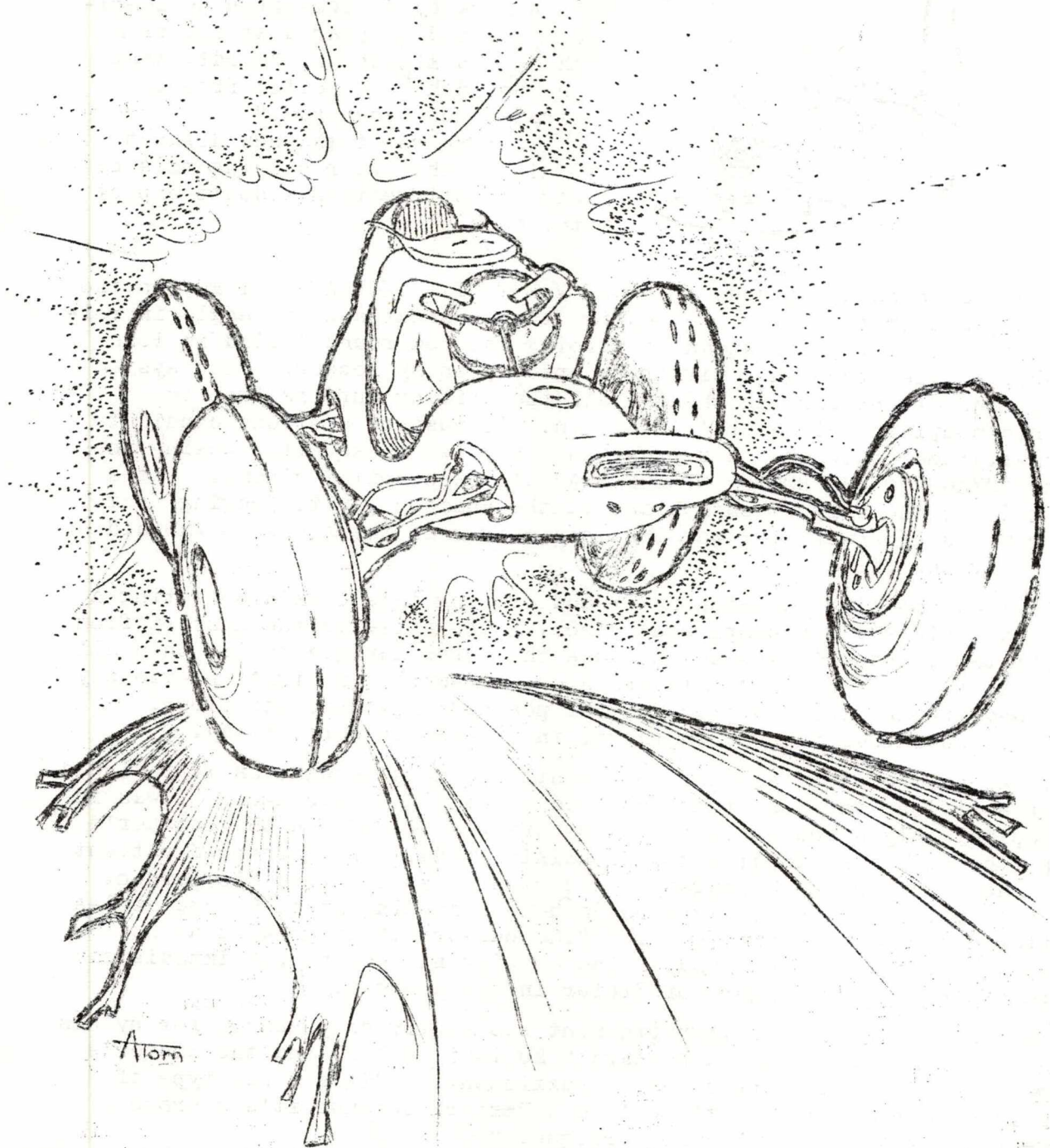
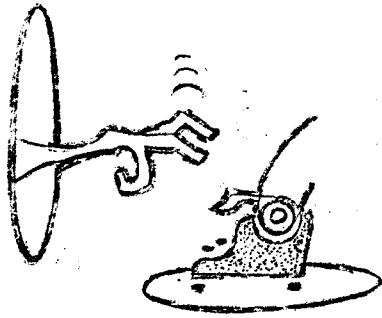


MEIN OMP - F 5



Scribblings



Remark by police after an American woman disappeared at sea from the Queen Elizabeth, "Hardly what one would have expected from a first-class passenger."

