



PLAYBOY ENTERPRISES, INC.

Date: September 22, 2004

To: Norman Mailer c/o Judith
(508) 487-2136

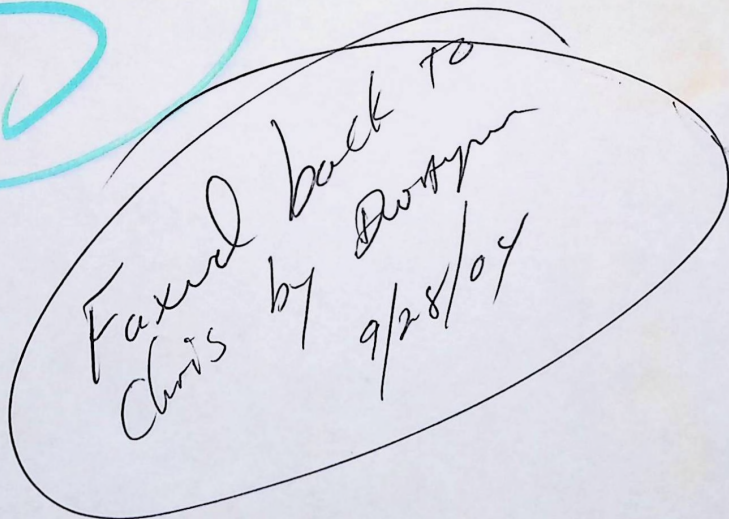
From: Chris Napolitano

Re: Reflections on Courage, Morality and Sexual Pleasure

Norman/Judith,

Here are a few changes we'd like to make. Let us know what works for you. And, once again, thanks for the fine job.

-C-



Body 1

REFLECTIONS ON COURAGE,
MORALITY AND SEXUAL PLEASURE
a spirited exchange between father and
son
by
Norman Mailer and John Buffalo Mailer

PLAYBOY: "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 drugs because I could." "I had sex
because I could." It is not so much im-
morality as amorality that drives such
behavior. In the absence of moral or-
der or authority, the fool is free to pur-
sue all courses with abandon. Is
amorality more troublesome than im-
morality?

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 gen-
erally 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 prowess by how many
times he gets laid. Even more impor-

~~✱~~ Yes!

Insert? Many readers feel
the questions about Province town
and novels, etc., come across
as swerves in the conversation
I suggest:

"The first of six topics:"

From research. Replace with
actual quote:

"I did something for the worst
possible reason. Just because
I could."

lowercase (B) ✓

✓ means: I agree
with the
change.

~~✱~~ I like inserting
the Provincetown
section up
front per
your suggest.
It also sets up
the Clinton topic.

34 tant: What rating did the woman give
35 him?

L 36 Then there's biological
L 37 amorality. The man is suffering a
38 heavy physical need. The need is more
L 39 important to him than the partner.
40 That's animal, if you will, but it is not as
41 related to the ego.

42 JBM: Can there ever truly be amorali- ¹/_m delete comma, insert dash ✓
43 ty? For me, everybody, whether they ¹/_m ✓
L 44 know it or not, lives by a code, and
L 45 when they break their own code, it
46 bothers them.

L 47 NM: Okay, some amoral people do
48 work by a code. That's more interest-
49 ing. Let's say that for them the whole ~~delete comma~~ ✓
50 moral system is a lot of crap. So ignore
L 51 it. They believe that any orthodox
52 moral system breeds illness, pain, frus-
53 tration, and deception of oneself. The
54 old Playboy philosophy used to weigh
55 in on how we have to change our sexu-
56 al mores. "Stick to one woman" was
57 not what Hef was all about.

L 58 I would say this aspect of
59 amorality can be justified. One can ar-
L 60 gue that we have the right to make
61 many sorties into sex when we are sin-
L 62 gle, and to find new partners all the
L 63 time. The underlying notion is that
64 sooner or later, the cumulative knowl-
65 edge we gain will ready us for a serious
66 love. Many a sexist who has a rep as a

L 67 good lover might, under all that, be
 68 dreaming of a great love to come. Such
 L 69 studs are getting ready for the big
 L 70 meeting by having many affairs en
 71 route to the championship. More than
 72 one movie star subscribes to this psy-
 73 chology. Seen as a vehicle to increase
 L 74 one's knowledge, amorality becomes
 75 more interesting.

76 ~~Henry Miller once said some-~~
 77 thing to the effect that there's no such
 78 thing as a bad fuck. I think he meant
 79 that no matter how horrible it can get,
 80 you always learn something about the
 81 woman and about yourself. Some peo-
 82 ple do dig into fucking like gold min-
 L 83 ers. They're not worrying about the
 84 earth—they want the goddamn gold.
 85 If the pick-axe strikes rock, they'll go
 86 elsewhere.

87 JBM: Do you learn more from sleep-
 88 ing with ten women, or sleeping with
 89 one woman for ten years?

90 NM: A man full of sensuality would
 91 probably opt for the first course. You
 92 need to feel extraordinary love to be
 93 faithful to someone for ten years. Af-
 L 94 ter my own checkered career being
 95 married six times, with 8 children and
 96 one terrific stepson—I've been on both
 97 sides of that question.

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

I'm damned if I can
 find the source but
 Henry Miller did say

Research can't find anything
 close to this quote. Source?
 let's go with
 the above

delete comma, insert m-dash ✓

100 the other hand, I've been attracted im-
L101 mensely to the qualities that women
102 have. My amorality—if we're going to
103 get into it—was a search. I wanted to
L104 learn more about sex. I sometimes
105 think if pornography had come along
106 when I was a young man, it would have
107 dispensed with a lot of friction in my
108 personal life. Because you do learn a ~~lot~~
109 lot from pornography. Women's ani-
110 mal qualities are exemplified positively
111 or negatively in a porny film. Besides,
112 you might be a little less likely to marry
113 the first woman you find who is highly
114 sexual.

115 JBM: I want to get back to Clinton's
116 quote: "~~I did it because I could.~~" What
L117 are your thoughts on the way he re-
118 ferred to Monica Lewinsky in his book?

