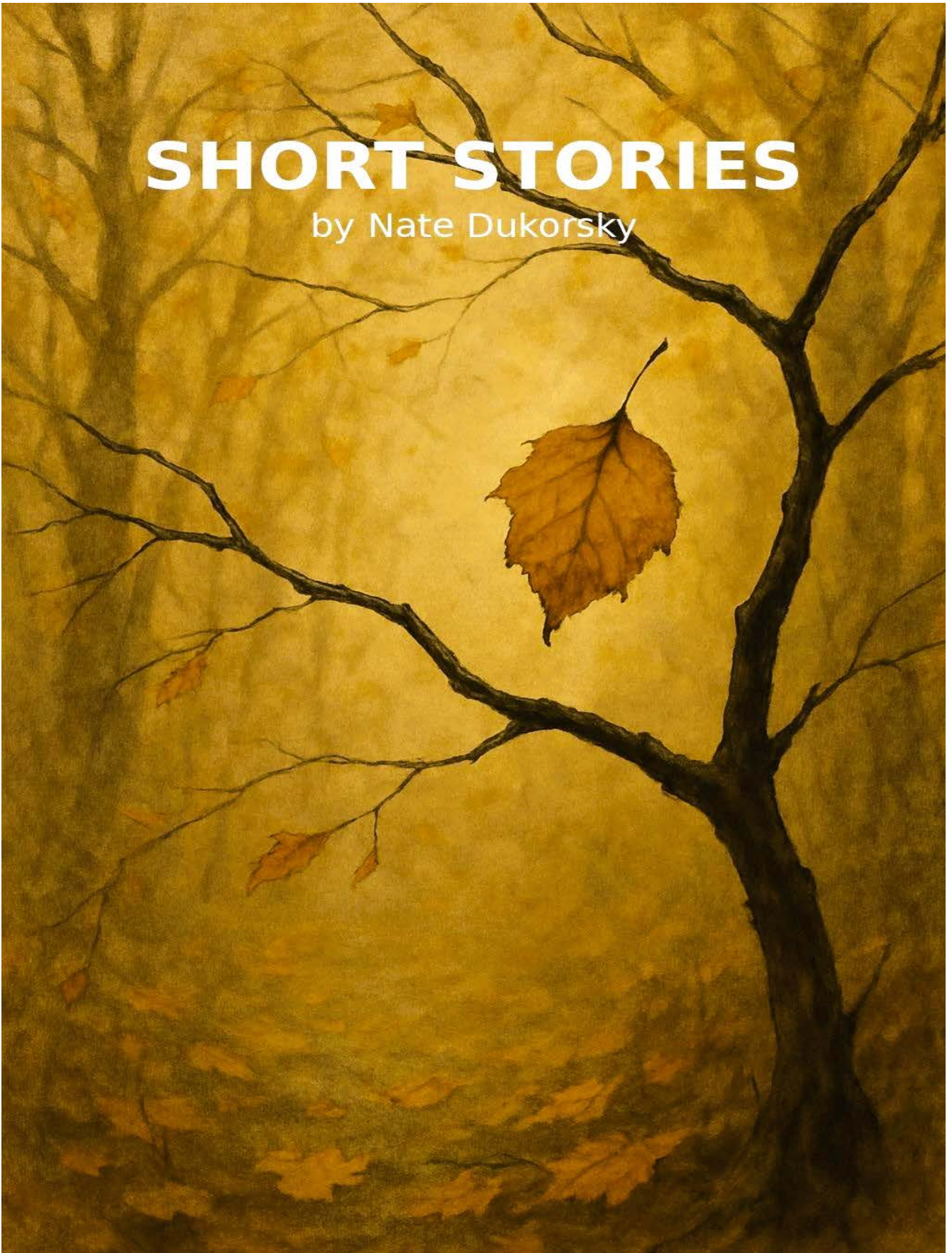


SHORT STORIES

by Nate Dukorsky



Short Stories

Nate Dukorsky

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The World As We Dream It

We are inside our little world – our house, our yard, computer.
Pandemic is upon us.
But does it matter? The whole world seem like a dream;
What is real what is not?
Sunrise – sunset, The Earth is moving; repetitive, constant, precise and relentless. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, spring.
And all these, nights and days, light, dark, asleep, awake.
What is real?
We dream, we live, we are busy, bored, happy and miserable. Moving pictures.
Why do we think that we are awake?
Could it be the other way around? That dreams are real?
Are we ever awake? And what does “awake” mean?
Life rushes by like it's a movie, and we are just images, projections on the screen of space.
I stop sometimes and wonder: is this today or yesterday, or few years in the past?
Am I losing my mind? Does it matter?
The world we see is not what is.
It is just our perception of moving energy reflected on our sensors,
All is just a play, interactions of nothingness clumped into energy fluctuation.
Do we have a soul? Immortal soul?
Body and soul duality, what is it? Nobody really knows.
Matter and consciousness.
But what if there is no matter?
Our souls, our bodies are composed from the same nothingness. Just space fluctuations,
Who are we? Just a random occurrence?
Product of design? What is our purpose then?
We understand so little. Are we even real?
I asked this question before. How do we know?
I am watching an old video of myself, my family.
Are these people, these moving shades of light, do they still exist?
Why not? If there is no matter, no time, what is really the difference between me today and me yesterday?
Are they just like us, alive? Somewhere? Some-when?
What is the use of thinking about the strangeness of existence?
Is it even possible to know, to understand? Eastern and Western cultures are trying to understand, each from their perspective. With no avail so far.
Maybe if East and West would combine their vision, their philosophy, maybe then humans would have a better understanding, a glimpse of enlightenment.
But I will keep thinking, fantasizing about this largest mystery of all.
What are we?



Frankenstein or the Tale of a Lost Tribe

People we call "The Tea Party",
Who are they?
They are the people left behind.
Our society is rapidly evolving, changing
And these changes are frightening:
Gay rights,
Immigration,
Growing minority population,
Technological advances.
These frightened Americans, mostly rural, many from poor states.
They are nostalgic for "good old times",
Lost in this turbulent vigorously active and changing society.
They feel they are losing their country,
The country these people knew are no more.
Their jobs are gone
And they don't have skills for new jobs.
Their life's very foundation is slipping from under them.
It is so scary!
And these lost people, "extreme right zealots" are desperate to know who is responsible.
Who is responsible for their problems?
Who is stealing their world?
And who can help them, who will explain?
And that is where the "gurus" come in,
The "leaders",
The explainers.
They know who is responsible and they will help.
Out of goodness of their heart and patriotism
They will do it to save America (for themselves),
Only for themselves.
The rich and the powerful.
They are rich and they are powerful.
But they want more-more money, more power.
They want it all!
The top 5% in America owns almost 80% of the wealth.
But they want more!
And there is an easy way to do it.
These angry and scared schmucks not knowing where to turn,
So easy to control, to manipulate.
These losers are scared out of their wits.
All we, the rich, need to do is to scare them even more and to point the finger - :The Enemy! (The people who stand in our way to more power, more riches).
America belongs to us because we are smart and rich and we got to have it all.
And the "ruling class", the rich, they have money.
And money in America can buy a lot.

And the buying is getting easier every year thanks to our (and we mean ours) Supreme Court.
Manipulating public opinion, buying media, buying Congress, buying elections.

They are very effective, the rich.

And they are powerful and smart.

But greed is even more powerful.

Greed takes over.

They, the rich and powerful, are greedy.

They created, they unleashed the force they will not be able to control.

The mob. The Frankenstein. The Tea Party.

The ignorant the disenchanted, the lost, the angry and hateful, you – the “rich”, organized them.

You gave them money and power. You created a monster.

And it will turn against it's creator – you the top 1%, the instigators.

Greed blinded you and you unleashed the monster that will turn against you.

I hope.

God and the Ten Commandments 2011

I have a question:

If people obey 10 commandments because of fear of God, what does it say about people? What does it say about God?

Which person got a higher moral standing?

One that follows God's orders to be good out of fear,

Or one that is good because of moral convictions?

Or maybe these Ten Commandments are just suggestions?

Are some believers just selfish and follow God's suggestions to get rewarded "in heaven"?

Do we humans have a free will?

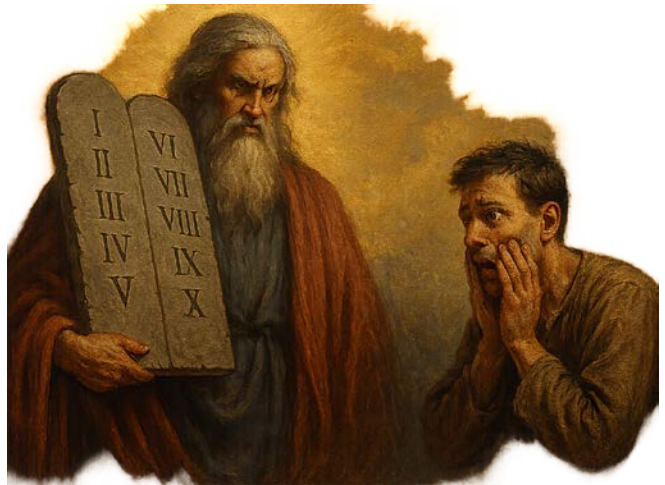
And if we do have a free will and choose to ignore the Commandments, then do the God's suggestions fall on deaf ears?

The Omnipotent God?

Or just a Santa Claus? If you will be good you will get a gift when you die.

During prayers on Yom Kippur Jews ask for forgiveness of a long list of sins they may have committed.

When I asked someone, which sins they have committed they were not sure, but are asking forgiveness anyway just in case. So are we learning anything from our mistakes? Or we just ask forgiveness wholesale? Just in case?



I have an idea: we should write down our sins and compare to the list in the Prayer Book, if ours are on the list. If yes, then ask forgiveness. On the other hand if God is all knowing why bother with the list in the first place? God knows your sins anyway.

