

**OWL (One World League):
A Lever for Social Change?**

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Supervisor not appointed for resubmission

A novel, website and exegesis
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Certificate of original authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis, to the best of my knowledge and belief, has not previously been submitted for another degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree, except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to create the precedent as to whether it is possible to facilitate change in civil society by challenging existing political and social values through the medium of a documentary or realist literary piece involving a mixture of fact and fiction. The hybrid fiction-to-fact book *OWL* thus created deals with a figure who functions as an ‘everyman’ who has all the human frailties but struggles for a society to evolve beyond the current and seeming everlasting ‘battle of the demagogues’.

The website accompanying the creative work is a central component of this exegesis. It was created in order to appeal to a broader audience and encourage immediate engagement with its ideas. I aim at motivating readers to actually create a new political party (OWL – One World League) just as is done in the part-fictional story embedded in the creative work.

In the exegesis I have examined three main themes underpinning my creative work. I canvas some of the issues wrought by the information and technological revolution, particularly the impact of relatively new social media on democratic politics. I also draw on my psychology and organisational background to examine how group and mass movements work. Finally, I outline the reasons for my choices of both the literary form and the presentation of the creative work.

Preface

The central focus of the exegesis is a creative work or works, for instance a painting, installation, photo media portfolio or film script. In the exegesis, the student critically examines their creative product in the light of contemporary theory and practice ... to meaningfully situate (the) work in contemporary theory and practice ... and may explore the influences, ideas, decisions, materials, technologies, events, theories, which inspire, inform, restrain or facilitate the process and production of (the) work.

<http://www.ecu.edu.au/CLT/tips/docs/exegesis.pdf> (as quoted in an exegesis seminar, University of Technology, Sydney 2011).

These are the parameters I worked within for this exegesis because I found conflict as to what actually constitutes a DCA with respect to the written creative component. Nowhere here does it state my experimental creative work must conform to strict literary guidelines.

David Richard Stevens, 30th June 2017

Introduction

This Doctor of Creative Arts (DCA) is an experiment. To say it is just a creative literary work with a supporting exegesis misses the point. It is presented as a 'package' of creative work that *includes* a literary piece, which may or may not be considered a novel. I will argue for the latter in this exegesis and especially in the Conclusion. I will argue the literary piece¹ is a fiction to non-fiction hybrid form which necessarily integrates with its bespoke website. The hybrid form as fiction to non-fiction has many manifestations, two of which are particularly important. First, conspiracy theory to truth. This is where alleged conspiracies are revealed as true. For example, in the book (the creative work) the historic sinking of the Lusitania conspiracy is irrevocably proven to be true. Then there is the fiction story *OWL* itself using social media to promulgate the creation of a new political party OWL which is turned in to fact. A real website, with a real social media campaign (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook etc.) has been actually launched into the real world subsequent to the first DCA submission. Even *OWL* the book mentioned in the fiction story has become 'real'.²

The creative component in its final published form is included as an addendum. It has the embellishments of a finished, print-on-demand (PoD) e-book with cover design; profile of the pseudonymous author 'd'ettut'; and the dedicated website and the social media strategy as mentioned. So, as the author I hope the assessment of this DCA and all of these critical components will be carried out in an 'holistic' spirit and not atomised into traditional academic components.

The research question is:

'Can an especially formulated hybrid fiction work³ fabricate truths to the point of credible fact?'

In the exegesis specifically I will be exploring the context and nature of the ideas that inform my political creative work *OWL (One World League)*, which I wrote part-time between January 2010 and June 2017. I will address the conceptual underpinnings for the world I have created and the politics that have been its impetus. I will also discuss

¹ Note it is not called a novel at this stage. There is a significant argument in this respect in Chapters 3 and 5.

² The real website is cited later. 'One World League' is a real Facebook page. The book is referenced in the 'references' and has been published.

³ The argument as to whether a novel can be anything else but fiction and vice versa is taken up in the exegesis conclusions where I address Gerald Clarke's biography of Truman Capote and Capote's assertion that he created the 'non-fiction' novel.

my techniques and historical antecedents for the hybrid fiction-to-fact literary form that I am using to enhance the cogency of the written work as a 'lever for social change.'

I am in my seventy first year and my professional background is as an organisational psychologist. Over the last four or so decades I have focussed on facilitating collaborative decision-making workshops on complex engineering projects on a global basis. This includes expanding the Panama Canal capacity; steering Gina Rinehart's AUD \$10 billion Roy Hill mining project and many other multibillion-dollar developments. This is a long way from my original training as a primary school teacher and educational psychologist; but training in counselling has helped. My experience in the corporate field and the contemporary political landscape has led me to question the efficacy of political decision making in general and also to revise my views on what I had hitherto regarded as conspiracy theory.

Those are the main factors that motivated me to write a fiction-to- fact work that could be called a formal exposition, or maybe even a treatise (but not necessarily a 'novel'). It might galvanise action in addressing certain problems emerging in Western democracies in the twenty-first century such as, but not limited to, overpopulation, nuclear weapons build up, and the unconscionable amassing of individual wealth.

I have had four novels published already by Abbott Bentley⁴. These are now out of print but are available as e-books through Amazon.com. All of these have elements of social and/or political satire/justice. To a significant extent all four novels look at ways in which human society might evolve in the future. For example, my first novel, *Greenwars* (1998), essentially covers the fact that technological evolution can outstrip social evolution. By this I mean the moral and ethical development of society is unable to keep pace with its own driving technology. This is all described in the form of an animal allegory – a kind of twenty-first century *Animal Farm*.

My second novel *Pie Square* (2000) describes a different aspect of social evolution. In this situation it is the benign exploitation of youth through a highly sophisticated interactive electronic-based fast food chain. Using this device young people are groomed for a more creative and constructive contribution to society.

In *Vampire Cities* (2000) the brashness, the harshness, of unfettered capitalism is the main theme. Finally, *Amber Reins Fall* (2006) looks in detail at an individual struggling in the 1960s and early 1970s to come to terms with contemporary society and the need

⁴ These are referenced in full in the 'references'.

for there to be a progressive evolution towards a moral betterment. The main protagonist invents the self-help concept.

These novels are precursors to the DCA creative work titled *OWL* (One World League) and show the development of my political thinking. They also all deal with a figure who functions as 'everyman' and the struggle for a society to evolve beyond the current apparent 'battle of the demagogues'. At the time of writing I would consider Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump, Tayyip Erdogan and Kim Jong-un to be among the contenders in this battle.

Yet my DCA creative work is also in many ways a departure from the novels I have previously written. I have moved beyond forms of social commentary or social satire to present a more fully developed hybrid model of fiction and non-fiction. This approach fuses factual, evidence-based and referenced materials in the creative work, tying these elements to a fictitious political plot. This work has now been published since my first DCA submission (December 2016) and is available through Amazon.com and other book retailers.

I accept my approach to this DCA could be considered unorthodox by some. But that should not diminish the significance of the effort put into extensive literature research and/or the creative effort.

The website <http://owlvoter.com>, which accompanies my written work, is a central component of this Doctorate of Creative Arts. It is the bridge between fiction and fact. As such, the website should be considered along with this exegesis and the creative work in the examination process. To this end, all of the text for the website is included as an addendum to this exegesis. As will be discussed, it is a comprehensive document with a properly constructed constitution for a political party, OWL; legally compliant forms for political party registration and membership application; the vision, mission and foundation policies for this new political party, and so on. This is to build realism and to create content within the statutory framework to actually form a new political entity.

There are other reasons for the creation of the website. I want my work to appeal to the widest possible readership and include the generations that have been either 'born digital'⁵ or for whom digital technology has become an essential tool in everyday life. So I believe the website will provide a focus for the work across more than one media platform.

⁵ Persons who have lived in a digitally based society from birth, unlike this author.