To readers of the now defunct SCRIBBLE who are receiving this by way of notification - don't expect too much.

I am watching an episode of "EGAYOV EHT OT MOTTOB AES EHT FO" on the ward TV as I write this. My bed is at a somewhat awkward angle in relation to the set, but instead of turning the bed round I find it less trouble to view through a mirror propped up on my locker. The system works fine except for one thing - all the writing suffers from the chronic complaint of lateral inversion. I must be a strong candidate for martyrdom, watching this programme only two weeks after seeing the film "VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA" at the hospital cinema. At a guess I was the only SF enthusiast in the audience, yet, judging from the remarks afterwards, I was the only member of the audience who did not enjoy the film.

At the same time as watching TV and writing this I am also eating a bruised apple - I'm accomplished y'sec. The apple is the dessert from supper time, and it's bruised because the nurse managed to tip them all onto the floor. Not too catastrophic. A couple of nights previously this same nurse tipped a tray full of poached eggs onto the floor. They looked rather funny down there, in a pathetic sort of way.

I was delighted to see the apples hit the deck though, as it reminded me of a similar incident that occurred about nine years ago. I was in a hospital only a few miles from here after a session in the Butcher's Shop (the operating theatre to the uninitiated). A discharged patient came back visiting and brought me a carton of apples from his garden. The bottom fell out of the carton as he was handing it to me and apples scattered across the ward floor. "The bastards!" he growled as he stooped to retrieve them, and in the ensuing silence he was immediately aware of the ominous figure of Sister in the doorway.

What my friend lacked in refinement was easily compensated for by his presence of mind. "Have a Bastard," he invited her, and the Sister's scowl gave way to an expression of puzzlement. "It's a new type of apple," he explained. "It's called a Bastard because it's a cross between a Cox's and an obscure foreigner."

Of course, the name stuck with us thereafter, and to commemorate the occasion my friend has sent me a carton full from his garden each year since.

Two years later found me down in London. (Normally you go up to London - but not from Yorkshire. From God's own county you go down to everywhere.) I was an articled clerk to a Chartered Accountant, which meant not too much money. To make ends meet I had lodgings in the East End where living is comparatively cheap. I rented a bed-room in the flat of an old Jewish-Polish widow - Mrs. P - and I shared her kitchen where I did my own cooking. The poor dear used to go scatty because I was a frying-pan addict and she complained bitterly that I was splattering all her wallpaper with fat. She ended up by sticking sheets of newspaper all round her walls to protect the wallpaper.

Came autumn and my old hospital friend sent me his usual carton of apples, which I shared with Mrs. P of course. She thought they were the best she had ever tasted and wanted to know what kind they were. "They are called Bastards," I told her without a qualm, knowing that her English was pretty poor and did not stretch to a knowledge of invective.

"I've been trying to buy those Bastard apples in the market," she greeted me when I returned from work next day, "but nobody has heard of them and they all gave me funny answers."

I was at once amused and horrified as the full significance of the situation struck me. We lived around the corner from Petticoat Lane and anybody who has experienced those dry-humoured, earthy, Cockney stall-holders can imagine the sort of replies this dear old foreign woman must have received when she went round asking them if they had any bastards.

There was another day when I went downstairs to empty the swill bucket and the flat door clicked shut behind me and I had neglected to take my latch key. When I came back up I rang the door bell. I heard Mrs. P shout something from within so I rang again and looked through the letter box. Mrs. P hadn't heard me leave the flat and, being under the impression that I was still in my bed-room, she was yelling at me to answer the door as she was busy in her own room.

I shouted through the letter box in an effort to explain the position but it somehow didn't get home. She thought I was calling from my room and she admonished me to hurry up and see who was ringing. I rang the bell again.

