

5/4 The good, the bad and the see-thru.

Were you to be in the country tomorrow and Tuesday, you could see bits of Halley's comet streaming across the skydome in the darkest pre-dawn. Aqarids, these meteors are called, and we visit them once a year.

People, old Pharaoh never really had the power. Let yourselves go.

Own the inner Pharaoh. Interpret his dreams. Tell him he doesn't need to oppress no one no more. He can take off that crown, lay down those symbols of state and go back to being a simple man. Give the priests their general discharges too.

Meantime, one's imagination must open its gates to House Resolution 3256, the Psychological Kevlar Act of 2007, proposed in September '07 and currently in sub-committee, which hopefully will turn out to be the tall grass.

In summary, the Act "directs the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a plan to incorporate preventive and early-intervention measures, practices, or procedures that reduce the likelihood that personnel in combat will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other stress-related psychopathologies, including substance use conditions." Et cetera, et cetera.

What this distills down to in Big Pharmophile terms, is the mass administration of a drug to combatees nominally on our side. The nostrum in question takes the form of a species of propranolol, a venerable beta-blocker officially used to treat high blood pressure, and vernacularly ingested as a stress-buster by anxious performers and exam-

bound students. In terms of the drug's value in warzones, there's apparently a body of evidence from psychiatric research to suggest that a timely dose of propranolol – timely in that it's taken soon after a harrowing event – can suppress the subject's response to, and effectively block physiological processes that transform disturbing events into vivid, distressing and durable memories. Icing this cake of potential unconsciousness, propranolol is inexpensive to produce and rarely seems to make folks who take it radically sick. Hence it's become a front-running candidate to become DOD's "mourning after" pill of choice for millions. Darn, if only it wouldn't make the soldiers fall asleep. But someone, somewhere's got to be working on that.

Thus does the creation of race of never-minders become a no brainer. As often, that which begins on the military margins colonizes the motherland. And ever the twain shall meet.

But then, ultimately, isn't all Kevlar psychological?

And along with *far niente* minds, the grunt of the future will be pumped full of performance-enhancing red blood cell boosters of the sort Lance Armstrong and his athletic compadres in a multitude of sports can cop but never cop to. Which drugs, combined with anti-torpor meds, no doubt help fuel the astonishing stamina of ClintObaMacain even as we write.

Yes, soon a robotic exoskeleton will enable GIs Joe and Josephine to trot along briskly carrying five hundred poundsworth of crap thereby transforming, in essence, into bipedal quasi-humanoid BigDogs. Already in limited warscape deployment, a cunning device powered by two-AA batteries that detects the all-too mortal breathing

of supposed bad actors through a foot of concrete wall. Ah DARPA DARPA DARPA. That moment where blue skies end and the deluge begins Who needs BigDog when we have ourselves as beasts of burden? Part Goofy, half Pluto – are we not men? Don't ask. Don't tell.

Would that we could constitute as something beside amplified yet diminished bodysouls vanishing and appearing and hurling our ghostselves through an endless fog of war.

Bang bang my baby shot me down.

And the wicked Mouse King!

Cinco de mayo

Burma. Cyclone Nargis, a seemingly two-headed storm passed near Rangoon at Cat 4 strength. Perhaps ten thousand dead. Perhaps more.

Cotton Mather, Doctor of Divinity, said it in his *Wonders of the Invisible World: Being an Account of the Tryals of Several Witches Lately Executed in New England*: “A Variety of Calamity has long follow'd this Plantation; and we have all the Reason imaginable to ascribe it unto the Rebuke of Heaven upon us for our manifold *Apostasies*; we make no right use of our disasters...”

Palilalia: disasters disasters disasters.

Rebuke of Heaven? Well, maybe and maybe not. Still, we can care for those who – for whatever reason – suffer and survive. We can restore them as best we can and grieve over what cannot be restored. Whether the source of suffering is human or extrahuman. Might not this be a righter use of our disasters? What do you say, Cotton. What do you think, Increase?

Oil oozes over \$120, or rather the dollar kneels to meet its rise.

5/6 It seems that the new game of social economics is about manipulating or coercing people, both as individuals and en masse, into operating against their best interests. In a way, the model for, or at least an analogy to, this new mode of cultural relations is the derivatives market where one takes a position based on the lure of short-term gain without ever having to consider a strategy that entails consequences. It's a form of investment that's actually anti-investment since there's no stake in developing anything remotely enduring.

