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1-41 ready for boxing

NORMAN MAILER AND JOHN BUFFALO MAILER

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW 7 AUGUST 2004

JBM: "I did it because I could." Thus explains President Clinton

on his motive for his affair with Monica Lewinsky. This would

appear to be the motive for much of Boomerdom. "I did it because

because I could." "I had sex because I could." It is not so much

immorality as amorality that drives such behavior. In the absence

of moral order or authority, the fool is free to pursue all courses

with abandon. Is amorality more troublesome than immorality

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NM: ~~Just off the top of my head~~ I'd say no. Immorality is ~~quite~~.

a clearer concept. When we ^{are} immoral, we know ^{we're up} we're doing

something that by our moral logic ^{is} ~~should be~~ forbidden, whereas

"amoral" ^{is more} there's something ambiguous about the word "amoral". ~~I believe~~

^{It} ~~Amorality~~ falls into several ^{categories.} separate conditions. People can be

amoral in business, ^{or} ~~amoral~~ in their ^{localities} ethics, (but generally speaking,

^{we think of} the essential notion is that an amoral man ^{as} is a sexist. ^{That's} ~~Even there.~~

^{fall of sub-categories.} we find various kinds. One kind of guy doesn't give a fuck about

the partner. His pleasure goes into achievement. Such ^{a dude} ~~man~~

measure prowess by how many times ^{he} they get laid, ~~and with~~

^{the form} many women ~~they have~~. Even more important, how does the

woman rate ^{him?} ~~them?~~ There's real coldness in the performance.

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Then there's another kind of amorality where the man has ~~no~~
~~interest in the partner,~~ ^{just} but suffers a huge physical need, ^{that's} and this
~~much more important than the partner~~
~~need dominates every other emotion.~~ It's animal, if you will, and
^{as} not related to the ego.

JBM: Can there ever truly be amorality? For me, everybody

whether they know it or not, lives by a code, and when they

breaking their code, it bothers them, but they do it anyway

NM: Okay, some amoral people do have a code. That's more

interesting. Their code is that the whole moral system is full of

crap. So, ignore it. They believe that the religiously received

moral system breeds illness, pain, frustration, and deception of

oneself. You can go so far as to say the old Playboy philosophy is

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~~Personified by Hugh Hefner~~ was declaring: "We have to change our sexual mores." "Stick to one woman" was not what Hef was involved in.

~~So the question sits right there into Playboy's lap. Because~~

I would say

(this aspect of amorality can be justified. One can argue that we

have the right to make many experiments in sex, and ^{to} find new

partners all the time because sooner or later, the cumulative

knowledge of these partners can be readying us for a great future.

So, every sexist who is good looking and has a rep as a good lover

So, every sexist who is good looking and has a rep as a good lover

might, under all that, ^{still} be dreaming of a great love affair ^{is gone} in the

~~future~~. They're getting ready for ^{the} ~~this~~ great affair by having mar

affairs. (More than one movie star has this psychology ~~that~~)

~~affairs.~~ More than one movie star has this psychology. ~~That~~

Gulgerukas to

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~~where~~ ^{more} amorality becomes interesting. (As a vehicle to increase

one's knowledge. ~~And most men who have a rich sex life learn a~~

~~awful lot from intercourse. You just do.~~

Henry Miller once said something to the effect that there is no

such thing as a bad fuck. I think he meant that no matter how bad

~~it can get,~~

~~the fuck,~~ you do learn something about the woman and something

about yourself. ~~So~~ ^{do} certain people go after fucking like gold

miners. They're not worrying about the earth—they want the

goddamn gold.

JBM: Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women or

sleeping with one woman for ten years?

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NM: Depends on who's doing it, and to whom. ~~The average~~ ^{average} man

~~who is~~ full of sensuality would probably opt for the first course.

You need to feel a ~~really~~ ^{really} extraordinary love to be faithful to

someone for ten years. After my own checkered career, being

married six times, with 8 children and one terrific stepson -

been on both sides of that question.

I've certainly been amoral in my day. Cold as ice with a few

But on the other hand, I've been attracted immensely to the

qualities that women have. My amorality—if we're going to get

into it—was a search. I wanted to learn more about sex. More and

more. I sometimes think if pornography had come along when I

was a young man, it would have dispensed with a lot of fiction in

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my personal life. Because you ^{can} learn an ^a awful lot from

pornography. People's ^{animal} qualities are magnified positively or

negatively in a porny. ~~you'd say, "No, she's really not my type"~~ 7

~~And vice versa.~~

~~I want to get back to~~
JBM: ~~Before we move on from amorality, let's get back to~~

Clinton's quote: "I did it because I could." What are your thoughts
on the way he referred to Monica Lewinsky in his book?

NM: I have a cynical response. As people go, Clinton is not the
worst guy you're going to meet. He has a lot of natural warmth.

plus a good deal of everything else a president needs, calculation

manipulation, all of that. In this case, I thought his remarks were

needlessly cruel. ^{believes} I ~~think~~ given his druthers, he would have

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speaks nice/4/
preferred to be ~~nicer~~ about Monica Lewinsky, but you've got to

has and injured
remember he ~~had~~ an angry wife on his hands. He ~~has~~ to come in

with something to satisfy her—Hillary was more on his mind than

Monica.

"I did it because I could" is bullshit. An empty remark

Anyone who's met Monica—and, for fact, we have—knows she's

very attractive. She's got beautiful coloring, she's intense—

young, attractive woman. That's the real reason why he did it

And for another reason entirely, which *maybe* is even richer *all the more*

it is certainly
~~although~~ *meaner*. A bright woman I know once said, "Clinton

lives in a minimum security prison. Every fifteen minutes, someone

checks up on where he is." I thought, she's absolutely right. What

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we're dealing with here is an incarcerated man. It's as if he's in the

finest, grandest minimum security prison in the world. the White

House. In that sense, 5% of him is a convict.

JBM: To this day?

NM: No, only when you're President. But surveillance is one of

the elements of prison life, so you're an innocent convict if you

will. You didn't work to become President in order to be

scrutinized every fifteen minutes but that did come with the job

JBM: So once you're in prison, you do what you can get away

with?

NM: Exactly.

JBM: Then his remark is not so hollow.

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NM: I see what you're saying—yes, it's not so ^{as} hollow as I thought:

Right! He did it because he could ^{well turn into} ~~does become~~ one of the

^{I think his phrasing comes} elements. Still, he was needlessly cutting in relation to Monica:

^{in the main because} repeat: Because of his wife. Having been married six times, I

know what one says on such occasions.

IBM: You're a good one to talk to about that. ^{But say} ~~Hey~~ more

^{to the point} ~~importantly~~, he has a wife who ^{is like} ~~most likely~~ will run for high office.

^{Under that, I still think the} My real question is, by making ~~that~~ ^a calculated decision to

^{strip} ~~take the~~ humanity away from Monica in order to preserve the

image of his marriage—^{still is either} ~~would you call that~~ immoral, or amoral
which?

NM: A little of both. Immoral in that he is most calculatedly not

telling the truth about his real feelings. It's amoral because he

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wants to keep the political process going: all politician have some

amoral to a degree. It's a question of how much. Are they 44%

amoral or 88%? Politicians cannot possibly afford morality except

as a series of specious sentiments ready to be uttered as patriotic or

theological slogans. But, normally speaking, a politician has to

deal with the given. That means they can ^{even} tell the truth at times.

Usually, they're ^{only} pretending to tell the truth. Politicians build up

profound habits of not addressing the truth head-on. In practice

they ~~do~~ have to shake hands with people they can't bear, and ^{proffer} ~~offer~~

patriotic remarks that don't ~~always~~ come from the heart.

Now, whether immoral, amoral, or both, it was, ^{literally, &} ~~about~~

necessity. It was the given. — the two holy words
for politicians — ~~the~~ the given.

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~~Isn't~~
JBM: Is it possible for a politician ~~today~~ to live by his own code ~~today~~?

NM: No, ~~not~~ *Not a successful politician*

JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

NM: ~~No~~. It's never possible. Go back to the maxim "Politics is

the art of the possible." What's important is to get some part of

what you want, done. That's how ~~it goes in~~ a democracy, *works,*
by pieces and parts.

The irony is, the only way you can have a direct expression
of your personality is in a dictatorship. Of course, as democrats
we feel instinctively that no human being is good enough to be
entrusted with that kind of power. So in a democracy, change

comes always from negotiation. When people walk away from a

political compact, everyone is a bit dissatisfied.

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JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's choice B.

NM: Well, if you ever get into politics, and you will may

that name of yours, how can you not?—you're going to discover

the interesting compromises you'll have to make, willy-nilly

JBM: ~~Let's~~ Okay, I'm going to move on - you've written about the cultural needs of

of literature. Yet we now live in a time when the novelist and

literature itself are borderline irrelevant.

NM: Irrelevant?

JBM: Borderline irrelevant. There's an absence of interaction of

serious, concentrated thought. We may be in danger of losing

literature forever. What would this mean for American culture?

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NM: As ^{as} novelist, I'm now speaking from my vested position. ~~He~~ ^{very}

Professional is

certainly being eroded. When I began, good novelists were more

important in the scheme of things. The irony is that the great

novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably didn't sell as

many copies per book as some serious novelists sell now. But they

were revered. They affected history. They had their impact on ~~the~~

American ~~spirit~~. Hemingway had a prodigious influence on young

American writers. He taught a lot of us how to look for the tensile

strength of a sentence. He improved ^{our} ~~the~~ language by the subtlety of

his simplicity. He gave a great deal to people who care about

English.

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I think a nation's greatness depends, to a ~~great~~ ^{great deal} extent on
how well-spoken its citizens are. Good things develop out of a
populace that really knows how to use the language and use it well.

^{Great}
Would Britain have achieved as much as it did without

where would Ireland be today without Joyce, Shakespeare? As a language deteriorates, as it becomes less

eloquent, less metaphorical, less salient, less poignant, a deadening
comes into things, a curious deadening of the human spirit

All this is wrapped up in my mind with many other aspects of
the phenomenon. America has moved, as a country, from a place
that had a great love of freedom and creativity—along with all the
people who opposed that—to a country that's now much more
interested in power. And power, I can promise you, is not

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interested in metaphor. Metaphor is antagonistic to power because:

pushes it ~~makes~~ you ~~begin to~~ think in parallels. *more poetic and counterintuitive* Power demands a linear ~~approach~~ *whereas, power demands*

a ~~un~~linear approach to things. Power does not entertain poetic

concepts .
~~questions~~

JBM: But hasn't power always been a driving force *in society?*

situational
NM: Yes. But it was always a driving force among such other

art and a love of it
driving forces as culture and ~~certain~~ sports. *It's* Now, as if power

has become more ~~pervasive than any other aspect of life~~ *our lives*

One
JBM: ~~The~~ way I put it is that writers used to be rock stars. Now,

only
~~it's~~ the rock stars ~~who~~ have credibility with the masses. Just

Timberlake, whom I'm sure is a sweet guy, shouldn't be influencing

a generation. He's a pop singer. He was created by Disney. I'm

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sure he's a nice guy but that burden shouldn't be on his shoulders

And it didn't used to be that way. Somewhere between the time,

I'm not sure where, it shifted from great minds speaking to the

masses to celebrities speaking to the masses.

NM: Be careful. You're too young to know how it was back then.

There weren't—

JBM: I can read history—

NM: Great minds almost never speak directly to the masses

JBM: Not directly. But Hemingway would write a piece, and

would write a piece, and people would discuss it and debate it and

people would go back and forth—

NM: Leave me out of it.

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JBM: OK. Another example--[pause] My point is, not to have to use you as an example, but you're on my mind—The White Meg.

To this day, people come up to me who were teenagers when this came out and they want to argue with me about it, talk to me about it. It still affects them to this day. I don't think any essay by anyone now could have the same effect. A movie would. A video would.

That's one reason Michael Moore is interesting because I think he's aware that while his books are good, and are what they are, he's going to reach so many more that way. But you can't get the same depth of an idea across in a sound bite—there's no way

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NM: Why not use a rating system for ideas? The most profound

ideas are those one is willing to die for. By that measure, Karl

Marx has to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Because

in his time and after
~~after it was all over~~, hundreds of thousands of people ~~all over the~~

All over the world?
~~world~~ were willing to die for his ideas. And ~~millions~~ were willing

to go to prison for them. ~~He had an enormous effect.~~

This is not to raise a latter-day defense of Marx. He had

~~many, many~~ incredible virtues as a thinker. He also, from my point of

view, had his lacks. He certainly didn't understand that atheism

Not by that mode.
 is not a way to win the world. You can't ~~that way~~. Half the people

may it
 alive, ~~maybe~~ three-quarters of the people ~~alive~~, have all sorts of

instinctive notions that God exists. I think the real failure is not

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parenthetically—of Bolshevism which became Stalinism. was ~~was~~

exactly the ~~idea~~
 clinging to a concept that didn't work, which is that there was ~~no~~
 that religion is the opium of the masses
~~Organized religion well may be~~
~~need to deal with a creator.~~
 its only species of narcotic, but the
 concept that we are part of a divine ~~creation~~
 is something else altogether
 If we're ever going to have a great society in the future

can be ~~if we ever create a~~
 which is hardly a guaranteed conclusion—~~a world with~~

may have to be some,
 real freedom and openness, there will be nonetheless a recognition that we

are obliged to dispense and instead
 dispenses with fundamentalism, but does live with the idea that

God is a Creator, ~~God is a creator~~ not a law-giver.

JBM: Yet you are always saying that

there
 IBM: But there's another problem there which was not dealt with
 creativity is becoming more and more
 restricted. To shift the subject to
 namely, people are not content merely with what they need. Well.

Your home funk, what they is getting
 to be the last novelist?
 selfish, we want more than we need and people in power will take

NM: He'll probably be analogous to
 the last poet everywhere today who still
 it—as we saw, as we see here. But it this way. In the black part.

writes verse plays in iambic pentameter.

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The divide is there, and it's there to keep the poor white people
pacified.

NM: That's old stuff.

JBM: I know it's old stuff, but to say half of America relates to
rich America isn't—

NM: John, when you get to generalizations, their only value is
they do point to a trend, a possibility. I think we're at a dead end
here—or down an alley.

JBM: OK, if it's as bad as that now, who's going to be the last
novelist?

NM: He'll be comparable to any living poet now who writes free
act verse plays in iambic pentameter. I do foresee a day when

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hardly anybody will look at serious fiction. They may read

computer novels. The computer is better suited to turn out

a mediocre novelist, But ^{not that} ~~Chasing~~ ~~Bar~~
 seller than the average mediocre talent. But as far as the serious -

most readers will still be interested in
~~serious novels, whole populations can't be~~
 novels go, people will be looking for technological power rather

exploring into
 than searching for moral questions they can't find anywhere else.

important
 If the novel dies, the ~~real~~ spectre that sits before us is that ,

~~Serious~~ fiction has always been the repository of the most

interesting and subtle moral questions. *These* ~~These~~ questions, (at best) go

~~far~~ deeper than any wisdom you're going to receive in any church

When it comes to moral parables
 or synagogue or mosque. ~~Theology~~ is essentially limited when it

~~comes to moral philosophy~~. It's too structured. What makes

morality interesting is that it almost never fits pre-arranged moral

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codes. So it's ^{only} the novelist — ~~the good novelist~~ the very good

novelist — ^{any} who ~~deals~~ with such moral issues as "Am I on balance

good person or a bad person?" You don't find that out by

declaring, "Well, I'm good because I obey the Ten

Commandments." That doesn't make you ~~a~~ good person. You can

still be a horror because you restrict the lives of others with you

piety. The real question is ^{how do you affect} just what do you do to the lives of

others? ^{By that measure} ~~And in that sense~~, the novel is marvelous for ^{presenting} ~~leading~~ it

moral questions into subtler inquiries of our nature.

^{After all, what} What is human nature? We're still finding that out. ^{It is} ~~human~~

^{even as God} nature is immensely various, ~~the way~~ I believe, incidentally, that

~~God~~ is immensely various. We're the children, if you will, of it.

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Creator. I believe that God doesn't want to give us orders from

above; rather, He ^{wishes} ~~wishes~~ us to ^{find our things} ~~find our things~~ we can send back to

Him. Or Her. Does the parent always ^{wish} ~~want~~ to be superior to the

child? No. ^{Most parents want their children} ~~They want the child~~ to surpass them.

JBM: Don't you think that very reason, right there, is enough to

keep the novel alive?

NM: Not necessarily. You're leaving out the social ^{imperatives} ~~needs~~

^{of} the people who run things in the world. An immensely powerful

global capitalism ^{is} ~~and~~ shaping up. ~~and~~ that capitalism does not need

^{on last line}

~~dissent~~ or inquiry into delicate matters; its need is to keep the

bullshit train running at top speed. It has to enforce the self-

serving notion that corporations are good for human existence. I

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needs to have most people believing that ~~there's no other answer~~ ^{big business is}

^{is the only way to do it}
~~but really [??] big business.~~ The last thing they need ~~is a rest~~ ^{is}

is novels.

Part of the genius of capitalism, upper capitalism,

particularly, is that they've found ways to control people that are s

much subtler than the old Stalinist ways, which were brutal, dull

cold, ~~and~~ stupid and ~~obviously and~~ openly oppressive. The

^{nuanced;}
 modern form of oppression is ~~subtle~~ ^{subtle} it gets into your psyche ~~is~~

~~subtle ways~~—it makes you think there's something wrong with you

if you're not on the big capitalist team. ~~And in that sense they don't~~ ^{letting them read}

^{so they}
~~need novelists. They don't want them.~~ They don't want ~~people~~ ^{novelists}

exploring into morality. They want ~~only~~ one morality, theirs.

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Unlike ~~like~~ Stalinism at its worst, it's ~~much~~ more of a benign

regime, superficially open and ready for the development of

technology which will make all our lives extraordinary—sure

technology will end up keeping us alive for 150 or 200 years—each

each of if three-quarters of *cells and* us will be replacement parts. *"I'm not sure that"*
my heart, said the ~~my heart~~ *my heart*
~~says the man who is 200 years old. It's not~~
 either God's intention or the real human intention. *I'm not sure of* *sure*
heart

~~that at all~~ *It* may be the destruction of the human spirit, to stay

alive beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as important to life as

life itself. *To* ~~If they~~ keep extending the years of your life ~~and~~

~~costs~~ *Much* ~~it~~ could be one more form of evil. ~~All this is too much~~ *is*

being taken for granted *today*.

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I must
But to go back to the original point: The good novel, the

serious novel, is antipathetic to corporate capitalism. The best

seller is one of the props of corporate capitalism precisely because

it's an entertainment. People feel, "At the end of my work, I want

to have fun. So how do I have fun? Give me asshole TV shows,

~~big, stupid~~ exploitation films with lots of bang. I ~~certainly~~ don't

~~need~~ want to read a good book—I want a page-turner." Well, even if no

there's a page-turner for too little, someone's mind is being dulled.