This farcical situation continued for at least five minutes. Me ringing the bell and appealing through the letter box. She begging me more and more impatiently and excitedly to answer the door. I finally heard her approaching as she muttered something about lazy lodgers. I will never forget the expression on her face when she opened the door and saw me standing there.

But I seem to have digressed somewhat. Oh yes, the nurse who dropped the apples and eggs on the floor. She happens to be a bobbyphiliac. She goes crazy about policemen. She drives a car (after a fashion) and whenever she glimpses a policeman in the street she leans out of the car window and waves at him vigorously whilst simultaneously blasting long and hard on the horn - all while she's driving.

Soon after coming on duty tonight she phoned the local police station to ask if a patrol car would be coming up by the hospital shortly. "Why?" enquired the desk sergeant. "What's the trouble?"

"Nothing's wrong," she blithely replied. "But if one of your cars is coming by the hospital in the next hour could you bring me some fish and chips from town?"

This same Irish nurse was in charge of the ward the night that one of our patients discovered he had an agonising pain in his back. By 6.30 a.m. it was too intense for him to bear any longer and this nurse phoned through to the doctor, getting him out of bed in the process, and explained the situation. "Give him 100 mgms. of Pethidine," he ordered "and I'll be along shortly to look at him."

So the wretched patient was given his injection, but even that didn't seem to help him much. And then the day staff came on duty, heard the sad story, and went to look at the patient.

"Exactly where is the pain?" they asked him, so he told them, and they turned him over to look, and they found the packet of mints under his back. They removed them. The doctor turned up then but it was too late. The nurses had already effected the cure.

Boggs has moved. I asked Ron Bennett for Red Boggs' address which he duly sent me. The following day a postcard arrived from Ron on which was printed - "Boggs has moved." Of course, the postcard was seen by several nurses before it reached me and the cryptic phrase aroused their curiosity and tickled their fancy. Now when the nurses come on duty each day, instead of the usual "good morning" which the other patients get, I am always greeted with "Boggs has moved."

All of which reminds me of an amusing little correspondence in the letter column of the Manchester Guardian. I think a doctor started it when he conjured up Mr. Bloggs - a hypothetical patient - in the course of his arguments. This provoked a reply from the chairman of the Patients' Association who pointed out that the very use of the name Bloggs as an example patient was typical of the superior attitude from which the members of the medical profession looked down upon their patients. They never talk about a doctor Bloggs, or a matron Bloggs, or even a nurse Bloggs she complained - so why patient Bloggs?

This complaint resulted in an indignant query from a reader who wrote, "Why Bloggs? Why not Bloggs?" This last letter was from a Mr. J.S. Bloggs.

I heard an old Coleman Hawkins jazz record on the radio the other day and included in the group was some guy on E-flat comb and paper. Can anybody enlighten me please? Was it a one-shot gimmick, or was it a gen instrument at that period? And how in hell do you tune up a comb and paper?

A TRANSPORT OF DELIGHT

By Brian
varley



If there's one thing in a changing world which I've come to rely upon it is the London Bus. At times they infuriate me, frustrate me, anger me, but always in the usual prosaic way of London Buses and busmen.

I am used to standing for half-an-hour in the driving rain waiting for a bus which is scheduled to appear once every five minutes. At the end of that half-hour I am resigned to seeing six or seven of them come trundling round the corner in stately procession, just like circus elephants, trunk to tail. Never do they overtake each other, vying for custom, but wait with bovine patience one behind the other. The conductor of the leading ~~elephant~~ bus dashes around with a frenetic energy, counting passengers on and off, ringing bells, collecting fares. On the back-marker the conductor reclines in lonely splendour at Cleopatra's ease reading the racing section of the Daily Mirror. Should one have the effrontery to mount his vehicle you receive a look of painful resignation, akin to Atlas receiving his burden, before he levers himself upright and comes to collect your tribute.

I am inured to sitting, seething with impatience, whilst the driver idles along at less than walking pace, or waits five minutes at a deserted stop. I can sit, outwardly bland and composed, as I visualise the train that I must catch arriving and departing sans varley.