The second reason is that the website with its immediacy of technology and the offering of a supporting e-book enables the links between footnotes, references and main text to be quickly accessed and certain issues like complex conspiracies more readily understood by the reader. This should be attractive to young readers in particular, and have a more sustained life than the circulation of a book. However this will only become evident after publication.

The third and final reason is that <http://owlvoter.com> provides opportunities for greater participation by the readers through its public forum and voting capability. It should encourage a much higher level of participatory democracy in ways the format of a book produced for the individual reader could not. In addition, I have designed the website to serve a didactic purpose with respect to certain conspiracies alluded to in the creative work. This is explained in more detail in the body of the exegesis.

In this exegesis I explore the main themes underpinning the project. I canvas some of the issues wrought by the information and technological revolution, particularly the impact of new media on democratic politics. Drawing on my psychology and organisational background, I examine how group and mass movements work. I also explore different literary forms, histories and models, especially those related to fiction-to-fact models. I comprehensively outline my reasons for certain choices regarding the form and the presentation strategies of the creative work. The total DCA resubmission is around 122,000 words, with the creative work at around 90,000 words, the exegesis at about 28,000 words, and the balance for the website text.

Chapter 1

A political necessity for a twenty-first century cyber democracy

In the last century there have been significant changes within society, much of them, but not all, based on technological advances that have not been formally adapted to, or incorporated into a refinement of western democracy (or any other political system for that matter)⁶. In fact, one could argue the only way politics has exploited technology and specifically Internet technology is to gain votes, not to evolve policy.

Creating civil societies, that is formulating interdependent communities and organisations with rules and regulations created and enforced by ordinary citizens in a non-military context, would appear to be a distinguishing feature of the human species. Throughout the millennia, both before and after the emergence of the Athenian (democratic) state, there have been many efforts to determine the best systems to rule the behaviour of humans within societies. Analysing these systems in terms of political theories and different systems of social governance is beyond the scope of this exegesis, but the various forms of democracy⁷ have probably been the most popular of these, at least in Western societies. However, there is little evidence to suggest much has been done in terms of expediting the evolution of democracy through political parties since the nineteenth century. It could be argued that many social innovations such as the abolition of slavery and child labour, the prevention of cruelty to animals and other institutionalised activities that represent a compassionate side to evolving societies have been initiated more by individuals and pressure groups than as the result of the evolving of political systems or of the evolution of democracy as a political system in particular. But is the expectation of the evolution of democracy idealistic? Well, I think ultimately bringing equity to the world is not idealism, it is the responsibility of an intelligent species that is intending to survive.

OWL, One World League, the literary work that accompanies this exegesis looks at ways of initiating radical socio-political change through the fictional creation of a new political party that would have popular appeal, OWL. Such would be the level of credibility that inevitably the fictional political party may be turned into fact. Some essential psychological reasons why individuals might be attracted to the world of

⁶ For example, the digital revolution has allowed for global, instantaneous communication between hitherto minor pressure groups or 'special interest' groups through the Internet and such social networking innovations as Facebook and Twitter. This area is explored in more detail later in this exegesis with special reference to Heather Brooke's *The Revolution Will Be Digitalised* (2011).

⁷ Democracy is defined as a system of government by the whole population usually through elected representatives; ideally creating a classless and tolerant form of society.

politics supports the fictive elements. This is achieved by various vignettes describing the protagonists life which is hoped will add realism to a potentially dry subject.

This fictional story *OWL* will not be a didactic treatise like *Mein Kampf*⁸ (1998) or *Das Kapital* (2006) or other similar political literary works. These works might be considered as precursors to dramatic social and political changes, but they were never presented as fiction in the first instance then as fact, as is the case with *OWL*.

OWL describes a new political party that is to be built up cell-like using the Internet as its main mode of putting forward policies and enrolling interested people to contribute to policy refinement and recruit new party members⁹. It also alludes to global conspiracies using footnote hyperlinks to reveal stark truths about these conspiracies to the reader. Simultaneously, the reader of the fiction work is being entreated to engage with exactly the same thing through the <http://owlvoter.com>¹⁰ website. So there is a deliberate didactic intent by the author to both educate the reader and create verisimilitude.

This brings in the psychological link between the individuals and groups and the pressures exerted upon individuals to make them participate in, or at least make them feel as though they are obliged to participate in, social issues through being a member of a group. To be more precise, it is the 'social psychology and social justice' perspective being facilitated by social networking (this will be dealt with in more detail in the Chapter 2). Barack Obama has done this to great effect, especially in his two presidential bids. It has also been demonstrated in developments in Tunisia, Egypt and several other Arab states that began in December 2010¹¹. Described as the 'Arab Spring', this phenomenon was achieved very much by the use of Facebook and other social media platforms. In retrospect, it might appear the Arab Spring was not successful at all. But the forces unleashed by the social media and Internet at the time

⁸ This is not strictly true in that the unravelling of some of the facts associated with certain conspiracies are indeed instructional. The reader is learning of certain truths, hitherto considered fiction; or even not known at all. Additionally, complex yet real financial factors are explained. These include the Glass-Steagall Separation, Frank-Dodd Act, the Rothschild Formula and so on. So the notion of didactic fiction is raised.

⁹ This could be compared to a benign form of current terrorist organisations' recruitment *modus operandi*, spreading their tentacles globally through social media.

¹⁰ www.owlvoter.com includes *OWL*'s constitution, membership application forms, etc. The website also includes a public forum which will allow voting capability. Other inclusions are PayPal for paying membership fees, buying eBooks, etc; and a streaming capability linked to social media. This website is explained in more detail later in this exegesis.

¹¹ Heather Brooke expands upon this in the concluding parts of her book when analysing some diplomatic cables regarding protestors in the Middle East (2011, p. 235).

might take years or even decades to play out to an end we can only speculate on. Since then the Hong Kong 'umbrella' revolution has also unfolded.

At this early point it is worth considering the work of Heather Brooke¹². In *The Revolution Will be Digitalised*, she says in relation to the above:

In the digital age, the most difficult part of any censorship operation – that of collecting, altering, or destroying an offending speech – becomes easy.

Information stored digitally on a centralised network can easily become one giant memory hole, and the way authoritarian governments rewrite history is itself being rewritten. (Brooke 2011, p. 15)

So what she is saying is that in the digital age we have new technological tools for an evolution in democracy; but the same technology can be used for new types of autocracy. She even relates her comments to George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, particularly the Ministry of Truth's Records Office in that novel¹³.

Perhaps a more dramatic indication of where things are headed, at least from a Western perspective, is the Wall Street '99 percenters' protests. In 2011 on Wall Street, Manhattan, groups of people initiated a broad-based protest against what they believed was the massively unfair distribution of wealth. So the concept of the 99 percenters was based on 99 per cent of the working population of the US earning around only \$50,000 per annum, with 1 per cent earning more than \$1 million. Quickly that protest movement – undifferentiated in its political aims – spread to other countries, including Australia and the UK. Again the basis for the rapid expansion of this and other similar movements has been very much through the use of mobile phones and social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter.

In an article, *Occupy 2.0 The Fringe Movement Gets a Professional Makeover*, Christopher Matthews¹⁴ wrote of the evolution of the Occupy Wall Street or 99 percenters, who in 2011 had been unable to articulate 'a concrete vision for reform':

¹² Brooke, H. (2012). *The Revolution Will Be Digitised*. UK, Windmill Books. This work is further expanded upon later in this exegesis.

¹³ In George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the Ministry of Truth is Oceania's propaganda Ministry. It is one of four ministries. This Ministry of Truth serves the opposite as its purported name. It is responsible for any necessary falsification of historical events. Thus it rewrites history to change the facts to fit Party doctrine for propaganda effect. Party ownership of the print media makes it easy (in the novel) to manipulate public opinion. Film and radio, plays and novels and every conceivable kind of information, instruction, or entertainment carry the process further.