Because even page-turners get into interesting moral questions. ~~But~~

although dependably, they will always
they skim away from the point. [???]
veer away from the moral significance

JBM: What you're talking about isn't limited to the novel. You're

talking about good art which pushes you and pokes you. I think

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the challenge, though, ~~is that because it's more work to read a~~

~~novel that's going to exercise your mind and question things~~

~~your soul~~ ^{a serious novel} the challenge is to make ~~it~~ entertaining so people will

put it down.

NM: ~~You know~~ I'm cynical about that. I started as that kind of

writer and I know how easy it is. It's ^{routine} ~~so easy~~ to write a page-

turner. There are such simple rules for it. I can teach any mediocre

writer to turn ^{one} ~~out a page~~ turner. I'm interested in something that's

good enough and well enough written so you have to stop on the

page and read ^a ~~the~~ sentence over a few times, because ~~each time it~~

~~it~~ vibrates within you ~~and tells more~~.

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Once you get into page-turners, it's equal to a very fast-paced

^{set-pace}
~~superficial television show, or the kind of musical comedy that~~

~~very successful as you sit there with your mate and you laugh and~~

~~laugh at the play, then walk out and say, "Gee, wasn't that funny?"~~

^{Well,}
JBM: Tangentially, what are your thoughts on the power that

Oprah Winfrey wields over a book. You know, recently she put

"Anna Karenina" on her book of the month list and it became a

best-seller again.

NM: I salute her for that. It so happens "Anna Karenina" is one of

my all-time favorite novels, ~~one of the five or three or four~~

~~novels of all time for me.~~ I had that and "War and Peace" on my

desk while I was writing "The Naked and the Dead" and

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steamed up to write every morning, I'd read five or ten pages of

Anna Karenina,

So I applaud her for that.

JBM: ~~Well, this is what I'm saying:~~ Because she has such popular

mass appeal, she can take something that is ~~dense and~~ hard to

read— "Anna Karenina" is ~~work to read~~— she can take that

and make it a best-seller. That gives hope to me.

NM: But if she keeps doing it, her popularity will begin to

diminish and then we'll begin to see the real test of her character.

Is she ~~really~~ devoted to great literature or is she, quite naturally,

a little more really devoted to the power of her own career?

JBM: Well, I would ask whether she can raise great literature back up to

popular the level of best-sellers, or.

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NM: I ~~would answer in the negative~~. No. No person can do it.

You're so young you still believe in the power of individuals. You

~~real~~ ^{hard} fact—what I would like to see develop in you, my friend over

the next ten years, is a much deeper notion of social structure.

Because society ^{is paramount. It's} ~~it's~~ as if we're little animals running through the

machine. Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we

start another little machine, but we can't really ^{alter} ~~change~~ the nature of

the machine that much. Not without great study and great devotion

and willingness to get into the grease of the machine

JBM: And great luck.

^{Same of}
^{social}
→ No, I respect the complexity of the machine—I don't think^{it's}
one person can change ~~the way of the machine~~, but there's that

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NM: No, I've only lived here year-round for the last 15 years. In :

the first time I came to Provincetown was almost 60 years ago. In :

I've spent serious time ^{here} ~~[cannot get]~~ in Provincetown over 45 (or 50)

of the last 60 years.

JBM: Now, Provincetown in winter—a lot of people see it as

being abandoned. It goes from—what? 30,000 ^{down} (to 3,000) ^{people?}

NM: Roughly.

JBM: Is winter better than high season?

NM: Well, ^{for} ~~for~~ a writer of my age, it's ~~very~~ better. There's also a

saying about P'town that in the winter you can roll a bowling ball

down Commercial Street and it'll never hit anyone. So it's ^{it is} ~~it is~~

here in February and March ^{mean and} ~~and~~ cold because the wind's ~~coming~~

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off the water. It's damp, it's lonely, and I love it. It fits my mood

It's much easier to spend the day writing if it's gray outside

Besides, all the people I used to know here over the years are dead

Provincetown *In summer it's*
now, and Provincetown has changed profoundly. ~~It's~~ now the gay

northeast
capital of the ~~northeast~~. Forty or fifty years ago, it used to be the

wild west of the east—you had motorcycle gangs coming in ~~on~~ *on*

Saturday, one day on ~~Friday~~ *Friday*
~~many a night~~ *on Saturday* ~~on Saturday night~~
time. On Saturday nights, you'd have people going up in the hills.

real bachannals, everybody carrying booze or beer. *Mac messes*

break up and serious affairs started
on many of these nights

JBW: Well, you still have motorcycle gangs coming in ~~it's just~~

now
that they're wearing chaps with nothing on underneath

NM: [laughs] All right.

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JBM: Having spent a lot of time in this town growing up, and in the last few years as well, I don't see this as a gay town. I see it as

as a very libertarian ^{place} town in the sense of, as long as you're not hurting anyone else, whatever you're doing is cool

NM: Well, that's true. There's been that tradition in Provincetown

There are amazing contrasts and contradictions ^{here.} After all,

Provincetown is the place where the Pilgrims first landed

JBM: Why did they leave?

NM: Like all good white people who are righteous and not quite

aware of how mean they ^{can be} are under the righteousness, there they

were, full of themselves, heroic ^{indeed} in a sense. After all, they had

dared to leave their roots and sail across the Atlantic with children.

NM AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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cramped in a small boat. They got here through ^{true} great difficulty t

was hard to navigate the waters around Cape Cod, but there is a

natural harbor in Provincetown because the land curls around like a

snail shell. So they entered ^{the} harbor—parenthetically the a :

where they landed now offers a huge motel—~~and~~ ^{we} are not in n

America if not adaptative. ^{to profit. The Paritang house} They found the soil not particularly

welcoming, full of sand, brush pine, low country, not good for

farming. They were in search of food, went scouting around ^{and}

^{reconnoitering} ~~reconnoitered~~ eight miles south of Provincetown ^{they} and found a place

in Truro now called Corn Hill where the Indians had stored a

their ^{crop} ~~corn~~ for the coming winter. So ^{the Paritang} ~~they~~ brought it back to the 1

ships, and in the course of that action killed a couple of Indians

NM AND JBM playhoy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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Shortly after, those Puritans probably said to one another ~~that~~

"Prithier, brother, shall we

let's get the fuck out?" So they ~~crossed~~ ^{sailed} to the other side of

some forty miles across,

Massachusetts Bay and found Plymouth which then became the

founding place of America.

Well, a couple of hundred years later, the locals ~~were~~ ^{here} ~~at~~ ^{here}

self-serving
at the hincty pride of Plymouth. How did that town dare

itself the founding place of America? So they started petitioning

Washington, D.C.

~~and~~ that got so hot by 1909 that a beautiful tower was erected

copy of an Italian tower in Sienna [CK], and Theodore Roosevelt

actually came to the opening festivities. That exceptionally pre 1 c

tower is now called the Pilgrim Monument.

NM AND JBM playboy04 revision I 3/12/04

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JBM: So America started with some white people stealing some corn, killing some Indians and going on the lam.

NM: Yes.

JBM: Perfect.

JBM: OK, here is a good query from Playboy: Did women's

sexuality shape human evolution? According to a theory in

Leonard Shlain's new book—which I haven't read—"Sex, Time

and Power," menstruation is what enabled women to develop

sense of time and forethought. Language evolved, he says,

primarily because men and women had to negotiate sex. When

became expert, he says, at reading between the lines of various

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Pleistocenes. Beauty was developed to maintain the interest

men. Is this why women control men?

same shit

Which is a large statement in and of itself.

NM: I haven't read the book either ^{but it does} ~~it~~ strikes me as a set of

nonsensical theorems. For example, negotiating sex. Why even

animals negotiate sex. I had two standard poodles once, many

years ago, Tibo and Zsa-Zsa and Zsa-Zsa was one he'll ~~at~~

^a ~~operative~~ bitch—she was always nipping at Tibo's nuts.

afraid Tibo would end up as no man at all by the time he came of

age—we first had them ^{when} ~~as~~ they were pups. ^{How she} ~~She~~ cannot act—

dominated him. She had fierce teeth. He'd have to duck and si

down fast.

NM AND JHM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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Then she came into heat for the first time. He seized her by the
no by your leave and impregnated her with nine pups. Before the
were done, they created 36 pups over the next three years. Their
ability to negotiate sex was perfect. But in fact, animals have
great deal of language in their grunts, their groans, their whines
their moans, their baying at the moon, their scents. Odor had more
more to do with sex than language—at least until deodorants came
on the scene. But before the advent of whiff-deadness, a
combination of strong genital odor mixed with perfume was pretty
damned aphrodisiacal all through every royal court of Europe. Et
cetera, et cetera.

NM AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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So the notion that language was developed to facilitate sex
cannot, by my lights,
couldn't be sillier.

JBM: Or a sense of time developed through menstruation.

don't know if that . . .

NM: There I can see ~~there's~~ ^a certain kind of point. ~~What~~~~M~~enstruation certainly proved to women ~~at least~~ that they were

^{So, they}
altogether different from men. They had to have a difference . . .

They had to find ways—I don't think women were as self
protective a thousand years, 3,000 years, 5,000 years ago. 20,000
years ago as they are today. I think there was less embarrassment
perhaps, about menstruation.

JBM: Well, they would go off alone when it was happening

NM AND JBM: playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

P40-70 ~~to be~~ 21

(40)

Then she came into heat for the first time. He seized her and

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FROM : nm

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NM AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

(41)

their moans, their baying at the moon, their scents. Odor had

much more to do with sex than language--at least until deodorants

came on the scene. But before the advent of ^(whiff-deadness, or deodorant) whiff-deadness, any

combination of strong genital odor mixed with perfume was pretty

damned aphrodisiacal, yessir, all through every ^{bavardage} royal court of

Europe. ^{So, they} The notion that language ^{had to be} was developed to facilitate sex

^{cannot, by my lights, be sillier.} couldn't be sillier.

JBM: Or a sense of time developed through menstruation.

NM: There I can see a ~~certain kind of~~ point. Menstruation

certainly proved to women, ^(at least) that they were altogether

different from men. ^{So, they} They had to have a different code

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JBM: Well, they would go off alone when it was happening

You don't want the smell of blood in the air to make you

NM: Absolutely right. I hadn't thought of that either

JBM: Good. This other question—do women control men? For

one, do you think so?

NM: Completely.

JBM: I'm glad you agree.

NM: Before women's liberation came along, men used to have

^{some} perhaps 25% or 35% purchase on control in a marriage. ^{the remaining 35%}

^{after} The woman had the remaining 65% ~~of 75%~~. Now with women's

^{up to} liberation, it's 95%.

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JBM: Wow!

NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's only 85%.

JBM: Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the ~~gender~~

~~gender~~ dominance of women?

NM: Well, women are closer to the universe. Closer to creation

than we are. So, they have deeper instincts.

JBM: They create life, we destroy life.

NM: Oh, let's not get into that. Women have ~~killed~~ ^{deaden} as many men

in subtle ways, for subtle reasons as men have ~~abused and killed~~ ^{beaten women down}

~~women~~ in more overt fashion.

JBM: I'm not saying one is more vicious than the other. I'm

saying, traditionally, men have gone to war and women have

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raised the children. That's changing. Women are going to war and

we've seen what happens at Abu Ghraib.

NM: ^{Yes,} ~~Oh,~~ that poor pregnant girl. . .

JBM: I feel for her—I do.

NM: You do?

JBM: ~~Yes,~~ She was in the wrong place with the wrong guys

feeling the wrong pressures and now she's all alone.

NM: She really was—just think how wild the parties are getting

all over America. The key factor at Abu Ghraib was, "Hey, none

of you at home are going to believe this until you see our pictures

And the photograph taking that was not called for ^(by their superiors)—as well as the

photos that were called for—after all, ^{some of the photos} they were also using the

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~~we were used~~ ("You don't want your friends to see this")
photos to blackmail the prisoners, But the security was all

~~the~~ After Christ's gang were
delighted to send those photos home to their friends. Just think of

the kind of party that's going on back in America ^{while Bush} under the cover

keeps talking about how good
of we're a good Christian nation *we are.*

JBM: The more Christian someone is, the more they have

sexual stuff in the closet.

John: discuss this with me.

NM: You know, I love this country with all its faults, but one of

^{that}
its huge faults is (we're the bullshit kingdom of all time We've

found a way to process bullshit so ^{you can't even} its aroma is not always

smell the ball any more.
apparent.

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JBW: What do you think of the gender roles of men and women

now that women are expected to raise a family and be successful

in the workplace.

NM: For me, any notion that males are superior to females or

females superior to males is, I'd say, comparing dogs to cats. ~~It's~~

my mind, it's a hopeless argument. Men are so fundamentally

different from women.

I still have to say that the desire for power in women that's

revealed itself in the last 35 years is not attractive. The power

they used to have was vastly more subtle. And vastly more

attractive. It used to be fun to realize a woman was smarter than

you. In the course of living one's life and learning how to handle

NM AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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oneself, there were women who developed wonderful subtleties

about how to control us. They were like animal handlers that

will. And the animal, even the lion, almost always adores the

handler.

Same H.

Now they're dominating us openly.

JBM: ~~I don't know~~ I don't think I agree with that. It's changing

There was the height of political correctness, which bordered on

fascism and it was terrifying. But the majority of the women that

know, they want a real man—they don't want a man they can walk

all over.

NM: Well, good. I'm 81, and these ^{unhappy} traumatic experiences

occurred to me 30 years ago.

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JBM: You were living then at the height of the war. But what's truly encouraging, what's encouraging me now, is we need more women in power, but we need women who do it the way a woman does it, not the way a man would do it if he were a woman or the way she thinks a man would do it if he were a woman.

NM: Listen, most of the women in power were not that impressive. There was Maggie Thatcher—the Iron Lady. You know, she was effective as a politician—in a certain sense she was more effective as a politician than Ronald Reagan was, her counterpart at that time. She wasn't a very nice person, and if she'd been a male, she would have been thoroughly detested.

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JBM: That's what I'm saying. I think she was doing it the way she

thought a man would do it if he were a woman. As opposed to

someone, say, like Arianna Huffington who is completely a

woman and who had this line which has just swept across the

Democratic Party of "you don't try to remodel your house while the

on fire." That's not something a man would say.

NM: How is that relevant to what we're talking about?"

JBM: Well, we're just now starting to see women getting into

power positions who are still allowed to be women. They don't

have to pretend to act like a man.

NM: Name a few, would you?

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JBM: Arianna Huffington, Hillary Clinton—

NM: Hillary Clinton is a very good example. I met her many

years ago ~~oh, maybe 20, 25 years ago~~ when she was the governor;

wife in Arkansas. Probably in '84, ~~20 years ago~~ She was

immensely intelligent—I happened to sit next to her at dinner

and we had a ~~marvelous~~ ^{very good} conversation. I was impressed with how

bright she was, how open, and what a fine mind she had. She's not

as interesting today. ~~She's a politician today. She's very cautious~~ ^{Today, she's}

Her books are boring. What's that one, "It Takes a Village

full of cant. The way Maggie Thatcher was full of it. ^{cant:} You say,

what's useful to say, not what you believe. You never speak from

the heart, ^{but} you speak manipulatively. Hillary is always ^{watching} ~~watching~~ ^{watching}

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her tongue these days. Totally unspontaneous in exactly the way

an average mediocre-to-good, effective politician ~~exercise~~ ^{overseer}

spiel.

JBM: But as we said before, she's a politician at a high level. She

has no choice.

NM: So why get excited about her as a role model?"

JBM: I'm not saying we're there yet. I see people coming up

the ranks. I see Laura Dawn of MoveOn.org who is changing the

face of politics. I see Arianna Huffington who is approaching it

from a new angle. I mean, politics this year is more exciting than

ever before in my lifetime, certainly. People who were never

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involved before are going there because it's sexier, it's getting more fun.

NM: All right. I can see a time when women are more important

politically than they are now, and for better reasons. but that

doesn't mean anything much is going to change. In a certain

sense, a politician, regardless of gender, is neutered by the process.

attractive
~~By the process.~~ A lot of politicians are ~~sexy~~ guys (in person

because, after all, they're pressing the flesh. All the time. Shaken

thousand hands in a day and you're horny by the end of the day

The hands are telling you something. Where's the guy who won't

get a hard-on if he's admired by a lot of *women?* ~~people?~~ But, nonetheless,

politics dehumanizes you ~~any~~ political leader.

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JBM: OK, but...

NM: By the way, I don't say this out of sour grapes because what

Democratic
I ran for mayor in that primary back in 1969, I considered it my

duty, believe it or not, ~~as most politicians do~~. I felt God ~~was~~

wanted me to go into politics to save New York. I was a fool, ~~but~~

~~all the others~~. And I wasn't nearly as good as I thought I'd be.

All the same,
politics ~~but~~ I was prepared to pay the price. ~~And the price was a~~

~~serious one in my mind~~. I knew I would never write again.

serious way. I

knew I would use up my soul in ways that were unhappy for me.

"
But I felt: I haven't been a good guy. ~~I haven't been that good a~~

~~guy all these years~~. ~~I want~~ to save my soul. Now this was ~~not only~~

but
~~and~~ simplistic thinking ~~and~~ I turned out to be an ineffectual

NM AND IBM playboy04 revision I 8/12/04

(54)
All the same, politician. But I was ready to bite the bullet. It would have known it was

(Even if I was going to) going to be good for my soul, my personality, or my best ideas, for

(has) politician, become a politician. I'd be used up by it. It's a tremendous

difficult business. You know, we respect basketball players

stamina because they have such power, running up and down the court all

day. Well, very few humans can become good politicians because

before you of the amount of work you have to do every day. The

responsibilities. The number of distasteful things you have to do

in every session are immense. So I don't sneer at politicians

think they're entitled to the same kind of respect we give

reasonably good athletes. Stamina is impressive. But I don't have

any illusions that in becoming a politician you become a nobler

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person—very rarely does that happen. The only reason it does

occur
happen once in a while is because it's an impossible Creation

you can't have exceptions to every single rule.

JBM: You once wrote somewhere: "As many people die from an

excess of timidity as from bravery. Nobody ever mentions that

Do you care to give an explanation of courage?

