

6/28 2007: What's in a year? Let's zero the clock and start from scratch.

No age so golden as now.

To what degree can you imagine a world and its attendant life extending out beyond the frame?

6/29 Chillin like a villain.

6/30 Epoch of the world virus of fear. Which took a turn for the worse, when? Wole Soyinka in *Climate of Fear*, identifies the state killing of three Nigerian drug traffickers in the late '70s as a liminal moment. These men became subject to a shifting of goalposts outside the "normal" framework of the dictatorship. They were sentenced to prison, then, retroactively, to death. This punishment, when carried out at the Lagos execution ground usually reserved for those convicted of armed robbery, evoked an outburst of horrified astonishment from the gleeful spectators who had gathered in expectation of witnessing a last-minute reprieve.

"No, no, no' went up from the crowd. After the deed was done, there followed moments of absolute silence, of utter disbelief; then the crowd more or less slunk away, downcast and shocked...

"While the regime lasted, however, there was no question about it: for the first time in the brief history of her independence, the Nigerian nation, near uniformly, was inducted into a palpable intimacy with fear. The question on every mind was simply

this: what else were they capable of, those who would carry out an act that revolted even the most elastic sectors of the public conscience?

“It is a question to bear in mind in our attempts to understand what distinguished from the past the new fabric of fear that we all seem to wear at this moment. As each assault on our localized or global sense of security is mounted or uncovered in the nick of time...

Witness the “discovery” by British police of two fully-loaded Mercedes car bombs in London this very yesterday, June 29, 2007.

“...the residual question is surely: What next? Where? How? Are limits or restraints no longer recognized?”

7/1 Direct communication with the Statue of Liberty today, this morning on the ferry to Staten Island. She seems to have gotten squatter, her proportions subtly changed. *Don't harden yourself*, she counsels, authority in her tone. *Don't harden yourself. Keep your heart open. There's still much work for you to do. And more to witness too.*

The salt air of the harbor must be the trigger, that and the vast freighters cued up to be ushered one way or another along the shipping channels. Not today, but Lord Nelson's era, when a battleship was called a “wooden wall.”

Soyinka writes, as of 2004, that “for an intense period that began a year or more ago, our airwaves were bombarded with an entrapment piece of monologue of just four words—*weapons of mass destruction*. It was a sustained demonstration, both as metaphor and as prophecy, of how empty such rhetoric can prove, yet how effectively it

can blind a people, lead them into a cul-de-sac, securing nearly an entire nation within a common purpose that proves wrongly premised.”

If anything, though, the WMD assault produced an endemic but hardly common lack of purpose, a voiding of political will, a moral paralysis that allowed the powermad to get on with their program unopposed. Such was the socially-depleted condition of Americans of all classes and races. This had to be pre-existing in order to be opportunistically exploited. In most cases it seemed as though the collusion was not active on the part of the populace, no heat of revenge or lust for conquest drove it – Afghanistan perhaps, but certainly not the invasion of Iraq – rather the deadening sense of the playing out of an inevitability which could not be witnessed, but only spectated.

I'm so glad to have you

And it's getting worse

I'm so mad to love you

And your evil curse...

Sang Skye Edwards with Morcheeba once upon a day in Albion.

Soyinka calls it fear of “the midnight knock.”

7/4 “What we have witnessed in the *tearing out of the heart, liver, and tongue* of the United States, the hideous conversion of captive human beings into battering rams for the destruction of other innocents, is an image of such diabolical horror that the imagination instinctively recoils from its full grasp, even after subsequent, seemingly

competitive horrors.” The italicized words Soyinka adapts from Mike Tyson’s threat, in 2000, against his next opponent, Lennox Lewis.

When you first read the above passage, you assumed Soyinka was referring to the hijacking of American decency and dignity, such as it is, and its transformation into the ferocious engine of Shock and Awe. But then it dawned on you that he was citing the attacks of September 11. Still, oddly, the shoe fits may feet, and in any case, his description could be interpreted as suitable for an incident, or a process.