¹⁴ Christopher Matthews, 'Occupy 2.0 The Fringe Movement Gets a Professional Makeover' *Time Magazine*, December 3, 2012, p. 15.

Less than a year after the last protestor was removed from New York City's Zuccotti Park the movement has re-emerged as a series of laser focused advocacy groups that, loosely organised under the Occupy Umbrella, are trying to effect change in a variety of sectors, financial and otherwise... led in part by former Wall Streeters, these groups might still be able to promote radical ideas. Occupy Bank wants to overhaul the entire US banking system; but their approach to change is incremental and they're playing by the rules ... Amongst many are five Occupy groups that are making real progress. (Matthews 2012, p. 15)

Matthews includes here Occupy SEC, which was lobbying consumer interests to counterbalance the outsize influence of financial firms; Occupy the Boardroom, which was organising a letter-writing campaign so boards could understand lower income problems; Occupy Sandy, which was funnelling hundreds of volunteers and suppliers to storm-hit New York; and Strike Debt, a group of fundraisers that bought peoples' debts and then forgave them. The point behind all this is to illustrate how quickly pressure was being brought upon political powers to change their approaches. And this was all through the power of information technology, in particular social media.

But the DCA creative work *OWL* is still a work containing some fiction, the fiction of power, psychopathy, intrigue, murder and more. The techniques used in the literary work to create the illusion of truth, including the use of the epistolary, albeit now manifested in an email format, reflect one of the key characteristics in the unfairness of human life – that is, domination, not collaboration, in decision making (this is expanded upon in the footnote below, but is summarised here). The Internet allows participation and collaboration, ownership and commitment¹⁵, and ultimately socially important

¹⁵ Stevens, D. (1991), the author of this exegesis, developed a formula in *Participatory Business Planning: Recession Proofing Your Company*. Melbourne: Wright Books. The formula P- O- C- G is best described as follows. For any set of goals to be achieved, those involved in the achievement of those goals should participate in the formulation of the strategies to achieve the goals in the first place. The reason being that if there is a high level of participation there will be a high level of ownership. If there is a high level of ownership there will be a high level of commitment to see through the strategies to achieve the goals. Then there is an old saying 'commitment grows its own legs'. The source of this maxim is not known. However, in essence, what it means is that if there is a high level of commitment to achieve goals and the first set of strategies set up are not successful then 'another leg is grown'. That is another strategy is put forward. If that strategy is not successful yet another leg is grown. This process will continue until the goals are achieved and the successful strategy is identified. The reverse of this is true; particularly in a project management context. For example the Project Director puts forward particular project goals and then sets forward the strategy the project team has to follow in a directive manner to achieve the goals. And that strategy doesn't work. Nothing much will happen apart from those in the project team saying 'that strategy is never going to work anyway'. And they will walk away. This is because there is no commitment. There is no commitment because there is no ownership of the strategies. There is no ownership of

decision making is not to be by the hereditary elite or an oligarchy but through the common man.

On another point, the book *OWL* asks the questions: In politics, why is it always an individual who gains massive publicity by being some sort of celebrity, who ostensibly leads an entire nation? Why not try a triumvirate to take away the cult of the celebrity?¹⁶ This brings back the political notion of government 'by the people for the people'¹⁷. In *OWL*, the fictional political party, the will of the selfish individual with the notion of instantaneous gratification will be juxtaposed against the greater need of a stable, participative and just society. This party hopes the benign and global exploitation of the Internet will allow the latter to prevail.

It could be suggested that the basis of this new political party (both in fiction and fact) reflects Barack Obama's aforementioned campaigning techniques that utilised the Internet to gain massive financial and human resources for his first successful presidential campaign and, to a lesser degree, his second campaign. In an article in *Time Magazine* (3 December 2012) Michael Scherer suggests that Obama's innovative Facebook approach brought youthful voters to the fore at the very last minute in his second presidential campaign and could well have been the decisive winning strategy in the election. This was because 'half the campaign's targeted swing voters under the age of twenty-nine, (who) had no listed phone number ... a Facebook application that will transform the way campaigns are done in the future' was developed. This application was not just another way to digitally connect potential voters. More than one million Obama backers signed up for the app and gave the campaign permission to look at their Facebook friend list. More than six hundred thousand supporters followed up with more than five million contacts. Scherer quotes Teddy Geoff, the Obama campaign's Digital Director as saying 'people don't trust campaigns. They don't even trust media organisations ... Who do they trust? Their friends' (Scherer 2012, p. 16).

Email connects one person to the campaign. Facebook can connect the campaign through one person to five hundred thousand or more friends. Scherer concluded:

the strategies because they didn't participate in the formulation of them in the first place. Thus back to collaboration versus domination. This in turn will lead on to clear explanations in the section on social identity theory later in the exegesis.

¹⁶ The notion of triumvirate is a point of discussion in *OWL*; the DCA creative work.

¹⁷ 'By the people for the people' from the Gettysburg Address, one of the best-known speeches in American history, was given by the US President, Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War. The exact wording of the speech is disputed, but it is generally agreed that the quote comes from Lincoln's statement 'the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth'.

‘... by 2016 this sort of campaign-driven sharing over social networks is almost certain to become the norm.’ (p. 16). Given Donald Trump’s success in the recent presidential elections, it would appear this *is* happening.

Unlike Obama’s approach, the story of OWL, the fictional political party, goes much further than merely gaining financial and human resources support. It entreats all levels of citizens to actually participate in policy development and other critical areas in the formation of a new political party. As mentioned earlier, involved citizens, will have high levels of ownership and commitment to this new party, not just the ability to elect. Further on in the exegesis I will discuss the specific notion of ‘social identity’ as part of the social psychology perspective. This describes how social identity draws in all levels of citizens and answers in part the reasons for the success of the Obama approach.

OWL as the fictional political party originates in Australia. But with some national refinements it may be expanded to many other countries. In fact the evolution of OWL as a world movement through a soft revolution is another way in which it is different from the participative, national, and socially inclusive approach of Barack Obama.

The political party described in *OWL* is a twenty-first century innovation that moves away from the nineteenth and twentieth century adversarial attitudes of many of the established parties in Australia. After all, the whole notion of a multi-party system is to encourage an adversarial approach to government policy. But this is not necessarily an enlightened way. So OWL is primarily aimed at youth and at those individuals who think youthfully. It is also highly participative and fosters a collaborative rather than adversarial or confrontational approach.

This exegesis uses as a reference point the work of American scholars Danielle Allen and Jennifer S. Light, who in their 2015 book *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age*¹⁸ outlined through a combination of both descriptive and normative contributor essays what they term ‘egalitarian participatory democracy’. In their introduction Allen and Light claim their study’s ‘theoretical centre of gravity’ is this concept of participatory democracy, which is ‘oriented towards how people who live together – whether locally or globally – shape their worlds together, especially in conditions of diversity, working both through and outside political institutions’ (p.6).

My argument takes this further by dealing specifically with those who are attracted to setting up new political processes by working outside political institutions altogether,

¹⁸ Danielle Allen, and Jennifer S. Light (eds) (2015), *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 5-6.

Like many others, I have become increasingly disenchanted with the current model of representative democracy. The two main signs of disaffection with this model are the decline in membership of standard political parties and the falling participation in elections (in optional voting countries). The recent success of Donald Trump could mean his unorthodox campaign strategy is in itself more evidence of dissatisfaction with the established approach to democratic government; at least in the USA.