It's
NM: I have one ready-made. Courage can only be measured by

place
the ~~ground~~ from which you start. *As* ~~An example~~ I've used it before

Picture
and will use again—is an old lady who is ill in every joint, arthritic

She
arthritic, nonetheless ~~has to get someplace~~ she has a reason to

cross a difficult street and she doesn't quite understand the lights

more
Nonetheless she feels an inner imperative to ~~cross that street~~

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she manages to get across even though she's terrified. I would say
that courage. I would say it is analogous to the case of a well-
trained Marine, a good kid, who gets into combat, sees his buddies
wounded, a good friend killed, goes through hell. He gets to the
point where he expects he will die. Until that moment, you can't
really speak of his courage. He's been trained to be brave -- you
can motivate people to be brave. But when you get to that crunch in
combat where you say, "It's not worth it. I'm scared shitless. I can't
go on, I want to quit, I don't care about my buddies, fuck it all. I
want to quit"—and then another side of you takes over and says
"You will go on, whether you die or not, you will go on" -- that
courage.

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Otherwise courage
~~Courage~~, in a very real sense, can be meaningless if it comes

too easily. If you're a ~~marvelous athlete~~ in a very easy way and

Very well-trained
 very good in your martial skills, you may feel panic, but you're

prepared
 trained to be brave.

So I would say courage is transcendence. Whatever our level

of competence *at* in hairy activities, *unless* if we go beyond ourselves

we may be effective but we
 transcend ourselves, that's courage.
are not rising into courage at all.

That's why I say timidity kills. Kills more people than

bravery because every time one's timid, one's pulling back creative

impulses in oneself, denying them, one's *over* denting the ego. And as

an ego contracts out of shame, illness begins. This is my opinion

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JBM: So is courage a virtue?

NM: Absolutely a virtue! Make it the virtue. I would go so far as

to say that it's very hard to feel love if you're full of shame. We

can feel love for someone else when we have gained respect for

ourselves—it's why we have this endless obsession with courage

Where is the man who can ignore it? It's analogous to a woman

who ^{will} wear no make-up, no jewelry, won't comb her hair because

she hates women who are elegant, feels those women are phony. "I

want to be seen as my natural self." Yet that woman can never

sneer at elegance ^{with} full confidence. A part of her feels that there's

something wrong with her. She doesn't want to get the utmost due

of herself. By the same token, some men sneer at bravery, say it's

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overrated, and that it breeds all sorts of trouble. Of course it does.

A macho brute is a macho brute. But not even a saint can sneer at

bravery with a completely clear and open heart. Not even a saint

JBM: You know, one of the outcomes of living in such an

organized society where everything is taken care of—men don't go

out and kill their food and bring it back—there's a complicity

almost a sense of deliberate forgetting that when it all comes down

to, ultimately, we're fucking animals. And we'll bite each other

and fight each other if our own is attacked. And I don't know if

this is true of everybody, but 95% of the time when I meet another

man, under it all is that sense of "Can I take you or can you take

me?" And it's usually a kind of fun, [smiling question and answer]

What's their game?

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(60)

but it's always there. And something like 9/11 reminds us at a

national level that tomorrow, like that [snaps fingers] all of this

societal bullshit could be gone and we're back to grunting and

biting. That's important. I think it's one of the major differences

between the mentality of a man in the millennium and the

mentality of a man in the '90s when political correctness was at its

height and the sensitive pony-tailed guy was getting laid more than

he should.

you have an unbalanced
NM: Well, I think ~~you're a serious~~ (situation when the sensitive

or over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is getting laid more than the

macho brute.

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NM: AND JBM playboy14 revision 1 8/12/04

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JBM: I don't know that he was getting laid more. No he was just

getting laid more than he should ^{And} for too little.

NM: Oh, you're a bigot.

JBM: I've got my prejudices.

NM: Yes, you may get them from
You've got your father.

JBM: In Freud's essay, The Uncanny, he contends that the

strongest instances of the uncanny involve "doubts whether an

apparently animate being is really alive, or conversely, whether a

lifeless object might not be in fact animate." We live in an age

where such distinctions become even less clear. This is indeed

frightening. We're overmatched by our technology. Our ability to

comprehend is exceeded by the ability to construct and fabricate.

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NM AND JBM playhxy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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You have spoken of the inanimate—that which cannot be

animated. Increasingly, it seems, we are overcome by this

uncanniness. Is there more of this to come in our future?

NM: I say absolutely yes, a great deal more. So long as

technology expands and expands, we're going to have more ~~and~~

of such
more uneasiness. I remember back in ~~I think it was~~ '69, I was

down at NASA, south of Houston, covering the first ~~moon~~ *landing* ^{P1}

the moon, The Flight of
Apollo 11. In the book I wrote ~~about it~~, there was a chapter called

"The Psychology of Machines" which discussed the immense

amount of attention these guys gave to glitches. It truly worried

them—there was something so spooky about glitches. They had

the best technology available, and yet the most inexplicable

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malfunctions would occur. It obsessed them. The real question, I

decided (even though they ^{would never} wouldn't admit it to themselves) was

"Do machines have a psychology?" Do things go wrong because a

~~the~~ machines have temperaments?

JBM: Are we talking about a psychology or a soul?

NM: ~~Look,~~ you're beyond me on that one. I was asking if there

was an inner life in the machine that we were not in touch with.

You rarely find a person now who has a computer who doesn't like

their ^{computer} new companion has a personality. Or, cars—everyone feels

~~that~~ this car has its own presence. There is a case where the unknown

doesn't scare us, it pleases us almost.

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JB VI: You know, whenever I hook my computer up to the

internet, she reacts very poorly and I feel it's the equivalent of

putting 10,000 dicks in out of the blue and she's saying, "Hey

just want yours. What is this?" ~~and~~ ^{so} she doesn't work as well. My

car is different, but if I let somebody else drive who isn't ~~as~~ ^{so} familiar

with it, it doesn't respond ~~as~~ ^{so} well.

NM: I think Freud ~~(cannot get)~~ put his finger on the nature of the

uncanny. Part of what is so depressing about modern technology

is the way it cuts off our senses. One of the things ~~that we are~~ ^{most} aware

about plastic—and I've been fulminating against plastic—most

unsuccessfully—for the last 30, 40 years, is plastic is not uncanny

It's just there, inert. It's very hard to conceive of any kind of soul

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or spirit inhabiting the stuff because it doesn't come out of nature.

Any object that does—even a wooden cane—has a touch of

personality. But plastic doesn't. I've always felt it is the

handmaiden to technology. Why do people love technology

gives you more power than you'd have without the technology but

you pay a ^{heavy} serious price for it. You ^{become} a little more intricate in ^{your} ~~your~~ ~~your~~

~~you~~ finer sensibilities.

JBM: Where is our technology leading us? ~~Because~~ ^{it} a car is ^{becoming} ~~becoming~~

technology but it ^{not} ~~wasn't~~ until recently ^{we} ~~that~~ there ~~was~~ plastic all

^{it} over ~~a car~~.

NM: ^{Yes, as} ~~As~~ they make plastic stronger, and more analogous to

steel—which they will—so, in turn, cars will be made entirely of

FROM : NM

FAX NO. : 5284972136

Aug 11 2004 8:11 PM

FROM : JMWORDEPT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 2004 8:35 PM

NMI AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

660

plastic ~~finally~~ because economically speaking, it offers more

profit. But I'm going to leave this.



NM: I'm going to leave this. To my mind, the mediocrities have

taken over the world under the banner of technology corporate

vision, the purveyance of democracy to all countries of the world

whether they're ready for it, or capable of it at this point but we

tell them in effect, "^{you are} Fuck you, you're going to end up a democracy

whether you like it or not," ^{they} which turns democracy into a farce

Because democracy is a grace. Any true democracy is sensitive

it's perishable, and we're in danger right now of losing our

democracy right here. The people who are running the world

now, very badly in many places, have the feeling that success is

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controlled direction is the only answer and of course, my feeling is

exactly the opposite. Global capitalism does not speak of a free

market but of a controlled ideology. It is alien to the creative

possibilities that have not yet been tapped in people who've never

had a chance to be creative, who work and die without creative

moments in their lives. *Such hopes have been* Some ~~hope~~ *hope* I think, *is buried in the r*

for generations gene stream. *appears* When talented people emerge from no sophisticated

cultural backgrounds, I see them as the product of ten generations

of frustration from people who wanted to be more than their lives

gave them. Such an artist is now receiving the bounty that was

packed into the gene stream of his or her forbears. This process

also works in reverse with people who are evil. Restrained evils

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5084872136

Aug 12 2004 3:11 PM

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 12 2004 3:11 PM

NM AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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~~the~~ withheld evils, extended over many generations can end war i;

producing a monster of a dictator.

JBM: There's an argument that our technology is stunting our

evolution. Were we not spending so much time going out into the

computer, focusing on ~~the~~ TV, what have you ~~more~~ people

would have evolved to a higher psychic level. Instead we're

developing a technology where—every day we get closer to having

one device that will be your phone and your email, your this, your

that, your internet access, a little device you carry with you and

you'll program your likes and dislikes into it—it'll be sending out a

signal and as you pass a stranger on the street—say you both like

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5284872136

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FROM : JMWORDCRAF

FAX NO. : 17186243782

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11 P3

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to watch Star Trek, a little bell will go off on both, and it'll tell you

that *near-by.*
what your compatibility is. Why are we doing this?

NM: Because of a deep fear. We've lost the dubious but

nonetheless intense consolations of religion. Formal organized

religion introduced many perversities but it also offered notions

that gave people hope. If you were a good enough person, you'd

But
enter heaven. ~~By now, because~~ religion truly stood in the way of

the development of capitalism and technology, corporate

certainly.
capitalism, that is ~~even more~~ but if a man's running a small

is *but*
business, ~~he's~~ living by his wits, Whereas people enter

in order not to have
corporations ~~so they don't have~~ to live by their smarts and

there,
instincts. Only a few people have to take responsibility. *Th*

FROM : nm

FAX NO. : 5284872135

Aug 11 2004 11:53

FROM : JMWORDCRAFT

FAX NO. : 17186243782

Aug 11 2004 0:29

NM: AND JBM playboy04 revision 1 8/12/04

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corporation can be a relatively benign organization. compare to .

~~worse ones~~, but it is ^{still} subtly ~~yet~~ completely in my mind.

totalitarian. And this is spreading everywhere. People ^{at the top?} want to

control the world because they're in terror that otherwise we are

going to blow it ~~up~~ up. My feeling is if the corporations take over

the world, it will ^{indeed} blow apart. It just doesn't suit human nature

JBM: Have they not taken over the world already?

NM: Not completely. Not completely. There are still corners and

avenues, games and places.

JBM: There's an underground. . .

NM: That underground has to go a long way before I will take it

seriously.

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NORMAN MAILER AND JOHN BUFFALO MAILER

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW 7 AUGUST 2004

PLAYBOY:

~~JBM~~: "I did it because I could." Thus explains President Clinton

on his motive for his affair with Monica Lewinsky. This soon

appear to be the motive for much of Boomerdom. did not

because I could." "I had sex because I could." It is not so much

immorality as amorality that drives such behavior. In the absence

of moral order or authority, the fool is free to pursue all

with abandon. Is amorality more troublesome than immorality

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NM: ~~I'd say no~~ Immorality is a clearer concept. When we find

~~immoral~~, we know we're up to something that by our moral logic is

forbidden, whereas "amoral" is more ambiguous. It falls into

~~several~~
separate categories. People can be amoral in business, or in their

loyalties, but generally speaking, we think of an amoral man as:

Even that word ~~has its~~ ^{type} sexist. That's ~~full of~~ sub-categories. One ~~kind of~~ guy doesn't give a

~~damn~~
~~fuck~~ about the partner. His pleasure goes into achievement, and

a dude ^{will} measures prowess by how many times he ^{gets} laid. For

more important: ^{what rating did the woman give him?} ~~How does the woman rate him?~~

^{biological}
Then there's another kind of amorality, where the man ~~just~~

^{is suffering a heavy} suffers a huge (physical) need. That's ^{the need is} ~~much~~ more important than

partner. ^{That's} ~~It's~~ animal, if you will, ^{but it is} ~~and~~ not as related to the

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JBM: Can there ever truly be amorality? For me, even about

whether they know it or not, lives by a code, and when they're

breaking their code, it bothers them, but they do it anyway

NM: Okay, some amoral people do ^{work by} have a code. That's more

interesting. ^{Let's say that for them} Their code is that the whole moral system is ~~just~~

~~a construction~~ crap. So, ignore it. They believe that the religiously received

any orthodox moral system breeds illness, pain, frustration, and deception of

oneself. You can go so far as to say the old Playboy philosophy, ^{it said}

to weigh in on how we

^{saying} was declaring: "We have to change our sexual more-

one woman" was not what Hef was ^{call about} involved in.

I would say this aspect of amorality can be justified. One can

argue that we have the right to make many ^{scenarios into} experiments in ~~sex~~ and,

when we are single

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miners. They're not worrying about the earth—they want to
goddamn gold.

JBM: Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women or
sleeping with one woman for ten years?

NM: ~~Depends on who's doing it, and to whom.~~ A man full

sensuality would probably opt for the first course. You need to

feel extraordinary love to be faithful to someone for ten years.

After my own checkered career, being married six times, with 3

children and one terrific stepson—I've been on both sides of a

question.

I've certainly been amoral in my day. Cold as ice with a fiery

But on the other hand, I've been attracted immensely to the

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qualities that women have. My amorality—if we're going to get

into it—was a search. I wanted to learn more about sex. ~~More and~~

~~more~~. I sometimes think if pornography had come along when I

was a young man, it would have dispensed with a lot of that

my personal life. Because you ^{do} ~~can~~ learn a lot from pornography

^{Women's}
~~People's~~ (animal qualities are ^{exemplified} magnified positively or negatively in

^{film.}
a porno. Besides you might be a little less
likely to marry the first woman you
find who is highly sexual.

JBM: I want to get back to Clinton's quote: "I did it because

could." What are your thoughts on the way he referred to Monica

Lewinsky in his book?

NM: ~~(Have a cynical response.)~~ As people go, Clinton is not the

worst guy you're going to meet. He has a lot of natural warmth,

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plus a good deal of everything else a president needs: calculation,

interest in his work, those particular:
manipulation, *(all of that.* In this case, I thought *his* remark *was*

needlessly cruel. *I believe,* ~~I believe, given his druthers,~~ *he would have*

preferred to speak nicely about Monica Lewinsky, but you've got

to remember he has an angry and injured wife on his hands. *He*

had to weigh,
~~has to come~~ in with something to satisfy her—Hillary was *there* to

his mind than Monica.

"I did it because I could" is *G.M.* ~~bullshit.~~ An empty remark

Anyone who's met Monica ~~and, for fact, we have~~ *known* her

very attractive. She's got beautiful coloring, she's intense *she's got it---*

a young, attractive woman. That's the real reason why he did it

NM A:ID JBM1 playboy04 revision 2 8/13/04

And for another reason entirely, which may be richer.

although it is certainly meaner. A bright woman I know, one of

"Clinton lives in a minimum security prison. Every fifteen

minutes, security checks up on where he is." I thought she

absolutely right. What we're dealing with here is an incarcerated

man. It's ^{as if he was} as if he's in the finest, grandest minimum security prison

in the world, the White House. In that sense, 5% of the world's

convict.

JBM: To this day?

NM: No, only when you're President. But surveillance is one of

the elements of prison life, so you're an innocent con.

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~~with~~ You didn't work to become President in order to be

scrutinized every fifteen minutes but that did come with the job

And
JBM: So once you're in ^{prison} ~~prison~~, you do what you can get ~~out~~ ^{prisoner}

with?

NM: Exactly.

JBM: Then his remark is not so hollow.

NM: I see what you're saying—yes, it's not as hollow as I thought

He did it not because he could but because he wanted to get away from it. 
Right! He did it because he could will turn into one of the
it. He could turn his incarceration into a little bit of a reward. He could beat the system.

elements. Still, I think his phrasing comes in the main because of

a senseless, I still think the style of his phrasing comes because of

his wife. Having been married six times, I know what one goes through

such occasions.

have some
idea of

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JBM: You're a good one to talk to about that. But, say more.

the point, he has a wife who will ^{likely} ~~likely~~ run for high office.

Under that, I still think the real question is, by making a calculated decision to strip humanity away from Monro in order to preserve the image of his marriage—is that either immoral or amoral? Which?

NM: ~~A little of both~~. Immoral in that he is most calculated in not

telling the truth about his real feelings. It's amoral because he

wants to keep the political process going: all politicians have to

amoral to a degree. It's a question of how much. Are they 10%

amoral or 88%? Politicians cannot possibly afford morality except

as a series of specious sentiments ready to be uttered as pain killers

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theological slogans. ~~But, normally speaking,~~ a politician has to deal with the given. That means they can even tell the truth at times. Usually, they're only pretending. Politicians build up profound habits of not addressing the truth head-on. In practice they have to shake hands with people they can't bear and proffer patriotic remarks that don't come from the heart.

Now, whether immoral, amoral, or both, it was a moral necessity. It was—the two holy words for politicians—the given.

JBM: Isn't it possible for a politician to live by his own code today?

NM: No. Not a successful politician.

JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

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NM: It's never possible. Go back to the maxim: "Politics is the

art of the possible." What's important is to get some part of what

you want, done. That's ^{how} a democracy works. By pieces and parts

The irony is, the only way you can ^{come near} ~~have~~ a direct expression

of your personality is in a dictatorship. Of course, as democrats,

we feel instinctively that no human being is good enough to be

entrusted with that kind of power. So in a democracy, change

always comes from negotiation. When people ^{adversaries} ~~walk~~ away from a

political compact, ^{each side} ~~everyone~~ is a bit dissatisfied.

JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's because I

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NM: Well, if you ever get into politics, and you well may with that name of yours, how can you not?—you're going to discover the interesting compromises you'll have to make, willy-nilly.

JBM: Okay. I'm ^{ready} going to move on—~~you've written~~ about the

PLAYBOY: You've written a grant the
cultural necessity of literature. Yet we now live in a time

the novelist and literature itself are borderline irrelevant.

NM: Irrelevant?

JBM: Borderline irrelevant. There's an absence of interest

serious, concentrated thought. We may be in danger of losing

literature forever. What would this mean for American culture?

NM: As a novelist, I'm now speaking from my vested position

My profession is certainly being eroded. When I began going

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novelists were more important in the scheme of things. The story

is that the great novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably

didn't sell as many copies per book as ^{a few} some serious novelists did

now. But they were revered. They affected history. They had the r

impact on American. Hemingway had a prodigious influence on

young American writers. He taught a lot of us how to look at the

tensile strength of a sentence. He improved our language by the

subtlety of his simplicity. He gave a great deal to people who care

about English.

I think a nation's greatness depends, to a real extent, on how

well-spoken its citizens are. Good things develop out of

populace that really knows how to use the language and use it well.

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Sp?