So, God, please forgive me this sin – asking stupid question.

Amen.

I Know the Future

I know what awaits them
While watching old movies
I am cursed with knowledge.
I know what lies ahead,
And cold sadness of this knowledge envelopes me,
Makes it hard to watch.
I know what awaits them.
I know the future.
I don't want this knowledge.
It hurts.
People in old movies,
They laugh and cry, they love and hate
Not knowing.
And that is how it should be.
I don't like watching old movies,
Old movies forcing me to know the future.
By knowing the past,
The human history,
Short breaks of happiness.
Between long dark stretches of tragedies and despair
The human history
Full of violence, death and distraction.
I don't like watching old movies.
I know what awaits them:
Misery, violence and death.
But the thought comes to me:
What the future holds?
I know it is wrong,
I should not ask this,
We should not, we cannot know,
So we can live.
And yet I wonder,
I know the past.
Just live in the moment we are told.
The past is gone,
And the future unknown.
But the past lives in me,
The past is talking to me
About the future.
All human suffering,
The inhuman brutality and hatred.
With short respite of peace,
And how quickly people forget
To live in the moment.

Maybe that is how we humans survive,
By forgetting.
We want so much to be happy,
But humanity gets reckless
Again.
And suffering returns again.
As if punishing us for forgetting
Tragic dilemma!
It is so painful to remember,
And yet we should not forget.
We have to remember the past
In order to have the future.
I watch old movies.

Invasive Species – Humans

2016

Invasive species: "animals, plants or other organisms introduced by man into places out of their natural range of distribution, where they become established and disperse, generating a negative impact on the local ecosystem and species." And 2004 paper in a Diversity and Distributions journal, that examines the terminology of invasiveness notes that there is a lack of consensus on this topic and lists five dominant definitions for 'invasive,' the most popular of which is "widespread that have adverse effects on the invaded habitat." Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/are-humans-an-invasive-species-42999965/#67GjHJStkA1H1lps.99>



One time I was playing a computer game where you, the player, creates the planet's ecology and is trying to make a sustainable ecological system. In this game humans are listed under "natural disaster".

I have been thinking about our place on this planet and lately came to a conclusion that we, humans, are the invasive species, killing off everything living on Earth. That the planet would be better off without us. Now, scientists say, the Earth is on the brink of a sixth such "mass extinction event." Only this time, the culprit isn't a massive asteroid impact or volcanic explosions or the inexorable drifting of continents. It's us.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/22/the-earth-is-on-the-brink-of-a-sixth-mass-extinction-scientists-say-and-its-humans-fault/>

There is plenty of information on the extent of the damage we humans inflicted on our planet:

- Disappearing rain forests
- Extinction of animal species. A report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has found that populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish have declined on average by 52 per cent in the last 40 years.
- And for freshwater creatures the situation is even bleaker, with population collapse of more than three quarters over the same period. Almost the entire decline is due to human activity, through habitat loss, deforestation, climate change, over-fishing and hunting.

Anyone born in 1970 or before would have lived in a world teeming with animals compared to life today. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/11129163/Half-of-worlds-animals-have-disappeared-since-1970.html>

We humans are so proud of our accomplishments. Science, arts, philosophy.
Humans are sending spaceships to other planets and are dreaming about going to stars.

And yet we are not able to save our home planet. Selfishness, greed, hate, apathy are ruling our species. None of these attributes associated with other life forms on Earth.

Only humans are capable of killing their own species for so many "reasons" that are invented by humans. Religion, race, natural resources and many other excuses human species use to fight and kill each other.

We are deeply flawed creatures. Any scientific advances are being used first and foremost on inventing new ways of destruction.

There is a natural delicate ecological balance of life forms on Earth. The only exception – humans. Why are we here? Was the Mother Nature aware what will become of us humans? Do we have reason, logic, intelligence just to use it against ourselves and our planet? Is there a future for our species? Is Darwinism working on planetary scale?

There got to be millions of habitable worlds even in our Galaxy. But is there a critical time in evolution when most intelligent species die out?

There could be many causes of extinction. Killer virus, meteorites, infertility or wars.

Are we humans capable to come to our senses and survive?

I give us 50/50 chance.

And if we vanish from the face of the Earth no living thing will miss us.

Mirage

Just a mirage.

Quiet peaceful evening. We are walking slowly on the beach. Late sunset, soft waves reflect the colored remnants of the daylight. Dark silhouettes of birds on the purple background of the low and tired sun. Thoughts and dreams envelop me becoming one with this mysterious late dusk.

What was here in the past? Thousands of years ago. Was somebody walking on this beach just like we do now? I am trying to feel, to see them. How did they look?

In the twilight I see shades of the past, of the future. Slowly floating, changing, mysteriously shifting shapes. What was here a million years ago? What the future holds? Will somebody walk here, watching sunset, a million years from now? Will there be people on this planet? Some intelligent beings? Maybe not people, some strange creatures that evolve from us, humans.

There are thoughts that past, present, and future coexist. That there are multitude of realities.

My imagination unites the realities and I can see past, present, and future in the changing shades and colors of the twilight. We all walking on the beach watching the tired sun's last purple projection of clouds. Who are they, these creatures? What are their dreams, hopes, worries. Do they think about us?

Sometimes at dusk when the world becomes surreal, filled with soft ocean breeze and strange fleeting, changing colors, the reality changes as I am walking on the beach that is strangely the same and yet so alien, different.

I am walking on the beach in a different time, in the past long gone. Or maybe in the future. Thousands of years from my time. They don't see me, these beings walking beside me.

I do not want to separate dream and reality. Their reality is real for them. Do they feel us? Think about other times? Do they feel the mystery of the world? Fascinated by it? In Ray Bradbury's "Martian Chronicles" Human and Martian meet on Mars in a strange half dream, half reality. Each in own reality.

Human and Martian cannot physically touch each other – they are just a shade, a mirage for each other Human sees a dead planet with remnants of civilization long gone. Martian sees a vibrant and busy world at the height of his civilization.

And I wonder if millions of years from now our world, our dreams, our thoughts will still be here, somewhere in some form, non-physical form but in some other reality, real nevertheless.

Have others, some intelligent being, visited our world in the distant past? Where did they come from? What brought them here? What secrets Earth holds about epochs of another time?

Why are we here? The oldest question.

Our lives are short. Just one breath of the Universe and we, humans came and gone.

What great civilizations, what life was roaming the Universe millions, billions of years ago? These questions, the mystery of existence in different times, other realities are fascinating to me. What the



life will be millions, billions years from now after humanity is long gone? And forgotten. Forgotten by whom?

Archeologists are finding old ruins, a remnant of the past cultures, civilizations vanished in the currents of time, a mirage now. Scarce remnants of peoples who lived and loved and hated. Their dreams, their struggles and aspirations are nothing but dust. A thin layer of dust.

People to whom their reality, their civilization was the most important in the universe. Some were rich and powerful, some poor and powerless. All that is left is just a layer of dust.

I wonder if, thousands years from my time archeologists will find some artifacts in the dusty desert and will try to understand, to imagine what was life like in the long forgotten times. And how people of the long vanished civilization, us, lived and died.

Rich and powerful, poor and powerless all equal. Just a layer of dust in a desert.

Mirror – Mirror 2012

An older man looks at me from the mirror.
It is me.
Imagination sees a different image -
A child,
Shy and cross eyed,
A young man with glasses and black hair,
And then my imagination refuses to play and an older man looks at me again.
I am almost 65.
Some are asking me if I feel old.
Am I?
Yes, sometimes,
No, sometimes.
How do you define “old”?
I watch romantic movies sometimes
And sadness creeps in.
Realization comes - it is all in the past for you, old man.
Romance is over,
Falling in love.
The joy of it and the heartbreak -
Be real.
Just look in the mirror.

But something in me keeps forgetting.
“You are old” my mind reminds,
And my body agrees with pains and aches.
An older man stares from the mirror.
I don't like him.
Time is my enemy.
It goes by faster and faster,
As if it got tired dealing with me.
Summer, fall, winter, spring, summer,
And the next winter is closing in.

Time is rushing me.
You are old!
Your body is tired!
My world is not as bright and vibrant anymore.
The seasons keep changing as if in the time warp:
Summer, fall, winter, spring, summer.
But my life does not change much.
It seems sometimes that I am just a passive observer.
My mind is restless.

Mirror- mirror on the wall,

What is the purpose of this all?
The eternal question.
And the mind hesitates not knowing.
The mirror is silent.
You figure it out, old man.
And I am trying.

A bittersweet feeling.
Mirror-mirror on the wall,
Who is the luckiest of them all?
And I think of my wife,
Mother of my children, my best friend, my lover,
My trusted companion in this short lives' journey.
I think of my kids,
All grown up smart and beautiful.
My grandkids that call me grandpa

Mirror-mirror on the wall.
I see husband, father, and grandpa,
An older man.
But not old yet,
Not yet!

My soul is resisting,
It ignores the mirror.
It disregards the mind, the logical arguments.
It dismisses the body's aches and pains.
My soul refuses to grow old,
It wants to be young and full of hope.
Young forever!

All the mysteries and the beauty of this World,
I want to know more, to see more, to experience more.
Something in me wants to believe in miracles.
What if...?
I want to see the unseen, to feel the life force of the World.
Without the limitation of Mind and Body.
I am afraid that my imagination is getting old,
It is not as flexible anymore.

Mirror-mirror on the wall,
Show me the wisdom of this all.
I want to see the young man you showed before,
I want to be young again.
Do I?
Do I want to read old chapters of my life again?
I did not enjoy it the first time around.
Would I rewrite some of these painful chapters? Maybe
But I cannot.

There is just one chance, one version available.
And I am still here, the book is still open.
There are some blank pages left to write.
I don't know how many,
I don't want to know.
Life is a mysterious journey.
I don't want this book to end too soon.
And I am the Writer.



