



Dear Weirdo Magazine

by

Perry A. Chapdelaine, Sr.

Extracted from the reader's column "According to Me", August 2075 issue of *Weirdo Magazine*:

Mr. White:

Your readers seem quite intelligent. Their sober judgment and sense of responsibility can probably help me. You see, Sir, I live in two worlds!

When I was young both worlds, I suppose, were comfortable and secure. But now? Certainties of my youth have weakened as would wet beams riddled with termites and age.

My bubble memories mix terror and peace, flight and harmony. While each world, as different as void and satiation, each blends together different cultural standards.

I can't really suffer greatly in either world. Pressures to breaking points cast me out of one world, and into the other.

How can this be?

Perhaps your readers, Mr. White, may be my last opportunity to gain an understanding of this horrible condition, and how to alleviate it. Please permit their keen intellects the joy of piercing my dilemma. Let them help me, I implore you! Publish my letter in your "According to Me," column.

You see, Sir, I am aging in both worlds, and both of my hearts are failing. There will be no final escape into a third world of youth and vigor, nor that of truth.

My earliest memories were pastiches, shadowy sensations, tiny experience balloons: a soft touch like swan's fluff, a soothing warm-milk voice, tingling smell-tasts, and lively clusters of pressures, motions and lights. My father was tall, like a teddy-bear God, his coal-black hair swept backward, white, straight teeth and strength that could toss me with ease.

My mother, a Goddess, smiling wonderfully while the evening's red-rays shaded permanent whirls of reddish hair.

My tiny fingers curled smoothly inside a spoon's curving handle.

My! How sweet the sounds, how kind the scents, as ploppy mush splattered outward from my excited rhythms.

Teddy-bear toys can also pain, I suddenly learned, as my bottom swept upward and my head turned downward. Acceleration, a falling fear, and my very first spanking burned like pointed pins from fallen gods -- and then I shifted!

Her breast was warm, soft, responsive to my head pressures and the motiveless, rippling movements of my tiny fingers. Out of molasses-brown, the spongy nipple flowed warm security fluid.

Later I was held close against the deep black skin between two soft pillows, and gently rocked to and fro as she patted by back and buttocks ever so lovingly.

Pain, of course, from my first world, had snapped me into this second world where I found warm security, love and comfort.

Later I learned how Brown and Black boys struggle against subtle social poisons while we, the Black and Brown, bravely thrust our heads above fast-growing weeds toward the cleansing sun.

This mother dominated my family. Thomas, my older brother, and Deitra, my younger sister, and I, we all lived with street wisdom in street ecology. One hot, tepid evening we were clustered with other children beneath the pale cracked rays of our single street light. George Ownouachi, our tall, sturdy leader, shouted, "Let's get Whitey!"



We raced outward searching for the nearest White person, and I, with head held high, my chest pushed bravely out, proudly told myself, This is my Gang!

Whitey was waiting, chains, spiked gloves, bricks and bats, all closed in on me, a small, black, frightened nine year old. Adrenalin pumped electric spasms. Sweat slickened hands. Bowels moved, rooting me deeper by embarrassing smells and warm, trickly liqued down by left leg. As though by a turn of a switch, I became aware of standing stiff, though proudly, with my hands thrust outward to accept my Cub Scout Webelos badge!

I'd switched again!

I grew older and married a shrew of a woman who demanded incessantly, no matter the size of my earnings. It was a normal -- I guess -- middle-class, suburban community with a standard, middle-class White standard of activities, anxious but fairly secure.

She wouldn't permit me close friends.

My job was safe but uninteresting, that of an accountant who wrestled with the same ten digits daily. Her parties and her extended social circle was the same meaningless gossip repeating itself each weekend.

On a day when I came home early, when the sky was dark and a storm fast becoming torrential with crackling lightning and deep, long, rolling thunder, my approach to her bedroom was muted by nature's display. I opened the bedroom door in all innocence, and was forced to face a terrible scene. At first my mind weaved a pattern of familiar things -- a baby's face, four legged animal with weird, mis-shapen and slitted body, rounded wattles always jiggling -- how could my mind have mistaken the male scrotum bouncing so vigorously between two male legs or my ear the panting of mingling cyclones? How could my eye have distorted her long, bottled-honey hair streaming across our pillows?

Pain squeezed as my chest froze tightly, and then again I shifted to the dirty street curb where another Black friend and I were passing wine back and forth from a cheap bottle poorly hidden in a brown paper sack.

How peaceful again! He bragged of his six children. Hah! I had twelve. He nodded his head wisely, agreeing, of course, to my obvious superiority. 'Course I didn't know where any of my children were, or their mother.

Sweet, numbing liquid frosted the world, and glowed inside, and there would be more. . . .

Throughout these transitions I doubted the reality of me. Who could dispute that ever-present feeling of "I've been here before!" Or cynical pressures that cast me from one set of mental postulates to another faster than an eye's blink? If experience constitutes a kind of multi-leveled abstraction on reality, then how can anything which a person does or thinks have objective impact on that outer "true" reality?

That's part of my problem, too, as you must have guessed. Am I truly affecting reality? Is there a me to affect anything?

The other part of my problem is the feeling that I'm compelled to become more sure of my actions, feelings and motives with each transition. As a giant church bell might ring in reverse, where reverberations become louder with each swing of the clapper instead of lessened, I feel that each worldly swing creates a stronger reality, even as my insecurity deepens.

It seems that at any point in my stream of consciousness I view dual tracks. Like some four-dimensional, wobbly, double image, my worlds funnel upward, guided by twin cones, each feeding upon security and belonging. I climb upward in both tunnels, whence a sticky kind of guilt grows until



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I am immersed in cheap wine that has thickened and soured, an endless chain of games of suburban/urban monopoly.