Change to
"Just because I could." ✓

119 NM: As people go, Clinton is not the
120 worst guy you're going to meet. He has
L121 a lot of natural warmth, plus a good
L122 deal of everything else a president

123 needs, calculation, manipulation, inter-
124 est in his work, all of that. In this case,
125 I thought his particular remarks were
L126 needlessly cruel. I believe he would
127 have preferred to speak nicely about
128 Monica Lewinsky, but you've got to re-
129 member he has an angry and injured
130 wife on his hands. He had to weigh in
131 with something to satisfy her ~~and~~ Hillary
132 was more on his mind than Monica.

delete comma, insert m-dash ✓

delete m-dash, insert period. ✓

133 "I did it because I could" is an
L134 empty remark. Anyone who's met
L135 Monica knows she's very attractive.
L136 She's got beautiful coloring, she's in-
137 tense, she's bright—that's the real rea-
138 son why he did it.

Insert

"Just because I could."

L139 And for another reason en-
140 tirely, which may be richer, although it
141 is certainly meaner. A bright woman I
L142 know once said, "Clinton lived in a
L143 minimum security prison. Every fif-
144 teen minutes, security checked up on
L145 where he was." I thought, she's ab-
146 solutely right. What we're dealing with
147 here was an incarcerated man. It's as if
148 he ~~was~~ in the finest, grandest minimum
149 security prison in the world, the White
150 House. In that sense, ~~5%~~ of him is a
151 convict.

Insert hyphen

Cap S

were

five percent

152 JBM: And once you're in prison, you
153 do what you can get away with?

154 NM: Exactly.

155 JBM: Then his remark is not so hol-
156 low.

157 NM: I see what you're saying—yes, it's
158 not as hollow as I thought. He did it
159 not because he could, but because he
160 wanted to get away with it. He could
L161 turn his incarceration a little bit
162 around. Nonetheless, I still think the
163 style of phrasing comes because of his
164 wife. Having been married six times, I
L165 have some idea of what one says on

166 such occasions.

L167 JBM: You're a good one to talk to
168 about that. But, more to the point, Bill
169 Clinton has a wife who plans to run for
170 high office. Is it immoral or amoral to
171 make a calculated decision to strip hu-
172 manity away from Monica in order to
173 protect the image of his wife as a strong
174 potential candidate?

175 NM: Both. Immoral in that he is most
176 calculatedly not telling the truth about
177 his real feelings. It's amoral because he
178 wants to keep the political process go-
179 ing: all politicians have to be amoral to
180 a degree. It's a question of how much.
181 Are they 44% amoral or 88%? Politi-
L182 cians cannot possibly afford morality
L183 except as a series of specious senti-
184 ments ready to be uttered as patriotic
185 or theological slogans. A politician has
L186 to deal with the given. That means
L187 they can even tell the truth at times.
L188 Usually, they're only pretending.
189 Politicians build up profound habits of
190 not addressing the truth head-on. In
191 practice, they have to shake hands with
192 people they can't bear, and proffer pa-
L193 triotic remarks that don't come from
194 the heart.

L195 Now, whether immoral,
196 amoral, or both, it was, finally, a neces-
L197 sity. It was—the two holy words for
198 politicians—the given.

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

201 NM: No. Not a successful politician.

202 JBM: Was it possible in FDR's day?

203 NM: It's never possible. Go back to the

204 maxim: "Politics is the art of the possi-
205 ble." What's important is to get some

L206 part of what you want done. That's

207 how a democracy works. By pieces and

208 parts.

209 The irony is, the only way you

210 can come near a direct expression of

L211 your personality is in a dictatorship.

L212 Of course, as democrats, we feel in-

213 stinctively that no human being is good

214 enough to be entrusted with that kind

215 of power. So in a democracy, change

216 always comes from negotiation. When

217 adversaries walk away from a political

218 compact, each side is a bit dissatisfied.

219 JBM: I'm still too much of an optimist.

220 I think that's choice B.

221 NM: Well, if you ever get into politics,

L222 you're going to discover how many

223 compromises have to be made, willy-

224 nilly.

L225 JBM: I suppose that's true. In the

226 end, the distinguishing factor between

L227 a decent politician and a corporate

228 puppet is not if he is willing to compro-

229 mise, but what he is willing to compro-

230 mise.

231 PLAYBOY: You've written about the

delete comma ✓

232 cultural necessity of literature. Yet we
L233 now live in a time when the novelist
234 and literature itself are borderline ir-
235 relevant. There's an absence of interi-
236 ority, of serious, concentrated thought.
237 We may be in danger of losing litera-
L238 ture forever. What would this mean
239 for American culture?

240 NM: As a novelist I'm now speaking *delete comma ✓*
241 from my vested position. My profes-
242 sion is being eroded. When I began,
243 good novelists were more important in
244 the scheme of things. The irony is that
245 the great novelists like Hemingway and
246 Faulkner probably didn't sell as many
247 copies per book as a few serious novel-
L248 ists sell now. But they were revered.
249 They affected history. They had their
250 impact on America. Hemingway was a
251 prodigious influence for young Ameri-
252 can writers. He taught a lot of us how
253 to look for the tensile strength of a sen-
254 tence.

L255 I think a nation's greatness
256 depends, to a real extent, on how well-
257 spoken its citizens are. Good things de-
L258 velop out of a populace that really
259 knows how to use the language and use
260 it well. Would Great Britain have been
261 able to manage the empire in the Nine-
L262 teenth Century without their (three)
L263 (hundred) and more years of reading
264 Shakespeare? Where would Ireland be

300 ✓

265 today without Joyce? Not as prosper-
266 ous, I expect. As a language deterio-
L267 rates, becomes less eloquent, less
L268 metaphorical, less salient, less
269 poignant, a curious deadening of the
270 human spirit comes seeping in.

delete ✓

L271 By now, America has shifted
272 from being a country with a great love
273 of freedom and creativity (in constant
274 altercation with those other Americans
L275 who wanted rule and order) into a
276 country that's now much more interest-
277 ed in power. And power, I can promise
L278 you, is not interested in metaphor.

279 Metaphor is antagonistic to power be-
L280 cause it pushes you to think in more
281 poetic and contradictory ways. Power
282 demands a uni-linear approach. Pow-
283 er does not welcome poetic concepts.
284 JBM: But hasn't power always been a
285 driving force in society?

L286 NM: Always. But it was situated
287 among other driving forces such as cul-
L288 ture and art and love of sports and
289 good architecture and tradition. Now,
290 it's as if corporate power has become
291 the most dominant theme of our lives.
292 In ten more years, will we find a pro-
293 fessional stadium that is not named for
294 a corporation?