Thoughts about Time

Time – what is it?

In our busy lives we should stop sometimes being still, listening to passage of time.

Time never stops.

It flies and we try to slow it down when we are happy.

It drags slowly and we want to speed up its flow when we are bored.

What is time?

I am looking at old pictures of myself, of people I know.

They look different in these pictures.

Younger and different. A mirage of reality.

Is this really me?

Are these the people we know now?

Not likely.

Memories are illusive, memories deceive us.

Would I know, understand myself from long time ago?

We are strangers to these people in old pictures, deceived by fleeting and ever changing memories.

Our Past is an ever changing illusion.

Our Present is ever flowing by us, around us.

We are in constant attempt to catch up with the Present and we never do as the Present becomes the Past and we miss it again and again.

As time flows it takes part of us into the Future.

And so just a distorted image remains, becoming the Past.

And with time this too is blown away into Ocean of Time.

The ever changing Illusion - our lives.

What is Time?

I wonder if millions of years ago there was another history on the planet we now call Earth.

Another civilization, visitors from other stars perhaps.

What battles raged here? What was the fate of these star travelers?

Perhaps we will never know. But we can dream.

If they were here, I wonder if their thoughts remained,

Just an illusion of the past long gone,

Like old pictures.

Were they thinking about time, about the future?

We missed each other in time.

Will our path ever cross with theirs?

What is Time?

We feel the flow of time. But what if this flow is just an illusion?

What if it is us?

Moving from phantom Present to phantom Past and the imaginary Future?

Is that what "Reality" is - just a Phantom?

We all wonder what the future holds.

But why wonder about an illusion?

Constantly changing Reality will always be just a phantom memory of fleeting moments as they are being washed away by flow of time.

Eroded just like winds eroding the rocks into strange shapes.

What is time?

I am trying to imagine who will be sitting in this place hundreds, thousands maybe millions of years from now.

Will they think about Time, about the Past, about me?

As I get older I think about death. What is it?

Will I really cease to exist?

But what is Existence?

The Past is an ever changing illusion,

The Present is never here,

The Future is unknown.

The flow of time itself is just our way to cope, to survive in a Grand Illusion.

So what changes after we die?

Will the World change when I die? Will I ever know?

The moment I die, will somebody be born who is continuation of me?

After all "Me" is never the same in the flow of time.

Time is a strange mystery. It is alive in us.

It draws me with scary mysterious attraction.

We think of Time as an enemy – sometimes, or as a friend - sometimes.

But it is neither. It is just an illusion.

Just as ever changing and flowing Universe that we are a part of.

A strange mystery like life itself.

I wish I can go back in time to meet this person on the old picture who became me.

Talk to him or just observe the stranger with the same name.

He knows nothing about me.

Sometimes I imagine that I am an eternal wanderer lost in time,

Just a ripple in the Ocean of Life.

What is time?

As I age I wonder if I lived to the fullest.

Our World is full of wonders I have not seen.

A mystery of life.

A mystery that I hope will never be solved.

The Coming of the Planet of the Apes Also The Reason Cockroaches will Win over the Tea Baggers.

A new study from researchers in Europe claims that the average IQ in Western nations dropped by a staggering 14.1 points over the past century.

On average, the general intelligence of those populations measured dropped by 1.23 points per decade. "These findings strongly indicate that with respect to general intelligence the Victorians were substantially cleverer than modern Western populations," the study says.

The study had other positive observations about the Victorian era, noting that economic efficiency began to flourish during the period and that the "height of the per capita numbers of significant innovations in science and technology, and also the per capita numbers of scientific geniuses," occurred during that time, followed by a steady decline.

So why has there been such a steady drop? As UPI notes, previous research studies have found that women of higher intelligence tend to have fewer children on average, meaning that population growth may be driven by those with a lower IQ. And over time, the abundance of less intelligent offspring would affect the overall IQ average.

2025 addendum

Since 2013 the wealth gap has only deepened: by 2024, the top one percent still control about 31 percent of U.S. household wealth, and the nineteen richest families added another trillion dollars in a single year.¹ Meanwhile, fertility has collapsed across rich and poor nations alike—worldwide births per woman fell to 2.3 in 2023 and are still dropping.² Although higher-IQ individuals continue to have slightly fewer children, the genetic drag is measured in tenths of an IQ point per decade, far smaller than the gains or losses we engineer through education, health, and, increasingly, who controls advanced AI. In other words, the real danger is not biological decline but a culturally self-reinforcing split between an AI-augmented cognitive elite and a population that outsources thinking to machines.

Our Dreams of Freedom

What is freedom?
To be free? Free from what?
You are not free from eating. We all have to.
But we would like to choose what we eat.

We are not free from breathing.
But we would like to enjoy it. To choose the air we breathe.
We are not free from our bodies but we would like make the best out of it.
Are we free from love?

Most creatures have to love.
But we would like to make a choice, of who and how to love.
Are we free from desires?
I don't think so. Even if we desire freedom it is still a desire.

Even if we understand what freedom means.
Is nature itself free?
It is not. All living things strive to survive. Why?
Why are we all trying to survive?

Are we free to choose? To not survive?
Yes we are.
But if we choose freedom to make a choice to not live.
We die.

Are we free after we die? We will not know.
Is there freedom without us knowing, appreciating it?
So we have freedom to make choices in matters that we do have choices.
But is it complete freedom?

Or are we trying to make the best choices in life, because we don't have freedom not to make choices?
So what is life but a set of choices we have to make, even if it's a choice to be free?
It is all in our mind.

You and only you can decide to be or not to be.
You are free if you feel free.
But we all have to make our choices.
Are you free?

Perfect Imperfection

Definition of “perfection”:

The condition, state, or quality of being free or as free as possible from all flaws or defects.

I disagree. “As free as possible” is by definition not perfect.

Perfection is, broadly, a state of completeness and flawlessness.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perfection>

“A state of perfect imperfection! In an ever-evolving world, why should a state of static perfection be a desired goal at all? Beauty and progress lie in imperfection”

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/O-zone/entry/a-state-of-perfect-imperfection>

Everything in the Universe is ever changing. The galaxies, the stars, the planets. Every single organism on our planet is evolving alongside with the Universe. Evolving. By definition perfection is the end, the final stage. Nothing can be more perfect.

Perfection

In other words if the Universe would attain perfection, all would stop. And nothing can exist in the static state. It is death. So if our universe came to life from nothing, it became alive, it became imperfect. And this is true for every level, every part of the Universe. Just look at people. Human beauty is in its little flaws, little cute imperfections.

Universe is not perfect, not precise. Another example is science and engineering. Boeing 787 Dreamliner is a good example. The first 787 was unveiled in a roll-out ceremony on July 8, 2007. By this day in June 2013 it just barely started to fly commercial flights. It took 6 years for all the super smart engineers to get out the bugs. Hopefully. So, no matter what, we humans design and build, what really works is trial and error.

The genius, the perfection of the Universe is in imperfection and constant movement, constant change, constant evolution. Evolution of not just species on our planet but stars and galaxies and the universe as a whole. The Mother Nature, the Universe is dealing with the imperfection, with uncertainty by diversification. Dinosaurs were perfect until the conditions changed. New species progressed. Not the strongest or the smartest. Just those better adapted to new conditions.

“Perfection doesn’t exist in the Universe. If the Universe were perfect, it would be empty.” I read this quote somewhere, and I disagree. There is no perfect emptiness. Emptiness if it is real nothingness would not have a volume and therefore cannot exist. Perfection is a chimera. It is

one of many human ideas that doesn't exist. There is not a perfect thing, state or concept. The concept of perfection itself is flawed.

Or perhaps it is a matter of definition? Maybe perfection is the ability for change, adaption and progress. Nassim Taleb calls it “antifragility”. “Antifragility is a postulated antithesis to fragility where high-impact events or shocks can be beneficial.”

<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/anti-fragility.asp>

Perfection is life's unattainable goal and thus is an enemy of life. The only perfection is Nothingness. If the Universe came from Nothing, and you believe it came from God, then the perfect God knows that life is imperfect and knowingly created the imperfect Universe so it evolves and improves. But, if perfection is unattainable, then either God is not perfect or does not exist.

Devil (if it would exist), on the other hand would strive to attain the opposite. To destroy what God has achieved. To destroy the Universe. If current definition of perfection stands the closest thing to perfection in the Universe is the state of full entropy or the heat death of the universe.

Devil wants Perfection.

Relax My Friends

Just lay down on the grass and look at the sky. The clouds. See any shapes you recognize? When I was a kid I was doing it often. I would see faces, and fairy tales heroes, and the armies ready for battle. Strange tropical islands, and wales, and faces watching me. Let your mind wander. Take a break and fly to the world of OZ for a little bit. Enjoy sunrise and sunset. Watch the grass grow. Check your flowers every morning. See the beauty around you.

I used to lay down and watch an ant busily doing its chores. Just following it. And the new world opens up. Bright and full of colors, sounds and meaning.

And then you realize that this world lives by its own rules and does not have an interest in your issues or problems or in you. This wide rich colorful and busy world does not need us humans and most likely will be happily busy living after humanity is long gone.



Please learn to see this world. Let your brain loose. Let your thoughts wander. Imagination and fantasy are your friends. They help you to get rid of your blinders and dogmas and see and hear what you have been too busy to see and hear. Real life.

Learn to meditate. Learn to understand children and see the world through their eyes. Because their world is much wider, brighter, more beautiful, and more alive than ours. We don't have to be serious all the time. We really are not that important. Relax.

Smile. Smile at the sun and clouds. Smile just for no reason and you will feel better. Smile at strangers and many of them will smile back at you and for both of you the day will get brighter and kinder. Sometimes it seems the whole world is against us and we don't feel like smiling. Smile and the world will smile back. Maybe not right away but it will. And the world will become brighter and will open up its beauty for you.

