

This Species is Amusing Itself to Death. The Addictive Contaminated Media Reality

The Diagnosis for the Future Inhabitants of our Dying Planet

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Theme: [Culture](#), [Society](#)

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“And when they found our shadows (grouped ‘round the TV sets), they ran down every lead; they repeated every test; they checked out all the data in their lists. And then the alien anthropologists admitted they were still perplexed, but on eliminating every other reason for our sad demise they logged the only explanation left: This species has amused itself to death.” - *Roger Waters*

“Apathy and indifference are nurtured in the modern age as most peoples’ free time is frittered away with worthless trivia like ball games, computer games, movies and soaps, and fiddling with their mobile phones. These distractions might be fun, but after most of them you’ve learnt nothing of any value, and remain ignorant, malleable and suggestible, which is just how the elites want you.” - *Clive Maund*

“A truth’s initial commotion is directly proportional to how deeply the lie was believed... When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker, a raving lunatic.” - *Dresden James*

“A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.” - *Winston Churchill*

30 years ago (1985) Neil Postman (a professor of communications arts and sciences at New York University - until his death in 2003) wrote the best-selling book “Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business”. The book exposed, among other things, the subtle but profound dangers to the developing mind from the mesmerizing (and addictive) commercial television industry.

The lessons from that book have essentially been ignored by the amoral and corrupted sociopathic capitalist system that says “damn the torpedoes/full steam ahead” and blindly and greedily promotes unlimited growth no matter what the costs and who or what gets hurt long-term in the resource-extractive, exploitive and permanently polluting processes.

But Postman’s thesis applies even more strongly today to the current internet/computer/age- inappropriate pornographic sex and pornographic violence-saturated/ televangelist/ political- contaminated media reality with which the prophetic Postman was properly alarmed.

SOMA, the Drug That Predicted Prozac by 50 Years

In the classic “Brave New World” (1932) Aldous Huxley wrote about the new form of totalitarianism that has now come to pass in the developed world, thanks to the privatized profit-driven, drug, medical and psychiatric corporations whose practitioners were once (naively or altruistically?) mainly concerned with relieving human suffering and trying to holistically and permanently cure their distressed patients’ ailments (rather than lucratively “managing” said “clients” as permanently paying consumers of unaffordable prescription drugs). Nearly 30 years after he wrote the book, Huxley said

“And it seems to me perfectly in the cards that there will be within the next generation or so a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propoganda, brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods.”

Neil Postman’s very last sentence of his book concerned the prescription drug-infested victims of the new form of totalitarianism that Huxley had described in “Brave New World”.

Of course, Huxley’s book was all about his imaginary psychotropic drug SOMA that Prozac’s makers and promoters in the late 1980s to falsely claim to make its swallowers “feel better than well”. One of the characters in Brave New World said:

“And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there’s always Soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there’s always Soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your morality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears; that’s what Soma is.”

Postman ended his book by writing: “what afflicted the people in Brave New World was not that they were laughing instead of thinking, but that they did not know what they were laughing about and why they had stopped thinking.”

A couple of years after the publication of Postman’s book, Roger Waters (of “Pink Floyd’s The Wall” fame) released a “concept” album that was inspired by the book. He titled the album “Amused to Death”. The lyrics of the title track are as follows:

“Amused To Death”

by Roger Waters

Doctor Doctor what’s wrong with me
This supermarket life is getting long
What is the heart life of a colour TV?
What is the shelf life of a teenage
queen?

Ooh western woman
Ooh western girl
News hound sniffs the air
When Jessica Hahn goes down
He latches on to that symbol of
detachment
Attracted by the peeling away of
feeling
The celebrity of the abused shell
of the belle
Ooh western woman
Ooh western girl
And the children of Melrose strut
their stuff
Is absolute zero cold enough?
And out in the valley warm and clean
The little ones sit by their TV screens
No thoughts to think
No tears to cry
All sucked dry down to the very
last breath.

Bartender what is wrong with me
Why I am so out of breath
The captain said excuse me ma'am
This species has amused itself to death

We watched the tragedy unfold
We did as we were told
We bought and sold
It was the greatest show on earth
But then it was over
We oohed and aahed

We drove our racing cars
We ate our last few jars of caviar
And somewhere out there in the stars
A keen-eyed look-out
Spied a flickering light
Our last hurrah.

And when they found our shadows
Grouped 'round the TV sets
They ran down every lead
They repeated every test
They checked out all the data in
their lists
And then the alien anthropologists
Admitted they were still perplexed.

But on eliminating every other reason

For our sad demise
They logged the only explanation left
This species has amused itself to death
No tears to cry
No feelings left
This species has amused itself to
death...

And here are pertinent lyrics to some of Waters' other songs that have to do with the media-generated propaganda and brain-washing that is now so effortlessly accomplished in America's prescription drug-intoxicated, brain-malnourishing, corporate-controlled and media-dominated technocratic age.