295 JBM: Or a Broadway theater.

296 The lack of rage against that from the
L297 artistic community is depressing but

L298 not surprising. The majority of the
299 biggest celebrities today are manufac-
300 tured by the largest corporations. It's
L301 hardly in their interest to attack the
302 money, even if their benefactor is turn-
303 ing the name of a theater into an ad-
L304 vertisement for the company. Gone
305 are the days when writers had the same
306 influence as rock stars. Justin Timber-
307 lake, who I'm sure is a nice guy, should
308 not be influencing a generation. He's a
309 pop singer. He was created by Disney.
310 Part of his job is not to have an opinion.
311 Somewhere between the lines, I'm not
312 sure where, it shifted from great minds
L313 speaking to the masses to celebrities
314 speaking to the masses.

315 NM: Be careful. You're too young to
L316 know how it was back then. Great
317 minds almost never speak directly to
318 the masses.

319 JBM: Not directly. But Hemingway
320 would write a piece, you would write a
321 piece, and people would discuss it and
322 debate it, go back and forth—

323 NM: Leave me out of it.

324 JBM: To this day, people come up to
325 me who read "The White Negro" when
326 they were teenagers, and they want to
327 argue with me about it. It still affects
L328 them nearly fifty years later. I don't
329 think any essay by anyone written to-
330 day could do the same. There are too

331 many other forms of media that are di-
332 gested more easily, too easily.

L333 That's one reason Michael
334 Moore is interesting. He's aware that
335 while his books are good, and serve his
336 purpose, he is going to reach so many
337 more through his movies. The prob-
338 lem is you can't get the same depth of
339 an idea across in a sound bite—there's
340 no way.

341 NM: Why not use a rating system for
L342 ideas? The most profound ideas are
343 those one is willing to die for. By that
344 measure, Karl Marx has to be one of
345 the greatest writers who ever lived. Be-
346 cause hundreds of thousands of people
347 in his time and after were willing to die
348 for his ideas. All over the world, mil-
L349 lions were willing to go to prison for
350 them.

351 This is not to raise a latter-day
L352 defense of Marx. He had incredible
353 virtues as a thinker. From my point of
354 view, he also had his lacks. He certain-
355 ly didn't understand that atheism is not
356 a way to win the world. You can't. Not
357 by that route. Half the people alive—
358 or is it three-quarters?—have instinc-
359 tive notions that God exists. I think the
360 real failure of Bolshevism, then Stalin-
361 ism, was clinging to the idea that reli-
362 gion is the opium of the masses. Orga-
L363 nized religion may well be its own

Note from research: Marx is commonly
misquoted thusly, "Religion is the
opiate of the masses."

Actual
~~mis~~ quote:

"Religion is the sigh of the
oppressed creature, the heart
of a heartless world and the
Soul of soulless conditions.
It is the opium of the people."

Change masses to people?

people ✓

364 species of narcotic but the concept that
365 we are part of divine ~~Creation~~ is some-
366 thing else altogether.

lowercase (c) ✓

367 If we're ever going to have a
L368 great society in the future—which is
369 hardly a guaranteed conclusion—if we
370 ever build a world with real freedom,
371 we may have to arrive at the recogni-
372 tion that we can dispense with funda-
L373 mentalism, and live instead with the
374 idea that God is (a Creator), not a law-
375 giver.

Note from copy:
Lowercase creator? Uppercase
"the Creator"? Or stet.
3 fet

376 JBM: To shift the subject back to your
377 home turf, who is going to be the last
378 novelist?

379 NM: Probably someone analogous to
380 the poor poet today who is writing five-
381 act verse plays in iambic pentameter. I
L382 do foresee a day when very few will
L383 look at serious fiction. Instead, they
384 will read computer novels. The com-
385 puter is better suited to turn out a best-
L386 seller than a mediocre novelist. But
387 not too many people will still be inter-
388 ested in serious literary work. Whole
389 populations will be looking for techno-
390 logical power rather than exploring in-
391 to those moral questions they hope to
L392 ponder anywhere but in the serious
393 novel.

L394 The best fiction has always
395 been the seed-bed for the most inter-
L396 esting and subtle moral questions,

397 questions that, at best, go deeper than
L398 the wisdom you can receive in any
L399 church or synagogue or mosque.
400 When it comes to moral paradox, the-
401 ology is limited. It's too structured. In-
L402 teresting morality almost never fits
L403 pre-arranged moral codes. It's only
404 the novelist—the very good novelist—
405 who can deal with such moral issues as
406 "Am I on balance a good person or a
407 bad one?" You don't find that out by
L408 declaring, "Well, I'm good because I
409 obey the Ten Commandments." That
410 doesn't make you good. You can still
411 be a horror if you restrict the lives of
412 others with your piety. The real ques-
413 tion is how do you affect other people's
414 lives? The best novels are marvelous
415 for delving into the subtler questions of
416 our nature.

L417 After all, what is human na-
418 ture? We're still finding that out. It is
419 immensely various, even as God, I be-
420 lieve, is immensely various. We're the
421 children, if you will, of the Creator. I
422 believe that God doesn't want to give us
423 orders from above; rather, He wishes
424 us to discover things about our nature
425 that we can send back to Him. Or Her.
426 Does the parent always wish to be su-
427 perior to the child? No. Most parents
428 want their children to surpass them.
429 JBM: One would hope that very rea-

Insert comma, uppercase (H)
As in "...is, How do..."

430 son, right there, is enough to keep the
431 novel alive.

432 NM: You're leaving out the social im-
L433 peratives of the people who run
434 things. An immensely powerful global
435 capitalism is shaping up. That capital-
436 ism does not need or look for inquiry
437 into delicate matters. Its need, rather,
438 is to keep the bullshit train running at
439 top speed. It has to enforce the self-
L440 serving notion that corporations are
441 good for human existence. It needs to
L442 have most people believing that big
443 business is the only way to do it. The
444 last thing those gentlemen need is nov-
445 els.