Imagine laying on the beach. Feel the sun touching your skin gently. You hear seagulls. Children are playing and their voices are like happy music of the Universe. Just float there in this sea of sounds, sunlight and smells. Your mind is far away, in another dimension, in other time or maybe just in nowhere. It's OK

That is life. Real life.

Live in these fleeting moments we call life. Because our lives are just a chain of fleeting moments and if you ignore these moments they are gone. Unnoticed. And here is my little secret.

I am writing it to myself. But I will let you to read it.

You are welcome. Relax.

The Last Leaf

I am looking through the window.
All is gray, wet and cold.
Droplets bombard the glass.
Black tree skeleton on the low heavy gray sky.
Air is mixed with water dust and feels cold even
from inside.
It makes my room feel warm and cozy.
Anticipation of winter in the air
Nature is ready for a long slumber.

Sleepy trees are shaking off last yellow and
brown leafs
I noticed a single leaf,
Still there, clinging to the black branch,
Refusing to let go.
The last leaf, it looked cold and lonely.
The tree doesn't want it anymore.
But for the leaf it is so hard to let go,
It was born there.

There is a desperate hope, an illusion.
The last leaf.
It does not want to die.
It does not know – it is dead already.
But the tree knows.
The spring will come again.
It will wake up to a new bright sunshine.
Sun will paint the sky blue
Eagerly anticipating summer.

The tree will grow new leafs, a new beautiful coat.
The last leaf does not know that it is dead already.
It is holding on.
It feels that the Universe will end if it let go.
A gust of wind.
The leaf falls now indistinguishable from others.
Nobody noticed this drama except me.
Life goes on.
Nothing changed in the universe.
There will be another stubborn leaf next fall.



When Parents Fade

Here is a human paradox: parents raise their kids, and want them to be happy and healthy. Then parents age, and children are having very difficult time caring for old parents, and that makes children over stressed and unhealthy. Also many older parents are demented or have Alzheimer. Are these people still parents or there are different personalities in old bodies. And what is a solution?

How do we make it easier for children? That situation is not what parents want for their children?

When Parents Fade: The Paradox of Love, Identity, and Care

A chapter by Nate Dukorsky

A Loving Paradox

Parents raise their children with the deepest intention: to see them grow strong, healthy, and free. Yet often, in life's final chapters, those same children are drawn back—not by choice, but by duty—into a caregiving role that drains their health, energy, and sometimes even joy.

How strange, and painful, that what begins in love can circle into suffering. A child who was once fed, held, and protected now finds themselves feeding, dressing, and soothing a parent who may no longer recognize them. This reversal is not what any good parent would want.

So we must ask: How can we honor our elders without sacrificing the well-being of their children?

Are They Still Our Parents? As dementia or Alzheimer's advances, personalities shift. Memory collapses. Familiar phrases vanish. Sometimes, anger and paranoia replace warmth and gentleness. The question arises: "Is this still my parent—or a different person in the same body?"

From one perspective, yes — they are still the person who raised you, even if time has unraveled their mind. From another, perhaps a new, altered consciousness has taken root — one shaped more by biology than biography.

In truth, both may be valid. Identity is not fixed. Memory and presence evolve. What remains, perhaps, is the thread of love that runs beneath all form.

How to Make It Easier for the Children?

Parents Can Plan Ahead—for Their Children's Sake

- A final act of love is preparing for one's own decline.
- Write advance directives. Be clear about your wishes if your mind fades.
- Create savings or long-term care plans. Not just for your comfort—but to spare your children agony.
- Speak openly before it's too late. Say things like: "If one day I forget your name, remember that I once held you and loved you. Live your life, even when I can't share it."

- These conversations, though painful, are liberating.
- Rebuild Elder Care as a Shared Social Responsibility

No family should carry this burden alone. We need:

- Affordable, dignified eldercare centers
- Financial support for family caregivers
- Intergenerational housing models that include, not isolate, elders

By making care communal, we preserve love without creating burnout.

- **Normalize Help—Without Shame**
Placing a parent in assisted living is not abandonment. It can be an act of love. Children must be free to say: “I can no longer do this alone. And I still love you.”
- **Use Technology to Lighten the Load**
Emerging tools will change how we support aging minds:
 - Smart homes that track safety and routine
 - AI companions trained on the elder’s own voice and stories
 - Voice assistants that cue memory and offer calming presence
 Eventually, even fragments of a parent’s personality might be captured and reflected back — preserving parts of the person long after cognition fades.
- **Teach Children - It’s OK to grieve and to Live**

The deepest burden is not physical — it’s emotional. Children must be allowed to:

- Mourn the fading of a parent
 - Feel frustration without guilt
 - Live their lives without shame
- We can whisper to them: “You do not owe your health to mine. Love me, but do not lose yourself in my decline.”

A Possible Gift: The Goodbye Letter.

What if parents, while still lucid, wrote a letter to be read if their mind faded?

"Dear child, if I forget your name, don't think I've forgotten your importance. If I change, know that it's my brain, not my heart. I want you to be free. Do not carry guilt. Carry love. That is all I ever wanted for you."

Closing Thoughts

This stage of life is hard. There's no pretending otherwise. But we can meet it with love, with honesty, and with preparation. When parents fade, they are not lost entirely. They are transformed. And with care, that transformation doesn't need to cost their children's peace.

Let us honor both sides of this paradox: the parent who once gave everything, and the child who deserves to keep something for themselves.



Still Flying

2011

◇ Food shortages in the world.

- One billion people do not have enough food. It fuels anger towards the governments, and the countries that support their government.
- The climate is changing, the weather becomes more extreme. We do not know how the climate change will affect crops around the world.
- The food prices are on the rise and will continue to rise.

It seems that a set of current events around the world points to common crises. The uncertainty, and fear, and resentment towards rich countries.

But, what we are talking about are the economy, the GDP growth, and the unemployment, as if nothing is happening around us. We keep wasting natural resources. We are still flying. We fell off the cliff and are falling down. But meantime we are flying and it feels good. As one roofer said after falling off the roof – flying is fine, it is landing that is the problem.

◇ Science, technology, and the future.

Does technology by itself will save our civilization?

I believe that in order to survive we need to grow and develop spiritually, so instead of devising new ways to kill each other, we will work on ways to advance physiologically and mentally. We still do not know the full capabilities of our minds and our bodies.

Now let's think what we need to be happy:

- Food
- Shelter
- Security
- Love
- Social interactions

I do hope that science and technology will bring us to understanding of the limits of technology in our advancement as species. What we call technology may actually cause the crush of our civilization. Just one example. It seems that as a society we are caught in a vicious circle. We devise new technology, new ways to increase production to make more stuff for our consumption:

- We make cars to drive to work
- We drive to work to make more cars
- We build roads to drive our cars

- We need fuel to drive our cars in order to make more cars that use more fuel.

And we have to ask ourselves: do all these activities make us happy? Our economy in my opinion resembles the inverted pyramid. We are depleting the planets resources, the foundation of our economy. But we keep expanding our production capacity. We keep building up and as our society becomes unstable economically, it also becomes unstable socially.

◊ What I see:

- Erosion of freedoms
- Erosion of the middle class
- Erosion of educational standards
- Erosion in leadership in scientific research
- Erosion in environmental protection
- Erosion in dollar value

And on and on....

In short – DECAY. Society, life cannot move backwards. It dies.

◊ About unemployment

Our employment rate depends on consumption. So it depends on dwindling natural resources. The food production in the world is falling behind the growth of the population. The rift between rich and poor is widening. Considering the shrinking resources, the rich will grab more and growing underclass will have less.

So, where is a solution? We cannot predict the future. But we know that even if we will have the unlimited energy source and we learn how to make food out of thin air, we will run out of air. In this universe it is impossible to make something from nothing. If the current situation continues, I see the scenario where a small group of super rich will control the planet and all the resources.

And all this problems affect the very structure of our society.

◊ Time to make a choice!

There is a growing consensus that capitalism is in obvious and dire need of replacement with the new and better Cooperative System, the latter characterized by morality and logic in both its economic operations and personal value systems. A Cooperative System that would not be corrupt in any area, including the military, and indeed would not foster the global competition to acquire resources in the first place, as capitalism routinely does, that has historically resulted in war.

◇ Western Civilization and Economy

Lately we witness a disturbing trend around the world. Western economies are in trouble. Financial problems plague most of the “developed world”. Unemployment is high, energy cost is rising. But the problems don't end with Western societies.

There are global problems:

- Food and water shortages
- Disillusioned populations
- Social upheaval
- Deforestation

In my opinion the underlying roots of the problem are deeper and much more serious than we led to believe – Consumption-based Economy!

Current model of western economy is not sustainable because of limited resources and diminishing ability of population to buy goods and services. Problems I see with our way of living.

Food.

- Monoculture
- Chemicals
- Genetically Modified food
- Raw Materials
- Open end consumption of non-renewable resources
- Waste, certain percentage of products made is junk. In order to make them we use energy, raw materials

Unemployment.

Reasons for unemployment:

- Lack of skills
- Inferior education
- Expensive high education
- Failing schools
- Constant productivity increases
- Corporations can do more with less to get bigger profits
- General population has less money to spend, people buy less In order to get more profit, corporations are trying to reduce overhead (wages, taxes), so there are more lay-offs
- **Social spending by the governments**

Health Care spending.

Population is getting sicker because of junk food, chemicals, medications, pollution, lifestyle, and diminishing quality of food (because of soil depletion). Population is getting older and needs more support-medical and general care. Increasing unemployment payments because of rising unemployment

◇ What Can Be Done?