For some political scientists the standard solution to this widespread discontent would be giving the population greater involvement in the political process; others see it as a plea for understanding more effectively the limits of politics in a democracy.¹⁹

Scandinavian scholars Eder, Mockman and Quandt in their book *Political Trust and Disenchantment with Politics, International Perspectives* suggest there is no universal decline in political participation across various countries, particularly in smaller nations. They nevertheless address the emergence of social movements against authoritarian regimes, as was seen in the Arab Spring already mentioned, and issues in democratic countries affecting mistrust of conventional politicians. This is evidenced by the rise of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the USA, Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, and the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK²⁰. However, the British political scientist David Runciman has recently argued that in recent times progressive political parties only seem to draw people to their ranks as vehicles for the expression of disenchantment, which is 'no way to rectify the causes of their resentment'. For Runciman,²¹ 'the changing nature of power is the principal problem and technology lies at the heart of it'. Digital media has empowered both individuals and networks, thus 'power is exercised as choice ... squeezing the power of the state.'(p.21)

OWL the fictional political party aims to become another Occupy type group. OWL fictionally describes the creation of a new political entity that is to be built up cell-like, using the Internet, engaging interested parties and recruiting new party members to

¹⁹ There is a burgeoning literature in the politics of disenchantment, for example, Hay, C. (2007), *Why We Hate Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Hay, C. and Stoker, G. 'Revitalising politics: Have we lost the plot?' *Representation*, 45, 3, pp. 225-236; Urbinati, N. (2014), *Democracy Disfigured*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press; John Boswell and Jack Corbett, (2015), 'Stoic Democrats? Anti-politics, elite cynicism and the policy process' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22, pp. 1388-1405.

²⁰ Christina Eder, Ingrid C Mockman and Markus Quandt (2014). *Political Trust and Disenchantment with Politics, International Perspectives*, Leiden, Netherlands, Brill Publishers.

²¹ Runciman's response is from the left for those who still have faith in the power of the state to mediate between different political world views.
<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2016/09/new-times-david-runciman-networks-and-digital-revolution>.

actually participate. Simultaneously through <http://owlvoter.com>, the reader of OWL is being entreated to create a new political party in reality. In OWL a social media campaign is alluded to, rather than going into technical detail lest it bore readers. Implicit in this involvement of concerned citizens in OWL's creation is the exploitation of the Internet and the harnessing of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc. However, since OWL's actual publication, fiction *has* become fact. The real social media campaign for OWL has been launched in some of its manifestations, such as Facebook and Twitter, with real-life respondents taking part.

In OWL there is debate between the characters as to whether they should be creating a more general participatory political entity or a political party as such. But what is actually meant by 'participation' in political terms? The Swedish Communications expert Peter Dahlgren (2013) has studied the Occupy movement as part of research on what he terms 'alternative democracy', that is, 'efforts aimed at attaining social change by democratic means which circumvents electoral politics'.²² (p.3). In his discussions with a range of participants in these social movements who rage at neo-liberalism, Dahlgren found many people considering new parties and different types of representation.

Allen and Light (2015) ask this question in relation to their concept of participatory democracy. They identify four elements that are central to new social movements or organisations: first, 'it should be large so that it can have influence and serve many members'. Second, there has to be a high degree of consensus. Third, it should be 'deep', causing significant changes in its own members and giving them satisfaction and meaning with regard to their beliefs and identity; and finally, that unity should 'encompass a diversity of views' in order to avoid narrow factionalism²³. Few movements have deployed all four of these elements, and Allen and Light cite the American Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. On the whole, Allen and Light argue, 'groups must choose between these four goods. Given limited resources, they probably cannot be both large and deep.' (p.19).

The conception of new political parties will of course build on US President Barack Obama's campaigning techniques mentioned earlier. These strategies have forever changed the face of American electoral campaigns, and there has been a great deal of

²² Peter Dahlgren, (2013). *The Political Web: Media, Participation and Alternative Democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2013 Introduction p. 3.

²³ Allen, D. and Light, J. S. (eds) (2015), *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in the Digital Age*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 19.

political commentary on it by journalists and analysis by political scientists and communication experts²⁴. As mentioned earlier, the use of email, text messages and social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube were central to mobilising young voters.

Since the first flush of enthusiasm for digital media's boundless possibilities, some commentators have cautioned against its potential for misuse, particularly in relation to censorship and surveillance. The scope of this exegesis will not allow for an in-depth analysis of such speculation. However, as one example, in her book *The Revolution Will be Digitised*, Heather Brooke, the journalist responsible for exposing details of a British MP's scandal, argues that in the digital age we now have technological tools for creating better mass democracies: 'the Interactive Internet is providing the mechanism for the world's first truly global people's uprising in democratic revolution; but the same technology in relation to freedom of information can be used for new types of autocracy'. (p. 63)²⁵. As mentioned previously, Brooke relates her comments to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, itself a dystopian novel that critiques Communist political systems. This particular Orwellian notion is mentioned again as this theme is central to my creative work OWL and forming the real political party OWL: the balance between the possibilities envisaged by reaching millions of people while at the same time trying to protect their rights and security.

The contributions of information technology (IT), manifested as the Internet, websites, Facebook, Twitter, and so on, have been discussed as taking different perspectives to enhance the notion of new ways of creating a new political party and new ways of decision making (i.e. policy formulation). However, there are two other specific aspects of IT that while having obvious political implications could well enhance the creation of the illusion of truth or reality in a fiction novel, albeit with some clever manipulation. The first is YouTube. In *The Beast With a Billion Eyes*. *Time Magazine*. April 2 pp 36-39 Lev Grossman (2012) outlines some astounding features of YouTube:

In just seven years, [YouTube] has become the most rapidly growing force in human history. More video is uploaded to YouTube every month than has been broadcast by the three big (USA) TV networks in the past sixty years. It gets four

²⁴ See, for example, Clair Cain Miller, (2008) 'How Obama's Internet Campaign Changed Politics', *New York Times*, November 7 (Miller claims that the Internet has also changed the way politicians govern); Samuel Greengard 'The First Internet President', *Communications of the ACM*, 52, 2 pp. 16-18; Rachel Gibson (2015), 'Party change, social media and the rise of 'citizen-initiated' campaigning', *Party Politics*, 21, 2, pp. 183-197 (Gibson reviews some of the scholarly literature).

²⁵ Heather Brooke (2012). *The Revolution Will Be Digitised*. UK, Windmill Books, p. 63.

billion page views a day, which adds up to over a trillion a year. Currently it has around eight hundred million users (about the same as Facebook) who watch three billion hours of video a month. (Lev Grossman 2012, p. 36)

More recent statistics not only demonstrate YouTube's phenomenal growth but also provide valuable demographic data to somebody targeting potential youthful voters like OWL members. YouTube is now the world's largest video sharing website and in 2016 had over 1 billion users in 76 different languages. Compared to television, the YouTube audience is younger, more partisan and educated. The YouTube website claims to reach more 18- to 49-year-olds than any US cable network, with each spending an average of at least 40 mins per day on the site²⁶. It is now widely used in many different ways for political campaigns²⁷.

But Grossman warns of YouTube collapsing under its own mass. It has no editorial process. Examples of some of the YouTube attractions are so bizarre it's not worth mentioning them here. So how can it make a contribution to fiction to fact, serious or not? Well, instantaneous video pictures connected to an electronic version of a novel, or a website linked to the novel, could create mind-blowing, yet credible, visual representations of what is stated in the written form.

Then there is Ben Rattray's petition website, Change.org (Rattray B, *Change Agent* 2012). This allows anyone, anywhere, to turn a complaint into a cause and win. Change.org offers individuals the opportunity to express their opinion and support people in innovative ways besides writing letters or demonstrating on the streets. Public awareness for causes can be raised all over the world by the click of a button (possibly facilitated through the medium of a novel) towards a new platform to facilitate people power never tried before. Change.org is another dynamic channel available to OWL so that it might quickly promulgate its benign position on policies and gather support for its rapid expansion as a globally ambitious democratic movement.