L446 Part of the genius of corpo-
L447 rate capitalism is that they've found
L448 ways to control people which are so
449 much subtler than the old Stalinist pro-
450 cedures. Those methods were brutal,
451 dull, cold, stupid and openly oppres-
452 sive. The modern form of oppression
453 is nuanced; it gets into your psyche—it
L454 makes you think there's something
455 wrong with you if you're not on the big
L456 capitalist team. So they don't want
457 writers exploring into morality. They
458 want one morality, theirs. Unlike Stal-
459 inism at its worst, it's more of a benign
460 regime, superficially open and ready
L461 for the development of technology
462 which will make all our lives extraordi-

Insert Corporate capitalists ✓

that ✓

L463 nary—sure, technology will end up
L464 keeping us alive for ~~150 or 200 years~~ ^{older} until we are 150 years ^{old}
L465 even if three-quarters of each of us will
L466 be replacement parts. "I'm on my
L467 fourth heart," says the man who is 200,
L468 ~~years old.~~ I'm not sure that's either
L469 God's intention or the real human in-
L470 tention. It may be an ultimate de-
L471 struction of the human spirit to stay
L472 alive beyond a certain point. Maybe
L473 death is as important to life as life itself.
L474 To keep extending the years of your
L475 life—that could be one more form of
L476 evil. Much too much is being taken for
L477 granted today.

L478 But I must go back to the
L479 original point: The good novel, the se-
L480 rious novel, is antipathetic to corporate
L481 capitalism. The best-seller is one of the
L482 props of corporate capitalism precisely
L483 because it's an entertainment. "At the
L484 end of the day, I want to have fun," says
L485 the nine-to-fiver. "Give me asshole TV
L486 shows, exploitation films with lots of
L487 bang. I don't need to read a good
L488 book—I want a page-turner." Well,
L489 every time there's a page-turner to
L490 read for too little, someone's mind is
L491 being dulled. Even page-turners can
L492 get into interesting questions, but de-
L493 pendably, they will always veer away
L494 from moral exploration.

L495 JBM: You're talking about good art

Not sure what "page-turner
to read for too little" means here. ✓

L496 which pushes you. I think the chal-
497 lenge, though, is to make a serious nov-
L498 el entertaining so people can't put it
499 down. That's the only way to compete
500 with the various other forms of media.

501 NM: I started as that kind of writer
502 and I know how easy it is. It's routine
503 to write a page-turner. There are such
504 simple rules. I can teach any mediocre
505 writer to turn one out. But I'm inter-
506 ested in something that's good enough
L507 and well enough written so that you
L508 have to stop on the page and read a
509 sentence over a few times. Why? Be-
510 cause it vibrates within you. A page-
511 turner is equal to a fast-paced sit-com.

512 JBM: What are your thoughts on the
513 power that Oprah Winfrey wields over
L514 a book? You know, recently she put
L515 "Anna Karenina" on her book of the
516 month list and it became a best-seller
517 again.

518 NM: I salute her for that. It so hap-
519 pens "Anna Karenina" is one of my all-
L520 time favorite novels. I had that and
L521 "War and Peace" on my desk while I
522 was writing "The Naked and the Dead."
523 To get steamed up to write every morn-
524 ing, I'd read five or ten pages of "Anna
525 Karenina." So, yes, I applaud her for
526 that.

L527 JBM: Because she has such popular
L528 mass appeal, she can take something

529 that is hard to read and make it a best-
530 seller. That gives me hope.

L531 NM: But if she keeps doing it, her
532 popularity will begin to diminish and
533 then we'll begin to see the real test of
534 her character. Is she devoted to great
535 literature or is she, quite naturally, a lit-
536 tle more devoted to the power of her
537 own career?

538 JBM: Perhaps through the power of
539 her own career, she can raise great lit-
L540 erature back to the popular level of
541 best-sellers.

L542 NM: No. No person can do that.
543 You're so young you still believe in the
544 power of individuals. The hard fact—
L545 which I would like to see develop in
546 you, my friend, over the next ten years,
547 is a much deeper sense of social struc-
L548 ture. Because society is paramount.
L549 It's as if we're little animals running
550 through the machine. Occasionally we
L551 touch a switch, something starts, we
L552 start another little machine, but we
553 can't really alter the nature of the ma-
L554 chine that much. Not without great
L555 study and long-term devotion plus
556 willingness to get into the grease of the
557 gears.

558 JBM: And great luck. No, I respect
559 the complexity of the social machine—
560 I don't think one person can change it
L561 by themselves, but I do agree with

L562 Robert F. Kennedy that every action
 L563 you take is equivalent to throwing a
 L564 pebble into a pond. It is the ripples
 565 that affect the machine.
 566 NM: The ripples die out.
 567 JBM: Unless they're strong enough.
 568 NM: How many times does a pebble
 569 thrown into a pond change the nature
 570 of the shoreline? Let's stop the crap.

571 PLAYBOY: Provincetown in mid-win-
 L572 ter. How is it to live in a place that in winter?
 573 seems abandoned and bereft? Is it bet-
 574 ter than during the high season?

575 NM: For a writer of my age, it's better
 576 in the off-season. There's an old saying
 577 about P'town that in the winter you can
 578 roll a bowling ball down Commercial
 579 Street and it'll never hit anyone. So it is
 580 lonely here in February and March and
 L581 mean and cold. It's damp, it's lonely,
 L582 and I love it. It fits my mood. It's
 583 much easier to spend the day writing if
 584 it's gray outside. Besides, the people I
 585 used to know here years ago are dead
 L586 now. (Most of them from drink)

587 Provincetown has changed profoundly
 588 since. In summer, it's now the gay cap-
 L589 ital of the Northeast. Forty or fifty
 590 years ago, it used to be The Wild West
 591 of the East—you had motorcycle gangs
 592 coming in on Saturdays. And at 11 A.M.
 593 on Sunday morning, you'd have peo-
 594 ple going up in the hills for bacchanals,

~~from~~ Abrupt shift cited by a few readers.

Change to

"Provincetown has a unique social scene. Then comes winter." ?

If we start with P'town, let's tug this: ~~you're not at~~ stay all year round now in Provincetown. How is it to live - cla

delete parens? ✓

one

L595 everybody carrying booze or beer.

596 Marriages broke up and serious affairs

597 started on many of those nights.

598 JBM: Well, you still have motorcycle

L599 gangs coming in—it's just that now

L600 they're wearing leather chaps and

601 nothing else.

602 NM: [laughs] All right.

L603 JBM: Having spent a lot of time in

L604 Provincetown growing up, I don't

605 think of it as a gay town. As a member

606 of the heterosexual underground, I see

607 it as a very libertarian place. As long as

608 you're not hurting anyone else, what-

609 ever you're doing is cool. And, because

610 there is so much sexual energy flying

611 through the air, the hetero nightlife is

612 jumping.

L613 NM: Good to hear that. There's al-

L614 ways been so much going on in

L615 Provincetown. There are amazing

L616 contradictions here. After all, this is

617 the place where the Pilgrims first land-

618 ed.