Would Great Britain have achieved as much as it did ~~in the past~~ ^{in the past}

Shakespeare? Where would Ireland be today without Joyce ~~and~~

language deteriorates, ~~as it~~ becomes less eloquent, less

metaphorical, less salient, less poignant, a ~~deadness~~ ^{comes}

~~things~~, a curious deadening of the human spirit, ^{comes}

~~All this is wrapped up in my mind with many other aspects~~

By now, ^{shifted from being} the phenomenon. America has moved, ~~as a country~~, from a place

Country with

that had a great love of freedom and creativity. ^(in constant)

~~Other Americans who wanted~~ ^{other Americans who wanted} ~~to a country that's now much more~~

into a

focused on

interested in power. And power, I can promise you, is not

interested in metaphor. Metaphor is antagonistic to power because

it pushes you to think in more poetic and contradictory ways

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Power demand a uni-linear approach to things. Power does not

welcome
entertain poetic concepts.

JBM: But hasn't power always been a driving force in society?

Always,
NM: ~~Yes~~. But it was situated among such other driving forces as

and good architecture and
culture and art and love of sports. Now, it's as if power has

dominant theme
become the most pervasive aspect of our lives. In the last
years have been a
with a professional standard
without a corporate standard

JBM: One way I put it is that writers used to be rock stars. Now

only the rock stars have credibility with the masses. Justin

Timberlake, whom I'm sure is a sweet guy, shouldn't be influencing

a generation. He's a pop singer. He was created by Disney.

sure he's a nice guy but that burden shouldn't be on his shoulders.

And it didn't used to be that way. Somewhere between the 1950s and

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I'm not sure where, it shifted from great minds speaking to the masses to celebrities speaking to the masses.

NM: Be careful. You're too young to know how it was back then.

~~There weren't.~~

JBM: ~~I can read history.~~

~~NM:~~ Great minds almost never speak directly to the masses.

JBM: Not directly. But Hemingway would write a piece, you

would write a piece, and people would discuss it and debate it and

people would go back and forth—

NM: Leave me out of it.

JBM: OK. Another example--[pause] My point is, not to have to

use you as an example, but you're on my mind—"The White

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Negro." To this day, people come up to me who were teenagers when that came out and they want to argue with me about it. I talk to me about it. It still affects them to this day. I don't think any essay by anyone now could have the same effect. A movie would. A video would.

That's one reason Michael Moore is interesting because I think he's aware that while his books are good, and are what they are, he ^{is} going to reach so many more that way. But you can't get the same depth of an idea across in a sound bite—there's no way.

NM: Why not use a rating system for ideas? The most popular ideas are those one is willing to die for. By that measure, for

Marx has to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Because

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hundreds of thousands of people in his time and after were willing
to die for his ideas. All over the world, millions were willing to go
to prison for them.

This is not to raise a latter-day defense of Marx. He had

incredible virtues as a thinker. He also, ~~from~~ ^{from} my point of view,

he also

(had his lacks. He certainly didn't understand that atheism is not

way to win the world. You can't. Not by that route. Half the

people alive—or is it three-quarters?—have instinctive notions of a

God exists. I think the real failure ~~is~~ ^{just parenthetically} of

~~of~~ Bolshevism, which ^{then} became Stalinism, was clinging to ~~uncon-~~

~~that didn't work, exactly~~ the idea that religion is the opium of the

masses. Organized religion may well be its own species of

NM AND IBM playboy04 revision 2 8/13/04

narcotic but the concept that we are part of divine Creation is

something else altogether.

If we're ever going to have a great society in the future

which ^{is} ~~can~~ hardly ~~be~~ a guaranteed conclusion—if we ever ~~create~~ ^{build}

world with real freedom and openness, ^{we} ~~there~~ may have to ~~be~~ ^{be}

^{at the} ~~(~~ recognition that we ^{can} ~~are~~ obliged to dispense with fundamentalism

and live instead with the idea that God is a Creator, not a law

giver.

IBM: Yet you are always saying that creativity is becoming more

and more restricted. To shift the subject ^{back} ~~to~~ your home turf, what

then, is going to be the last novelist?

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Probably someone someone (poor)
 NM He'll probably be analogous to the last poet anywhere

is writing five-act
 who writes verse plays in iambic pentameter. I do foresee a time

very few when hardly anybody will look at serious fiction. *Instead, they will*
 They may find

computer novels. The computer is better suited to turn out a best

seller than a mediocre novelist. But not too many people will

literary work
 be interested in serious novels. (Whole populations will be looking

those
 for technological power rather than exploring into moral questions
hope to ponder questions but
~~they can't find anywhere else.~~
in the serious novel

the best
 Serious fiction has always been the repository of the most

most
 (interesting and subtle moral questions, questions that

the deeper than any wisdom you're going to receive in any church or

synagogue or mosque. When it comes to moral paradox, there's not

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is ~~essentially~~ limited. It's too structured. ^{Interesting} ~~What makes~~ ^{it} ~~moral~~

~~interesting is that it~~ almost never fits pre-arranged moral ~~issues~~

It's only the novelist—the very good novelist—who ~~can~~ ^{can} ~~do~~ ^{do} it

such moral issues as "Am I on balance a good person or a bad ~~one~~?"

person?" You don't find that out by declaring, "Well, I'm good

because I obey the Ten Commandments." That doesn't ~~work~~ ^{work}

good. You can still be a horror ~~because~~ ^{if} you restrict the lives of

others with your piety. The real question is how do you affect ~~the~~ ^{the}

^{people's} ~~lives of others?~~ ^{Best novel's are} By that measure, the novel is marvelous for

^{delving} ~~pursuing moral questions~~ ^{the} into subtler inquiries of our nature

After all, what is human nature? We're still finding that out

It is immensely various, even as God, I believe, is immensely

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various. We're the children, if you will, of the Creator. We know

that God doesn't want to give us orders from above. Rather, He

wishes us to discover things about our nature that we can report

back to Him. Or Her. Does the parent always wish to be superior

to the child? No. Most parents want their children to surpass

them.

JBM: Don't you think that very reason, right there, is enough to

keep the novel alive?

NM: Not necessarily. You're leaving out the social imperative of

the people who run things. An immensely powerful global

capitalism is shaping up. That capitalism does not need to report

for inquiry into delicate matters; its need, ^{rather} is to keep the system

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more of a benign regime, superficially open and ready for the

development of technology which will make all our lives

extraordinary—sure, technology will end up keeping us alive for

150 or 200 years, even if three-quarters of each of us will be

replacement cells and parts. "I'm on my fourth heart," says the man

who is 200 years old. I'm not sure that's either God's intention or

the real human intention. It may be ^{an ultimate} the ~~destruction~~ of the human

spirit ^{to} ~~to~~ stay alive beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as

important to life as life itself. To keep extending the years of your

life—^{that} ~~it~~ could be one more form of evil. Much too much to be ~~taken~~ ^{taken}

taken for granted today.

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But I must go back to the original point: The goal of the serious novel, is antipathetic to corporate capitalism. The best seller is one of the props of corporate capitalism precisely because it's an entertainment. ^{the idea} People feel, "At the end of my work day, ²¹ to have fun, ^{a game the nine-to-five} ~~So how do I have fun?~~ Give me asshole ~~11~~ exploitation films with lots of bang. I don't need to read a good book—I want a page-turner." Well, every time there's a page ^{to read} turner for too little, someone's mind is being dulled. ~~Because~~ ^{can} page-turners get into interesting moral questions, ~~although~~ dependably, they will always veer away from moral significance.

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Karenina" on her book of the month list and it became a best-seller again.

NM: I salute her for that. It so happens "Anna Karenina" is one of my all-time favorite novels. I had that and "War and Peace" on my desk while I was writing "The Naked and the Dead," ~~and "The~~ steamed up to write every morning, I'd read five or ten pages of "Anna Kanenina." ^{yes} So I applaud her for that.

JBM: Because she has such popular mass appeal, she can make something that is hard to read and make it a best-seller. That gives hope to me.

NM: But if she keeps doing it, her popularity will begin to diminish and then we'll begin to see the real test of her character:

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Is she devoted to great literature or is she, quite naturally, more
more devoted to the power of her own career?

JBM: Well, I would ask whether she can raise great literature up to
the popular level of best-sellers.

NM: No. No person can do it. You're so young you still believe

in the power of individuals. The hard fact---^{which} ~~what~~ would like to

see develop in you, my friend, over the next ten years, is a much

deeper notion of social structure. Because society is part of it.

It's as if we're little animals running through the machine.

Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we start to change

little machine, but we can't really alter the nature of the machine.

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that much. Not without great study and ^{long-term} great devotion ~~and~~

^{grease} plus willingness to get into the grease of the machine.

JBM: And great luck. No, I respect the complexity of the system.

machine—I don't think one person can change it, but there's that

great RFK line, I'm paraphrasing—that every action you do is

essentially throwing a pebble into a pond and it sends out ripples

that affect other things.

NM: The ripples ~~do~~ die out.

JBM: Unless they're strong enough.

NM: How many times does a pebble thrown into a pond change

the nature of the shoreline? Let's stop the crap.

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JBM: Can we move on to Provincetown? *Provincetown - it has been your home**It*
over 50 years, yes?

NM: No, I've only lived here year-round for the last 15 years. But

the first time I came to Provincetown was almost 60 years ago and

I've spent serious time here over 45 or 50 of the last 60 years.

JBM: Now, Provincetown in winter—a lot of people see it as

being abandoned. It goes from—what? 30,000 down to 5,000

people?

NM: Roughly.

JBM: Is winter better than high season?

NM: For a writer of my age, it's better. There's an old saying

about P'town that in the winter you can roll a bowling ball down

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Commercial Street and it'll never hit anyone. So it is lonely here in

February and March and mean and cold because the wind's coming

off the water. It's damp, it's lonely, and I love it. It has my name.

It's much easier to spend the day writing if it's gray outside

Besides, ~~all~~ the people I used to know here ^{long ago} over the years are dead

(Most of them from Provincetown and Cape Cod)
now. Provincetown has changed profoundly. In summer it's ^{the} gay capital of the Northeast. Forty or fifty years ago it was

the gay capital of the Northeast. Forty or fifty years ago it was

be the Wild West of the East—you had motorcycle gangs coming

our on Saturdays, ^{and at 1:00 A.M. Sunday morning} [cannot get] Sunday, you'd have people going

up in the hills, ^{down} ~~real~~ bachannals, everybody carrying booze

Marriages broke up and serious affairs started on many of these

nights.

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JBM: Well, you still have motorcycle gangs coming

that now they're wearing chaps with nothing on underneath

NM: [laughs] All right.

JBM: Having spent a lot of time in this town growing up, and

As a member of the hetero community
the last few years as well, I don't see this as a gay town.

a very libertarian place ~~in the sense of~~, as long as you're not hurting

anyone else, whatever you're doing is cool.

always
NM: Well, that's true. There's been that tradition in Provincetown.

There are amazing ~~contrasts and~~ contradictions here

Provincetown is the place where the Pilgrims first landed

JBM: Why did they leave?

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NM: Like all good white people who are righteous and not quite

aware of how mean they can be ^{underneath their} ~~under the~~ righteousness. ~~then~~ ;

were, full of themselves, ~~heroic~~ indeed. After all, they had to ()

leave their roots and sail across the Atlantic cramped in a small

boat. They got here through true difficulty. ^{At the end of 13th century} ~~It was~~ hard to navigate

the waters around Cape Cod, but there is a natural harbor

Provincetown ^{where} ~~because~~ the land curls around like a snail shell ()

^{made anchor in} they ~~entered~~ (this harbor—parenthetically, the ^{spot} ~~place~~ where the ~~13th century~~ ^{16th century} ~~their longboat to land~~)
landed now offers a huge motel. We are nothing in America ()

^{highly} adaptive to profit. The Puritans, however, found the sea ()

particularly welcoming, full of sand, brush pine, low country ()

good for farming. They were in search of food, went searching ()

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around ^(white) reconnoitering eight miles south of Provincetown they

found a place in Truro (now called Corn Hill) where the Indians had

stored ~~all~~ their ^{grain} crop for the coming winter. So the Puritans brought

^{the corn} it back to their ship, and in the ^{reverberations} course of that action killed ~~about~~ ^{one of} the

^{redskins,} of Indians. (Shortly after, ^{one of} those Puritans probably said to ~~the~~ ^{the}

another, "Prithee, brother, ^{lets} shall we get the fuck out!" So the

sailed to the other side of Massachusetts Bay, some forty miles

^{the waters,} across ^(moved into) and found Plymouth which then became the founding place

of America. ^{the first} Hail to ^{the first} Thanksgiving!

Well, a couple of hundred years later, the locals here are

^{outraged} furious at the self-serving pride of Plymouth. How did that town

dare to call itself the founding place of America? So the

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By 1909, that
 petitioning Washington, D.C.. All that got so hot by ~~that~~ that
 through subscription
 beautiful tower was erected, (a copy of an Italian tower in S. r a

[CK], and Theodore Roosevelt actually came to the opening

(here this
 festivities) That exceptionally phallic tower is now called the

Pilgrim Monument.

JBM: So America started with some white people stealing

corn, killing some Indians and going on the lam.

Yes.
 NM: ~~Yes. I've been saying yes.~~

~~JBM: Perfect.~~

PLAYBOY!
 JBM: OK, here is a good query from Playboy: Did women

sexuality shape human evolution? According to a theory

Leonard Shlain's new book ~~which I haven't read~~ "Sex, Time

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and Power," menstruation is what enabled women to develop

sense of time and forethought. Language evolved, he says

primarily because men and women had to negotiate sex. Women

became expert ~~he says~~ at reading between the lines of various

Pleistocenes. Beauty was developed to maintain the interest of

men. Is this why women control men? Which is a large statement

~~in and of itself.~~

NM: I haven't read the book, ~~either~~, but ^{that theory} it does strike me as ~~awfully~~

~~that's wobbly~~, ^{where is the new idea?} nonsensical ~~theorems~~. For example, negotiating sex ~~with~~

^{After all,} ~~without language~~ (animals negotiate sex). I had two standard poodles once

years ago, Tibo and Zsa-Zsa, and Zsa-Zsa was one hell of a bitch.

~~she was~~ always nipping at Tibo's nuts. I was afraid Tibo would

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end up as no man at all by the time he came of age — we first met

them when they were pups. How she dominated him! She had

fierce teeth. He'd have to duck, and sit down fast,

Then she came into heat for the first time. He seized her by the

no by-your-leave and impregnated her with nine pups. Before that

were done, they created 30 pups over the next three years. This

on-going negotiation. Animals are only
~~ability to negotiate sex was perfect. But in fact animals~~

great deal of language in their grunts, their groans, their whines,

their moans, their baying at the moon, their scents. Odor and

more to do with sex than language—at least until deodorants came

on the scene. But before the advent of ~~whiff deodorant~~

in spray cans,

deodorants, any combination of strong genital odor mixed with

these earlier negotiations had taught him a lot, however. He knew what was called for, when Iga-Tao came

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perfume was pretty damned aphrodisiacal, yessir, all through every

right through the second laboring labor

barnyard and royal court of Europe. So the notion that

had to be developed to facilitate sex cannot, by my lights, be better

How a heart
JBM: ~~Of~~ a sense of time developed through menstruation?

NM: There I ~~can~~ see a point. Menstruation certainly proved

women that they were altogether different from men. So they

to have a different code.

JBM: Well, they would go off alone when it was happening

You don't want the smell of blood in the air to make you prey

NM: Absolutely right. I hadn't thought of that either

JBM: Good. This other question—do women control men?

one, do you think so?

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NM: Completely.

JBM: I'm glad you agree.

NM: Before women's liberation came along, men used to have

some purchase on control in a marriage. Perhaps 35%. The woman

had the remaining 65. Now, after women's liberation, it's

95%.

JBM: Wow!

/ NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's only 85%.

JBM: Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the

dominance of women?

2
2
1 NM: Well, women are closer to the universe. Closer to creation

than we are. So, they have deeper instincts.

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JBM: They create life, we destroy life.

NM: Oh, let's not get into that. Women have deadened

men in subtle ways, for subtle reasons, as men have beaten

down in more overt fashion.

JBM: I'm not saying one is more vicious than the other. I'm

saying, traditionally, men have gone to war and women have raised

the children. That's changing. Women are going to war and we've

seen what happens at Abu Ghraib.

NM: Yes, that poor pregnant girl. . .

JBM: I feel for her—I do.

NM: You do?

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JBM: She was in the wrong place with the wrong guys. ~~Team~~ :

wrong pressures and now she's all alone.

is. I also can see,
NM: She really ~~was~~ ~~just think~~ how wild the parties are getting

this reason,
all over America. The key factor at Abu Ghraib was. They mean

of you at home are going to believe this until you see our picture.

And the photograph taking that was not called for by their

superiors—as well as the photos that were—after all, some of the

(prisoners into talking)
photos were used to blackmail the prisoners. "You don't want to see

was overtly behind a lot of the
family to see this," *^* But the Abu Ghraib gang were delighted

also
send these photos home to their friends. Just think of the kind of

been
party that's *going* on back in America while Bush keeps talking

splendid
about how ~~good~~ a Christian nation we are.

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JBM: The more Christian someone is, the more they have a

sexual stuff in the closet. [John, discuss with NM]

NM: You know, I love this country with all its faults, but if

its huge ^{spiritual crimes} ~~faults~~ is that we're the bullshit kingdom of all time. We've

found a way to process bullshit so you can't even smell the bullshit

^{longer.}
~~more.~~

JBM: What do you think of the gender roles of men and women

now that women are expected to raise a family and be successful

the workplace?

NM: For me, any notion that males are superior to females or

females superior to males is, I'd say, ^{like} comparing dogs to cats.

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my mind, it's a hopeless argument. Men are so fundamentally

different from women.

I still have to say that the desire for power in women that

revealed itself in the last 35 years is not attractive. The power

they used to have was vastly more attractive. It used to be fun to

realize a woman was smarter than you. In the course of living

one's life and learning how to handle oneself, there were women

who developed ^{such taste} ~~wonderful~~ subtleties about how to control us. They

were like animal handlers if you will. And the animal, say,

lion, almost always adores the handler. Now they're dominating

us openly. ^{the whip and the knout for you,}
^{buddy,} we are the politically correct

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JBK: I don't think I agree with that. It's changing. There was the

height of political correctness, which bordered on fascism and

was terrifying. But the majority of the women that know they

want a real man—they don't want a man they can walk all over.

NM: Well, good. I'm 81, and these unhappy experiences occurred

to me 30 years ago.

JBK: You were living then at the height of the ^{gender} war. But it was

truly encouraging, what's encouraging me now, is we need more

women in power, but we need women who do it the way a woman

does it, not the way a man would do it if he were a woman—

~~way she thinks a man would do it if he were a woman~~

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NM: Listen, most of the women in power were not that

impressive. There was Maggie Thatcher—the Iron Lady. You

know, she was effective as a politician—in a certain sense she was

more effective as a politician than Ronald Reagan had been at

at that time. She wasn't a very nice person, and if she'd been

male, she would have been thoroughly detested.