YouTube enables OWL to (fictionally) educate millions of people on topics hitherto only understood by the financial elite (see footnote 8 of this exegesis). In addition, combining this approach with the (fictional) website allows the masses to participate

²⁶ <https://www.YouTube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>.

²⁷ See Abraham Kreiger, *Campaigning on YouTube: Messaging and Online Communication in the 2016 Presidential Nomination process*, BA Honours thesis 2016 Colby College, USA available at Colby College Commons.

(fictionally) in OWL policy formulation. This I am calling the beginnings of 'cyber democracy'²⁸.

In recent years there have been a number of accounts of the digital revolution of politics that try to burst the techno-utopian bubble. Astra Taylor, in *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age*, (2015) argues at length that the Internet in fact amplifies global inequalities at least as much as it ameliorates them²⁹. She cites corporate monopolies such as Apple and Google and the concentration of media power in corporate hands as important factors that perpetuate inequalities of access and distribution. One might well ask, as Taylor does, whether these platforms are the spaces of the future where the opportunities for transformation of society and politics will be played out.

This is particularly the case for those who argue that the individualist nature of social media is inimical to collective action and only serves to create aggregates of individuals, rather than political movements³⁰. This tension between individual and collective action is central to the arguments made by W Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg in their book *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics* (2013) for 'connective' rather than 'collective' action. Connective action in their view has two particular features that make it distinctive; 'frames of meaning that are easily personalised' and the ownership or availability of personal media platforms that can mobilise large numbers of people quickly³¹. Some of these events can be organised by political groups. At other times formal political intentions may be absent but social media can work as organisational devices in themselves.

Others such as Henry Jenkins, the well-known cultural commentator, continues to support ideas of openness and inclusivity that are evident in his definition of 'participatory culture'. The key elements include low barriers through social media to participation, strong support for sharing, informal mentorship, and members who feel

²⁸ Access is now available to a YouTube promotion of the real OWL on <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ciudx086pgs20aq/AAB-s2xjnRl4iIH042Q4oOwna?dl=0>

²⁹ Astra Taylor (2015). *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the digital age*. UK, Picador Pan Macmillan.

³⁰ Tim Markham (2016) succinctly outlines the arguments in relation to this point in his 'Review Essay: Social media, politics and protest', *Media, Culture and Society*, 38 (6), pp. 946-957.

³¹ W Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2013). *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Introduction.

that their contributions matter and who care about others' participation. He sees users not as 'consumers' but people who shape, share, reframe and remix media content in a grassroots context³².

A lot has been said about the upside of the digital age. It was Heather Brooke, previously quoted in a different context, who wrote 'the Interactive Internet is providing the mechanism for the world's first truly global people's uprising in democratic revolution' (Brooke 2011, p. 63). She said this in a discussion with Julian Assange³³. Many press and other articles referred to in this exegesis reinforce this view. This is the *raison d'être* of my creative work depicting a new political party that is benign in its exploitation of information technology.

But Brooke then quotes Assange responding contradictorily: 'the Internet is the easiest place to censor' (p. 63). This time her book, whilst extolling the virtues of individual freedoms and the ability to form pressure groups through the social media like Facebook, YouTube and so forth, mentions: 'In Britain information (is) held by the powerful (and is) not shared equally but rather divvied out through secret networks of patronage and favouritism.' (p. 57) She also writes of how the Founding Fathers of the United States had 'likely seen first-hand how Crown copyright was used by the ruling elite to limit access to and public use of government information' (p. 85). She then describes how when she moved from America to the UK she saw 'how Crown copyright continues to be used by those in power to control and restrict civic interest in exactly the same way in 2006 as in 1776' (p. 86). She also talks of a 1991 US Senate Bill going through Congress 'that would have required all companies developing communications technologies to include backdoors in their products for government interception' (p. 98). In the *OWL* novel these restrictions are alluded to in the character Virginia's obsession with the 'word' conspiracy.

In essence all this appears to be the antitheses to the notion of the One World League. But it is not! Engagement of the public on a structured global basis, albeit as a highly participative political party, will ensure that popular democratic rights will (or should) outmanoeuvre the political constraints that might be envisaged for the future.

Even so, for all the advantages we believe we are acquiring through information technology, Brooke (2011) says,

³² See Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford and Joshua Green (2013). *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. New York, New York University Press.

³³ Julian Assange: Purported developer/initiator of WikiLeaks.

What few people realise is that companies such as Google and Apple harvest this data (from mobile phone companies to telecommunication companies) and all are required to hand over to governments information when legally requested. (p. 107)

[There is] a growing divide between those who can afford the luxury of privacy and the bulk of people who can't ... those with power, like corporations, governments and rich individuals continue to demand levels of privacy no longer possible for the rest of society who opt to use the networked Internet (p. 132).

Brooke concludes her book with discussion on technical hacking and how some organisations have become hubs of 'political activism based around a few common goals; transparency of government information, individual privacy and the removal of information sharing restrictions' (p. 168). Her penultimate chapters are 'The Information War Begins' and 'To the Brink and Beyond', which present the notion of the *Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act* going through US Congress to give the US President the power to cut off the Internet entirely (p. 217). The final chapter, 'A Brave New World', augurs well for OWL because both sides of the equation seem to balance. She writes:

For those used to controlling the citizen's communication, the digital age is frightening. Suddenly a seemingly powerless man can, through interactive global networks, effectively challenge powerful individuals and institutions ... others view this time of unprecedented freedom of speech as a gateway to transform the political arena, and enlightened interconnected global democracy. (p. 228)

Among Brooke's concluding remarks are

What is likely to happen is that nations, realising their impotence at enforcing national laws against the world's citizens online, will band together to police the Internet. (p.228)

Free speech is not the great danger for humanity. Concentration of power is ... instead of re-engineering the Internet to fit around unpopular laws and unpopular leaders we could re-engineer our political structures to mirror the Internet. (p. 230)

This latter statement is an important factor in the considerations of the real OWL being set up as a new political entity.

The scholars discussed in this chapter outline a number of negative issues with the concept of participatory (or cyber) democracy, but these do not invalidate my focus on One World League. I continue to support the potential of the democratic masses, acting through the Internet, as an extraordinarily powerful force (a lever) to generate social change. Engagement of the public on a structured global and digital basis, albeit as a new highly participative political force, could ensure that popular democratic rights *will* out-manoeuvre the future political constraints of those who seek the alternative route.

Chapter 2

Social psychology, crowds and identity

Political scientist Melissa Schwartzberg uses the term 'epistemic democracy' to describe those who believe in the capacity of 'the many' to make wise decisions for the benefit of all³⁴. In this chapter I discuss this position as the basis for my political schema outlined in the creative work, as well as the notion of 'social identity' and the need for individuals to be a member of a group. The fictional story in the DCA creative work, my novel *OWL:One World League*, is underpinned by a foundation of people representing the 'everyman'. This group develops 'pillars of policy' that utilise social media to communicate globally and instantaneously to millions of like-minded people. In this chapter I further explore some ways in which digital media has the potential to strengthen or weaken democracies, but this time in the context of social psychology

Crowd power

In 2004 the American finance journalist (but not psychologist) James Surowiecki published what has become an immensely influential book, *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economics, Societies and Nations*³⁵. This concept was introduced by Francis Galton in 1906 but applied by Surowiecki to contemporary twenty-first century society. His central argument, as the title suggests, is that 'large groups of people are smarter than the elite few, no matter how brilliant [the latter] are at solving problems, fostering innovation, coming to wise decisions and even predicting the future' (pp. 30-31). In Surowiecki's view the aggregated knowledge of a crowd would be larger and more effective than any of the single components or individuals. He provides multiple case studies to support his thesis as well as analysing several circumstances where the 'wisdom of the crowd' was unsuccessful. His first example relates to a fair Francis Galton attended at the age of eighty-five, in which there was a simple gambling game where people had to guess the weight of a hog. What Galton found when he took all of the guesses and divided them by the number of people who guessed was that the 'actual weight arrived at was almost perfect' (Surowiecki, 2004, p. xiii). He had initially undertaken this informal exercise or experiment to demonstrate that unenlightened individuals (those of the lower classes of society at that time) were never likely to come

³⁴ Melissa Schwartzberg 'Epistemic Democracy and its challenges' *Annual Review of Political Science*, Volume 18, 2015, pp. 187-203 Schwartzberg supports a modified version of this theory.