I am resigned to the fact, and indeed understand that my fate decrees, that as I rush buswards the driver shall see me coming and immediately be stricken by a sudden desire to get into the Hall of Fame as the first London busdriver to effect a supersonic boom.

All these, and many other idiosyncrasies, I accept as the established pattern of the London Bus. If they changed and started to appear at the regularly defined intervals, travelled at a reasonable average speed, waited courteously for hastening passengers, then my world would be shattered, my security would vanish, and sanity crumble into dust.

Some things never happen though. When was the last time you saw a London busman changing a tyre? Whoever travelled on a London Bus that lost its way? They just don't do that, they trundle round their pres-

cribed route as solid and enduring as the Rock of Gibraltar. Come rain, come storm, come atomic holocaust the London Bus will navigate its route. I used to visualise it, one of a procession of six, bumbling through the ravaging blast of an atomic explosion, stopping at the duly appointed places to pick up the dutifully queueing charring bodies. (Only five standing, thank-you). I knew for sure in these circumstances that when the heaven-bound express departed from Platform 2 at Waterloo I'd be sitting half a mile away on an idling London Bus. I don't visualise it like that anymore though. I've actually been on a London Bus that got lost.

It happened on the most prosaic of journeys, the one that carries me twice a day, five days a week, the 88 between Westminster and Vauxhall. If it had happened on a 14 in Shaftesbury Avenue in the early hours I could have rationalised it, imagined the driver overcome by a sudden lustful urge and heading for a likely back-street Soho strip-joint, but it didn't. It happened on an 88, homeward-bound at 5 p.m. on a drizzling weekday afternoon.

I was one of the fifty-odd passengers on the lead bus of a miniature procession of four when we were strangoly jolted from our normal lethargic state by a sense of something wrong. A few seconds thought analysed the feeling, we hadn't swayed when we should have swayed. The driver had missed his turning!

The conductor recovered from a quick fit of apoplexy and rang the bell, gesturing and grimacing at the back of his driver. The driver glanced round, blankly staring until the full horror of his deed penetrated. We stopped. A brief moment for thought and we lurched confidently forward again and ran on to the next left turn. We were half-way round the corner before the driver saw the sign...."NO ENTRY One Way Street."

The conductor dismounted and went forward to hold a consultation and he was soon joined by several passengers and interested passers-by. The debate swayed back and forth, the conservatives favoured a retreat, the radicals wanted him to drive on and seek adventure. If the crowd had been fans they would undoubtedly have put out a one-shot seeking support for their viewpoint. During the argument a car approached up the one-way street and started to hoot loudly. It was beginning to look and sound like Hampstead on a Bank Holiday. Even the diehards still on the bus were affected and actually began to talk to each other.

Suddenly our driver, mind made up, started to reverse back the way we'd come. Passengers and conductor scrambled aboard and just as quickly descended again when we found our way blocked by a milk-float. Impasse. The road was far too narrow for the bus to circumnavigate the float and the milkman didn't have a reverse gear on his vehicle. Eventually the conductor and the milkman combined to ease the float between two parked cars and onto the pavement. Again the retreat began. We hadn't gone very far before the scene was enlivened by the sight of our conductor pounding down the street after his vanishing command.

Eventually, however, we reached our correct left-turn and with communal sigh of relief started down it. And what did we find round the

corner on Millbank? Nothing but our original three faithful followers, now augmented by two later arrivals, all awaiting the return of their leader.

A mere ten seconds later and we were back in our rightful position at the head of the procession. Slowly our caravan moved off, the London Bus had triumphed in adversity, the Universe relaxed and the world once more began to spin.