619 JBM: Why did they leave?

620 NM: Like all good white people who

621 are righteous and not quite aware of

L622 how mean they can be underneath

623 their righteousness, they were full of

624 themselves. After all, they had dared

625 to leave their roots and sail across the

626 Atlantic cramped in a small boat. They

627 got here through true difficulty. At the

628 end, it was even hard to navigate the
629 waters around Cape Cod, but there is a
630 natural harbor in Provincetown where
631 the land curls around in a spiral. So
632 they made anchor in this harbor—par-
633 enthetically, the spot where they first
634 rowed their longboat to land now of-
635 fers a huge motel. We are nothing in
L636 America if not ready for profit. The
637 Puritans, however, found the soil not
L638 particularly welcoming, full of sand
639 and brush-pine, not good for farming.
L640 They were in search of food, went
641 scouting around. While reconnoiter-
642 ing eight miles south of Provincetown,
643 they found a place in Truro (now called
L644 Corn Hill) where the Indians had
645 stored their grain for the coming win-
646 ter. So the Puritans brought the corn
647 back to the Mayflower, and in the re-
648 verberations of that action ~~killed a cou-~~
L649 ~~ple of Indians.~~ Shortly after, one of
650 those Puritans probably said to anoth-
651 er, "Prithee, brother, let's get the fuck
652 out!" So they sailed to the other side of
L653 Massachusetts Bay, some ^{fifty} ~~forty~~ miles
654 across the water, and moved into Ply-
655 mouth which then became the found-
656 ing place of America. Hail to the first
657 Thanksgiving!

L658 Well, a couple of hundred
659 years later, the locals here became furi-
660 ous at the ongoing self-serving pride of

Note from research:

Can't find any account that
Indians were killed at this
point and place. Source? ✓

Note from research:

Closer to fifty. Does it matter? ✓

661 Plymouth. How did that town dare to
662 call itself the founding place of Ameri-
663 ca? So they started petitioning Wash-
664 ington, D.C.. By 1907, that got so hot
L665 that a first cornerstone was laid by
666 Theodore Roosevelt in a Masonic cere-
667 mony, and by 1910, a formidable tower
668 having been erected by subscription (a
L669 copy of an Italian tower in Sienna),
670 President Taft arrived for the opening
L671 festivities. This exceptionally phallic
672 tower is now called the Pilgrim Monu-
673 ment.

L674 JBM: So America started with white
L675 people stealing corn, ~~killing natives~~,
676 and going on the lam.

677 NM: Yes.

L678 PLAYBOY: Did women's sexuality
679 shape human evolution? According to
680 a theory in Leonard Shlain's new book,
681 "Sex, Time and Power," menstruation
L682 is what enabled women to develop a
683 sense of time and forethought. Lan-
684 guage evolved, he says, primarily be-
685 cause men and women had to negoti-
L686 ate sex. Women became expert at
L687 reading between the lines of various
688 Pleistocenes. Beauty was developed to
689 maintain the interest of men. Is this
690 why women control men?

691 NM: I haven't read the book, but that
692 theory does strike me as wobbly. For
L693 example, negotiating sex. Where is

Insert

Women

to aid transition?

694 the new idea there? After all, animals
695 certainly negotiate sex. I had two Stan-
696 dard Poodles once, many years ago, Ti-
L697 bo and Zsa-Zsa, and Zsa-Zsa was one
698 hell of a bitch, always nipping at Tibo's
699 nuts. I was afraid Tibo would end up
700 as no man at all by the time he came of
701 age—we first had them when they were
702 pups. How she dominated him! She
703 had fierce teeth. He'd have to duck,
704 and sit down fast. These earlier nego-
705 tiations taught him a lot, however. He
706 came to see what was not yet called for.
L707 The moment Zsa-Zsa came into heat
L708 for the first time, however, he was
L709 ready and seized her without a by-
710 your-leave and impregnated her. Nine
711 pups for one coupling. Over the next
L712 three years, before they were done, -----
713 they created 34 new Standard Poodles.
714 Negotiations never ceased. Animals not
715 only have a great deal of language in
L716 their grunts, their groans, their
L717 whines, their moans, their baying at
718 the moon, but their scents. Odor used
719 to have more to do with sex than lan-
720 guage—at least until deodorants came
721 on the scene. But before the advent of
L722 whiff-deadening products in spray
723 cans, any combination of strong genital
L724 odor mixed with perfume was pretty
L725 damned aphrodisiacal, yessir, all
L726 through every barnyard and royal

727 court of Europe right through the Sec-
728 ond World War. So the notion that lan-
729 guage had to be developed to facilitate
730 sex cannot, by my lights, make it as the
731 logo on a T-shirt.

732 JBM: How about this sense of time and
L733 forethought Shlain claims was devel-
734 oped through menstruation?

L735 NM: That's too large a question for
736 me.

737 JBM: Well, how about one that is not
738 do women control men?

739 NM: Completely.

740 JBM: I'm glad you agree.

741 NM: Before women's liberation came
L742 along, men used to have some pur-
L743 chase on control in a marriage. Per-
L744 haps 35%. The woman had the re-
L745 maining 65. Now, after women's
746 liberation, it's up to 95%.

747 JBM: Wow!

748 NM: I could be wrong, maybe it's only
749 85%.

750 JBM: Is this why men are forever at a
L751 loss in regard to the dominance of
752 women?

L753 NM: Well, women are closer to cre-
754 ation than we are. So, they have deep-
755 er instincts.

756 JBM: They create life, we destroy it.

L757 NM: Oh, let's not get into that.

758 Women have deadened as many men
L759 in subtle ways, for subtle reasons, as

Change to colon (!) ✓

L760 men have beaten women down in
761 more overt fashion.
762 JBM: I'm not saying one is more vi-
763 cious than the other. I'm saying, tradi-
L764 tionally, men have gone to war and
L765 women have raised the children.
766 That's changing. Women are going to
L767 war and we've seen what happens at
768 Abu Ghraib.
769 NM: Yes, that poor pregnant girl. . .
770 JBM: I feel for her.
771 NM: You do?
772 JBM: She was in the wrong place with
L773 the wrong guys, feeling the wrong
774 pressures and now she's all alone.
775 NM: She really is. I also can see how
L776 wild the parties are getting all over
777 America this season. The key factor at
778 Abu Ghraib was, "Hey, none of you at
779 home are going to believe this until you
780 see our photographs." And while a lot
781 of that picture-taking was probably giv-
782 en a subtle go-ahead by their superi-
783 ors—some of the photos could obvious-
784 ly be employed to goad the prisoners
L785 into talking—"You don't want your
L786 family to see you like this," the Abu
L787 Ghraib gang were also delighted to
L788 send a lot of the good stuff home to
789 their friends. Just think of the kind of
L790 party that's been going on back in
L791 America while Bush keeps talking
792 about how splendid a Christian nation

793 we are. You know, I love this country
L794 with all its faults—it's been good to
L795 me—but one of our huge spiritual
796 crimes is that we're the bullshit king-
797 dom of all time.