³⁵ James Surowiecki. (2004), *The Wisdom of Crowds*. London. Little Brown.

up with a sensible voting formula and that the mass of people would always be 'far off the mark' (p. xiii). He completely recanted this after his experience at the fair.

Galton's experiment was carried out over a century before the Internet appeared. If he were living now, no doubt he would exploit this technology to bring about a 'click-on democracy', by using the Internet. (That is having citizens voting electronically on policy issues.) As mentioned Galton originally speculated that the average voter was capable of very little. He was wrong, when the crowd's average answer is considered. This perhaps validates the notion of one-person-one-vote and that the group will get it 'right', democratically. The aggregated wisdom of voters will deliver the government that is optimal for them at the time.

Another example given by Surowiecki is about the disappearance of the nuclear submarine USS *Scorpion* on 22 May 1968 and how a group of people with very little information had, as a group, used 'best guesses' to indicate within 220 yards where *Scorpion* had disappeared. It was found five months later. Surowiecki writes:

The crowd is holding a complete picture of the world in its collective brain ... we are products of evolution and presumably have been equipped to make sense of the world around us. With most things the average is mediocrity. With decision-making it is often excellence. You could say it is as if we have been programmed to be collectively smart. (Surowiecki 2004, pp. 30-31)

Surowiecki suggests that heterogeneous groups made up of some smart people and some not so smart people almost invariably do better than a group made up of just smart people. By contrast, homogeneous groups may be great at what they do well but they become progressively less able to investigate alternatives. Most importantly, the conventional wisdom of turning to a leader or an expert when you want something done is wrong. Instead, to get the 'best' answer you need to ask the heterogeneous group. And what is more heterogeneous than the public via the Internet. So OWL, the fictional party, exploits this phenomenon.

Even a crowd has to be able to distinguish good solutions from bad ones. Large groups, as indicated by Surowiecki (2010), seem to be able to achieve this intuitively. But for small groups and informal organisations 'fostering diversity is actually more important' (p. 29). What is important is the sheer size of the collective that is making decisions: the bigger the group, the greater the level of diversity. And this brings us back to information technology, the Internet and social media. Nothing has the capacity to equal the size of groups created through them, and therefore the levels of decision -

aking efficacy residing in them. Nothing has the same reach, in terms of communication to the masses and enabling actual interaction, than the Internet.

Surowiecki's work was published at a time when mass participation through social networks was just emerging and his ideas have been applied to a wide range of different fields, especially business, psychology and politics. Crowdsourcing, for example, has apparently become a popular model for companies wishing to engage the public in decision-making processes, and it has stimulated a trend towards mass collaboration in both the making and providing of services. As well, digital media has encouraged the emergence of a new grass roots–based model of citizen-initiated political campaigning that no longer needs to rely solely on traditional campaign management.

Historically many of us have long assumed the importance of experts who hold important positions economically and socially acting as arbiters of quality, influencers of popular opinion and gatekeepers of resources. But since this gradual shift in perception there has been an increasing erosion of expert authority; so for instance, there is little expert oversight in the Crowdfunding decision-making process. Despite this growing role of crowds in making decisions once left to experts, however, little is known about how crowds and experts may differ in their ability to judge projects. There is even considerable debate over whether their decisions are actually based on rational criteria at all. Yet scholars Ethan Mollick and Ramana Nanda, who carried out a comparative study of decisions made on evaluating the arts between an expert panel and crowds, found an important congruence between their respective decisions³⁶. Large groups, argues Surowiecki, seem to be able to achieve this distinguishing of good solutions from bad ones intuitively.

Surowiecki's detractors are legion and the traditional 'madness of crowds' has a long history³⁷. As Daniel Isenberg, the evangelist for entrepreneurship, claimed in 2012, 'crowds are wise' in only a limited set of circumstances: 'As often as not crowds bring us tulip crazes, subprime meltdowns, the Kitty Genovese scandal, Salem witch trials and other tragedies'³⁸. (Isenberg p.137). Critics point to emotional contagion, hysteria

³⁶ Ethan Mollick & Ramana Nanda 'Wisdom or madness? Comparing Crowds with Experts in Evaluation of the Arts' *Management Science*, December 16, 2014, published in 2015.

³⁷ The 'madness of crowds' was a term first coined by journalist Charles Mackay in a 1841 book titled *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, well before the emergence of mass participatory democracies. See JP Chaplin *Rumor, Fear and the Madness of Crowds* Dover Publications New York, 1959, 1987, 3rd ed. 2015.

³⁸ See Daniel J Isenberg 'How to Start an Entrepreneurial Revolution' (2010) *Harvard Business Review* February 2.

and patterns of thinking that perpetuate biased information processing or 'groupthink' as causes of crowds acting in non-rational ways.

Surowiecki claimed that that 'non-rational' crowd events are due to faulty systems of decision making in particular environments and/or failed cooperation or a too strong awareness of the opinions of others. Independent thinking is a central plank of his theory of the capacity for discussion and dissent. He suggests there are three other factors needed to be in play for any 'wise crowd' to exist. First, there needs to be a diversity of opinion and information acquired privately, however eccentric. Second, people should be able to specialise in particular areas and refer to their own circumstances through local knowledge. Finally, some aggregation mechanism, such as social media, needs to exist for turning private judgements into collective decisions.

In 2005, Surowiecki, presenting at the O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference, elaborated on the theory, specifically in relation to the circulation of information. He made three more recommendations: 'to keep your ties loose, be exposed to as many different sources of information as possible and make groups that range across hierarchies'³⁹. These tenets are central to the political party set up in the novel *OWL*.

Social psychology and identity

In 2005 before social media had such a widespread impact on political organisations outside formal channels, a protest movement was set up in the UK to 'Make Poverty History', which garnered support from approximately 15 million people. Nicolas Sireau studied this campaign in depth noting the use of various mass communication techniques of information and persuasion to mobilise public action⁴⁰.

Emma Thomas, Craig McCarty and Kenneth Mavor (2010) also used this campaign as a case study in their own discipline of psychology, suggesting that 'the question of motivating public support for a social movement is intensely social psychological' (pp 4-15). They argue that social psychology can play an important positive role in overcoming what Nelson Mandela (2005) described as the 'obscene inequality' of people'.⁴¹ Here I explore their contribution to the debates about social movements and communication.

³⁹ 'O'Reilly – What is Web 2.0?' Oreilly.com 30.0.2005.

⁴⁰ Nicolas Sireau, *Make Poverty History: Political Communication in Action*. (2009) Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2009.

⁴¹ Emma Thomas, Craig McCarty and Kenneth Mavor. (2010) 'Social Psychology of Making Poverty History; Motivating Anti-Poverty Action in Australia' *Australian Psychologist*, Vol 45, Issue 1, pp. 4-15.

The Making Poverty History campaign drew significant support from people who do not themselves experience disadvantage (and preventable disease and other catastrophes), that is, people and governments in developed countries. However, Thomas and her colleagues claim that this large group of people, though sympathetic, did not create sufficient 'political will to have any real effect on these worldwide problems'.⁴² The authors drew on psychological insights in order to find ways to inspire social and political action.