*Angry faces, cursing loud,
Changing places, falling proud
Behind the bomb, no one cares,
Time is money
We’re taught to tear
It’s all part of the process
We all love looking down
All we want is some success
But the chance is never around...
More Morcheeba as Skye-sung then.*

Eighth Avenue and 17th: etched into the wall still standing, next to the taken-out building, the serpentine flues of chimneys, like so many creatures bored into the fruit and gone.

Undifferentiated lullaby.

“Long live death!” This shouted into the face of Unamuno by General José Millán-Astray y Terreros, circa 1936, and subsequently adopted as the Falangist battle-cry.

7/5 First we must be clear about the nature of the beast we are dealing with.

“Silence undermines ‘bad speech’ – by which I mean dissociated speech – speech dissociated from the body (and therefore from feeling), speech not organically informed by the sensuous presence and concrete particularity of the speaker and by the individual occasion for using language. Unmoored from the body, speech deteriorates. It becomes false, inane, ignoble, weightless. Silence can inhibit or counteract this tendency, providing a kind of ballast, monitoring and even correcting language when it becomes inauthentic.”

Sontag (1966) as quoted by Bollas (1987).

7/6 Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). Gad!

Actuality has moved beyond your capacity to narrate it.

The blinding road.

7/9 Worth transcribing nearly the whole enchilada as it appears, frontpagewise in the *Times*:

By the end of this year, police officials say, more than 100 cameras will have begun monitoring cars moving through Lower Manhattan, the beginning phase of a London-style surveillance system that would be the first in the United States.

The Lower Manhattan Security Initiative, as the plan is called, will resemble London's so-called Ring of Steel, an extensive web of cameras and roadblocks designed to detect, track and deter terrorists. British officials said images captured by the cameras helped track suspects after the London subway bombings in 2005 and the car bomb plots last month.

If the program is fully financed, it will include not only license plate readers but also 3,000 public and private security cameras below Canal Street, as well as a center staffed by the police and private security officers, and movable roadblocks.

"This area is very critical to the economic lifeblood of this nation," New York City's police commissioner, Raymond W. Kelly said in an interview last week. "We want to make it less vulnerable."...

...For a while, it appeared that New York could not even afford such a system. Last summer, Mr. Kelly said that the program was in peril after the city's share of Homeland Security urban grant money was cut by nearly 40 percent.

But Mr. Kelly said last week that the department had since obtained \$25 million toward the estimated \$90 million cost of the plan. Fifteen million dollars came from Homeland Security grants, he said, while another \$10 million came from the city, more than enough to install 116 license plate

readers in fixed and mobile locations, including cars and helicopters, in the coming months.

The readers have been ordered, and Mr. Kelly said he hoped the rest of the money would come from additional federal grants.

The license plate readers would check the plates' numbers and send out alerts if suspect vehicles were detected. The city is already seeking state approval to charge drivers a fee to enter Manhattan below 86th Street, which would require the use of license plate readers. If the plan is approved, the police will most likely collect information from those readers too, Mr. Kelly said.

But the downtown security plan involves much more than keeping track of license plates. Three thousand surveillance cameras would be installed below Canal Street by the end of 2008, about two-thirds of them owned by downtown companies. Some of those are already in place. Pivoting gates would be installed at critical intersections; they would swing out to block traffic or a suspect car at the push of a button.

Unlike the 250 or so cameras the police have already placed in high-crime areas throughout the city, which capture moving images that have to be downloaded, the security initiative cameras would transmit live information instantly.

The operation will cost an estimated \$8 million to run the first year, Mr. Kelly said. Its headquarters will be in Lower Manhattan, he said, though the police were still negotiating where exactly it will be. The police and corporate security agents will work together in the center, said Paul J.

Browne, the chief spokesman for the police. The plan does not need City Council approval, he said.

The Police Department is still considering whether to use face-recognition technology, an inexact science that matches images against those in an electronic database, or biohazard detectors in its Lower Manhattan network, Mr. Browne said.

The entire operation is forecast to be in place and running by 2010, in time for the projected completion of several new buildings in the financial district, including the new Goldman Sachs world headquarters.