1. The common problem with all developed countries is budget deficit so naturally governments are trying to reduce spending
2. **Cutting spending is harder than many of us think because of side effects such as unemployment.**
3. I said before that corporations should stop making useless junk. But again it will lead to some people losing jobs. So is cutting military spending

So, no matter what we do, it does not look good for employment. That leads to logical conclusion that current model of our society is unsustainable. But here is a question – do we need full employment?

Are there any solutions?

We must stop wasting natural resources and stop making junk, people will get healthier, and that will reduce consumption and health care spending. **What do we do about unemployment?** I read the book by Daniel Quinn, he offers an idea of tribal society. He does not offer too much detail. So here is my suggestion.

Tribal society but on a higher technological level: advanced communications (so that we do not have to drive to work), micro-nuclear powered generators, solar and wind power, locally grown food (cuts the need for transportation and fertilizers); nano technology for manufacturing products for our daily needs; slowing population growth (because if don't do it, nature will).

But that will involve the change of Capitalism as we know it, or rather of what it has become. One of the issues I see are multinational corporations that constantly need to expand and to find new markets in order to be profitable. Originally the idea was that capitalism is good at assessing the needs and working to fulfill these needs.

But that is reversed now with proliferation of global economy, multinational corporations and mass media. Now corporations are creating products first and then by using sophisticated media campaign they convince people in absolute necessity to have these products.

Here is an example: Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

From 1996 to 2000 annual spending on direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs more than tripled to \$2.5 billion, with the largest percentage increase committed to spending on television advertising (Rosenthal, Berndt, Donohue, Frank, & Epstein, 2002).

A study by the National Institute for Health Care Management Research and Educational Foundation found that increased sales of the 50 most advertised drugs accounted for **47.8% of the \$20.8 billion rise in retail spending on pharmaceuticals from 1999 to 2000** (Findlay, 2001).

Also corporations are intentionally limiting the life of their products so people will buy new ones.

“Planned obsolescence or built-in obsolescence in industrial design is a policy of deliberately planning or designing a product with a limited useful life, so it will become obsolete or nonfunctional after a certain period of time. Planned obsolescence has potential benefits for a producer because to obtain continuing use of the product the consumer is under pressure to purchase again, whether from the same manufacturer (a replacement part or a newer model), or from a competitor which might also rely on planned obsolescence.” (Wikipedia)

In my opinion as long as we remain a consumption-based society the situation will not improve. Here are quotes that fit from the book "The Great Disruption: How the Climate Crisis Will Transform the Global Economy" by Paul Gilding:

"If you cut down more trees than you grow, you run out of trees. If you put additional nitrogen into a water system, you change the type and quantity of life that water can support. If you thicken the Earth's carbon dioxide blanket, the Earth gets warmer. If you do all these and many more things at once, you change the way the whole system of planet Earth behaves, with social, economic and life-support impacts." This is not speculation, this is high school science.

"In all this though, there is a surprising case for optimism. As a species, we are good in a crisis, and passing the limits will certainly be the biggest crisis our species has ever faced. Our backs will be up against the wall, and in that situation we have proven ourselves to be extraordinary."

"As the full scale of the imminent crisis hits us, our response will be proportionally dramatic, mobilizing as we do in war. We will change at a scale and speed we can barely imagine today, completely transforming our economy, including our energy and transport industries, in just a few short decades."

"Perhaps most surprisingly we will also learn there is more to life than shopping. We will break our addiction to growth, accept that more stuff is not making our lives better and focus instead on what does."

In reality, can we radically change our society, our economy?

Not without a major crisis. Falling off the cliff.

Have a good flight.

Future by the Pessimist

Disclaimer: I wrote this article before the AI. So, of course I was wrong in some aspects. *"Predictions are difficult, especially about the future. " In order not to tire readers with too many details and explanations I will be short. But whatever technologies I will mention in this article are existing technologies in different stages of maturity.*

Below are my attempts to figure out where the existing trends and technologies will lead humanity. Some experts predict gloom and doom while others are full of optimism. Who is right? Maybe both. It depends on how you look at life, civilization, and progress. And what is "progress"?

Is the end of dinosaurs and rise of mammals progress? Not from the dinosaur's point of view! Is the beginning of the industrial revolution progress? Not for our planet.

So what is progress?

Is growth and consumption-based economy progress? Is global climate change caused by humans' progress? Science, our understanding of the universe, our technological advancements are impressive.



But what about weapons of war? Nuclear and thermonuclear weapons of mass distraction? Is that progress? So, when I predict a major crisis of Western civilization, is this progress? I guess it depends on your point of view. So you be the judge.

The major crisis of our civilization.

- Consumption and growth-based economy is nearing a crisis. Our economy in my opinion is unsustainable.
"If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most

probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity.

- Hamster cage economic model.

Here is the question: Productivity keeps increasing for a hundred years and yet we are busier than ever! Please, think about it. Where did the results of our high productivity go if we have to work harder and produce more? Is it because we consume more and more stuff and services?

Following this logic what is the logical conclusion? The more we produce, the more we consume and we have to work even harder so we will be able to consume more to “grow our economy”.

- **The water crisis** is the #1 global risk based on its impact to society (as a measure of devastation) and the #8 global risk based on likelihood (likelihood of occurring within 10 years) as announced by the World Economic Forum, January 2015.
- Food shortages.
WASHINGTON, D.C. — the world is less than 40 years away from a food shortage that will have serious implications for people and governments, according to a top scientist at the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- Global shortage of raw materials is an increasingly pressing issue leading to instability in the world and wars. **Russia and China are gearing for global war for natural resources. And so is the US.**

“The world is facing an unprecedented crisis of resource depletion—a crisis that goes beyond “peak oil” to encompass shortages of coal and uranium, copper and lithium, water and arable land.” The global pursuit of vital natural resources has long shaped human history, providing the impetus for campaigns of exploration and conquest across the millennia.

- Effects of global warming.
- Floods affect the crops and destroy human habitats.
- Droughts affect the food supply and will force human migrations.
- Wars for natural resources, caused by human migration.
- *“...powerful evidence backing up the Pentagon and intelligence community’s assessments that climate change is likely to play the role of a “threat multiplier” in coming decades, pushing countries that are already vulnerable to upheaval over the edge and into open conflict.”*
- Mass extinction of life.

Warming temperatures of water bodies, decertification and deforestation can all contribute to the irreversible impact on our natural habitat and thus threaten endangerment and even extinction of plant and animal life.

- Fragility of globalization.

“The presence of globalization can thus create a domino effect which means that if this is affected, several other countries are bound to get affected too even if they might be on the other side of the globe.”

- Population growth and a centralized economy model.
- Waste and overhead due to centralized global infrastructure: huge expenses and losses to warehouse and deliver products to the stores.
- Industrial agriculture. Mono agriculture may cause global crops sickness.
- Large, homogeneous crops enable parasites -- bacteria, viruses, fungi and insects --- to specialize on one specific host, increasing the chance they will mutate into a more pathogenic form.
- Genetically engineered crops and its side effects. Super weeds and super bugs.

The ecological, economic and agronomic disaster accompanying herbicide-tolerant transgenic crops is by now well known:

- over 10 million acres of super-weeds resistant to Monsanto's weed killer, Roundup;
- farm machinery breaking on Roundup-resistant pig-weed thick as a baseball bat;
- Monsanto paying farmers to spray their fields with competitors' herbicides;
- A new generation of transgenic crops in the pipeline engineered to withstand older and more dangerous chemicals like 2,4-D.
- Fragility of the centralized infrastructure.
- Domino effect. Just by hacking into a grid, one can create a catastrophic failure of the grid. Not just a power grid. Any grid.
- Air traffic, computerized Walmart logistics, and cell phone grids and so on.
- Global financial system is vulnerable. The so called Cloud: "the practice of using a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage and process data, rather than a local server or a personal computer."
- Cyber war is coming.

Another aspect of the decentralization issue is a cyber-war. The most lethal weapon is not a bomb. It is a cyber-attack on the country infrastructure. A country "smart" power grid can be disabled not with bombs, but much easier and cheaper - by hacking into a grid and disabling the power distribution in the country. That will end civilization as we know it.

"We're not prepared. If the nightmare scenario becomes suddenly real. If hackers shut down much of the electrical grid and the rest of the critical infrastructure goes with it. If we are plunged into chaos and suffer more physical destruction than 50 monster hurricanes and economic damage that dwarfs the Great Depression."

Part II

Possible solutions and cause for optimism.

For many reasons our habits and the way we use our resources are changing to the better, slowly. Below are some promising trends:

- Decentralization of our Western economy
- Power distribution - Getting rid of the grid.
- Renewable power sources: solar, wind, etc.

Germany generated over half its electricity demand from solar power for the first time ever, and the UK, basking in the sunniest weather of summer during the longest days of the year, nearly doubled its 2013 peak solar power output at the solstice weekend. France, Italy, Denmark and other countries are also believed to have generated record amounts in June.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/23/uk-and-germany-break-solar-power-records>

- Prefabricated houses that are self-sufficient.
- http://www.gizmag.com/archiblox-archi-plus-carbon-positive-house/36283/?utm_source=Gizmag+Subscribers&utm_campaign=768f1f3c48-UA-2235360-4&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_65b67362bd-768f1f3c48-90360674
- Fusion reactors.

The world has been working on controlled nuclear fusion for over 60 years.

<https://www.iter.org/>

It is just a matter of time before the fusion reactor will become a reality. But again the predictions are hard. But I have no doubt that new energy sources will be discovered and implemented.

- Micro-power generators. "The Big Potential of Micro-Nukes"
- Downsized, simplified reactors are poised to revive nuclear energy and bring carbon-free power to where it is needed most."
<http://discovermagazine.com/2010/jun/05-the-big-promise-of-micro-nukes>
- Food distribution and decline of supermarkets.
- One observation about the abundance of products in supermarkets.