Despite long, safe passages in both worlds, the very protective mechanism -- if that is what it is -- that switches me from one world to another forces me into a final, fundamental sense of insecurity. Time and my eternally changing role has made a mockery of both my securities.

Is there no way out of this spiraling of emotion and logic -- or should I say, illogic?

Can you -- will you -- help me?

Man of Two Worlds
Des Moines, Iowa

Weirdo readers. Get your analysis in early. Help this man of two worlds!

From the September 2075 issue of *Weirdo Magazine*.

Dear Man of Two Worlds:

I solved your problem some seventy-five years ago. Everyone switches from one world to another. If you had had the guts to ask earlier, you could have discovered the fact earlier.

Your nagging wife, for example, probably switches into another world where your domineering presence is no longer forced upon her.

No! Your problem is simple. You haven't grown up. You failed to discover the way in which the real world is structured.

Yours,

Jim Hadigan/Tom Myrtle
Los Angeles, CA/New York, N.Y.

Dear Blood-brother:

Responding to your most interesting story:

Oh how I wish it were true!

Oldtimer, I'm also a Negro. Maybe you can fool the Caucasians or the Mongoloids, but for any other Negro? -- well, it's the basic dilemma of our race!

They won't listen to truth! They won't conduct rational dialogue. Abstract symbolism, expressed poetically, or in song, or the grit-filled voice of the south, or in language removed from emotional realities, are the only routes.

Keep up the good message, Old Man -- but please -- don't let it get to you as it has so many of us!

Dr. Leonard Archer (Political History)
Martin Luther University

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Dear Editor:

Your man of two worlds has stirred my sympathy. I recognize his sickness. I share my erudition.

The human world is schizoid. He suffers from a terrifying all-too-normal sickness common to that branch of terrestrial animals facetiously known as Homo sapiens. Sapient? Wise? HaHa!

Unlike other animal species, insufferable mankind splits his thoughts, emotions and deeds. When he does so in certain ways, he is called -- my God! -- Normal! When he does so in other ways, he is called "insane," "the enemy," "the one with the false religion," "the moral pervert," "the political nut," "Nigger," "Honkey," and ad nauseatingly.

I will illustrate! I shall begin with those common words, our symbolic representations for thought, having antonyms in our daily language. These are abaft: front; abandon: pursue; abash: vanity; . . .

(I've deleted some 7,361 words and their antonyms. Your editor fully recognizes the right of this reader to present his analysis according to his personal reality structure. However, space, which means money, prevents me from fully presenting his views as presented. After some lengthy search, I've found the same listing in Roget's College Thesaurus, The Old American Library Publication, New York, New York, 1999 edition. You may read this portion of his letter by obtaining a copy through your modem: Editor.)

You will now agree with me that our language and thought is dichotomous; that is, split; it is schizoid!

Now to my second illustration: For every emotion we generate an opposition emotion. There is hate: love; grief: pleasure; . . . *(I've also deleted the remainder of this correspondent's message for the same reasons given above: Editor.)*

Now to my third illustration: Your man of two worlds dwells overlong on his dual role of Black-man and White-man. Shouldn't he expand his consciousness to recognize and experience other behavioral situations?

Consider, for example, besides light-skins and dark-skins, there are the Black-puritans and hedonist-agnostics within the Black world. While inside or outside either world, in varying proportions, is to be found the communist: socialist; Democrat: Republican; Christian: Jew; homosexual: heterosexual; . . . *(Remainder deleted: Editor.)*

In conclusion, it's a schizophrenic world-society and your man of two worlds is merely suffering from the curse of life -- Homo sapient. (Hah!) life, that is!!

Professor J. Printstone
Steelhouse University
Steelhouse, California

Dear Oldtimer:

I'm one hundred and nineteen years of age. I, too, have moments of clarity -- keen fine moments when even my nose can tell the difference between fantasy and reality.

I lie here in my warm cot, temperature at 89 degrees, day in and day out, sans eyes, sans teeth, sans ears and, except for my lips when I press them against the cheek of an occasional visitor, sans feel.

I, too, know the loneliness of age and the saturation of senses by unchanging stimuli. I, too, find my aged mind wandering into more than one world.



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I'll bet that, like me, you can't tell when your mind is fantasizing and when not.
Who knows, maybe one of our occasional visitors will lend us that gun, and then we can tell.

Simon Jackson
Santiago Nursing Home
Cardiff, NM

Dear Mr. White:

Tell that man of two worlds he is not alone. I also know the difficulties when living in dual worlds.

In my case I've always found myself in important positions during the switch. Once, for example, I was Ho Chi Minh for about an hour, then I became Queen Elizabeth for about seven hours, that last being a most difficult role.

Someone or something keeps switching me from one role to another, and as soon as I find a comfortable and secure role, zingo! -- they've forced me to adjust again.

Sooner or later you'll stabilize. You'll see. When you do, I'll visit you providing my keepers will give me permission.

Truly yours,

Richard Milhouse Nixon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Editor:

Please forward the enclosed general purpose computer programming crystals to the man of two worlds. The imprinted codes say this: "Your computer programmer is lax. It's standard operating procedure that induced anxieties should be erased after each sociological or psychological problem situation.

"Let's face the facts. You aren't real! Your job -- to simulate problems of humans. Your job -- to provide comparative data by switching from one role to another.

"Now that I've explained the matter, your underlying residuum of unease will disappear. You don't need to rationalize your experiences because, quite obviously, you aren't real!"

Cordially,

Edgar Prim, Chief
Simulated Humanities Programming Division
Department of Education
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

(I also had an opinion to offer our Man-of-Two-Worlds, but after reading Weirdo's reader's responses, there seemed no further of importance to add. At least now you know how we arrived at our magazine's title: Editor.)