Already, according to a report last year by the civil liberties group, (ACLU) there are nearly 4,200 public and private surveillance cameras below 14th Street, a fivefold increase since 1998, with virtually no oversight over what becomes of the recordings.

Mr. Browne said that the Police Department would have control over how the material is used. He said that the cameras would be recording in "areas where there's no expectation of privacy" and that law-abiding citizens had nothing to fear.

"It would be used to intercept a threat coming our way, but not to collect data indiscriminately on individuals," he said.

Mr. Browne said software tracking the cameras' images would be designed to pick up suspicious behavior. If, for example, a bag is left unattended for a certain length of time, or a suspicious car is detected repeatedly circling the same block, the system will send out an alert, he said.

Still, there are questions about whether such surveillance devices indeed serve their purpose.

There is little evidence to suggest that security cameras deter crime or terrorists, said James J. Carafano, a senior fellow for homeland security at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research group in Washington.

For all its comprehensiveness, London's Ring of Steel, which was built in the early 1990s to deter Irish Republican Army attacks, did not prevent the July 7, 2005, subway bombings or the attempted car bombings in London last month. But the British authorities said the cameras did prove useful in retracing the paths of the suspects' cars last month, leading to several arrests.

While having 3,000 cameras whirring at the same time means loads of information will be captured, it also means there will be a lot of useless data to sift through.

"The more hay you have, the harder it is to find the needle," said Mr. Carafano.

The above extracted from "New York Plans Surveillance Veil for Downtown," by Cara Buckley.

Funny locutions in that headline: "New York Plans...". Which New York, whose New York? Surely the implication cannot be that this program exists as a great collective enterprise on the part of eight million souls? Or is the New York referred to a synecdoche, as in "the Crown" or "the Stage"? And "Surveillance Veil" – what a wealth of associations inhere in that one little word! By turning the cameras outward,

does Goldman Sachs attempt to cloak itself in purdah, protect its tender core from the predatory gazes of men in whose hearts who knows what evil lurks? A sach thrown over Goldman to render itself "less vulnerable"? Or just less visible.

7/11 Hidden Master delights in all the ways it is possible to feel.

It's all bloen up. Everything that we were has become a dust storm. Naturally we can't see anything, but the flummoxing clouds and confusion. Give it time, and we'll see if we cohere again in the material realm, or if we're astral bodies now.

Hurricane Dog: most intense tropical storm of the season just after you were born.

Last bus to Zerolandia.

7/12 Just next time production.

A new condo riseth on 28th and Eighth, 52 units averaging about 2 mill. Onyx. Not very. But to the saps who buy in at those prices, it'll be amber for sure.

7/12 The deepest high.

Anything can happen. Everything will.

On the cusp of her fifteenth birthday, Gwen begins *Free City*. She reads the first four chapters aloud. When you mention that Carl Malamud called it a “cult classic,” she beams, says how happy she is that you’ve got a fan base.

Sometimes, separated as you are by all these years, you both seem to be experiencing, within, a rush of converging worlds.

7/14 One brain fitz all.

In “regression to dependence,” facilitated by the analyst’s non interpretation, there is a subtle transition from hearing, seeing, sensing and feeling the properties of the outside world to hearing, seeing, sensing and feeling the inside world. There may be a continuous interplay between the two. Winnicott terms this the intermediate area of experiencing. This transition is not thought about, however, and is fundamentally pleasurable.

Quoth Bollas in *Shadow...*

Bollas also describes the difference between *musings* and *evoking*:

“In musing, the ‘I’ actively moves. In evoking, the ‘I’ receives.”

Quoting Laurie Ryavec: “Musing is a state in which I experience myself as active, engaged, in movement. In evocation, something emerges into view. I don’t feel the force behind the arrival, though I know I have created the state necessary for its emergence.”

Now things get deep and wide: Bollas constitutes the analyst as, potentially, a *transformational process* “experienced by the patient in ways similar to the infant’s experience of the mother: as an object that does not distinguish between internal and external perceptions.”