When we just immigrated to the US from the Soviet Union in 1979 we were shocked and overwhelmed with American stores – these huge rooms full of all kinds of food products. Shocked in a good way. We had never seen it before. There were always problems with food shortages in Russia basic foods. But here we still don't know a good number of products on shelves in these supermarkets. Now my attitude has changed a lot. Now I know that all these countless boxes

and jars and bottles are a giant waste of Earth's precious resources. Absolutely unneeded and not even good for our health.

- Eliminating losses due to distribution and warehousing. Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year, approximately 1.3 billion tons, gets lost or wasted. <http://www.unep.org/wed/2013/quickfacts/>
- “Reducing food losses by only 15 percent would be enough food to feed more than 25 million Americans each year. But supermarket food is marketed with an eye toward bulk, convincing shoppers to take home more than they can use.” <http://modernfarmer.com/2013/09/next-food-revolution-youre-eating/>
- Eliminating processed food. Processed food...cookies, crackers, cereal, even yogurt, crammed with various chemicals that will let it sit on the shelf for a good long time, all the while containing enough sugar and salt to make it taste good. Processed foods are, plus or minus, 70 percent of what most of us eat. <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/life/big-book/processed-foods-make-70-percent-us-diet>
- Impact of technology.
- “Smart dust” micro-computers suspended in the air. “Smart Dust actually describes microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices that include sensors, computational ability and more. They can be as tiny as dust particles and can spread throughout buildings and into the atmosphere to collect and monitor data.” <http://chaione.com/smart-dust-communication-systems-and-the-future-world/> No rigid infrastructure will be necessary. The clouds of smart dust will move and change functions depending on instructions. It will be much more robust than cables, towers, and antennas. But humans are usually trying to adapt new technology to kill each other. So the smart dust undoubtedly will be used as a weapon.
- Solar energy generators in space.
As space-borne energy-harvesting schemes go, this one seems faintly possible – an array of curved mirrors directing sunlight toward solar cells, their energy production microwaved down to Earth. It's so realistic, actually, that NASA is providing funding for a proof-of-concept study.
- Local goods production using 3D printers.

Applying 3D printing concepts to nanotechnology could bring similar advantages to nanofabrication – speed, less waste, economic viability – than it is expected to bring to manufacturing technologies.

Read more: Nanotechnology and 3D-printing

3D printing is still in its infancy. “A self-replicating 3D printer that spawns new, improved versions of itself is in development at the University of Bath in the UK.”

The “self-replicating rapid prototype” or RepRap could vastly reduce the cost of 3D printers,

paving the way for a future where broken objects and spare parts are simply "re-printed" at home. New and unique objects could also be created."

Part III

Other possible solutions and a little imagination.

- Sharing goods and services
It is the most prominent example of a huge new "sharing economy", in which people rent beds, cars, boats and other assets directly from each other, coordinated via the internet.
- Second hands market.
<http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21573104-internet-everything-hire-rise-sharing-economy>
- Eliminating text books for students.

I remember my kids schlepping to school heavy backpacks filled with textbooks. Why are these textbooks so heavy? I am sure many of these kids would have back problems because of this.

So instead of 50 books per student we will have 1 tablet. Domino effect follows: no trees cutting, transporting and processing. No paper making, no printing and books binding. No books sales in store and so on.

A national push to get a computer into each student's hands will upend the way American children are taught. <http://time.com/3483905/the-paperless-classroom-is-coming/>

Possible negative effects of changing economy.

Jobs and labor

Unemployment due to automation, decentralization, sharing economy, reduced manufacturing sector.

Let's imagine the future not so distant. Your house gets energy from the micro nuclear generator buried in the backyard. Or you will have solar cell roof. By the way solar cell efficiency is improving rapidly and solar cells are getting cheaper. And there are batteries available now that will store the energy for night time and rainy days.

"Solar energy sources are erratic—but by storing their energy and then releasing it when required, batteries could solve that problem." <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/will-tesla-s-battery-for-homes-change-the-energy-market/>

You buy food at the local farm or you grow your own at the cooperative farm (no junk food is being produced anymore). Having a 3D printer you can print household goods using software you buy online. So you buy just a program for your printer to make tools, dishes, furniture...

(By the way, if you need a new computer just print it.)

Reusable materials for 3D printers. “A few academics and garage-bound inventors are trying to take on the problem of 3D printing with metals on their own terms, and on budgets that make sense for hobbyists and makers, while startups like MatterFab are confronting the problem as well. <http://3dprint.com/29944/diy-metal-printing-garage/>

No cables. If you need to connect to a friend on the other continent you call a smart dust swarm and it forms a dish that gets signal from a satellite. If you need a car to visit family you just pick up a shared car or a bike on the street. There still will be big factories and research centers. But very little mass production manufacturing. Even cars will be produced by 3D printing. And so will be the 3D printers.

As I mentioned before it is impossible to predict the future just because many things are not being invented yet and many events will happen that we cannot predict.

But one thing is certain. If we will not change our ways voluntarily the Universe will force humanity to do so in a way much more painful. Nothing is forever and grows and consumption based economy will be a thing of the past.

Black Swan

Nassim Taleb: “What we call here a Black Swan is an event with the following three attributes.

First, it is an *outlier*, as it lies outside the realm of regular expectations, because nothing in the past can convincingly point to its possibility. Second, it carries an extreme impact. Third, in spite of its outlier status, human nature makes us concoct explanations for its occurrence *after* the fact, making it explainable and predictable.

I stop and summarize the triplet: rarity, extreme impact, and retrospective (though not prospective) predictability. A small number of Black Swans explain almost everything in our world, from the success of ideas and religions, to the dynamics of historical events, to elements of our own personal lives. Ever since we left the Pleistocene, some ten millennia ago, the effect of these Black Swans has been increasing. It started accelerating during the industrial revolution, as the world started getting more complicated, while ordinary events, the ones we study and discuss and try to predict from reading the newspapers, have become increasingly inconsequential.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/22/books/chapters/0422-1st-tale.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

What will the next Black Swan bring?

The Train of Life 2012

We dream of better times,
We dream of better life.
Sometimes it is the future,
Sometime the past.
The future where the problems of the present are gone,
The past where the problems of the present are not there yet.

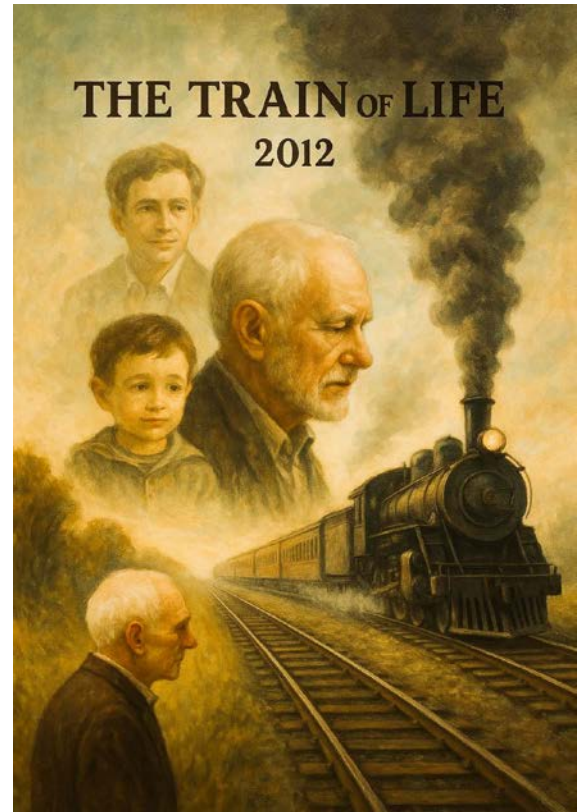
We dream about the “good old times” that are gone,
We dream about happy times that are not there yet.
But we forget about the Knowledge,
The knowledge about the past's future.
And this knowledge is terrifying - the wars and disasters, and suffering.

And we shudder at the thought of that Knowledge.
We realize our life in the past would be impossible with this Knowledge.

We dream about the Future,
But the future of our dreams is just that - a dream because we cannot know the future.
We are in the Present and we dream of better times.
Sometimes it is the past.
But than we would know the future and live in fear and anticipation.

Sometimes it is the Future.
But we don't know the future and our dream could become a nightmare.
We live in the Present and we know the Past and we dream about the Future.
I know that the future is not just a dream.
We live there every day,
We make the future.

And the future becomes the past every day of our lives.
By our action or inaction in the Present we are building the Future and creating the Past.
And we call it Life
We travel through Life's Present Past and Future and are making choices every moment of our journey.
And hope not to miss the right turn.



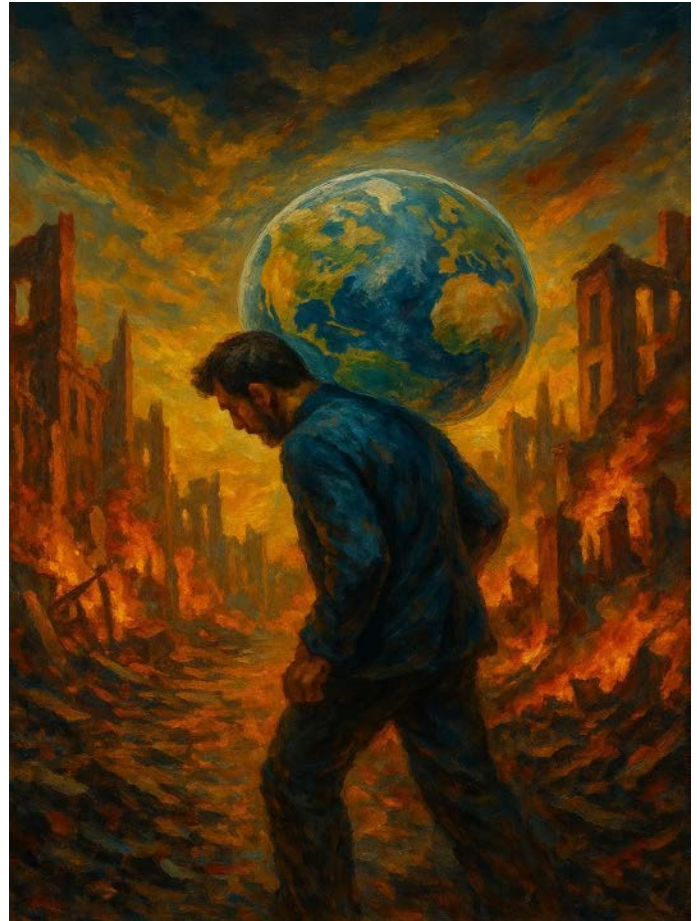
The Weight of the World Is On My Shoulders

Every soul separated from its body,
Every man killed in battle,
Every child, every woman, every innocent
that died,
Died for no reason.
I die with them.
So much misery in the world,
Injustice, murder, senseless wars,
Crimes for no reason,
No reason other than anger.