L798 JBM: The Bullshit Kingdom of all
799 time? Well, that's a piece in and of it-
800 self. Let's stick to men and women for
801 the moment. What do you think of the
802 gender roles now that women are ex-
803 pected to raise a family and be success-
804 ful in the workplace?

805 NM: For me, any notion that males are
806 superior to females or females superior
807 to males is, I'd say, like comparing dogs
808 to cats. To my mind, it's a hopeless ar-
L809 gument. Men are so fundamentally
810 different from women.

811 I still have to say that the de-
812 sire for power in women that's revealed
813 itself in the last 35 years is not attrac-
814 tive. The power they used to have was
815 vastly more interesting. It used to be
L816 fun to realize a woman was smarter
817 than you. In the course of living one's
818 life and learning how to handle one-
819 self, there were women who developed
820 such tasty subtleties about how to con-
L821 trol us. They were like animal han-
822 dlers if you will. And the animal, even
823 the lion, almost always adores the han-
L824 dler. Now they're dominating us
825 openly, and in the worst way—by ideol-

L826 ogy. "The whip and the knout for
827 you, buddy, we are the politically cor-
828 rect."

829 JBM: I don't think I agree with that.
830 It's changing. There was the height of
831 political correctness, which bordered
832 on fascism and it was terrifying. But
833 the majority of the women that I know,
834 they want a real man—they don't want
835 a man they can walk all over.

836 NM: Well, good. I'm 81, and these un-
837 happy experiences occurred to me 30
838 years ago.

839 JBM: You were living then at the peak
840 of the gender war. But what's truly en-
L841 couraging, ~~what's encouraging me~~

delete per JBM ✓

842 now, is I believe both sides are begin-
L843 ning to realize that we need more
844 women in power, but we need women
845 who do it the way a woman does it, not
846 the way a man would do it if he were a
847 woman.

L848 NM: How is that relevant to what
849 we're talking about?

850 JBM: Well, we're just now starting to
L851 see women getting into power posi-
L852 tions who are still allowed to be
853 women. They don't have to pretend to
854 act like a man.

855 NM: Name a few, would you?

L856 JBM: Arianna Huffington, Laura
857 Dawn of MoveOn.Org, Hillary Clinton
858 in her way.

859 NM: Hillary Clinton is a very good ex-
860 ample. I met her many years ago when
L861 she was the governor's wife in
862 Arkansas. Probably in '84. She was im-
863 mensely intelligent—I happened to sit
864 next to her at dinner—and we had a
L865 very good conversation. I was im-
866 pressed with how bright she was, how
867 open, and what a fine mind she had.
L868 She's not as interesting now. Today,
869 she's a politician. She's very cautious.
870 Her books are boring. What's that one,
L871 "It Takes a Village. . ."—full of cant.
872 The way Maggie Thatcher was full of
873 cant. You say what's useful to say, not
L874 what you believe. You never speak
L875 from the heart. Hillary is always
876 watch-dogging her tongue these days.
L877 Totally unspontaneous in exactly the
878 way an average mediocre-to-good, ef-
879 fective politician oversees his spiel.

L880 JBM: But as we said before, she's a
881 politician at a high level—she has no
882 choice.

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

885 JBM: I'm not saying we're there yet.
L886 But I do have hope that the future
887 players are beginning to emerge.

888 NM: All right. I can see a time when
889 women will be more important politi-
890 cally than they are now, and for better
L891 reasons, but that doesn't mean any-

892 thing much is going to change. In a
893 certain sense, a politician, regardless of
L894 gender, is neutered politically by the
895 process. A lot of politicians may be at-
L896 tractive in person because, after all,
897 they're pressing the flesh. All the time.
898 Shake a thousand hands in a morning
899 and an afternoon and you're horny by
L900 the end of the day. The hands are
L901 telling you something. Where's the
902 guy who won't get a hard-on if he's ad-
L903 mired by a lot of women? But,
904 nonetheless, politics dehumanizes you.
905 I don't say this out of sour grapes be-
906 cause when I ran for mayor in that De-
907 mocratic primary back in 1969, I con-
908 sidered it my duty. Believe it or not, I
909 felt God wanted me to go into politics
910 to save New York. I was a high-octane
911 fool. And I wasn't nearly as good as I
912 thought I'd be. All the same, I was pre-
913 pared to pay the price. I knew I would
914 never write again in any serious way if
915 I got elected. I knew I would use up
L916 my soul in hard work of a sort that
917 would not be happy for me. But I felt:
918 "I haven't been a good guy—I want to
919 save my soul." Now this was not only
920 simplistic thinking (which is no draw-
921 back to running for office) but I turned
922 out to be an ineffectual politician. All
923 the same, I was ready to bite the bullet.
924 What I learned from the effort and the

L925 defeat is that politics can be a tremen-
L926 dously difficult business. You know, we
L927 respect even mediocre professional
L928 basketball players because they have
L929 stamina. Well, very few humans can
L930 become good politicians due to the
L931 amount of work you run into. The re-
L932 sponsibilities. The number of distaste-
L933 ful things you have to do. So, I don't
L934 sneer at politicians. I think they're en-
L935 titled to the same kind of respect we
L936 give reasonably good athletes. Stamina
L937 is impressive. But I don't have any illu-
L938 sion that in becoming a politician you
L939 become a nobler person—very rarely
L940 does that occur. The only reason it
L941 happens once in a while is because it's
L942 an impossible Creation if you can't
L943 have exceptions to every last rule.

L944 PLAYBOY: You once wrote some-
L945 where: "As many people die from an
L946 excess of timidity as from bravery. No-
L947 body ever mentions that." Do you care
L948 to give an explanation of courage?