Futures? Well, only literally and in the most reductive sense because one's concerns remain confined to the binary outcome of one's position the set moment. One holds the hot potato only in order to pass it to the next idiot. In such an economy of the mind, there's no allegiance possible either to self or others because the ego has been radically displaced by a rogue dyad of id and super-ego that demands compulsive and panic-based acting out. This mode announces the arrival of a world so refracted, contingent and discontinuous that imagination becomes a liability along with the capacity to pay attention in any sustained way.

Today, several billions of people – the ones most deeply in thrall to an economy built on speculation rather than productive mutual exchange or relative self-sufficiency – approach the point where the common experience becomes disarticulation of both the social fabric and individual subjectivity. Culture can no longer take root and draw nutrition from the economic soil, it simply self-erases, zeroes the clock the minute the contract's expiration comes up.

With the excision of the capacity to engage the faculties of learning, the value of accumulated experience become null. All values float against all other values. And gone with the bathwater, our drives to adapt and survive in any but the most immediate and perfunctory way. Thus forms the insolvent irrepública. Liquidity, Stupidity, Cupidity.

A one-off, fuck-off world. Meaningless repetition ever diminishing in value.

The deathtoll in Burma appears to be much, much worse than initially thought.

Fannie and Freddie went up the hill to *blank a blank* of mortgage...

We all know the meter of the couplet, but it's hard to find the words for a resolving rhyme, however tragic. Language fails. Yours anyway. What form of verse could encompass the idea of a fluffy \$83 billion cushion positioned demurely beneath a hovering \$5 trillion deadweight of obligations? And the rope's unthreading strand by strand. What immortal hand or eye dare limn such dread asymmetry?

5/7 La vraie réalité. Triste vraie réalité.

5/8 May 2, the same day Cyclone Nargis made landfall in Burma, volcán Chaitén in southern Chile blew its top after having lain dormant, supuestamente, for nine thousand years.

And the pics of the latter certainly make one wonder about the electromagnetics of it all. Or dragon nature. Or PhotoShop.





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As one neotropical bird said to the other: We have a love only toucans share.

The only way you're going to get through this is to become a hundred times more patient. Maybe a thousand times.

"Olympic Torch Reaches Everest Peak." The *Messenger* goes on to report that:

"The ascent of the 29,035-foot Mt. Everest was the most ambitious leg of what is expected to be the longest Olympic torch relay in history. The torch that climbers carried to the top at 9:18 a.m. on Thursday was a side torch; the main torch is making its way through the southern province of Guangdong and will continue through every province of China before arriving in Beijing in August for the Summer Games.

Ah, a side torch.

“The state-controlled Chinese news media has highlighted the fact that most members of the climbing team on Everest are ethnic Tibetans.

“The torch was lit at 9:12 a.m. by one of those Tibetans, Norbu Zhamdu, then carried on a 30-meter relay to the peak, according to Xinhua, the state news agency. The team captain, Nyima Cering, was the third torch bearer and shouted the 2008 Olympic slogan, ‘One world, one dream.’”

In what language, one wonders did this utterance permeate the thin Himalayan air?

“Photos showed a team of climbers bundled in red down jackets and wearing oxygen masks standing next to Tibetan prayer flags atop the windy, snow-bound summit. The climbers held up the Chinese national flag and two white flags with the Olympic rings. The summit attempt had been repeatedly delayed because of bad weather, and the team had been forced to sit for days at various high camps.”

Or – how’s this conspiracy theorists? – had the summit attempt been delayed in order to have it coincide with oil at \$125. But there was only so long they could wait. The dollar wasn’t falling fast enough. So they settled for \$123. No problem.

Today’s date is 5/8 in the U.S. of A. Pretty much everywhere else, they’d write the abbreviation as 8/5. So what are we to make, given our unique inversion scheme in

this regard, of the fact that the Berlin wall was disassembled on 11/9?

Take heart Amerika – Russia’s still an evil empire, capable of awful projections of power. It’s just not “Soviet” any more. We’ll be OK, sort of. In the sense that maybe we can still play the game of causing more suffering to others than we receive in direct recompense. See it as a favorable balance of hate. On the other hand, we don’t territorially encompass within our borders anything like Greater Mutha Russia’s natural resources. So it may be that we’ve simply lost to them. In extra innings. And, in a different way, to Cathay.

And what fuel is it keeps that main torch and that side torch burning?

In Xing Yi Quan, Form Intention Boxing, a cousin of Ba Gua, the five elements metaphorically represent different states of combat. In practice, however, these elements do not remain separate.

Wood: Crushing: To collapse, as a building collapsing in on itself.

Fire: Pounding: To explode outward like a cannon, while simultaneously blocking.

Earth: Crossing: Crossing the line of attack while overturning.

Metal: Splitting: To split like an axe chopping up and over.

Water: Drilling: Drill forward horizontally like a geyser.