Viscous ignorance,
Limitless greed,
Vindictive and ruthless despots ruling over
the ignorant,
Ignorant trying to fill the void.
The void of empty senseless life.
They created this vindictive ruthless and
jealous god.

This god, this small and mean creation of
human sins and ignorance.
The vengeful god created in the image of the
lower common denominator of humanity.
In his name the “believers” are committing unspeakable crimes.
The weight of the world is on my shoulders.

Killing fields in the Middle East.
Israel surrounded by the alien world of the blood thirsty killers of the Dark Ages.
Russia, this forever drunk unpredictable tragic and talented nation,
Russia forever ruled by demonic scary despots.
Russia willingly submitting to every King, Emperor and communist psychopath,
And now Putin, a power hungry maniac.
The weight of the world is on my shoulders,
The pain of the world is in my heart.



I Am a Jew

Jewish guilt – maybe, what is the reason?
Guilt for all human crimes and tragedies.
And the world, this big hostile and unfair world,
The world hates the Jews and is afraid of us.

Afraid of us a small ancient tribe of tragic and brilliant people.
Antisemitism is rising, again,
A sign of the dark times coming.
And we Jews are here to fulfill the tragic task

We are here to warn the world by our sacrifice,
To warn of coming disaster.
And maybe, just maybe, we the Jews are carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders.
And we are the first to be crushed by it.

We the Jews are always the first to meet the coming evil force.
But not the last. The evil will not stop.
The pain of the world is in my heart,
Not by choice, not by my choice.

I am a Jew, a chosen one.
Chosen to carry the weight of the world.

We Have to Live

Despite it all,
Despite all odds,
As the wave of hatred is rising again,
And again throughout millennia.
We are Jews, The Chosen people.

A privilege and a curse.
The Jews, a small tribe of nomads
Among the multitude of hostile ignorant people.
Our curse – we are the chosen people.

A task is given to us.
A task we are obligated to fulfill.
A Sisyphean task it seems.
Did we the Jews sign up for this?

Or was it imprinted in our DNA?
The Task to show the way.
An impossible curse to drag an unwilling humanity,
The kicking and screaming mob

To the light, to a better future.
And they hate us for this.
A curse.
Throughout countless generations

We are just trying to live.
To live in spite of enemies that tried to destroy us Jews,
To outlive the eternal evil of hatred thirsting for our blood.
Our enemies who are determined to get rid of these strange and different people – the Jews.

The Jews, these strangers that are never satisfied with the order of things.
But we survived,
Survived because we have to live,
To never lose hope,

To live against all odds,
To live in hope that maybe...
Maybe one day ignorance and hate will vanish,
The Evil will be defeated and the Light will prevail.
But sometimes we pause in doubt,

Hope fading away.
We are cursed.

The Romans and the inquisition,
The Holocaust and the Middle East,
And now the resurgence of antisemitism in Europe.
But we are the chosen people.

Cursed and privileged,
We have to live.
Our task is not yet done.
As long as there is hatred and ignorance in the world

We the Jews will be here.
We have to live
To drag this world to a better future.
We will be here.

The Storm Is Coming

2016

I am going about daily business as if nothing changed, nothing is wrong.
But I feel uneasy.
The storm is coming and I feel empty and heavy at the same time.
The uncertainty it creeps in my heart.

This anticipation, expectation of something,
Something awful.
Maybe it is just paranoia?
The world is disintegrating around me.

Ignorance, hate and fear are rising like poisonous fog, creeping, enveloping all.
And I am unable to be just an impartial observer,
It is not who I am.
And it shows, my friends can see it in me.

Take it easy they keep telling me. Everything will be fine. Eventually.
Eventually is not good enough.
I think many now can feel this dark primal fear around.
Fear is the companion of hate.

Ignorance feeds fear and fear breeds hate.
Only we humans are capable of hate, blood thirsty hate toward our fellow humans.
Is hate a trait of intelligence? Of reason?
Animals do not have ability to reason, and maybe that is why animals don't know hate.

Why is it happening now?
Why all that is bad about humans is condensing, getting heavier and stronger, floats to the surface?
Why in spite of human accomplishments, the science, art, music, technology, ignorance is spreading around our world?
In all the human history have humans change at all?

Millennia passed by and we remain what we were in ice age.
This thirst for power.
It still drives humanity. This insanity leads to wars and suffering of innocents.
Pulls humanity toward extinction.

And some use these lethal traits for their benefit.
Throughout millennia rulers and despots needed ignorance of their subjects to control them.
Nothing changed.
Ignorance fear and hate kill reason.

Fear and hate poisons people, robs of free will.
Now it came to America.
No. It always been here.
Hiding, waiting.

Waiting patiently for the opportune time.
And it came. Trump Presidency.
Ignorance is contagious. It spreads given the chance.
Ignorance created Trump for self-preservation.

Trump gave voice to hate. Fear and hate.
Trump legitimized ignorance and normalized racism.
In disbelief and desperation we are watching our country being destroyed from inside.
All that makes America America.

Acceptance, free thinking, sense of fairness, tolerance, appreciation of arts and science.
Compassion and desire to help other
Being dismantled, destroyed by a crude amoral caricature of a human being,
Whom Americans chose to be President of the United States of America.

Americans. Are they?
Are these people really Americans?
Are these ignorant, hateful and full of fear humans really Americans?
Just because they happen to be born here?

Does that makes them what we and the world knows as Americans?
These people by electing Trump disregarded all moral, human values.
They sacrificed their integrity that they think they have.
They ignored logic and basic decency.

Why?
For what?
This election shook my faith in humanity and human values.
It forced me to write this.

Where do we go from here? What do we do?
And who are "we"?
Are, we the people, still matter?
Can thinking people, especially younger generations, change anything?

Should we give up? Can we give up?
Please look in the mirror.
Listen to your consciousness, to your heart.
Can we afford to give up?

Can we allow the haters to have their way?
I am clinging to hope.
Looking for silver lining.
What does not kill us makes us stronger.

Will America survive?
It is up to you. Up to us.

Time Out

The last warning,
And the Earth stands still.
Eerie silent cities.
Empty streets, closed shops and restaurants.

Manufacturing plants are deserted, quiet.
Empty dark theaters.
Deserted beaches.
Humanity stopped in its tracks.

Civilization held hostage by an invisible enemy.
Corona virus rules.
Life became surreal, frightening, and sad.
But encouraging, enlightening in a strange way.

The Sky is blue!
For the first time in many years people can see the sky.
There are mountains near Mumbai in India. People can see the mountains!
Air is clean and fresh in big cities.

Animals are wondering on empty streets.
Movie comes to mind – “Earth After People”.
But why “After People”?
People are still here! We just got a warning, a time out.

A warning by Mother Nature.
We the people have to change our ways. Or else.
And I think, I hope, I want to believe that humanity can change.
We have to.

To save ourselves, to save the only home we have – our blue planet.
I see the silver lining in this tragedy.
People are discovering what is really important.
People are starting to appreciate what they don't have anymore.

Yes we the people are far from perfect.
Now we are starting to realize that we miss each other.
We miss getting together, be together.
We miss real hugs and kisses.

Computer images are not the same as real interaction.

And yet we call. We call people we haven't talk to for a while.
We talk to our families, relatives, friends more often than before the pandemic.
I see the generosity, compassion, desire to help.

We feel more than ever before that we are all in this together.
Virus does not recognize borders or party affiliations.
We realize that it is up to us, all of us, to contribute, to do something.
This crisis pushed us to realization how fragile, how delicate life is on our planet.



PS: I wrote “At the Crossroads” a year ago. And now, during the pandemic, I can see that the future I tried to imagine is not that far away. Life is forcing humanity to change. We the people are at the crossroads right now. And one of the roads leads to the dead end. To Earth after people.

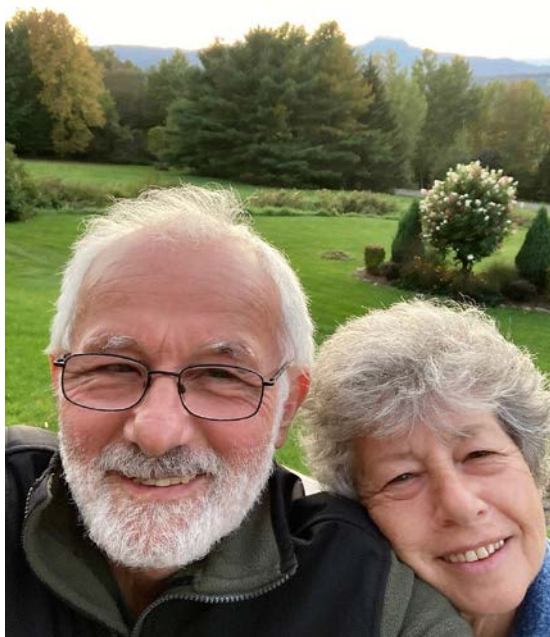
What Could Have Been

Sometimes I wonder. What if? What could have been?