L949 NM: I have one. It's ready-made.
L950 Courage can only be measured by the
L951 place from which you start. Picture an
L952 old lady who is ill in every joint, terri-
L953 bly arthritic, nonetheless she has to
L954 cross a busy street and she can't quite
L955 keep up with the lights. Still, she feels
L956 an inner imperative to do it. And she
L957 does manage to get across even though

Though I provided this, I can't
recall where I first saw it.

Source? Confirm?

Yes I've said it
many times in
many ways.

L958 she's terrified. I would call that
959 courage. I would say it is analogous to
L960 the case of a well-trained Marine, a
961 good kid, who gets into combat, sees
L962 his buddies wounded, sees a good
L963 friend killed, goes through hell. He
964 gets to the point where he expects he
965 will die. Until that moment, you can't
966 really speak of his courage. He's been
967 trained to be brave—you can motivate
968 young people to be brave. But when
969 you get to that crux in combat where
970 you say, "It's not worth it. I'm scared
971 shitless, I can't go on, I want to quit, I
972 don't care about my buddies, fuck it all,
973 I want to quit"—and then another side
974 of you takes over and says, "You will go
975 on, whether you die or not, you will go
976 on"—that's courage.

L977 Otherwise, courage can be
978 meaningless. If you're in a very easy
L979 war, and very well-trained in your
980 martial skills, you may feel panic, but
981 you're prepared to be brave.

L982 So, I would say, courage is
983 transcendence. Whatever our level of
984 competence at more or less hairy activ-
985 ities, we are still obliged to go beyond
986 ourselves, to transcend ourselves, if we
987 wish to rise so high as courage itself.

988 That's why I say timidity kills.
L989 Kills more people than bravery be-
L990 cause every time one's timid, one's

991 pulling back creative impulses in one-
L992 self, denying them. One is denting
993 one's ego. And as an ego contracts out
L994 of shame, illness begins. This is my
995 opinion.

996 JBM: So courage is always a virtue?

997 NM: Absolutely! Make it the virtue. I *tal*
998 would go so far as to say that it's very
999 hard to feel love if you're full of shame.
1000 We can only feel love for someone else
1001 when we have gained respect for our-
1002 selves—it's why we have this endless
1003 obsession with courage. Where is the
1004 man who can ignore it? It's analogous
1005 to a woman who will wear no make-up,
1006 no jewelry, won't comb her hair be-
1007 cause she hates women who are ele-
1008 gant, feels those women are phony. "I
1009 want to be seen as my natural self." Yet
1010 that woman can never sneer at ele-
1011 gance with full confidence. A part of
1012 her feels there's something wrong with
1013 her. She isn't ready to get the utmost
1014 out of herself. By the same token,
1015 some men sneer at bravery, call it over-
1016 rated, are always ready to point out
1017 how much trouble it breeds. Of course
1018 it does. A macho brute is a macho
1019 brute. But not even a saint can sneer at
1020 bravery with a completely clear and
1021 open heart. Not even a saint.

1022 JBM: You know, one of the outcomes
1023 of living in such an organized society

033

1024 where everything is taken care of for
1025 us—men don't go out and kill their
1026 food for survival, etc.—there's a com-
1027 plicity, almost a sense of deliberate am-
1028 nesia that what it all comes down to is,
1029 ultimately we're fucking animals. And
1030 we will fight each other and if neces-
1031 sary, kill when our own is attacked.
1032 And I don't know if this is true for
1033 every man out there, but I would say
1034 90% of the men I know, when they
1035 meet another man, under the pleasant
1036 conversation is the question, "Can I
1037 take you or can you take me?" And
1038 usually it's a kind of fun, but regard-
1039 less, it's always there. Something like
1040 9/11 reminds us all on a national level
1041 that tomorrow, like that [snaps fingers]
1042 all of this societal bullshit could be gone
1043 and we're back to grunting and de-
1044 fending your fire. That's important. I
1045 think it's one of the major differences
1046 between the mentality of a man in the
1047 new millennium and the mentality of a
1048 man in the ~~90s~~ ^{1990s} when political correct-
1049 ness was all the rage and the sensitive
1050 pony-tailed guy was getting laid more
1051 than he should.

1052 NM: Well, I think you have an unbal-
1053 anced situation when the sensitive—or
1054 over-sensitive—pony-tailed guy is get-
1055 ting laid more than the macho brute.

1056 JBM: I don't know that he was getting

1990s ✓

1057 laid more than the macho brutes, but
 1058 he was certainly getting laid more than
 1059 he should. And for too little.
 1060 NM: Oh, you're a bigot.
 1061 JBM: I've got my prejudices.
 1062 NM: Yes, you may have received them
 1063 from your father.

1064 JBM: It's a distinct possibility.
 1065 PLAYBOY: In Freud's essay, The Un-

1066 canny, he contends that the strongest
 1067 instances of the uncanny involve
 1068 "doubts whether an apparently ani-
 1069 mate being is really alive, or conversely,
 1070 whether a lifeless object might not be in
 1071 fact animate." We live in an age where
 1072 such distinctions become even less
 1073 clear. This is indeed frightening.
 1074 We're overmatched by our technology.
 1075 Our ability to comprehend is exceeded
 1076 by the ability to construct and fabricate.
 1077 You have spoken of the inanimate—
 1078 that which cannot be animated. In-
 1079 creasingly, it seems, we are overcome
 1080 by this uncanniness. Is there more of
 1081 this to come in our future?

1082 NM: I say absolutely yes. So long as
 1083 technology expands and expands,
 1084 we're going to have more of such un-
 1085 easiness. I remember back in '69, I was
 1086 down at NASA, south of Houston, cov-
 1087 ering the first landing on the moon,
 1088 the flight of Apollo 11. In the book I
 1089 later wrote about it, there was a chap-

Note from Research:

Freud was actually citing an
 earlier essay by Ernst Jentsch
 for the whole of the ~~above~~
 quote below within his essay.

~~Subject~~ Inserts:
 (his)

Freud cited Ernst Jentsch
 in contending

Insert semi-colon, per original
 quote

19

Note from Research:

Then, the Manned Space
 Flight Center, now the
 Johnson Space Center

the Manned Space
 Flight Center south of

1090 ter called ~~"The Psychology of Ma-~~
1091 chines" which discussed the immense
1092 amount of attention these NASA tech-
1093 nicians gave to glitches. It truly wor-
1094 ried the venture—there was something
1095 so spooky about glitches. NASA had
1096 the best technology available, and yet
1097 the most inexplicable little malfunc-
1098 tions would occur. It obsessed them.