JBM: That's what I'm saying. I think she was doing it the way a

thought a man would do it if he were a woman. As opposed to

someone, say, like Arianna Huffington who is completely over the top

and who had this line which has just swept across the Democratic

Party of "you don't try to remodel your house while it's on fire"

That's not something a man would say.

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NM: How is that relevant to what we're talking about

JBM: Well, we're just now starting to see women getting into

power positions who are still allowed to be women. They don't

have to pretend to act like a man.

NM: Name a few, would you?

JBM: Arianna Huffington, Hillary Clinton—

NM: Hillary Clinton is a very good example. I met her many

years ago when she was the governor's wife in Arkansas. Probably

in '84. She was immensely intelligent—I happened to sit next

her at dinner—and we had a very good conversation. I was

impressed with how bright she was, how open, and what a fine

mind she had. She's not as interesting ^{now,} ~~today~~. Today, she's

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politician. She's very cautious. Her books are boring. When I read

one, "It Takes a Village. . ."—full of cant. The way Maggie

Thatcher was full of cant. You say what's useful to save, not what

you believe. You never speak from the heart, but manipulate with

Hillary is always watch-dogging her tongue these days. Totally

unspontaneous in exactly the way an average mediocre-to-good

effective politician oversees his spiel.

JBM: But as we said before, she's a politician at a high level. She

has no choice.

NM: So why get excited about her as a role model?

JBM: I'm not saying we're there yet. I see people coming into the

ranks. I see Laura Dawn of MoveOn.org who is changing the way

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of politics. I see Arianna Huffington who is approaching it from a new angle. I mean, politics this year is more exciting than it has been before in my lifetime, certainly. People who were never involved before are going there because it's sexier, it's getting to be more fun.

NM: All right. I can see a time when women are more important politically than they are now, and for better reasons. But that doesn't mean anything much is going to change. In a certain sense, a politician, regardless of gender, is neutered by the process. Most of politicians are attractive in person because, after all, they're pressing the flesh. All the time. Shake a thousand hands in a day

and a few more)

and you're horny by the end of the day. The hands are telling you

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something. Where's the guy who won't get a hard-on if he

admirer by a lot of women? But, nonetheless, politics

dehumanizes you. I don't say this out of sour grapes because

when I ran for mayor in that Democratic primary back in 1991,

considered it my duty. Believe it or not, I felt God wanted me to

go into politics to save New York. I was a ^{high-octane} fool. And I wasn't

nearly as good as I thought I'd be. All the same, I was prepared to

pay the price. I knew I would never write again in any serious

way. If I got elected, then I knew I would use up my soul in ways that were unhappy

for me. But I felt: "I haven't been a good guy—I want to save my

soul." Now this was not only simplistic thinking (which is no drawback to being for a fix) but I thought it was

be an ineffectual politician. All the same, I was ready to find the

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~~bullet. It would not be good for my soul (even if I was saving my~~

~~personality, nor my best ideas. I'd be used up by politics.~~
I know I'd be
What I learned from the effort
the defeat is that politics is a
 tremendously difficult business. You know, we respect basketball

players because they have such stamina, ~~running up and down the~~

~~court all day.~~
hands,
 Well, very few humans can become good politicians

due to
 because of the amount of work before you every day. *(run into, run into the)*

responsibilities. The number of distasteful things you have to do.

So I don't sneer at politicians. I think they're entitled to the same

kind of respect we give reasonably good athletes. Stamina is

impressive. But I don't have any illusions that in becoming a

politician you become a nobler person—very rarely does that

occurs
 happen. The only reason it *happens* once in a while is because

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it's an impossible Creation if you can't have exceptions to every ~~single~~ ¹⁻⁵⁷ rule.

~~JBM~~ ^{PLAYBOY!} You once wrote somewhere: "As many people die from an
excess of timidity as from bravery. Nobody ever mentions that."

Do you care to give an explanation of courage?

NM: I have one. It's ready-made. Courage can only be measured
by the place from which you start. Picture an old lady who is ill in
every joint, terribly arthritic, nonetheless she has to cross a difficult
street and she ^{Can't quite keep up with the} ~~doesn't quite understand the~~ lights. Nonetheless she
feels an inner imperative to move. And she ^{does} ~~(manages)~~ to get across
even though she's terrified. I would call that courage. I would say

it is analogous to the case of a well-trained Marine, a good kid,

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who gets into combat, sees his buddies wounded, ^{sees} a good friend killed, goes through hell. He gets to the point where he expects he will die. Until that moment, you can't really speak of his courage. He's been trained to be brave—you can motivate people to be brave. But when you get to that crux in combat where you say "It's not worth it. I'm scared shitless, I can't go on. I want to quit, I don't care about my buddies, fuck it all, I want to quit"—and then another side of you takes over and says, "You will go on, whether you die or not, you will go on"—that's courage.

Otherwise, courage can be meaningless. If you're in a very easy war, and very well-trained in your martial skills, you may feel panic, but you're prepared to be brave.

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So I would say courage is transcendence. Whatever our level
 of competence at ~~hairy~~ ^{more or less hairy} activities, ~~we are not going to~~ ^{we are not going to} go beyond ourselves, ~~unless we go beyond ourselves.~~ ^{if we want to}
 transcend ourselves, we may be effective but we are not rising ~~the~~
^{raise so high as} courage itself.

That's why I say timidity kills. Kills more people than

bravery because every time one's timid, one's pulling back creative

impulses in oneself, denying them, ~~one's~~ ^{One is} (denying one's ego. And as

an ego contracts out of shame, illness begins. This is my opinion.

JBM: So is courage a virtue?

NM: Absolutely a virtue! Make it the virtue. I would go so far as

to say that it's very hard to feel love if you're full of shame. We

^{only} can feel love for someone else when we have gained respect for

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ourselves—it's why we have this endless obsession with courage.

Where is the man who can ignore it? It's analogous to a woman

who will wear no make-up, no jewelry, won't comb her hair

because she hates women who are elegant, feels those women are

phony. "I want to be seen as my natural self." Yet that woman can

never sneer at elegance with full confidence. A part of her feels

is not really
~~that~~ there's something wrong with her. She ~~doesn't want~~ to get the

utmost out of herself. By the same token, some men sneer at

call it *are always ready to point*
bravery, ~~say it's overrated, and that it breeds all sorts of trouble. (Of~~
out how much trouble it breeds, of

course it does. A macho brute is a macho brute. But not even a

saint can sneer at bravery with a completely clear and open heart

Not even a saint.

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JBM: You know, one of the outcomes of living in such an organized society where everything is taken care of—men don't go out and kill their food and bring it back—there's a complicity, almost a sense of deliberate forgetting that when it all comes down to, ultimately we're fucking animals. And we'll bite each other and fight each other if our own is attacked. And I don't know if this is true of everybody, but 95% of the time when I meet another man, under it all is that sense of "Can I take you or can you take me."

And it's usually a kind of fun, but it's always there. And something like 9/11 reminds us all on a national level that tomorrow, like that [snaps fingers] all of this societal bullshit could be gone and we're back to grunting and biting. That's important. I think it's one of

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the major differences between the mentality of a man in the millennium and the mentality of a man in the '90s when political correctness was at its height and the sensitive pony-tailed guy was getting laid more than he should.

NM: Well, I think you have an unbalanced situation when the sensitive—or over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is getting laid more than the macho brute.

JBM: I don't know that he was getting laid more. No, he was just getting laid more than he should. And for too little.

NM: Oh, you're a bigot.

JBM: I've got my prejudices.

NM: Yes, you may ^{have received} get them from your father.

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PLAYBOY

JBM: In Freud's essay, The Uncanny, he contends that the

strongest instances of the uncanny involve "doubts whether an

apparently animate being is really alive, or conversely, whether a

lifeless object might not be in fact animate." We live in an age

where such distinctions become even less clear. This is indeed

frightening. We're overmatched by our technology. Our ability to

comprehend is exceeded by the ability to construct and fabricate

You have spoken of the inanimate—that which cannot be

animated. Increasingly, it seems, we are overcome by this

uncanniness. Is there more of this to come in our future?

NM: I say absolutely yes, ~~a great deal more.~~ So long as

technology expands and expands, we're going to have more of such

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uneasiness. I remember back in '69, I was down at NASA

Houston, covering the first landing on the moon, the flight of

Apollo 11. In the book I wrote about it, there was a chapter called

"The Psychology of Machines" which discussed the immense

amount of attention NASA technicians gave to glitches. It truly worried

the venture
~~the sent~~

~~them~~ there was something so spooky about glitches. NASA had

the best technology available, and yet the most inexplicable little

malfunctions would occur. It obsessed them. The real question,

decided, (even though they would never admit it to themselves)

was "Do machines have a psychology?" Do things go wrong

because machines have temperaments?

JBM: Are we talking about a psychology or a soul?

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NM: You're beyond me on that one. I was asking if there was a

inner life in the machine that we were not in touch with. You

rarely find a person now who has a computer who doesn't feel their

little magic box

computer has a personality. Or, cars—everyone feels that his car

of course this best

has its own presence. There is a case where the uncanny doesn't

scare us, it pleases us ~~almost~~.

JBM: You know, whenever I hook my computer up to the internet,

she reacts very poorly and I feel it's the equivalent of putting

10,000 dicks in out of the blue and she's saying, "Hey. I just want

yours. What is this?" She doesn't work as well. My car is

different, but if I let somebody else drive who isn't in love with it

it doesn't respond so well.

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NM: I think Freud put his finger on the nature of the uncanny

Part of what is so depressing about modern technology is the way

it cuts off our senses. One of the things most awful about plastic - -

and I've been fulminating against plastic--most unsuccessfully - -

for the last 30, 40 years, ^{that} is plastic is not uncanny. It's just there,

inert. It's very hard to conceive of any kind of soul or spirit

inhabiting the stuff because it doesn't come out of nature, ^{but} ~~any~~

from a ^{get} ~~set~~ of factory processes.

~~Object that does~~ Even a wooden cane ~~it~~ has a touch of personality,

~~but~~ plastic doesn't. I've always felt it is the handmaiden to

technology. Why do people love technology? It gives you more

power than you'd have without the technology but you pay a heavy

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price ~~for it~~. You become a little more inert in your finer sensibilities.

JBM: Where is our technology leading us? A car is certainly a piece of technology but not until recently was there plastic all over it.

NM: Yes, as they make plastic stronger, and more analogous to

steel—which they will—so, in turn, cars ~~will be~~ ^{are going to} made entirely of

plastic because economically speaking, ~~it~~ ^{the plastic substitute} offers more profit. ~~But~~

~~No surprise then if the~~
~~I'm going to leave this. To my mind, the~~ mediocrities have taken

over the world under the banner of technology, corporate vision ~~and~~

~~the~~ ^{the unholy urge to purvey}

~~the~~ ^{the} purveyance of democracy to all countries of the world. whether

they're ready for it, or capable of it at this point, ~~but~~ ^{but} we tell them in

effect, "You are going to end up a democracy whether you like it

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or not." This turns democracy into a farce. Because democracy is

a grace. Any true democracy is sensitive, ^{Certainly to be} its perishable, and we're

in danger right now of losing our democracy right here

people who are ^{now} running the world ^{at present} now, very badly in many places.

have the feeling that successfully controlled direction is the only

answer and of course, my feeling is exactly the opposite. ^{III} Global

capitalism does not speak of a free market but of a controlled

^{globe,} ~~ideology~~ ^{at}. It is alien to the creative possibilities that have not yet

been tapped in ^{legions of} people who've never had a chance to be creative,

who work and die without creative moments in their lives. ^{But then} ~~that~~

hopes, I ^{believe} ~~think~~, have been buried in their gene stream for

^{and are passed on,} generations. When talented people emerge from no apparent

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~~separated~~ cultural background, I see them as the product of ^{the} ~~the~~

generations of frustration from people who wanted to be more than

their lives gave them. Such an artist is now receiving the bounty

that was packed into the ^{dreams} ~~gene stream~~ of his or her forbears. This

premise also works in reverse with ~~people who are evil~~. Restrained

evils, withheld evils, extended over many generations can end by

producing a monster of a dictator.

PLAYBOY:

~~JBM~~: There's an argument that our technology is stunting our

evolution. Were we not spending so much time going out into the

computer, focusing on TV, what have you, more people would

have evolved to a higher psychic level. Instead, we're developing a

technology where—every day we get closer to having one device

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that will be your phone and your email, your this, your that, you :

internet access, a little device you carry with you and you'll

program your likes and dislikes into it—it'll be sending out a signal

and as you pass a stranger on the street—say you both like to

watch Star Trek, a little bell will go off on both, and it'll tell you

that compatibility is near by. Why are we doing this?

NM: Because of a deep fear. We've lost the ~~dubious but~~ *often only policy*

~~but~~ nonetheless intense consolations of religion. Formal, organized

religion introduced many perversities *into our nature* but it also offered ~~notions~~ *many peer people some hope*

~~many peer people some hope~~ *that gave people hope*. If you were a good enough person, you'd

also enter heaven. But religion ~~truly~~ stood in the way of ~~the~~

development of capitalism and technology, corporate capitalism,

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~~certainly~~. A man running a small business is living by his wits, but

people enter corporations in order not to have to live by their

~~on, most important the~~
~~spirits and instincts~~. Only a few people have to take responsibility.

~~there~~. The corporation can be a relatively benign organization, but

it is still subtly totalitarian. And this is spreading. People at the

top want to control the world because they're in terror that

otherwise we are going to blow it up. My feeling is if the

corporations take over the world, it will indeed blow apart. ~~It~~ ~~it has~~

~~because technology could end~~
~~with it~~ ~~technology ends~~ ~~(by violating~~
~~doesn't suit human nature.~~

~~for much of human nature.~~

~~Hasn't technology~~
JBM: Have they not taken over the world already?

NM: Not completely. Not completely. There are still corners and

avenues, games and places.

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JBM: 'There's an underground. . .

NM: That underground has to go a long way before I will take it

seriously, and yet I am

ready to drink to that idea. ~~But I'm not~~

NV: Immorality is a clearer concept. We know we're up to something that by our moral logic is forbidden. "Amoral" is more ambiguous. It falls into several categories. People can be amoral in business or in their loyalties, but generally speaking, we think of an amoral man as a sexist. Even that word has its sub-categories. One type doesn't give a damn about the partner. His pleasure goes into achievement. Such a dude will measure progress by how many times he ^{gals} got laid. Even more important: What rating did the woman give him?

Then there's biological amorality. The man is suffering a heavy physical need. The need is more important to him than the

partner. That's animal, if you will, but it is not as related to the

go

J. BM: Can there ever truly be amorality? For me, everybody,

whether they know it or not, lives by a code, and when they're

~~I break~~ ^{own} their code, it bothers them, but they ~~do it anyway~~ ^{go ahead w/ what they are doing}, but ~~it's wrong~~ ^{the} ~~is the~~ ^{the} ~~gut~~ ^{fringe} ~~tells them~~ ^{it's} ~~it's wrong~~

J. M: Okay, some amoral people do work by a code. That's more

interesting. Let's say that for them the whole moral system is a lot

of crap. So ignore it. They believe that any orthodox moral

system breeds illness, pain, frustration, and deception of oneself.

The old Playboy philosophy used to weigh in on how we have to

change our sexual mores. "Stick to one woman" was not what Hef

was all about.

Would say this aspect of amorality can be justified. One can argue that we have the right to make many sorties into sex when we are single, and to find new partners all the time. The underlying notion is that sooner or later, the cumulative knowledge we gain will ready us for a serious love. Many a sexist who has a reputation as a good lover might, under all that, be dreaming of a great love to come. Such studs are getting ready for the big meeting by having many affairs en route to the championship. More than one movie star subscribes to this psychology. Seen as a vehicle to increase one's knowledge, amorality becomes more interesting.

Henry Miller once said something to the effect that there's no such thing as a bad fuck. I think he meant that no matter how

he can get
~~he can get~~ it can get, you always learn something about the

woman and about yourself. Some people do dig into fucking like

gold miners. They're not worrying about the earth—they want the

gold damn gold. *If the pickaxe strikes rock,
 they'll go elsewhere.*

J3 v Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women, or

sleeping with one woman for ten years?

JF1 A man full of sensuality would probably opt for the first

course. You need to feel extraordinary love to be faithful to

someone for ten years. After my own checkered career, being

married six times, with 8 children and one terrific stepson—I've

been on both sides of that question.

I've certainly been amoral in my day. Cold as ice with a few.

But on the other hand, I've been attracted immensely to the

qualities that women have. My amorality—if we're going to get

into it—was a search. I wanted to learn more about sex. I

sometimes think if pornography had come along when I was a

young man, it would have dispensed with a lot of friction in my

personal life. Because you do learn a lot from pornography.

Women's animal qualities are exemplified positively or negatively

in a potry film. Besides, you might be a little less likely to marry

the first woman you find who is highly sexual.

DB: I want to get back to Clinton's quote: "I did it because I
could." What are your thoughts on the way he referred to Monica
Lewinsky in his book?

AM: As people go, Clinton is not the worst guy you're going to
meet. He has a lot of natural warmth, plus a good deal of
everything else a president needs, calculation, manipulation,
interest in his work, all of that. In this case, I thought ^{his} ~~these~~
particular remarks ~~remarks~~ were needlessly cruel. I believe he
would have preferred to speak nicely about Monica Lewinsky, but
you get to remember he has an angry and injured wife on his
hands. He had to weigh in with something to satisfy her—Hillary
was more on his mind than Monica.

J B W To his day?

J B W No, only when you're President. But surveillance is one of the elements of prison life, and of White House life. You didn't want to become President in order to be scrutinized every fifteen minutes but that did come with the job.

J B W And once you're in prison, you do what you can get away with.

J B W Exactly.

J B W Then his remark is not so hollow.

J B W I see what you're saying—yes, it's not as hollow as I thought.

J B W He did it not because he could, but because he wanted to get away with it. He could turn his incarceration a little bit around.

For instance. I still think the style of phrasing comes because of his

or for. Having been married six times, I have some idea of what one

says on such occasions.

JEM: You're a good one to talk to about that. But, ~~say~~ more to

(Bill Clinton) Plans ~~most~~ to
at point he has a wife who will likely run for high office.

~~Under that, I still think the real question is, by making a~~
~~if it immoral or amoral to make~~

a calculated decision to strip humanity away from Monica in order to

~~protect~~ as a strong potential candidate?
~~preserve the image of his marriage~~ (wife) is that either immoral, or
~~immoral or amoral?~~
~~immoral. Which?~~

JEM: But. Immoral in that he is most calculatedly not telling the

truth about his real feelings. It's amoral because he wants to keep

the political process going: all politician ^{5/} have to be amoral to a

degree. It's a question of how much. Are they 44% amoral or 33%? Politicians cannot possibly afford morality except as a series of specious sentiments ready to be uttered as patriotic or ideological slogans. A politician has to deal with the given. That means they can even tell the truth at times. Usually, they're only pretending. Politicians build up profound habits of not addressing the truth head-on. In practice, they have to shake hands with people they can't bear, and proffer patriotic remarks that don't come from the heart.