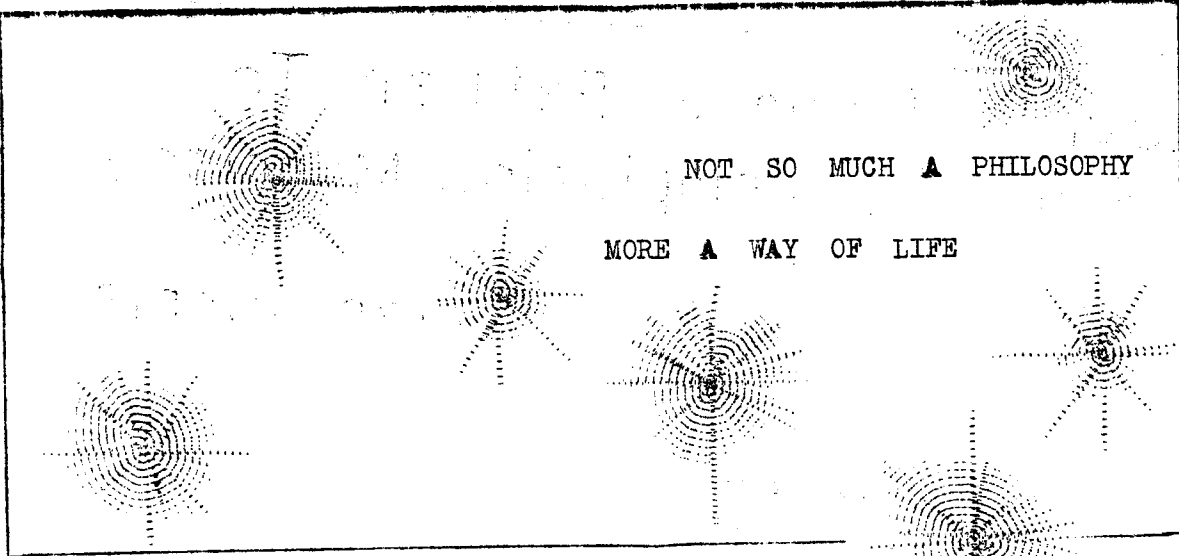
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Advice From a Father To a Son Contemplating Marriage

roger norris

Now do not seek a wife, my son,
Too beautiful or fair;
A girl that men would rave about,
Her looks beyond compare;
Nor should you really seek a wife
Whose cookery is great;
Whose busy hands might make each night
A seven course dinner date;
And certainly no film star
Or cover girl you'll wed,
No rounded, bulging pulchitruide
Shall share your nuptial bed;
Of course, you may not find a wife
Who makes a perfect lover;
In fact, I fear you'll end up with
Someone just like your mother.

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NOT SO MUCH A PHILOSOPHY
MORE A WAY OF LIFE

If there is a God then he ought to have made it plain enough to do away with doubt, and if there isn't then it won't matter what I believe.

For many years the above conclusion was a seemingly impenetrable barrier to further reasoning, but I had to find a gateway through it and couldn't rest until I did. Whether there is a God or not it possibly doesn't matter what one believes - unless, of course, one wants to know what life is all about, and can't be satisfied with not knowing. The questions - how and why is there existence at all, and what is its purpose? - kept nagging at me and I had to find some answers.

"If there is a God then he ought to have made it plain enough." Of course, many Religions claim that he has made it plain enough. Christianity, for instance, says that he has revealed himself through Christ and the bible, and if you open your heart you will find yourself able to believe. This assertion didn't satisfy me. If there is such a God who wants me to believe in him then he would surely dispel doubt in my mind first and show himself to me somehow. I wanted the proof before I committed myself. Therefore the evidence in my mind appeared to be slightly against the existence of God.

Then I began to examine definitions. The general concept of God seems to be confined to the one described by the Religions. Why? If I don't accept their beliefs then why should I accept their definitions?

Most Religions preach that God wants us to believe in him, but let us suppose that he isn't really bothered about this. Perhaps belief in him is irrelevant to his purpose. Then he would have no need to make himself known to us; to prove himself.

So perhaps there is a God and perhaps there isn't, but if there is he is not necessarily or not wholly of the character defined by the Religions.

What cause have we for believing in any kind of a God?

What, how and why is existence? A little perception of the world around us and a little knowledge of a variety of subjects reveals that everything is inter-connected and inter-related in a fantastically intricate way and appears to be heading in the same direction - all part of a universal purpose. An accident of nature? If so, a deliberate accident. I found it impossible to believe otherwise.