Nurit Schnabel and Johannes Ullrich, from Israel, have developed their own psychological perspective on social change. They suggest that cooperation between both advantaged and disadvantaged groups will facilitate not only the redistribution of power and wealth but also the restoration of their social identities. For them, disadvantaged groups experience threats to capacity to act, whereas advantaged groups experience threats to their morality. For Schnabel and Ullrich, restoring these aspects of groups' identities can unlock the potential for collective action among members of disadvantaged groups. Perhaps this will bring about a greater willingness to change the status quo toward equality among members of advantaged groups⁴³.

Thomas, McCarty and Mavor (2010) suggest there has been a traditional tendency to view the 'individual' self as most important, but they also draw on the social identity mechanism, which emphasises the profound psychological reality of social groups and collective behaviour. (This implicitly has important links to the politics of OWL. If its members behave in line with group norms as described, then OWL's policies, guiding principles, as delivered through the website, could become group norms).

These authors suggest the following three 'recent developments in the social psychology of collective action to explore ways to inspire social and political action in support of the anti-poverty cause'⁴⁴: (a) the role of meaningful social identities that mobilise collective action, (b) the motivating role of group-based emotions, and (c) group efficacy beliefs. I will deal with these three points in some detail.

First, the 'social identity' process in motivating commitment to collective action and social movement participation through Social Identity Theory means people's self-concepts consist of personal identities (things that make 'me' different from 'you') and social identities (things that make 'us' different from 'them'). Why are social identities

⁴² Ibid p. 5.

⁴³ Nurit Schnabel & Johannes Ullrich, *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, Vol 1 Issue 1, 2013, pp. 216-238.

⁴⁴ Thomas, McCarty and Mavor, Op cit.

important in explaining collective efforts in social causes? A possible reason is that a social identity acts as a psychological link between the individual and group, and thus enables co-action of individuals in line with shared understanding of who 'we' are.

Another possibility is that when a social identity becomes meaningful in a given context, group members will behave in line with the group norms that describe how group members ought to think, feel and behave. Social identification as a supporter of a particular movement (e.g. the gay rights movement) is a much better predictor of action than is membership. Psychologists Bernard Simon and Bert Klandermans have argued that some identities are more easily equipped for action than others because they have become politicised. They viewed a 'politicised collective identity as a key antecedent to collective action' that has 'become embedded in an awareness of the political context of the struggle'. (p 323).⁴⁵

These ideas of Thomas et al. have historical antecedents. They were first espoused by Kurt Lewin (1936).⁴⁶ Lewin believed that human behaviour involves the continual balance of tension, locomotion and relief. He suggested that a state of equilibrium naturally exists between an individual and their environment. When the equilibrium is disturbed tension results. To counter the tension the individual will take an action in an attempt to restore that equilibrium.

Lewin wanted to use mathematical models to represent his perceptions of the underlying psychological processes. This did not work for him because he was only interested in the individual or single case and he really needed group data. However, his theoretical notions ultimately led to his development of the notion of group dynamics, for which he is most famous. This links to social identity theory. Just as the individual and the environment form a psychological field, the group forms a social field. 'Social behaviours occur in and result from simultaneously existing social entities, such as subgroups, members, barriers and channels of communication' (Schultz and Schultz 1987, p. 284). This would apply to political parties and information technology.

⁴⁵ Bernard Simon and Bert Klandermans 'Politicized collective identity: a social psychological approach' *American Psychologist*, Vol 56, Issue 4, 2001, pp. 319-31. See also their later specific study of Turkish migrants in Germany *Journal of Personal Social Psychology*, Vol 95, 2008, pp. 354-66.

⁴⁶ Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947) is almost exclusively linked to the term 'field theory' which considers a person's psychological activities occur within a psychological field or life space. Field theory in physics led Lewin to consider that a person's psychological activities occur within a kind of psychological field, or life space. The life space encompasses all the past, present and future events that may possibly influence a person. From a psychological standpoint, each of these aspects of life can determine behaviour in any single situation. Thus, the life space consists of the individual's needs interacting with the psychological environment.

In effect Lewin was saying group behaviour is a function of the total field situation at any given time. Lewin (1947) later observed that it was easier and more effective to change people as group members than it was to change them as individuals.

Lewin showed that enduring behaviour that is committed to change is more likely to occur among participants in group discussions rather than through mere attendance at lectures. So in talking about campaigns to recruit people to a cause (and this could apply to political parties), Thomas et al., influenced by Lewin, suggest that campaigners would

do well to include would-be supporters in discussion (either face-to-face or Internet mediated) with other like-minded people, rather than simply providing them with information. Indeed it seems that many agencies have changed or are already aware of the powerful effects of dialogue. It is through Internet blogging that social change can become a reality. (Thomas et al. 2010, p. 12)

Here is support for the idea of utilising the Internet as a precursor for the creation of a new political party; or indeed the electing and re-electing of President Obama in the United States.

So we now return to what Heather Brooke said in terms of the Internet revolution enabling people to participate globally, 'in numbers, historically never envisaged' – that is, millions of people spontaneously participating in social movements. This in turn is linked to Surowiecki's *Wisdom of the Crowds* theory.

The second development that has been shown to be important in understanding participants in collective action is 'group based emotion' Thomas et al. argue that individual emotions can be taken on by the group, and these emotional reactions 'play a valuable role in capturing the phenomenology of the situation'. Certain feelings 'like sympathy are only weakly associated with action, compared to the stronger emotions like guilt and outrage'.⁴⁷ The OWL philosophy is to facilitate those stronger emotions through OWL the book.

The final development itemised by Thomas et al. is group efficacy, which they distinguish from self-efficacy:

⁴⁷ Op cit pp. 7-8.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to exert control over events that affect their lives. Group efficacy is the belief that the group's actions will be (more) effective at achieving desired goals⁴⁸(p. 9).

Nonetheless, these authors underline the necessity to include groups in decision-making processes, whatever the mechanism. For them it is central to include 'would-be supporters in discussion (either face-to-face or Internet mediated) with other like-minded people ... It is through Internet blogging that social change can become a reality.'⁴⁹

If the ideas contained in theories of social psychology, particularly social identity theory and Surowiecki's crowd wisdom concepts, as described, are combined with the massive reach of digital media, we might begin to create a powerful theory that explains why expansive collaborative decision making on political issues could produce exciting global outcomes; far more than the individual speech writer, lobbyist, policy maker or spin doctor could ever achieve. But we need the medium, the lever, to facilitate this.

Is it possible then that the hybrid fiction-to-fact *OWL*, by taking into account these factors, could achieve this outcome? I now explore various literary devices that could help convince readers of seeming fictional situations that could be realistically interpreted, or worked toward, as fact.

⁴⁸ Ibid p. 9.

⁴⁹ Thomas,McCarty and Mavor, Ibid p. 12.

Chapter 3

Literary forms, models and histories

Hybrid fiction

This exegesis examines OWL the fictional political party and *OWL* the creative work, both of which work towards the actual creation of a new political entity. In this chapter I describe some literary techniques that have been created, borrowed, or exploited to help create the hybrid fiction book *OWL*, which directs the reader to an especially created website that, in turn, endeavours to engage readers so that they commit to or assist in the facilitation of social change. This social change could manifest as the creation of a new political party, OWL.

In my first draft DCA submission, to the dismay of some, I used the term ‘fusion fiction’ to describe my hybrid fictional approach. For the sake of academic rigour I will avoid using this term until the Conclusion of this exegesis, when I believe I will be able to retrospectively justify its use.