"The Bravery Of Being Out Of Range"

You have a natural tendency
To squeeze off a shot
You're good fun at parties
You wear the right masks
You're old but you still
Like a laugh in the locker room
You can't abide change
You're at home on the range
You opened your suitcase...
To show off the magnum
You deafened the canyon
A comfort a friend
Only upstaged in the end
By the Uzi machine gun
Does the recoil remind you
Remind you of sex
Old man what the hell you gonna
kill next?
Old-timer who you gonna kill next?
I looked over Jordan and what did
I see
Saw a U.S. Marine in a pile of debris
I swam in your pools
And lay under your palm trees...
And through the range finder over
the hill
I saw the frontline boys popping their
pills
Sick of the mess they find
On their desert stage
And the bravery of being out of range
Yeah the question is vexed
Old man what the hell you gonna
kill next?
Old-timer who you gonna kill next?

Hey bartender over here
Two more shots
And two more beers
Sir turn up the TV sound
The war has started on the ground
Just love those laser guided bombs
They're really great
For righting wrongs
You hit the target
And win the game
From bars 3,000 miles away
3,000 miles away we play the game
With the bravery of being out of range
We zap and maim
With the bravery of being out of range
We strafe the train
With the bravery of being out of range
We gained terrain
With the bravery of being out of range
We play the game
With the bravery of being out of
range.

"It's A Miracle"

Miraculous you call it babe
You ain't seen nothing yet
They've got Pepsi in the Andes
McDonalds in Tibet
Yosemite's been turned into
A golf course for the Japs
The Dead Sea is alive with rap
Between the Tigris and Euphrates
There's a leisure centre now
They've got all kinds of sports
They've got Bermuda shorts
They had sex in Pennsylvania
A Brazilian grew a tree
A doctor in Manhattan
Saved a dying man for free
It's a miracle
Another miracle
By the grace of God Almighty
And pressures of the marketplace
The human race has civilized itself
It's a miracle
We've got a warehouse of butter
We've got oceans of wine
We've got famine when we need it
And we've got designer crime

We've got Mercedes
We've got Porsche
Ferrari and Rolls Royce
We've got a choice...
An honest man
Finally reaped what he had sown
And a farmer in Ohio has just repaid
a loan
It's a miracle
Another miracle
By the grace of God Almighty
And pressures of the marketplace
The human race has civilized itself
It's a miracle
We cower in our shelters
With our hands over our ears
Lloyd-Webber's awful stuff
Runs for years and years and years
An earthquake hits the theatre
But the operetta lingers
Then the piano lid comes down
And breaks his frigging fingers
It's a miracle

It All Makes Sense

...And the Germans killed the Jews
And the Jews killed the Arabs
And Arabs killed the hostages
And that is the news...

...Hi everybody I'm Marv Albert
And welcome to our telecast
Coming to you live from Memorial
Stadium
It's a beautiful day
And today we accept a sensational
matchup
But first our global anthem
Can't you see
It all makes perfect sense?
Expressed in dollars and cents
Pounds, shillings and pence
Can't you see?
It all makes perfect sense...

Late Night Home Tonight - Part 1

But the cockpit's techno glow
Behind the Ray Ban shine
The kid from Cleveland

In the comfort of routine
Scans his dials and smiles
Secure in the beauty of military life
There is no right or wrong
Only tin cans and cordite and white
cliffs
And blue skies and flight
The beauty of military life
No questions only orders and flight
only flight
What a beautiful sight in his wild blue
dream
The eternal child leafs through his
war magazine
And his kind Uncle Sam feeds ten
trillion in change
Into the total entertainment combat
video game
And up here in the stands
The fans are goin' wild...
But that's okay see the children bleed
It'll look great on TV...

"Too Much Rope"

...And last night on TV
A Vietnam vet
Takes his beard and his pain
And his alienation
Twenty years back to Asia again
Sees the monsters they made
In formaldehyde floating 'round
Meets a gook on a bike
A good little tyke
A nice enough guy
With the same soldier's eyes
Tears burn my eyes
What does it mean?
This tear-jerking scene
Beamed into my home
That it moves me so much?
Why all the fuss?
It's only two humans being
It's only two humans being
Tears burn my eyes
What does it mean?
This tender TV
This tear-jerking scene
Beamed into my home
You don't have to be a Jew

To disapprove my murder
Tears burn my eyes
Moslem or Christian, Mullah or Pope
Preachers or poet who was it that
wrote?
Give any one species too much rope
And they'll fuck it up

And from a song from an earlier Roger Waters album:

"The Powers That Be"

Game shows, rodeos, star wars, TV
They're the powers that be
If you see them come,
You better run
You better run on home...
The powers that be
They like treats, tricks, carrots and
sticks
They like fear and loathing, they like
sheep's clothing
And blacked-out vans

Blacked-out vans, contingency plans
They like death or glory, they love a
good story
They love a good story

Sisters of mercy better join with your
brothers
Put a stop to the soap opera state
They say the toothless get ruthless
Run home before its too late.

Dr Gary G. Kohls is a retired physician from Duluth, MN, USA. He writes a weekly column for the Duluth Reader, the area's alternative newsweekly magazine. His columns deal with the dangers of American fascism, corporatism, militarism, racism, malnutrition, Big Pharma's psychiatric drugging and over-vaccination regimens, and other movements that threaten the environment, prosperity, democracy, civility and the health and longevity of the planet and the populace. Many of his columns are archived [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

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