The fact that there is existence or anything at all points to something beyond our ken and beyond scientific knowledge. But that this existence has a design to it seems to be pretty strong evidence in favour of a purpose. This conclusion alone (if you can reach it) is good enough for a basic definition of God. How you build on it from there depends upon your knowledge, experience, reasoning and personal philosophy. My own is still very young and very flexible and liable to change within its framework - but I have great fun picking out my favourites from amongst the possibilities.

.....- We were once sea creatures incapable of reasoning, and now we have evolved to man; a species that worries about the whys and wherefores of existence. So the mind and knowledge and understanding have evolved as fantastically as the body. Yet we are still near the beginning of our evolutionary ladder. To what extent will the mind and knowledge eventually expand? Doesn't it seem probable that as man evolves he will come to understand more and more the Purpose of everything? Perhaps this understanding is even part of the Purpose.

In spite of each apparent set-back and catastrophe the Purpose continues to grind inexorably onwards - perhaps even because of the reversals. Even a devastating nuclear holocaust would seem to have its reason if it occurred, and out of it would emerge a species which would be part of the Design. Evil and goodness; suffering and happiness mixed up together stimulate further evolution which is part of the Scheme. All these factors cause psychological, emotional, physical, and sociological pressures, and without them there would be no evolution and no Purpose. When these pressures cease and evolution ceases the Purpose will be fulfilled. Any particular evil viewed in isolation seems wrong and pointless, but put in its context with all of time and the whole of the Design it makes sense and its necessity becomes apparent. An individual action or emotion is of little consequence in itself, but it has its place in the Grand Design.

We cannot conceive the ultimate Purpose - not at our present stage of evolution - but it is of far greater proportions than the professed *raison d'etre* of the orthodox Religions. It seems highly improbable that this unbelievably vast universe of ours exists solely for the benefit of man on Earth.

My belief in a Design and a vague Purpose puts this thesis in the category of a religion. I cannot prove, or even pretend to analyse the Purpose. Rather it is a faith based on what I consider to be highly convincing evidence. And the belief in a God is perhaps no less scientific than the stand taken by the atheists and agnostics. Science endeavours to discover the cause or the reason of everything, ()

HAGGIS - (Ian Peters) The fact that Picasso considers he is amusing himself by painting picture puzzles for a lot of ignorant, rich fools does not really effect the issue. I am prepared to accept your contention that a large number of modern art fans are solely searching for the novel and bizarre and understand nothing of the artwork, but this is simply a sad reflection upon these people and in no way detracts from the value of the work itself. But is 'understanding' so necessary and important anyway? It seems to me that we are analysing art to such an extent these days that we are making a science of it and forgetting its basic intention, which is to communicate. A few years ago I saw a reproduction of Picasso's cubist painting "The Three Musicians". I liked it immediately. I didn't understand the artist's motives and I saw no deeper significance, but I liked it. Enough to spend 9 months or so working a tapestry of the painting. It has hung on the wall in front of me for the last three years. I like it more than ever. I still don't understand it. I don't even realise there is anything to understand. In spite of what Picasso says his nonsense has brought me a great deal of pleasure and the novelty is taking an awful long time to wear off.

Of course, "The Three Musicians" is one of his earlier works and is not nearly so crazy as the recent paintings and sculptures you had in mind in your article, but it is still far out enough for most people who come and see it on my wall not to understand it or like it. If only a few of those who rave about his current work genuinely love it then surely it is worthwhile. I hesitate more and more to attach a phoney label to things I don't comprehend.

I like your zine Ian. It amuses, it annoys (you are not exactly moderate in your opinions) occasionally it has me nodding my head in agreement - but always it provokes reaction.

BINARY - (Joe Patrizio) Very much enjoyed Bill Temple's article on plagiarism until I reached the final line - "for there is no new thing under the sun." I must quarrel with this oft' repeated dictum. New things are being put together all the time. As Bill so rightly affirms it is not plagiarism to imbibe someone else's idea and regurgitate it with one's own individual slant and presentation, but the result can be something more than this. It is possible to integrate, for the first time, a combination of old ideas and produce something original - and, of course, this doesn't only apply to writing. Because the component factors of a product are recognisable it doesn't invalidate the originality of the end product. Admittedly, new ideas are not generated, but they are evolved.

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