station. His shrunk-en body is all contorted, as if someone had put him together wrong. He gasps through hoses and writhes in between them like a worm.

His child knew back then already, that the "for now, it is the way it is" was nothing but a joke. The man had given up years ago and none of the seven paradises on earth could lift him on to his thin legs. His brain is broken and creeping forgetfulness had started long ago.

In the clinical neon light of artificially frozen time, his child recognizes the face that he had known as a child once more. In the past years the man had let his beard and hair grow out of indifference. In the re-exposed meat of the man's face, common memories revealed themselves. The child comes very close and descends into the breath of the man to find what his father had once been.

The beloved creature, on whose warm breast the child always laid upon, so large and safe like on top of a breathing mountain. In whose gaze beamed with all the love possible, which to the child had once meant the universe.

Again the child tries to cry because there remains little time in the man's face to travel. Also because the child is now alone on the journey.

The man twists. Tries to wrench himself from the weight

of his blanket. But for his own safety he's been strapped down. After brief attempt he gives up again and sinks back into the depths of his bed. What he was, that I of his own imagination, stepped back behind the mealy eyes of a fish. Where has childhood gone? The present dawns only to himself, like a rotten piece of meat perforated with tubes and cables. The future looks as rotten as the present.

The child is livid that the man swindled their future. Even thoughts that are normally free to travel space and time are tied to the hospital bed by the sterile room. But the child cannot be angry at the man. The child knows the reason for things too well. Thinks again about tearing the man from his bed, to shake him with frenzied force, so that maybe the man would return to himself. Return to the world of the autonomous. Like in one of those alleged miracles, where people who've been declared dead, by some wonder, inexplicable incident, regain consciousness.

The man's child asks for the doctor. She explains to him that the man's heart had an attack and that his body was full of poison. They didn't know yet how the poison had gotten into the blood. The doctor had good skin. You want to smell it. Her eyes are like colorful glass and there's something sporty about her. You can see a bit of musculature in her face, which constitutes these sporty types. But she has something tender, something careful. She evidently gets along with the younger and equally sporty nurse. Does she let him fuck her? The child is basically already a man. He imagines what the doctor's pussy would taste like. He can't avoid thinking about it. Everything is a big shit. When the doctor leaves again, the child tries with all of his strength to cry. Crying doesn't work. When no one is there to see and share your sadness, then what's the point in wailing? Crying alone in a hospital bed. When you start thinking about it, it becomes chivalrous. What a disgusting thought. The clinical coolness of the barren room seems to move inwards. Cold, hollow and deprived. How can this be? Then the rescue. A warm porridge. It's shame. You warm shame, bring me back into feeling. What a relief. Ashamed for oneself alone. The restoration of sensitivity has triumphed over shabby cold reality. The child

is again close to the man. Love and sadness have returned. Maybe there hadn't been a reason to be ashamed. They were just thoughts. The child already knew those kinds of thoughts from funerals. They came out of the child, but were not the child's, and nevertheless, was defenseless against the feeling of guilt. After all, you don't want to be caught with these kind of thoughts, not even by yourself. Often those kind of thoughts arise solely by the idea of thinking them. What if someone thought that? Maybe you need to understand or differentiate that those kind of thoughts are more like incidences trapped in certain situations.

Like when imagining, what would happen if at a banquet dinner you threw some kid sitting at the other end of the table out the window. What would happen? Sometimes you're not safe from your own fantasies. But in your thoughts you're much crueler than in reality. Otherwise, how many times would you have already shot or punched this or that person. For the most trivial reasons, no doubt. This release in the imagination is probably one of the most important safety features of the human psyche.

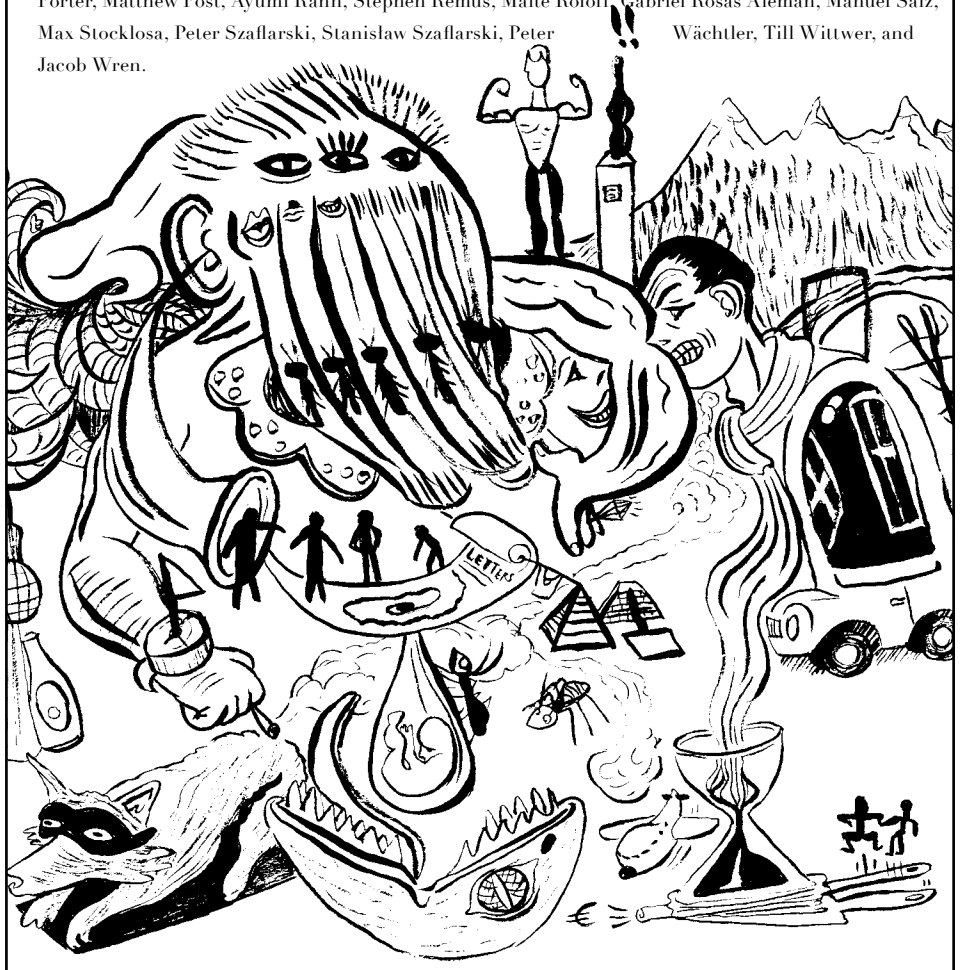
The child caresses the man's hand and kisses him on the forehead. Then kisses him a second time and whispers that the child will be back the next day or the day after that. In reality, it takes 4 days.

Join us in the not so distant future for the launch of the

Letters to the Editors book

March 30, 2016, 6-10PM | *Ashley Berlin**, Oranienstrasse 37, 10999
with select readings from contributing authors!

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* Part of "Intercalating the Drift", an exhibition series curated by Kate Brown and Lauryn Youden, including overlapping exhibitions from Mirak Jamal, George Rippon and Michele Di Menna. [other-projects.com]