Now, whether immoral, amoral, or both, it was, finally, a
 necessity. It was—the two holy words for politicians—the given.

JBM: Isn't it possible for a politician to live by his own code

to say?

JBM: No. Not a successful politician.

JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

JBM: It's never possible. Go back to the maxim: "Politics is the art of the possible." What's important is to get some part of what you want done. That's how a democracy works. By pieces and parts.

The irony is, the only way you can come near a direct expression of your personality is in a dictatorship. Of course, as democrats we feel instinctively that no human being is good enough to be entrusted with that kind of power. So in a

democracy, change always comes from negotiation. When

adversaries walk away from a political compact, each side is a bit

dis-satisfied.

IBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's choice B.

IBM: Well, if you ever get into politics, and you well may—with

your mother and I gave you
that name of yours, how can you not?—you're going to discover

be made,
The interesting compromises you'll have to make, willy-nilly.

If you say so ** Insert 13A*
IBM: Okay, I'm ready to move on to the next question.
let's

PLAYBOY: You've written about the cultural necessity of

literature. Yet we now live in a time when the novelist and

literature itself are borderline irrelevant. There's an absence of

intensity of serious, concentrated thought. We may be in danger

the distinguishing factor between
 a decent politician and a
 corporate puppet, is not if they
 are willing to compromise, but
 what they are willing to compromise.

JFM I suppose in the end, ~~that's true~~
 That's true

* I insert

13A

of losing literature forever. What would this mean for American

of hunger

Now. As a novelist, I'm now speaking from my vested position.

My profession is being eroded. When I began, good novelists

were more important in the scheme of things. The irony is that the

great novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably didn't sell

as many copies per book as a few serious novelists sell now. But

they were revered. They affected history. They had their impact

on American. Hemingway ^{was} ~~had~~ a prodigious influence for young

American writers. He taught a lot of us how to look for the tensile

strength of a sentence.

think a nation's greatness depends, to a real extent, on how well-spoken its citizens are. Good things develop out of a populace that really knows how to use the language and use it well.

been able to manage their empire
 Would Great Britain have ~~achieved as much in its heyday without~~
~~in the nineteenth century without three centuries~~
~~of language~~ *their three-hundred and more years of*
reading Shakespeare? Where would Ireland be today without Joyce? ~~And~~
without Prospero, I expect. And

Language deteriorates, becomes less eloquent, less metaphorical,
 less ^{of} salient, less poignant, a curious deadening the human spirit
 comes seeping in.

By now, America has shifted from being a country with a
 great love of freedom and creativity (in constant altercation with
 those other Americans who wanted rule and order) into a country
 that is much more interested in power. And power, I can

1-Promise you, is not interested in metaphor. Metaphor is

1-a poetic to power because it pushes you to think in more poetic

1-a contradictory ways. Power demands a uni-linear approach.

1-Power does not welcome poetic concepts.

1-3M: But hasn't power always been a driving force in society?

1-M: Always. But it was situated among other driving forces such

as culture and art and love of sports and good architecture and

tradition. Now, it's as if corporate power has become the most

dominant theme of our lives. In ten more years, will ^{we} find a

professional stadium ^{that is not named for a corporation?} without a corporate mark? * Insert 16A

~~One reason is that writers no longer have the influence of rock stars.~~

1-3M: One way I put it is that writers used to be rock stars. Now,

~~it's actually the ones who have influence on the masses. Justin~~

Of a Broadway theater.
The lack of rage against
that from the Artistic Community
is depressing, but not surprising.
The majority of the biggest celebrities
are manufactured by the largest
corporations. It's hardly in their interest
to ~~speck out~~^{bite} against the hand that
feeds them, even if that hand is
turning the name of a theater
into an advertisement for the company.
Some are the days when writers
and the same influence as rock stars.

53M

✱

Insert

161

Emberlake, whom I'm sure is a ^(nice) sweet guy, shouldn't be ^{not} influencing

a generation. He's a pop singer. He was created by Disney. ~~I'm~~
 Part of his job is to not have an opinion.
~~He's a nice guy but that burden shouldn't be on his shoulders.~~

~~But~~ ~~and it didn't used to be that way.~~ Somewhere between the lines,

I'm not sure where, it shifted from great minds speaking to the
 masses to celebrities speaking to the masses.

XVI Be careful. You're too young to know how it was back then.

Great minds almost never speak directly to the masses.

XVII Not directly. But Hemingway would write a piece, you
 would write a piece, and people would discuss it and debate it, ~~and~~
~~people would~~ go back and forth---

XVIII Leave me out of it.

But OK Another example—[pause] My point is, not to have to

use you as an example, but you're on my mind—"The White

Moore" In this day, people come up to me who ~~were teenagers~~

^{when they} read "The White Negro"

^{when they were teenagers}

~~when they came out~~ and they want to argue with me about it, talk to

^{nearly fifty years later,}

~~remember it~~ It still affects them ^{to this day}. I don't think any essay

^{written today} ^{do} ~~there is too much competition~~
by anyone now could have the same effect. A movie would. A
~~there are too many different forms of more easily~~
~~digested media. make it feel like a digest~~
~~it would.~~

~~and are easily too easily~~ * Insert 18A

That's one reason Michael Moore is interesting, because I—

~~think~~ He's aware that while his books are good, and ^{serve his purpose} ~~are what they~~

^{through his movies} ~~are~~ going to reach so many more ^{that way}. But you can't get

The problem is

the same depth of an idea across in a sound bite—there's no way.

There are too many other
 terms of Media that are
 digested more easily, too easily.

Q: Why not use a rating system for ideas? The most profound ideas are those one is willing to die for. By that measure, Karl Marx has to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived. Because hundreds of thousands of people in his time and after were willing to die for his ideas. All over the world, millions were willing to go to prison for them.

...this is not to raise a latter-day defense of Marx. He had
...credible virtues as a thinker. From my point of view, he also had
...lacks. He certainly didn't understand that atheism is not a way
...to win the world. You can't. Not by that route. Half the people
...of us, or is it three-quarters?—have instinctive notions that God
...ists. I think the real failure of Bolshevism, then Stalinism, was

:ing to the idea that religion is the opium of the masses.

Organized religion may well be its own species of narcotic but the

concept that we are part of divine Creation is something else

together

If we're ever going to have a great society in the future—

which is hardly a guaranteed conclusion—if we ever build a world

with real freedom, we may have^{to} arrive at the recognition that we

can dispense with fundamentalism, and live instead with the idea

that God is a Creator, not a law-giver.

11:11 ~~Yet you are always saying that creativity is becoming more~~

~~and more restricted.~~ To shift the subject back to your home turf,

11:11 ~~Then~~ is going to be the last novelist?

I do foresee a
 writing five-act verse plays in iambic pentameter. I do foresee a
 day when very few will look at serious fiction. Instead, they will
 read computer novels. The computer is better suited to turn out a
 best-seller than a mediocre novelist. But not too many people will
 be interested in serious literary work. Whole populations will
 be looking for technological power rather than exploring into those
 moral questions they hope to ponder anywhere but in the serious

the best fiction has always been the seed-bed for the most interesting and subtle moral questions, questions that, at best, go deeper than the wisdom you can receive in any church or

is a mosque or mosque. When it comes to moral paradox, theology is limited. It's too structured. Interesting morality almost never fits rearranged moral codes. It's only the novelist—the very good novelist—who can deal with such moral issues as "Am I on balance a good person or a bad one?" You don't find that out by declaring "Well, I'm good because I obey the Ten Commandments." That doesn't make you good. You can still be a monster if you restrict the lives of others with your piety. The real question is how do you affect other people's lives? The best novels are marvelous for delving into the subtler ^{questions} ~~inquiries~~ of our nature.

After all, what is human nature? We're still finding that out.

is immensely various, even as God, I believe, is immensely

to wish the train running at top speed. It has to enforce the self-
 enforcing notion that corporations are good for human existence. It
 needs to have most people believing that big business is the only
 way to do it. The last thing those gentlemen need is novels.

Part of the genius of corporate capitalism is that they've found ways to control people which are so much subtler than the old Stalinist ^{procedures} ~~ways~~. (Those methods were brutal, dull, cold, stupid and utterly oppressive. The modern form of oppression is advanced—it gets into your psyche—it makes you think there's something wrong with you if you're not on the big capitalist team. They don't want writers exploring into morality. They want one morality: theirs. Unlike Stalinism at its worst, it's more of a benign

ing one superficially open and ready for the development of technology which will make all our lives extraordinary—sure, technology will end up keeping us alive for 150 or 200 years, even if three quarters of each of us will be replacement parts. "I'm on my fourth heart," says the man who is 200 years old. "I'm not sure it's either God's intention or the real human intention. It may be an ultimate destruction of the human spirit to stay alive beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as important to life as life itself. To keep extending the years of your life—that could be one more form of evil. Much too much is being taken for granted today.

300 I must go back to the original point: The good novel, the
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AM I started as that kind of writer and I know how easy it is. It's

to write a page-turner. There are such simple rules. I can

teach any mediocre writer to turn one out. ^{But} I'm interested in

something that's good enough and well enough written so that you

have to stop on the page and read a sentence over a few times.

WV Because it vibrates within you. A page-turner is equal to a

dis-paced sit-com.

BB Well, ~~what~~ what are your thoughts on the power that Oprah

WV wielded over a book. You know, recently she put "Anna

Karen" on her book of the month list and it became a best-seller

BB

Now I salute her for that. It so happens "Anna Karenina" is one of my all-time favorite novels. I had that and "War and Peace" on my desk while I was writing "The Naked and the Dead." To get steam'd up to write every morning, I'd read five or ten pages of "Anna Karenina." So, yes, I applaud her for that.

FM Because she has such popular mass appeal, she can take
something that is hard to read and make it a best-seller. That gives
me hope.

Q But if she keeps doing it, her popularity will begin to
collapse and then we'll begin to see the real test of her character.
Is she devoted to great literature or is she, quite naturally, a little
more devoted to the power of her own career?

Perhaps through the power of her own career,
[31] ~~well, I would ask whether~~ she can raise great literature up to
(back)

the popular level of best-sellers.

• No ^(that) person can do it. You're so young you still believe

in the power of individuals. The hard fact—which I would like to

...the development in you, my friend, over the next ten years, is a much

1. ^{dependence} ~~operation~~ of social structure. Because society is paramount.

It's as if we're little animals running through the machine.

Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we start another

in the machine, but we can't really alter the nature of the machine.

Not without great study and long-term devotion plus

Willingness to get into the grease of the gears.

JIM And great luck. No, I respect the complexity of the social

relation. I don't think one person can change it, but ^{by themselves} there's that I do agree with Robert F. Kennedy,

~~and I think I'm paraphrasing~~ that every action you ^{take} do is

^{equivalent to} ~~essentially~~ throwing a pebble into a pond, and ^{it is the} ~~it sends out~~ ripples

that affect ^{the machine} other things.

MM The ripples die out.

JIM Unless they're strong enough.

MM How many times does a pebble thrown into a pond change

the nature of the shoreline? Let's stop the crap.

~~AYEBY~~ * Insert 30A

~~Can we move on to Provincetown? Provincetown - P-town,~~

~~it's like it has been your home for over 50 years, yes?~~

How is it to live in a place
 that seems abandoned and bereft?
 Is it better than during the High
 season? ~~Best, like Kona, people~~
~~with the ghosts of the past?~~
~~Why did the Pigeons leave it?~~

* Insert
 304

Lower origin (Playboy question)

~~Q: No, I've only lived here year-round for the last 15 years, but~~

~~The first time I came to Provincetown was almost 60 years ago, and~~

~~I've spent serious time here over 45 or 50 of the last 60 years.~~

~~Q: Why?~~

~~A: Well, Provincetown in winter—a lot of people see it as~~

~~being abandoned. It goes from—what? 30,000 down to 3,000~~

~~people~~

~~A: Right.~~

~~Q: Is winter better than high season?~~

in the off-season

A: For a writer of my age, it's better. There's an old saying

about town that in the winter you can roll a bowling ball down

Commercial Street and it'll never hit anyone. So it is lonely here in

February and March and mean and cold because the wind's coming

of the water. It's damp, it's lonely, and I love it. It fits my mood.

It's just easier to spend the day writing if it's gray outside.

Besides, the people I used to know here years ago are dead now.

(A lot of them from drink.) Provincetown has changed

profoundly since. In summer, it's now the gay capital of the

Northeast. Forty or fifty years ago, it used to be The Wild West of

the East. You had motorcycle gangs coming ⁱⁿ ~~out~~ on Saturdays.

As early as 11 A.M. on Sunday morning, you'd have people going up in

the hills for bachannals, everybody carrying booze or beer.

Marriages broke up and serious affairs started on many of those

nights.

BM: Well, you still have motorcycle gangs coming in—it's just

that now they're wearing ^(leather) chaps ^(and) with nothing ^(else) on underneath.

AM: [laughs] All right.

BM: Having spent a lot of time in ^{Provincetown} this town growing up, and in

^{think of it Provincetown} the last few years as well, I don't see this as a gay town. As a

member of the heterosexual ^{underground} population, I see it as a very libertarian

place as long as you're not hurting anyone else, whatever you're

doing is cool. And, because there is so much sexual energy flying through the air, the hetero nightlife is jumping to clear that ~~sexual~~

AM: That's true. There's always been ~~that~~ tradition in

~~so much going on here in Provincetown~~
Provincetown. There are amazing contradictions here. After all,

~~if this~~
Provincetown is the place where the Pilgrims first landed.

BM: Why did they leave?

1 Mr. Like all good white people who are righteous and not quite

2 aware of how mean they can be underneath their righteousness,

3 they were full of themselves. After all, they had dared to leave

4 their roots and sail across the Atlantic cramped in a small boat.

5 I now got here through true difficulty. At the end, it was even hard

6 to navigate the waters around Cape Cod, but there is a natural

7 harbor in Provincetown where the land curls around in a spiral.

8 So they made anchor in this harbor--parenthetically, the spot

9 where they ^{found} towed their longboat to land now offers a huge motel.

10 We are nothing in America if not ^{ready for} highly ~~adaptive~~ to profit. The

11 Puritans, however, found the soil not particularly welcoming, full

12 of sand, brush-pine, ~~low country~~ not good for farming. They were

use of time and forethought. Language evolved, he says,

primarily because men and women had to negotiate sex. Women

became expert at reading between the lines of various Pleistocenes.

Beauty was developed to maintain the interest of men. Is this why

women control men?

MM: I haven't read the book, but that theory does strike me as

absurd. For example, negotiating sex. Where is the new idea

here? After all, ~~even~~ ^{certainly} animals negotiate sex. I had two standard

poodles once, many years ago, Tibo and Zsa-Zsa, and Zsa-Zsa was

one hell of a bitch, always nipping at Tibo's nuts. I was afraid

Tibo would end up as no man at all by the time he came of age—

we first had them when they were pups. How she dominated him!

He had fierce teeth. He'd have to duck, and sit down fast. These

earlier negotiations ~~had~~ ^{came to see} taught him a lot, however. He ~~knew~~ ^{was not} what ~~was not~~ ^{yet} called for. ~~When~~ ^{the moment} Zsa-Zsa came into heat for the first time, ~~he~~ ^{however}

~~he was ready and~~ ^{without} ~~seized her with hardly a~~ by-your-leave and impregnated her. Nine

~~days for one sound.~~ ^{coupling, Over the next three years, before} ~~Before~~ they were done, they created 34 new

^{Negotiations never ceased,} Standard Poodles ~~over the next three years.~~ ^{An on-going}

~~the foundation.~~ Animals not only have a great deal of language in

their grunts, their groans, their whines, their moans, their baying at

the moon, but their scents. Odor used to have more to do with sex

than language—at least until deodorants came on the scene. But

before the advent of whiff-deadening products in spray cans, any

combination of strong genital odor mixed with perfume was pretty

canned aphrodisiacal, yessir, all through every barnyard and royal

court of Europe right through the Second World War. So the

reason that language had to be developed to facilitate sex cannot,

by my lights, ^{make it as the logo on a T-shirt.} ~~have men~~ ^{gender of}

~~How about this time and love the world?~~
~~How about Schlem claims was?~~
 IBM: ~~the~~ sense of time developed through menstruation.

that's too large a question for me

IBM: There, I see a point. Menstruation certainly proved to women
~~that there were profound differences~~
~~between man and woman~~
 that they were ~~altogether~~ different from men. ~~So, they had to have~~

~~more of a~~
~~different code~~

IBM: Well, they would go off alone when it was happening.

You don't want the smell of blood in the air to make you prey.

IBM: Absolutely right. I hadn't thought of that either.

2/11/77
 (out) was J 1/15

Victoria

JBM ~~not about the~~ ~~Good. This other question—do women control men? For-~~
~~well, how about one that is not—~~

~~we do not think of~~

JBM Completely.

JBM I'm glad you agree.

JBM Before women's liberation came along, men used to have
 some purchase on control in a marriage. Perhaps 35%. The woman
 had the remaining 65. Now, after women's liberation, it's up to
 95%.

JBM Wow.

JBM I could be wrong, maybe it's only 85%.

JBM Is this why men are forever at a loss in regard to the
 dominance of women?

NM Well women are closer to ^{creation} ~~the universe. Closer to creation~~

than we are. So they have deeper instincts.

IBM They create life, we destroy ^{it} ~~life~~.

NM Oh, let's not get into that. Women have deadened as many

men in subtle ways, for subtle reasons, as men have beaten women ^{ve} ~~in~~

down in more overt fashion.

IBM I'm not saying one is more vicious than the other. I'm

saying, traditionally, men have gone to war and women have raised

the children. That's changing. Women are going to war and we've

seen what happens at Abu Ghraib.

NM Yes, that poor pregnant girl. . .

IBM I feel for her, ~~under~~

NM: You do?

BM: She was in the wrong place with the wrong guys, feeling the wrong pressures and now she's all alone.

NM: She really is. I also can see how wild the parties are getting

over America this season. The key factor at Abu Ghraib was,

Hey, none of you at home are going to believe this until you see

photographs. 4/
our pictures." ~~And the photograph taking that was not called for~~
while a lot of test picture-taking
~~was probably given a subtle go-ahead~~

by their superiors—as well as the photos that were—after all, some
Some of the photos?
~~Some of the photos~~ *could obviously be employed to goad*
~~were employed to goad~~
good
~~(if the photos were used to blackmail the prisoners into talking.~~

you like
You don't want your family to see ~~this," was overtly behind a lot~~

~~that~~ But the Abu Ghraib gang were also delighted to send a

lot of the good stuff
~~the~~ ~~photos~~ home to their friends. Just think of the kind of party

* Insert 43A

IBM The Bullet Kingdom of
all time? Well, that's a
piece in and of itself.
Let's stick to Men and
Women for the Moment.

that's been going on back in America while Bush keeps talking

about how splendid a Christian nation we are.