1099 The real question, I decided ~~(even~~
1100 though they would never admit it to
1101 themselves) was "Do machines have a
1102 psychology?" Do things go wrong be-
1103 cause machines have temperaments?

1104 JBM: Are we talking about a psycholo-
1105 gy or a soul?

1106 NM: You're beyond me on that one. I
1107 was asking if there was an inner life in
1108 the machine that we were not in touch
1109 with. You rarely find a person now
1110 who has a computer who doesn't feel
1111 their magic box has ~~no~~ personality. Or,
1112 cars—everyone feels that his car has its
1113 own presence. Of course, this last is a
1114 case where the uncanny doesn't scare
1115 us, it pleases us almost.

1116 JBM: You know, whenever I hook my
1117 computer up to the internet, I feel as if
1118 I have allowed 10,000 phalluses to en-
1119 ter her uninvited. I am left with the re-
1120 alization that I may have cheapened
1121 the relationship. An intimacy we once
1122 shared of only my fingers on her keys is

Note from Research:

Can't find this chapter title so far
Confirm?

Insert m-dash ✓

Insert m-dash ✓

(a) ✓

1123 lost. As a result, she does not work as
1124 well for me.

1125 NM: I think Freud put his finger
1126 on the nature of the uncanny. Part of
1127 what is so depressing about modern
1128 technology is the way it cuts off our
1129 senses. One of the things most awful
1130 about plastic—and I've been fulminat-
1131 ing against plastic—most unsuccessful-
1132 ly—for the last 30, 40 years, is that plas-
1133 tic is not uncanny. It's just there, inert.
1134 It's very hard to conceive of any kind of
1135 soul or spirit inhabiting the stuff be-
1136 cause it doesn't come out of nature but
1137 from a truly evil-smelling set of factory
1138 processes. Even a wooden cane has a
1139 touch of personality, but plastic doesn't.
1140 I've always felt it is the handmaiden to
1141 technology. Why do people love tech-
1142 nology? It gives you more power than
1143 you'd have without the technology but
1144 you pay a heavy price. You become a
1145 little more inert in your finer sensibili-
1146 ties.

1147 JBM: Where is our technology leading
1148 us? A car is certainly a piece of tech-
1149 nology but not until recently was there
1150 plastic all over it.

1151 NM: Yes, as they make plastic stronger,
1152 and more analogous to steel—which
1153 they will—so, in turn, cars are going to
1154 be made entirely of plastic because eco-
1155 nomically speaking, the plastic substi-

1156 tute is cheaper to work with and so of-
1157 fers more profit. No surprise then if
1158 the mediocrities have taken over the
1159 world under the banner of technology,
1160 corporate vision, and the unholy urge
1161 to purvey democracy to all countries of
1162 the world, whether they're ready for it,
1163 or capable of it. But we tell them in ef-
1164 fect, "You are going to end up a democ-
1165 racy whether you want it or not." This
1166 turns democracy into a farce. Because
1167 democracy is a grace. Any true democ-
1168 racy is sensitive enough to be perish-
1169 able, and we're in danger right now of
1170 losing our democracy right here. The
1171 people who are running the world at
1172 present, very badly in many places,
1173 have the feeling that successfully con-
1174 trolled direction is the only answer. My
1175 feeling, of course, is exactly the oppo-
1176 site. Global capitalism does not speak
1177 of a free market but of a controlled
1178 globe. It is alien to the creative possi-
1179 bilities that have not yet been tapped in
1180 legions of people who've never had a
1181 chance to be creative, who work and
1182 die without creative moments in their
1183 lives. But their hopes have, I believe,
1184 been buried in their gene stream for
1185 generations, and so are passed on.
1186 When talented people emerge from no
1187 apparent cultural background, I see
1188 them as the product of these ten gener-

1189 ations of frustration from people who
1190 wanted to be more than their lives gave
1191 them. Such an artist is now receiving
1192 the bounty that was packed into the
1193 dreams of his or her forbears. This
1194 premise also works in reverse. Re-
1195 strained evils, withheld evils, extended
1196 over many generations can end by pro-
1197 ducing a monster of a dictator.

1198 JBM: There's an argument that our
1199 technology is stunting our evolution.
1200 Were we not spending so much time
1201 going out into the computer, focusing
1202 on TV, processing the constant slew of
1203 advertisements, more people would be
1204 taking the inner journey and evolving,
1205 perhaps, to a higher psychic level. In-
1206 stead, we're developing a technology
1207 where—every day we get closer to hav-
1208 ing one device that will be your phone
1209 and your email, your this, your that,
1210 your internet access, a little device you
1211 carry with you at all times pro-
1212 grammed to know your likes and dis-
1213 likes. This device will send out a signal,
1214 broadcasting your information to all
1215 the other devices of the same nature,
1216 and as you pass a stranger on the
1217 street—say you both like to watch Star
1218 Trek, a little bell will go off on your re-
1219 spective machines. It will tell you that
1220 compatibility is near by. Why are we
1221 doing this?

1222 NM: Because of a deep fear. We've lost
1223 the often crippling but nonetheless in-
1224 tense consolations of religion. Formal,
1225 organized religion introduced many
1226 perversities into our nature but it also
1227 offered many poor people some
1228 hope—if you were a good enough per-
1229 son, you'd enter heaven. But religion
1230 also stood in the way of development
1231 of capitalism and technology, corporate
1232 capitalism. A man running a small
1233 business is living by his wits, but people
1234 enter corporations in order not to have
1235 to live by their instincts—or, most im-
1236 portant—their fears. Only a few have
1237 to take responsibility. The corporation
1238 can be a relatively benign organization,
1239 but it is still subtly totalitarian. And this
1240 is spreading. People at the top want to
1241 control the world because they're in
1242 terror that otherwise we are going to
1243 blow it up. My feeling is if the corpora-
1244 tions take over the world, the globe will
1245 indeed blow apart because technology
1246 could end by violating too much of hu-
1247 man nature.

1248 JBM: Hasn't technology taken over the
1249 world already?

1250 NM: Not completely. Not completely.
1251 There are still corners and avenues,
1252 games and places.

1253 JBM: There is still an underground. . .

1254 NM: That underground has to go a

*who are down a
little lower*

1255 long way before I will take it seriously,
1256 and yet I am ready to drink to that
1257 idea.

1258 JBM: Cheers.

1259