My wife and myself, we are sitting in a beautiful park. Music is playing, darkness is coming down gently, the sound of music is mixed with birds and cicadas chirping. The fresh breeze touches our faces, makes the leaves whisper to each other.

It is peaceful, relaxing, the music is wonderful. I am enjoying it all, watching people around us. People, old and young, beautiful and not. Couples, friends, singles, families.

Evening darkness changes appearances and makes the world more mysterious. I love mystery, the unknown, possibility of impossible. What if? And I wonder, how life, my life, all lives, are full of random, accidental events that are determining our life stories.



What if

What if I had not met my wife the way I did, what if I had encountered her under different circumstances and we just walked by each other, glancing briefly, never to meet again. Never aware of each other's existence.

How would our lives be now?

Where would we be, who would we be with, would we have kids?

Was it fate that determined our lives, or just an accident?

And what if there is another me?

If there is a parallel reality with another me there, what would be my life story there?

And what if? What if we are communicating somehow? On subconscious level.

Some strange feelings, some vaguely familiar faces, events.

Unexplained.

Maybe, just maybe, mystery is all around us, maybe it's us?

Maybe we, all of us, are these mysterious beings communicating, living across the universe?

I am watching people, so different, mysterious and beautiful.

Each one is a mystery.

What a wonderful evening.

What is The Question?

2011

The most important activity in acquiring the Knowledge is to ask questions. Only when we are asking questions can we get answers. So my friend don't be afraid to ask "stupid" questions. There are no stupid questions. "We are all agreed that your theory is crazy. The question which divides us is whether it is crazy enough to have a chance of being correct. My own feeling is that it is not crazy enough." Niels Bohr.

What is the question?

These questions would not leave me alone. Why are we here? What is intelligence? What is life? Are we humans really that smart? In comparison to whom? How do we know? We haven't seen any other intelligent species. Why haven't we seen any "aliens"? Are we alone in the universe? How can we know?

When I am far away from the city I look in awe at the night sky, bright and mysterious. And I wonder if at the same time there any others on far away planets looking at the sky, wondering. Are they asking the same questions? How do they look? Or maybe we are missing each other on crossroads of time and some civilizations are already gone while others are just starting to look up at the sky.

Star barrier

Civilizations, species rise and fall. Just memories and ruins remain. Are all civilizations destined to perish eventually dissolved by indifferent time? I think there is a threshold. A star travel barrier. The energy needed to power star ships can destroy the life on the planet if the species are too aggressive and lacking qualities to resolve their problems in a peaceful manner. Natural selection in a more general sense applies to civilizations too. So hopefully some intelligent species survive and cross the star travel barrier. But not many. So hopefully there are sparks of intelligence that will not be extinguished. Will our civilization survive the threshold? It seems less and less likely.

What is life?

I look up there seeing myriads of stars and I feel lonely, lost in this vastness. Our lives, our existence is just a fleeting moment, a spark in the universe. Is there a purpose for humanity, for our lives? Is our universe really a final frontier? There is just emptiness and energy interaction and flickering sparks of consciousness. Intelligence is like fireflies at night, fleeting and fragile. What is life, consciousness, mind? Are there other forms of life? Totally different?

Why do we think that only animals, carbon based organisms can receive the gift of intelligence and self-awareness? I hope, I believe that there is a mind far greater than ours, a mind where the galaxies are neurons and all the beautiful and terrifying events and cataclysms we see are

the results of the consciousness of a great mind.

Hardwired to wonder.

Why are we humans cannot resist the quest for more knowledge? We love mystery, the unknown. We are hardwired this way. I think there is a purpose in this. It is not an accident. The consciousness, the intelligence are not an accident.

I cannot help wondering. Will we ever meet an alien civilization? I am not sure. We humans are of high opinion of ourselves but we are still too primitive in a grand scheme of cosmic play to be of interest to an advanced civilization that may be millions of years ahead of us. And considering that a million years is just a blink of an eye, a fleeting moment in universe's time the alien contact is doubtful. But if I am right and only peaceful civilization survive the star travel barrier we should not be afraid to meet them.



I hope.

I want it to be true, I believe that there is a reason for us being here, a purpose. We may be a part, a minuscule part of a great mind whose intelligence we will never be able to comprehend. But we humans will keep trying, we cannot help it. We are hardwired this way.

New questions are coming up in my mind. If this great consciousness, this universal intelligence exists how did it come to being? May it be just a part of even greater conscious mind? Seems like a dead end in this reasoning.

Big and small

Or maybe not. The size, scale of our reality is also a mystery. It is relative. Our planet seems big to us but it is just a speck of dust on the galactic scale and our galaxy is infinitely small in our Universe's scale. So the size is actually losing the meaning. The beam of light crosses our universe in an instant by the time measured by the light beam. So is our universe big or small? Well it is the matter of opinion.

Each one of us contains a universe within us. Universe full of life, movement and cataclysms. We don't know how our mind works but inside there is light and explosions and violent storms just like in our universe full of stars galaxies and voids. What are the questions? Will we ever know the extent of our ignorance? Will we ever know the truth of our existence? The perpetual force of our curiosity is driving us and probably many other intelligent species.

We humans love mysteries.

Starting Assumptions

My thoughts about the nature of reality

2019

There is no hard (solid) matter in the universe. There is no “hard” reality.

Definition of reality: Something that exists independently of all other things and from which all other things derive. Supernatural does not exist.

All is vibration.

- Different realms of “reality” created by different frequencies
- Nothing exists but exchange and interaction of information
- Interaction of information creates illusion of reality

Different vibration frequencies, different planes do not interact. Information exchange in different realities is conducted at vastly different speeds. “Nothing” does not exist because if you can describe “nothing” it is not nothing. There is a reason for any reality to exist

Each reality progresses and develops according to an algorithm for each reality. Each algorithm corrects itself via feedback continuously. There is no beginning or end. It is a circle, a snake swallowing its tale. “Always” is meaningless without a point of reference like time. Entropy is accumulation of errors in the system (reality) – aging.

The Tragic Loop

Rockets are falling on Israel. Again. And Again. And the enlightened world is in shock, in horror. Israel is doing it again. Israel is the culprit, the villain. And I, the Jew, expected that. We Jews are the oppressors, the bad guys.

Why? Would the world pity us if we would just let our enemies succeed? But we, the Jews, promised our children: NEVER AGAIN! Never again. Can you hear me, can you hear Israel saying this to the world? Never again! This feeling of desperation, helplessness, and dark fear for this tragic nation, for me, for us.

I remember my childhood in the Soviet Union. Being called a dirty Jew since I can remember. Being bullied in the day camp, in technical school, in the Soviet Army for being a Jew!

I remember my father being arrested and incarcerated, sent to Siberia for being a Jewish writer. I remember being a family of the “enemy of the people.” I remember drunks on the streets, in buses, in a hotel, spewing hate against Jews. Was it my fault that I was born to Jewish parents, that I am a Jew?

But I am proud of being a Jew. I am proud for our accomplishments in science, arts and just about any aspect of today's civilization. I am proud of many Jewish accomplishments in fights for human rights, for freedom, for the right cause. So, what do I feel hearing all these self-righteous opinionated ignoramuses? For me, it is not a theoretical knowledge and interpretation. I grew up being a Jew, the one who lived through the millennia of persecutions and being proud of my people.

- I am the Jew who killed my wife and children before killing myself rather than facing Roman enslavement.
- I am the Jew who was bludgeoned to death by Cossacks in a shtetl in Russia.
- I am the little kid that died from starvation in Auschwitz.
- I am the mother who threw the baby over the fence of a German concentration camp in hopes that somebody would pick up her baby and save it.
- I am my grandparents who were dragged to the ravine near Lubonichi in Belarus, then shot along with hundreds of other Jews, and buried (many still alive) by bulldozers.
- I am the one who managed to survive the war, and following my dream, was able to get to Palestine, the land of my ancestors.
- I am the one who fought desperate wars with Arabs trying to kill those of us who survived the Nazis.
- I am the one who with my blood and sweat built my, yes, MY nation from the ground up.

We Jews did not want to fight the Arabs. We just wanted to live in peace, to love, to raise children. To be happy again, after thousands of years of persecution, after the Holocaust.

But we were surrounded by sworn enemies that kept trying to do what countless enemies before tried to do and failed. Failed! Arabs wanted to destroy our country and to murder all of us. And they failed! Why did they fail?

Golda Meir said that we Jews have a secret weapon: we have nowhere to go.

I am the parent whose children were blown up, murdered by a Palestinian suicide bomber during the wedding. Yes, we Jews love, cherish life. Islamic terrorists glorify death, being a martyr. That is why they put their children in harm's way that is why mothers are proud of their terrorist children who wear explosives belts and die for Allah while killing the Jews.

I am the Israeli child that knows to run to the bomb shelter attached to their school at the sound of a siren. I am the young girl walking with a rifle going to the grocery store.

Israel is constantly on alert. All the time, 24/7.

Do you know, understand how hard it is for people to be on alert ALL THE TIME, to be ready to run into the shelter at the sound of the siren? To be woken up in the middle of the night, to grab your kids and run for your lives?

Just remember the Yom Kippur war. Do you remember how Israel ended the Gaza occupation and what happened afterwards? All the suicide bombing? All the innocent civilians, children and mothers, fathers and grandparents? The "civilized" world has a short memory, but I remember! We remember.

And I intend to do all I can to keep our promise to our children. Israel is the only place in the world where Jews are always accepted and welcomed.

I love America, we came here over 40 years ago. But even here, in America, we see the rise in hate crimes. Not just against Jews, but also people of Asian descent.

Can fascism come to power here in USA? Yes. It almost succeeded on January 6th.

And then Israel will be our last hope.