JBM: ~~The more Christian someone is, the more they have crazy~~

~~sexual stuff in the closet. [John, discuss with NM]~~

~~It's been good to me~~
 You know, I love this country with all its faults, but one of

its huge spiritual crimes is that we're the bullshit kingdom of all

time ~~We've found a way to process bullshit so you can't even~~

~~smell the bull any longer~~

~~John~~ * Insert 43A

JBM: What do you think of the gender roles ~~of men and women~~

now that women are expected to raise a family and be successful in

the work place?

MM For me, any notion that males are superior to females or females superior to males is, I'd say, like comparing dogs to cats. To my mind, it's a hopeless argument. Men are so fundamentally different from women.

I still have to say that the desire for power in women that's revealed itself in the last 35 years is not attractive. The power they used to have was vastly more ^{interesting.} attractive. (It used to be fun to realize a woman was smarter than you. In the course of living one's life and learning how to handle oneself, there were women who developed such tasty subtleties about how to control us. They were like animal handlers if you will. And the animal, even the lion almost always adores the handler. Now they're dominating

and in the recent war - by ideology.
 is openly. "The whip and the knout for you, buddy, we are the
 politically correct."

JBM I don't think I agree with that. It's changing. There was the
 height of political correctness, which bordered on fascism and it
 was terrifying. But the majority of the women that I know, they
 want a real man—they don't want a man they can walk all over.

NM Well, good. I'm 81, and these unhappy experiences occurred
 to me 60 years ago.

peak
 JEM You were living then at the height of the gender war. But

what's truly encouraging, what's encouraging me now, is *(I believe both sides are beginning to realize we need*
that we need more women in power, but we need women who do it the way a

~~she thinks some~~ woman does it, not the way a man would do it. *if he were a woman*

MM: How is that relevant to what we're talking about?

JBV: Well, we're just now starting to see women getting into power positions who are still allowed to be women. They don't have to pretend to act like a man.

MM: Name a few, would you?

JBV: Arianna Huffington, *Laura Dawn of MoveOn.Org*, Hillary Clinton *in her way*.

MM: Hillary Clinton is a very good example. I met her many years ago when she was the governor's wife in Arkansas. Probably in '84. She was immensely intelligent—I happened to sit next to her at dinner—and we had a very good conversation. I was impressed with how bright she was, how open, and what a fine mind she had. She's not as interesting now. Today, she's a

politician. She's very cautious. Her books are boring. What's that

one "It Takes a Village. . ."—full of cant. The way Maggie

Charner was full of cant. You say what's useful to say, not what

you believe. You never speak from the heart. Hillary is always

watch-dogging her tongue these days. Totally unspontaneous in

exactly the way an average mediocre-to-good, effective politician

oversees his spiel.

JEM: But as we said before, she's a politician at a high level—she

has no choice.

JL4: So why get excited about her as a role model?

JL5: I'm not saying we're there yet. *But I do have hope*
~~I see people coming up in the~~
~~first the future players are beginning to emerge.~~

~~Link: I see Laura Dawn of MoveOn.org who is changing the face~~

~~of politics. I see Arianna Huffington who is approaching it from a
new angle. I mean, politics this year is more exciting than ever
before in my lifetime, certainly. People who were never involved
before are going there because it's sexier, it's getting to be more
fun.~~

NM All right. I can see a time when women ^{will be} ~~are~~ more important
politically than they are now, and for better reasons, but that
doesn't mean anything much is going to change. In a certain sense,
a politician, regardless of gender, is neutered ^{politically} ~~by~~ the process. A lot
of politicians ^{may be} ~~are~~ attractive in person because, after all, they're
passing the flesh. All the time. Shake a thousand hands in a
morning and an afternoon and you're horny by the end of the day.

once in a while is because it's an impossible Creation if you can't have exceptions to every last rule.

PI AMBOY: You once wrote somewhere: "As many people die from an excess of timidity as from bravery. Nobody ever mentions that." Do you care to give an explanation of courage?

NM: I have one. It's ready-made. Courage can only be measured by the place from which you start. Picture an old lady who is ill in every joint, terribly arthritic, nonetheless she has to cross a ^{busy} difficult street and she can't quite keep up with the lights. ^{She's} Nonetheless she feels an inner imperative to ^{do it.} ~~move~~. And she does manage to get across even though she's terrified. I would call that courage. I would say it is analogous to the case of a well-trained Marine, a

good kid, who gets into combat, sees his buddies wounded, sees a

good friend killed, goes through hell. He gets to the point where

he expects he will die. Until that moment, you can't really speak of

his courage. He's been trained to be brave—you can motivate *young*

people to be brave. But when you get to that crux in combat where

you say, "It's not worth it. I'm scared shitless, I can't go on, I want

to quit. I don't care about my buddies, fuck it all, I want to quit"—

and then another side of you takes over and says, "You will go on,

whether you die or not, you will go on"—that's courage.

Otherwise, courage can be meaningless. If you're in a very

dangerous and very well-trained in your martial skills, you may feel

brave, but you're prepared to be brave.

So I would say, courage is transcendence. Whatever our level of competence at more or less hairy activities, we are still obliged to go beyond ourselves, to transcend ourselves, if we wish to rise so high as courage itself.

That's why I say timidity kills. Kills more people than poverty because every time one's timid, one's pulling back creative impulses in oneself, denying them. One is denting one's ego. And as an ego contracts out of shame, illness begins. This is my opinion.

JM: So ~~courage~~ ^{is always} a virtue?

JV: Absolutely ~~a~~ the virtue! Make it the virtue. I would go so far as to say that it's very hard to feel love if you're full of shame. We

can only feel love for someone else when we have gained respect
for ourselves--it's why we have this endless obsession with
can rage. Where is the man who can ignore it? It's analogous to a
woman who will wear no make-up, no jewelry, won't comb her
hair because she hates women who are elegant, feels those women
are phony. "I want to be seen as my natural self." Yet that woman
can never sneer at elegance with full confidence. A part of her
feels there's something wrong with her. She ^{isn't ready} ~~doesn't want~~ to get the
most out of herself. By the same token, some men sneer at
but very, call it overrated, are always ready to point out how much
trouble it breeds. Of course it does. A macho brute is a macho

pure. But not even a saint can sneer at bravery with a completely
 clear and open heart. Not even a saint.

BM: You know, one of the outcomes of living in such an
 organized society where everything is taken care off ^{for us,}
 to it and kill their food ^(for survival, etc.) and bring it back — there's a complicity,

a most a sense of deliberate ^(Amnesia) forgetting that when it all comes down

ultimately we're fucking animals. And we'll ^(will fight) fight each other and

if necessary, Kill ^(Kill when) ~~each other~~ if our own is attacked. And I don't know if this is

for every man out there, ^{men I know,} but 90% of the ^(I would say) time when I meet another man,

under ^{the} ~~that~~ is that sense of "Can I take you or can you take me?"
 the pleasant conversation

isn't usually a kind of fun, but it's always there. And something
 regardless,

I know reminds us all on a national level that tomorrow, like that

[snaps fingers] all of this societal bullshit could be gone and we're

defending your fire

back to grunting and ~~biting~~. That's important. I think it's one of

the major differences between the mentality of a man in the new

millennium and the mentality of a man in the '90s when political

all the rage

correctness was ~~at its height~~ and the sensitive pony-tailed guy was

getting laid more than he should.

AM: Well, I think you have an unbalanced situation when the

sensitive—or over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is getting laid more

than the macho brute.

than the macho brutes)
but
No, he was just
Certainly

I BM: I don't know that he was getting laid more. ~~No~~, he was ~~just~~

getting laid more than he should. And for too little.

BM: Oh, you're a bigot.

EM: I've got my prejudices.

NM: Yes, you may have received them from your father.

IBM: It's a distinct possibility.

PLAYBOY: In Freud's essay, The Uncanny, he contends that the

strongest instances of the uncanny involve "doubts whether an

apparently animate being is really alive, or conversely, whether a

lifeless object might not be in fact animate." We live in an age

where such distinctions become even less clear. This is indeed

frightening. We're overmatched by our technology. Our ability to

comprehend is exceeded by the ability to construct and fabricate.

You have spoken of the inanimate—that which cannot be

animated. Increasingly, it seems, we are overcome by this

of gaininess. Is there more of this to come in our future?

MM I say absolutely yes. So long as technology expands and expands, we're going to have more of such uneasiness. I remember back in '69, I was down at NASA, south of Houston, covering the first landing on the moon, the flight of Apollo 11. In the book I *later* wrote about it, there was a chapter called "The Psychology of Machines" which discussed the immense amount of attention these NASA technicians gave to glitches. It truly worried the venture — there was something so spooky about glitches. NASA had the best technology available, and yet the most inexplicable little malfunctions would occur. It obsessed them. The real question, I decided (even though they would never admit it to themselves)

my fingers on her keys is lost. As a result,
~~what is this? She doesn't work as well. My car is~~
~~she does not work as well for me.~~
~~different, but if I let somebody else drive who isn't in love with~~
~~it doesn't respond so well.~~

SM I think Freud put his finger on the nature of the uncanny.

Part of what is so depressing about modern technology is the way
 it cuts off our senses. One of the things most awful about plastic—
 and I've been fulminating against plastic—most unsuccessfully—
 for the last 30, 40 years, is that plastic is not uncanny. It's just
 there, inert. It's very hard to conceive of any kind of soul or spirit
 inhabiting the stuff because it doesn't come out of nature but from
~~that's a truly evil-smelling~~
~~a~~ of factory processes. Even a wooden cane has a touch of
 personality, but plastic doesn't. I've always felt it is the

handmaiden to technology. Why do people love technology? It gives you more power than you'd have without the technology but you pay a heavy price. You become a little more inert in your finer sensibilities.

JBM: Where is our technology leading us? A car is certainly a piece of technology but not until recently was there plastic all over it.

JBM: Yes, as they make plastic stronger, and more analogous to steel—which they will—so, in turn, cars are going to be made entirely of plastic because economically speaking, the plastic substitute is cheaper to work with and so offers more profit. No surprise then if the mediocrities

have taken over the world under the banner of technology,

corporate vision, and the unholy urge to purvey democracy to all countries of the world, whether they're ready for it, or capable of it.

But we tell them in effect, "You are going to end up a democracy whether you want it or not." This turns democracy into a farce.

Because democracy is a grace. Any true democracy is sensitive enough to be perishable, and we're in danger right now of losing our democracy right here. The people who are running the world at present, very badly in many places, have the feeling that successfully controlled direction is the only answer. My feeling, of course, is exactly the opposite. Global capitalism does not speak of a free market but of a controlled globe. It is alien to the creative possibilities that have not yet been tapped in legions of people

122 computer, focusing on TV, what have you, more people would

be taking the inner journey and

have evolved ^{ing} to a higher psychic level. Instead, we're developing a
 perhaps

technology where—every day we get closer to having one device

123 it will be your phone and your email, your this, your that, your

124 internet access, a little device you carry with you ^{at all times,} and you'll

125 program your likes and dislikes ^{need to know} into it—^{This device will} it'll be sending out a signal,
 broadcasting ^{your} information to all the other devices
 of the same nature,
 126 and as you pass a stranger on the street—say you both like to

127 watch Star Trek, a little bell will go off on both, ^{Your respective} and it'll tell you
 (machines) will

128 that compatibility is near by. Why are we doing this?

129 Now Because of a deep fear. We've lost the often crippling but

130 nonetheless intense consolations of religion. Formal, organized

131 religion introduced many perversities into our nature but it also

... offered many poor people some hope—if you were a good enough
... person, you'd enter heaven. But religion also stood in the way of
... development of capitalism and technology, corporate capitalism.
... A man running a small business is living by his wits, but people
... enter corporations in order not to have to live by their instincts—
... or, most important---their fears. Only a few have to take
... responsibility. The corporation can be a relatively benign
... organization, but it is still subtly totalitarian. And this is spreading.
... People at the top want to control the world because they're in terror
... but otherwise we are going to blow it up. My feeling is if the
... corporations take over the world, ^{the globe} it will indeed blow apart because
... technology could end by violating too much of human nature.

IBM: Hasn't technology taken over the world already?

DEM: Not completely. Not completely. There are still corners and
avenues, games and places.

IBM: There's an underground.

DEM: That underground has to go a long way before I will take it
seriously, and yet I am ready to drink to that idea.

IBM: Here's to it.

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NM: Immorality is a clearer concept. We know we're up to something that by our moral logic is forbidden. "Amoral" is more ambiguous. It falls into several categories. People can be amoral in business, or in their loyalties, but generally speaking, we think of an amoral man as a sexist. Even that word has its sub-categories. One type doesn't give a damn about the partner. His pleasure goes into achievement. Such a dude will measure his prowess by how many times he ^{gets} laid. Even more important: What rating did the woman give him?

Then there's biological amorality. The man is suffering a heavy physical need. The need is more important to him than the

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horrible
~~[cannot get]~~ it can get, you always learn something about the

woman and about yourself. Some people do dig into fucking

gold miners. They're not worrying about the earth--they want the

goddamn gold. *If the pick-axe strikes rock,*
they'll go elsewhere.

JBM: Do you learn more from sleeping with ten women, or

sleeping with one woman for ten years?

NM: A man full of sensuality would probably opt for the first

course. You need to feel extraordinary love to be faithful to

someone for ten years. After my own checkered career, being

married six times, with 8 children and one terrific stepson-- I've

been on both sides of that question.

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JBM: I want to get back to Clinton's quote: "I did it because I could." What are your thoughts on the way he referred to Monica

Lewinsky in his book?

NM: As people go, Clinton is not the worst guy you're going to meet. He has a lot of natural warmth, plus a good deal of everything else a president needs, calculation, manipulation, interest in his work, all of that. In this case, I thought ^{his} ~~these~~ particular remarks ~~remarks~~ were needlessly cruel. I believe he would have preferred to speak nicely about Monica Lewinsky, but you've got to remember he has an angry and injured wife on his hands. He had to weigh in with something to satisfy her. ~~His~~ ^{Her} ~~that~~ was more on his mind than Monica.

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"I did it because I could" is an empty remark. Anyone who's met Monica knows she's very attractive. She's got beautiful coloring, she's intense, she's bright—~~a young, attractive woman~~. That's the real reason why he did it.

And for another reason entirely, which may be richer, although it is certainly meaner. A bright woman I know once said, "Clinton lived in a minimum security prison. Every fifteen minutes, security ^{checked} ~~checks~~ up on where he ^{was} ~~is~~." I thought, she's absolutely right. What we're dealing with here was an incarcerated man. It's as if he was in the finest, grandest minimum security prison in the world, the White House. In that sense, 5% of him is a convict.

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democracy, change always comes from negotiation. When
adversaries walk away from a political compact, each side is a bit
dissatisfied.

JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist. I think that's choice B.

NM: Well, if you ever get into politics, and you well may—wait

your mother and I gave you,
that name of yours, how can you not?—you're going to discover

how many
the interesting compromises ~~you'll~~ *be made,* have to make, *awfully* nifty

JBM: Okay. I'm ready to move on

PLAYBOY: You've written about the cultural necessity of

literature. Yet we now live in a time when the novelist and

literature itself are borderline irrelevant. There's an absence of

interiority, of serious, concentrated thought. We may be in danger

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of losing literature forever. What would this mean for American
culture?

NM: As a novelist, I'm now speaking from my vested position. My profession is being eroded. When I began, good novelists were more important in the scheme of things. The irony is that the great novelists like Hemingway and Faulkner probably didn't sell as many copies per book as a few serious novelists sell now. But they were revered. They affected history. They had their impact on American ^{was} ~~had~~ Hemingway ^{was} had a prodigious influence for young American writers. He taught a lot of us how to look for the tensile strength of a sentence.

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I think a nation's greatness depends, to a real extent, on how well-spoken its citizens are. Good things develop out of it.

populace that really knows how to use the language and use it well

been able to manage their companies

Would Great Britain have achieved as much in its heyday without

in the nineteenth century without their three hundred and more years of reading Shakespeare? Where would Ireland be today without Joyce?

Notes prosperous, I expect. As a

language deteriorates, becomes less eloquent, less metaphorical

less salient, less poignant, a curious deadening ^{of} the human spirit.

comes seeping in.

By now, America has shifted from being a country with a great love of freedom and creativity (in constant altercation with those other Americans who wanted rule and order) into a country that's now much more interested in power. And power, I can

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promise you, is not interested in metaphor. Metaphor is

antagonistic to power because it pushes you to think in more poetic

and contradictory ways. Power demands a uni-linear approach

Power does not welcome poetic concepts.

JBM: But hasn't power always been a driving force in society

NM: Always. But it was situated among other driving forces such

as culture and art and love of sports and good architecture and

tradition. Now, it's as if corporate power has become the most

dominant theme of our lives. In ten more years, will ^{we} find a

professional stadium ^{that is not named for a corporation?} ~~without a corporate mark?~~

JBM: One way I put it is that writers used to be rock stars. Now,

only the rock stars have credibility with the masses. Justin

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synagogue or mosque. When it comes to moral paradox, theology is limited. It's too structured. Interesting morality almost never is pre-arranged moral codes. It's only the novelist—the very good novelist—who can deal with such moral issues as "Am I on balance a good person or a bad one?" You don't find that out by declaring, "Well, I'm good because I obey the Ten Commandments." That doesn't make you good. You can still be a horror if you restrict the lives of others with your piety. The real question is how do you affect other people's lives? The best novels are marvelous for delving into the subtler ^{questions} ~~inquiries~~ of our nature.

After all, what is human nature? We're still finding that out. It is immensely various, even as God, I believe, is immensely

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regime, superficially open and ready for the development of technology which will make all our lives extraordinary — sure technology will end up keeping us alive for 150 or 200 years, even if three-quarters of each of us will be replacement parts. "I'm on my fourth heart," says the man who is 200 years old. "I'm not sure that's either God's intention or the real human intention. It may be an ultimate destruction of the human spirit to stay alive beyond a certain point. Maybe death is as important to life as life itself. To keep extending the years of your life—that could be one more form of evil. Much too much is being taken for granted today.

But I must go back to the original point: The good novel, the serious novel, is antipathetic to corporate capitalism. The best-

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seller is one of the props of corporate capitalism precisely because

it's an entertainment. "At the end of the day, I want to have fun."

says the nine-to-fiver. "Give me asshole TV shows, exploitation

films with lots of bang. I don't need to read a good book. I want a

page-turner." Well, every time there's a page-turner to read for too

little, someone's mind is being dulled. Even page-turners can get

into interesting ~~moral~~ questions, but dependably, they will always

veer away from moral ^{exploration.} ~~significance.~~

JBM: You're talking about good art which pushes you. I think the

challenge, though, is to make a serious novel entertaining so

people can't put it down.