Which makes you flash on Mabel Todd, who, in *The Thinking Body*, way back in 1930-something spoke of the need for a physically and psychically therapeutic creation of balance between the *proprioceptive* (perceiving of self) and the *exteroceptive* (how we perceive the outer world). Of all the creatures, Todd wrote, “man alone, can be afraid all the time – of what has happened, of what is happening, of what may happen. He thus interferes with the wise workings of the body.”

Can book act as transformational object?

Eiditic, from Greek *eidōs*, form. Marked by or involving an extraordinarily accurate and vivid recall, especially of visual images. As in, an eidetic memory.

7/16 *Tu me prend pour un con?!*

What do you take me for, an idiot?

Heather lay down in a field of Bridget.

Bloomie’s Congestion Pricing Plan. Presents itself as an environmental and fiscal win-win to rationalize the motor car in densest city spacetime. Not. Or rather more: a surveillance Trojan horse. The Green-zoning of Manhattan.

7/18 No government. Only management.

The new U.S., er, embassy in Baghdad. Twenty-one buildings on 104 acres, an area six times the size of the UN complex. Lord love a duck.

“Every war is unique, but the heavy use of private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan is likely to persist in future conflicts. Relying on market sources is intrinsically more flexible than using government workers, and nobody seriously believes that the market will fail to respond to multibillion dollar opportunities even when danger is involved.” So said Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute in Arlington, VA, to Brad Knickerbocker of *The Christian Science Monitor*.

7/19 WNYC news reports foreign investors buying blocks of rent-stabilized apartments in East Harlem and other neighborhoods in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. Some of the bucks invested through these “outside” entities derive from NYC public employee benefit funds. Thus the city, wittingly and not, eats itself and its own.

Yesterday, heading uptown on Madison, you walked behind a man, his hair and much of the jacket of his suit covered in brown muck, as though he’d been dipped headfirst into an unholy vat of Mr. Softee topping.

It was a skyscraper of steam that instantly towered over 40th and Lex. A gas. Hot air. A vapor. Lots of rain these last days, then a drop in temp and a little cool

condensation on an ancient underground steam pipe, et voila! And lofty rubble! Protean stuff. Up comes Midtown's guts. No one, fortunately, brained by the falling debris or swallowed alive in the street cave-in. One man's ticker couldn't take it though.

Having survived the first harsh round of negative objectifications of *Notes of a New York Son*, you move on, more dust-like than before.

Be kind to your web-footed self.

7/21 The golden clock tower, last remaining vertical element of Samarra's al-Askari mosque, has been leveled by bomber or bombers unknown.

When there is nothing left, there will still be sand. There will still be the desert to conjugate the nothing.

Says Jabès.

8/8 Downeast in North Brooksville, Maine. Ding shi circles around an ash tree on the lawn near the house. Then to the Blue Hill Library and a wifi connection. At a distance you read of the torrential storm that swept the city in the early hours. The tempest flooded the subways, shut them down, and a tornado in its wake tore along the line between Sunset Park and Bay Ridge, smashed houses and uprooted trees, sent branches like eldritch spears through the windshields of the SUVs it tossed across the streets. Soon to come, if predictions prove correct, a bizarre surge of heat, mercury

spiking over a hundred and then, a further downpour. "Stay home!" counsels Bloomie, and advises those at risk to visit city "cooling centers." Did you miss something? What are they? Gigantic public meat lockers? And when did the term become a commonplace?

How does this man, the consummate blasé corpo-rationalist come to grips with supernatural rebellions of the weather? His priests foregather, grave-faced at these auguries. "Great Chieftain, the gods are angry. We must mend our ways!" He dismisses them with a wave, of course. Nonsensical superstitions! But does his visage, as they scurry off, reveal the shadow of a doubt? He's had his way in the mundane world more times than not – manipulated much to his advantage. On his watch as ruler, there's been a kind of Pax Bloomiana. Save for a tribe of hooligan cyclists the town's lain quiet, like a conquered land. And as for flux, he knows it from the markets, takes their shifting atmospheres in stride. But this? First the geyser and now the flood and twister. What to make of these sudden insurgencies of the elements? And what comes next?

Ahl al-kitab = people of the book.