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JBM: Well, I would ask whether she can raise great literature up to the popular level of best-sellers.

NM: No. No person can do it. You're so young you still believe in the power of individuals. The hard fact—which I would like to see develop in you, my friend, over the next ten years, is a much deeper ^{sense} ~~notion~~ of social structure. Because society is paramount

It's as if we're little animals running through the machine.

Occasionally we touch a switch, something starts, we start another little machine, but we can't really alter the nature of the machine that much. Not without great study and long-term devotion plus willingness to get into the grease of the gears.

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NM: No, I've only lived here year-round for the last 15 years but

the first time I came to Provincetown was almost 60 years ago and

I've spent serious time here over 45 or 50 of the last 60 years

PLAYBOY:

JBM: Now, Provincetown in winter—a lot of people see it as

being abandoned. It goes from—what? 30,000 down to 2,000

people?

NM: Roughly.

JBM: Is winter better than high season?

NM: For a writer of my age, it's better. There's an old saying

about P'town that in the winter you can roll a bowling ball down

Commercial Street and it'll never hit anyone. So it is lonely here in

February and March and mean and cold because the wind's coming

JBM and NM Interview 7/13/04

Pages 1-28
minus page)WORD COUNT: 11, 624JBM: ~~Right, or~~ why don't we start with ~~the~~ Fahrenheit

9/11?

NM: Fine. Um, so you want to go ahead and start by talking about how you brought me to see it? You think that's the way to start? Or, just start by talking about 9/11?

JBM: We can just start with 9/11. That was the third time.

~~that I had seen it, and it's interesting, with each time I see it~~

With each
viewing I see more

of Michael Moore's tricks in it.

~~NM: I think I~~

~~JBM: Find, before I would say~~ ~~that~~ ~~about 75% of the film~~

~~is~~ ~~was indisputable, and 25% were Moore's tricks. After~~

~~seeing it the third time, I would say half of it is Michael~~

Moore's theories on what's going on with this country,

~~are valid but~~ ~~which are valid, but certainly not watertight, and half of it~~

is undeniable, ~~Mainly, for me,~~ the portion on Iraq, and how we just don't belong there and never should have gone

NM: ~~Yeah,~~ I don't disagree with that. I saw it for the first time last night, and ~~I~~ was pretty upset through the first half

I thought, this is the sort of bad, dumb, ~~stupid~~ thing that ~~embattled~~ liberals do all the time, ~~democrats do, that radical~~ ~~democrats do, that they rip their own case, because they cut~~

too many corners. I mean, when you get into talk radio,

they're always cutting corners, distorting facts. If they have a sentence with four elements in it, they'll use only the one element that's to their advantage, and Michael Moore is doing the same thing. And I got pretty bored about half way

through. I mean, I just got bored with the Saudi Arabian

business, because, while there's obviously a lot of smoke ~~concerning~~ there, ~~between the Bush family and the Saudis, all he was~~

~~doing was rubbing smoke in our faces.~~ There were no hard

facts, ~~relative to what you need to make a case on that~~

Because, after all, powerful people deal with all sorts of

countries all over the place. You don't make ^{your} a case by

showing two huge politicians, ~~two world~~ politicians

shaking hands. ^{A bunch people will} They'll shake hands with the devil on a

On a photo-op. That's part of what you're in politics for. In a

small way, when I ran for mayor, I probably shook a

thousand hands a day when I worked that subway. Well,

half of those hands are the hands of people who on sight

you don't like. That don't matter; you shake hands with

~~them.~~

JBM: Right.)

NM: So, you see, that's not making a case. But, when ^{More} ~~he~~

got into Iraq I ^{changed my mind. It became} thought the stuff was wonderful. I was very

a powerful film. ^{Those} Some critics thought ~~was~~ taken with the movie. I thought it was very powerful. ~~I~~

^{It was outrageous} thought a lot of people who disliked the movie or criticized

it and thought it was outrageous that ^{Moore} he showed people ~~two boys with kites~~ ^{flying on the eve of war} ~~Where these boys were running with~~ ^{Where these boys were running with} ~~kites was hardly a nice scene, it was a very dreary park,~~ ^{then were playing in a most}

JBM: Right.

~~NM: They're running in front of ugly, cement block~~

buildings of the sort you see in cheap housing projects in

America, you ~~used to see in the~~ ^{and in the old} Soviet Union, the kind of

unhappy, mass architecture that pollutes the world. ~~I didn't~~ ^{I thought}

~~the wrath was excessive,~~ ^{the wrath was excessive,} ~~seem to me that that was an example of violating do~~

~~people think that~~ ^{people think that} just because Saddam Hussein was a

monster ~~that nobody ever flew a kite~~ ^{do people think} ~~under his regime?~~ ^{under his regime?}

JBM: Well, that's what's fascinating to me. The images,

~~were of Iraq in March 2003 and they were what they were,~~

And people were nailing ^{Moore} him for saying he made it look as

if it were a peaceful, happy country. ~~No! He showed the~~

~~footage that he had procured for that, and it was true.~~

NM: He could have done it with a ~~little~~ more irony.

~~considering~~ ^{too hard his right there} he was trying to make a case. ~~In other words,~~

~~he made what I consider the fundamental error of all liberal~~

~~and left wing attacks on the right, which is they seem to~~

~~The left seems to~~

~~think that if you can come up with something that makes~~

people laugh at the right ^{winning} ~~that~~ you're winning. ~~And they're~~

wrong. ^{that's when we're} you're losing. ~~Cause I remember, fifty years ago~~

~~was~~ Back with the progressive party in 1948—more than

fifty years ago—~~when~~ we used to laugh, and laugh, and,

laugh at how dumb and ignorant the other side was. And

we've been laughing for fifty years and more. We're

further behind now than we were when we started.

^{have to} JBM: I agree. ~~I mean, the problem is, and the reason~~

~~why—I don't know if I'd want to go out and have a beer,~~

~~with Michael Moore. I'm glad he's there, doing what he's~~

~~doing, as extreme as he is. The right has unbelievable skills~~

with propaganda and sound bites. They sense that if you take more than ten seconds to answer a question, you've lost your audience. The left doesn't have that. Michael

^{does,}
Moore is the closest thing the left has to that. And so ---

NM: Well, he's the closest thing ^{we have} ~~the left has~~ (to a right wing ~~demagogue~~ ^{demagogue}.)

JBM: Right.

NM: And ~~the argument comes down to: is that what is~~ ^{that} necessary? ~~And~~, I don't have the answer ~~to that~~.

~~because~~ Some of the things he was doing were damn ugly.

~~Damn ugly in terms of someone who~~ let's say there are

perfectly sincere people, after all, on the right, and they

~~would~~ ^{had for} (be absolutely offended, the way people on the left

^(in survival) are offended by what talk radio ^{cheap shots} does to issues. And a lot of

~~the issues were being buggered by Michael Moore.~~ On the

other hand, what ^{finally} ~~made~~ the picture ~~finally~~ powerful for me.

so that finally I'd ~~approve of the film enough to see it, was.~~

^{less} I thought the stuff on Iraq ~~and the war was~~ three times as

powerful as all the earlier stuff. ~~The early stuff was full of~~

~~cheap shots. When it came to Iraq, he didn't need as many~~

~~cheap shots. In fact, he didn't need any. The real story for~~

~~me~~ ⁱⁿ was the study ⁱⁿ of the faces. You looked at all the faces

~~on the right, all the people, that's all the high faces on the~~

~~Bush team. What~~ ^{All those} right, the people that went to war, and what you saw was a

~~miserable display of humanity at its most powerful. There~~

~~was a certain emptiness about all the people, starting with~~ ^{the spiritual of those}

~~Bush, who~~ ^{he} has one of the emptiest faces in America. It's

amazing. You get the feeling that ~~There's no psychic density~~

~~to the man. In contrast, getting a grip~~ Now, I'm sure there is. ~~There's no such thing as~~

~~a look at the our soldiers who were really~~ a human being who doesn't have all sorts of depths. But

~~nothing. In~~ Bush gives you the nearest impression of someone who has

~~Bush looks to have~~

~~no more depth than spit on a rock. Then you get the others~~

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~~In contrast, are the faces of the~~
 American soldiers who ~~were~~ ^{over} there. They're so ~~innocent~~ ^{lost}
~~them are so bewildered,~~
 bewildered. They're (so innocent.

JBM: They're kids!

NM: They look like good people. And ~~for~~ they are being

taken for a hideous ride. ~~Hideous ride. And, then, of course, there's~~

~~are cost *~~
 the people who suffer from it: the woman who lost her son

~~All of that was splendid.~~ The second half of the movie just

takes on a ~~huge force~~ ^{big} great power. It was very well made.

It ~~was~~ ^{is} artistic. Far more artistic than the first half, where he

was looking for cheap shots. It seems to me one of the rules

of discourse, if is you get your opponent down, you don't

kick him in the ear. The stuff with the Bushs and Saudi

Arabia ~~was not needed.~~ ^{All right} Alright, end of the critique! The

point I do want to make out of all this is it gave me all over

again a sense of how powerful, how intelligent, how

skillful, and how totally unscrupulous the Bush

administration is at getting its way. And what we're here to

talk about is ~~what the republican administration, the~~

coming to
the republican convention is going to be like in New York. ~~It~~

that
~~I~~ I would go so far as to say ~~I~~ I am desperately worried

about what ~~the left, and~~ the demonstrators, and the agitators

are going to do. Because, the first question to ask yourself

not ready to
before you ~~march in the street~~ is, ~~why~~ why did the republicans

choose New York ~~of all places?~~ I would say the answer is

they are hoping there will be ugly riots, *that would do it*
~~because that's their~~

their
best way to get re-elected. They're looking for a repeat

of '68 in Chicago. In that case, you remember, the police

mowed down the demonstrators on Michigan Boulevard. It

was called "The Massacre of Michigan Boulevard." And

yet, the democrats looked ~~so~~ bad in the course of it. Then

~~the republicans, then~~ Nixon, ended up squeaking through to

win. The situation here could be worse, because the key

thing to keep in mind ~~if I were~~ ~~you know as a novelist, I~~

~~try to think in terms of not only how my people would~~

~~think, so to speak,~~ ^{is} ~~but how the other people would think.~~ ^{scene is thinking}

~~You can't be a good novelist if you can't really take five or~~

~~ten or fifteen percent of yourself and put it into your enemy,~~

~~and try to estimate how they're going to reason.~~ If I were a

republican, I'd say ^{this} ~~(the thing I need most are~~ ^{is an} ~~ugly riots~~

while we're in New York. Very ugly riots and particularly,

~~Obscene episodes.~~ ^{even better!} ~~Now, how do I get it?~~ ^{How to obtain that? Well,} ~~A lot of these~~

~~those~~ ^{radical} kids are so mad at our president, says the right wing

~~planners~~ ^{man} ~~that they'll do it on their own. But that may not be~~ ^{Even so, we may}

~~enough. We may need more. We gotta have a core of~~ ^{can certainly use a}

agents provocateurs ~~in these organizations,~~ doing their best

to fire people up and have them go crazy. Because, one of

the things that ^{9/11} ~~did~~ was to excite the rage that half of

America is feeling towards Bush. ^{During the} ~~It absolutely does excite~~
~~convention, when the~~
~~that rage.~~

JBM: ~~Fahrenheit 9/11?~~ You're talking about ~~Fahrenheit,~~

~~9/11?~~

NM: Yeah, I meant ~~Fahrenheit 9/11.~~ And, so when the

stakes are upped, the desire to express one's rage, one's

contempt, ~~one's~~ ^{will be} ~~fury,~~ one's anathema against the Bush

administration ^{is} ~~is~~ incredibly intense. At that point you stick

a few agents provocateurs ^{are as good as a water on a gas stove.} in there. They'll find a way to

^{We need a couple of fellows who are so stupid}
~~they'll~~ urinate on the American flag. The payments they'll receive

~~will never be found. We'll never be able to point a finger -~~ ~~cause~~

~~cause,~~ ^{on our own scale,} that stuff is skillful. It's been done in previous political

campaigns. The Democrats used to have a guy named Dick

Tuck, who ^{came} ~~used to come~~ up with a lot of capers. ^{few} ~~They~~ were

relatively innocent in those days. ^{the} ~~But~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{Administration} ~~they're~~ really

is playing for keeps, because this is the most important single

~~I would say~~
election in my lifetime, ~~maybe~~. One of the reasons is that

The republicans know that if they lose this time they could

be in real trouble. Because everything they've been doing

for the last four years is bound to come out if there's

another administration in there. ~~And~~ they can't afford to

lose. ~~Carl Rove for years, the last four years,~~ ^{for} ~~has been~~ ^{Karl Rove}

^{saying that}
talking about how the republican administration will have a

twenty year hegemony once they win this next election. ~~It~~

~~fact this way~~
They'll be in power for twenty years, Carl Rove said. This

~~is~~ ^{these people} before the worst of Iraq came through. Now what they're

~~facing is the opposite~~: if they lose, they could be out of

power for twenty years. ~~And that, they can't tolerate.~~ They

absolutely can't tolerate that. And, so, what I would add, is

that they ^{will} ~~are~~ put as many ingredients ^{of their people} into the protest

movement as they can get away with. ^{well} ~~The only thing that~~

saves it from being overridden, ~~totally~~ with agents

provocateurs, is ~~precisely~~ that it's not ~~that~~ easy to ~~get that~~
~~get too~~ many good ones ⁱⁿ without being caught. You know, in the ~~Twifties~~
~~old days~~, the ~~old~~ American Communist Party, which ~~was~~
~~not the happiest nor most powerful party in America's~~
~~history, by far, and had a lot of relatively innocent and~~
~~dogmatic and ideological people in it, used to get twisted~~
~~and turned, but~~ ^{was} kept alive ^{in part} by the fact that a good number of
the members were FBI men. But that was then, I'm talking
about ~~fifty years ago~~. Now, it's subtler, it's more difficult,
but if you are part ~~and this is what I'd say to people who~~,
~~happen to be reading this interview~~ if you are part of an
~~of an~~ activist movement, and one of your people wants to cut up
the American flag, burn it, or urinate on it—finger him
don't trust him. That's not a ^{youth} pure ideologue who's so
~~inflamed with rage at Bush that he has to express himself~~
^{detestation of}

it could be
that way. On the contrary, ~~that's~~ a guy who's doing his job,
and ~~he~~ knows why he's doing it.

JBM: Well, this is one of the big dangers that I see is there
is that agent in there, whose job it is, who's being paid to
disrupt the protest, to throw a brick through a window or to
piss on the flag, but there's also—

NM: You have to say "maybe." Because, technically
speaking, legally speaking we can't say, "they are there."
We can't prove it.

All right,
JBM: Exactly. ~~Alright, there may be,~~ good reason would
suggest that there may be those people in there, ~~and~~ at the
same time there will be—I don't know how many, but
certainly enough—certainly in the hundreds of thousands
of young fifteen, sixteen, seventeen year old anarchists.
who are filled with rage and they don't know why. And
they have no idea where to direct it. And so, what they end

But when
~~up doing is the same thing: they throw a brick through a~~
window, ~~And they also know at this point that, by throwing~~
~~that brick through the window~~ *that* they're going to be on TV.

this
And ~~it~~ feeds into the ~~whole~~ celebrity craze that America is
under right now of get on TV, man, that's when you're

really important. And so, it's interesting, because this

protest may be the first ~~protest~~ *one* that has ~~as many cameras~~ *so* *protestors*

with cameras
~~going as protestors~~. It's unbelievable. And every even

you've seen a ridiculous amount of cameras. There's about

126 documentaries being made on it already.

NM: Also—let me just interject this one thought right
here—apart from that, I think half the protestors will be
carrying their own video cameras.

JBM: Yes.

NM: And some of them will actually have film to sell
afterward.

JBM: Yes.

NM: Or, the networks and cable companies will be looking for films.

JBM: Right, but it's also for their own protection. A cop is much less likely to bash a protestor in the head if ^{he's holding} ~~they've~~ got a video camera. *Sudith - and the press here.*

NM: Mmm-hmm.

JBM: And so, it's an interesting line. There is a Big Brother element to it—everybody is being watched all the time. But you see—not to keep bringing it back to *Fahrenheit 9/11*—the fact that all of these statements made by the administration are on tape, are caught, and can then be compiled and seen back to back, and completely contradicting themselves—We've never had that ability before. And it's an infant ability right now.

JBM: If we are we entering a realm where the question is whose propaganda is better, the left has finally figured out that they can't beat the right with intelligent arguments.

They need punch phrases that get to the heart of the average American. If that's the case, what is the future for us?

NM: I would say we'll be better off if the Democrats win, but still it will be an ugly situation. How do you begin to put the country together again?

JBM: What is the alternative? If one side that is bashing the other with lies, how can you try to play fair?

NM: Yes, at this point things have gotten so bad that to play fair is to ask for it. It's as if you get into a fight you can only use your fists. The other guy can use his feet, his fists, his brass knuckles, and, if it comes to it, he can take out a shiv or a pistol. All right, you have to go in equally armed. But,

afterward, there's a lot to pay for. Are the activists ready to watch themselves or do they not know what they're going into? I hope they don't assume that expressing their rage is equal to getting Kerry elected. It could have exactly the opposite effect. The point may be to frustrate the republicans by coming up with very orderly demonstrations. Now when I was young, the suggestion itself was like a stink bomb to me. An orderly demonstration? What were we, cattle? You have to express your rage. Well, I'm trying to say, if we aren't able to take a huge step up, and realize that there are more important things than expressing our rage. I would remind everybody who goes out to march, of an old Italian saying: "Revenge is a dish that people of taste eat cold." Instead of expressing yourself at the end of August, think of how nicely you can express yourself over four years to come. It could even be twenty years to come—if you can contain yourselves.

NM: They look like good people. And they are being taken for a hideous ride. The second half of the movie takes on a great power. It was far more artistic than the first half. All right, end of the critique!

What we're here to talk about is the Republican convention coming to New York. I would go so far as to say that I am desperately worried about what the demonstrators and the agitators are going to do. Because, the first question to ask yourself before you get ready to march is: Why did the Republicans choose New York? I would say they are hoping there will be ugly riots. That could be their best way to get re-elected. They're looking for a repeat of '68 in Chicago. In that case, you remember, the police mowed down the demonstrators on Michigan Boulevard. It was called "The Massacre of Michigan Boulevard." And yet, the Democrats looked so bad in the course of it. Then Nixon ended up squeaking through to win. The situation here could be worse,