This chapter addresses issues relating to the particular form in which I have chosen to finally present my work. These include the historical antecedents to my hybrid fiction-to-fact approach and an exploration of other models that have assisted in the development of my thinking. Why did I choose what I will now finally accept as the ‘novel’ form to present my work in conjunction with its website? (Note to this point I have not used the term ‘novel’ as I had not initially decided this was the appropriate form). Would it not have been more in keeping with its content to present my argument as creative non-fiction? In fact, though calling it a ‘novel’ to accommodate the fictive elements of the craft, I have chosen the hybrid form that incorporates both fiction and non-fiction. I have deliberately blurred the boundaries between these historically separate literary forms.⁵⁰

Leonora Flis⁵¹ (2012) *Factual Fictions* looks at genres and sub-genres on a spectrum from fiction to non-fiction. There is extensive debate on where the novel fits as a work of literature. Most of her discussion relates to what she calls the documentary novel. She also maintains she created the term ‘post-modern documentary novel’.

If Flis were to call *OWL* a documentary novel I would disagree with her. As I explain in more detail later in this chapter, a key difference in my novel is the juxtaposition of

⁵⁰ See Lennard Davis *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (1996)

⁵¹ *Factual Fictions* is subtitled *Narrative Truth and the Contemporary American Documentary Novel* (2012), Newcastle Upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

fiction against actual references and factual evidence for selected conspiracies. This juxtaposition is achieved through the exploitation of relatively new technologies (the website and hyperlinks) and is quite distinct from a 'documentary' novel, as she describes it.

Flis (p. 85) creates a simple Venn diagram locating the documentary novel at the intersection of factuality and fictionality. I believe this is far too simplistic to explain my literary work. It does not sit *between*; it actually simultaneously *combines* both factuality and fictionality. It mixes them to get an outcome, which she describes as a 'bi-referential interpretation', which I interpret as not being related to the documentary novel. To demonstrate this she presents a Gestalt drawing of a duck/rabbit (p. 89). Looking at this particular drawing one simultaneously sees a rabbit and a duck. I suggest the *OWL* hybrid novel *is* bi-referential and is therefore not a documentary novel.

At the very beginning as to what form the literary work was to take the conceptualised DCA novel was to work only with traditional literary devices to convince readers that what is in effect fiction, 'is' or more significantly, 'becomes' fact. In this early context I explored in detail the complexities of the emerging concept of the novel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when 'factual fiction' was related to early defamation legislation and associated threats of litigation, along with trying to avoid or minimise taxes payable on print format. Relative to this era were the devices of the epistolary⁵², preface declarations of authenticity, the *roman á clef*, and other creative literary devices. Later I explore the alternatives to these traditional approaches.

Davis in *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (1996) produced an innovative study on the origins of the novel. This work is highly relevant to the essence of this exegesis. He delves into the notion of the novel as a purveyor of both fiction and fact, depending upon context, the author, the time – particularly in the seventeenth century – of writing, and the prevailing political, social and legal forces at play. His observations, assumptions and declarations in his book have not been significantly challenged by other authors, to my knowledge.

⁵² The epistolary was used extensively in the early development of the novel. A cognate form has been used in contemporary literature in three volumes of letters, purportedly from God, in Walsch's (1996) *Conversations with God*. However, one might consider this is not so much the epistolary as automatic writing. This is discussed in detail as a case study later in the exegesis.

Preface declarations of authenticity, is self-defined. It was used extensively in the early development of the novel; and has continued right up to current times. It is used by all three authors in this exegesis' case studies; and by this author in the DCA novel.

In the *roman á clef* the author uses real people in real situations (mostly); but the people have fictional names.

Davis goes to great pains to distinguish between the developments of the novel and journalism in parallel with the cultural shifts that have occurred, particularly in the seventeenth century. He also describes the legal pressures that were brought to bear on veracity and truth in the written word, particularly in print. He sees novels as evolving from ballads and linked to the invention and rapid development of the printed news pamphlet. He also draws a distinction between a novel and a French Romance.

The news pamphlet was initially considered by the reading public (the working class and to a certain degree the emerging middle class) to be incredible and unreliable. He accepts the notion that most people reading the 'news' in those days would probably accept that it was mostly exaggerated, fabricated or straight out lies. However, legal pressures, particularly those related to taxes on format (not so much content) of the news pamphlets, required there to be a clear separation of fact from fiction. At this stage the novel started to evolve.

To distinguish it from the Romance, which generally dealt with the long-distant past and characters of heroic proportions, the novel was far more immediate. In fact, to establish the illusion of truth, the novelist might act as an editor of letters or other apparently important documents that had somehow just been brought to the author's attention. Herein lays the interesting twist.

Seventeenth and eighteenth century novels: lying and truth

The novelist of the seventeenth century frequently used immediacy through the epistolary as a literary form and a few other devices to establish the 'truth' of a narrative that was, in all probability, fiction.

According to Davis, printed news, in contradistinction to the novel, facilitated the starting of ideologies and political parties. Evolving from the news pamphlet, the printed news could be construed as today's equivalent of social networking through Facebook, Twitter and other manifestations of the Internet. Davis writes: 'Novels seem to have been assigned the responsibility for carrying social discourse, and news had responsibility for carrying factual discourse' (Davis 1996, p.100). The mutual similarities of news and novels 'went largely out of fashion by 1744' (p.10). This is when the series of new laws were created and used against the press to force the distinction between libellous and non-libellous material, that is, between journalism and literature. Having said this, an eighteenth century author of a novel might still be trying in many instances to create the illusion of truth in his fictional account by being the editor rather than the author per se.

And then the *roman á clef* was introduced. Davis describes this novel as featuring fictional people who are based on real people but have obviously fictional names. Sometimes the author would deliberately not properly disguise the real people. The motive for this came from the new defamation laws, particularly libel. Here the author could maintain his or her works were fictional but they were in fact allegorical and satirical 'truths' related to particular persons and, at times, political parties.

Davis talks about a simultaneous revolution in writing, particularly the Puritans use of a 'plain style', which 'claimed for itself a close kinship with the Word of God' (Davis 1996, p.80). And so, a 'powerful triangulation of language, legend and politics arises' (p.18). It would appear the political reasons to write fiction were to avoid prosecution. In many respects writers of fiction then aimed at overt moral truths as opposed to covert actual truths. Davis refers to the many works relating to criminality:

Novelists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were placed in extremely odd positions. They had to construct and elaborate a false theory of the novel to mask the inherently illicit discourse, writing about criminals in the fictional form ... being forced to lie about the fictionality of their work. (Davis 1996, p. 133)

To go a step further in the describing of the more 'traditional' ways of fabricating the truth – or creating the illusion of authenticity – we can make a comparison between Daniel Defoe⁵³ and Henry Fielding⁵⁴. Defoe, whilst commonly recognised as one of the inventors of the novel (he certainly did not do this alone – and it depends on how one defines a novel) when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*⁵⁵, created quite a controversy. Some thought his novel was a true account of experiences of Robinson Crusoe told through the editor/author Daniel Defoe. There are others who maintained that the story was historically true, based on the real adventures of a marooned sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who spent four years as a castaway on a Pacific island. But others again (back to the *roman á clef*) believed it was an allegory of Defoe's own life: Robinson Crusoe's

⁵³ Defoe, Daniel (1660 – 1731) he was imprisoned for his notorious pamphlet called *The Shortest Way With Dissenters* and was a prolific writer and produced some 560 books, pamphlets and journals. The work for which he is best known is *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). (Drabble M – Ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵⁴ Fielding, Henry (1707 – 1754) he was a well-known dramatist and between 1729 and 1737 wrote some 25 dramas. *Tom Jones* was one of his most popular novels. Fielding devised what he described as 'comic epic and pros' which are in effect the first modern novels in English leading straight to the works of Dickens and Thackeray (Drabble M – Ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵⁵ first published in 1719.

isolation on the island mirrored Defoe's isolation during his jail sentences. This is discussed in more detail as a case study in Chapter 4 of this exegesis.

Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*⁵⁶ was written some time later, and the situation is a little different. Fielding does not look to the creation of the illusion of truth through statements in the preface or any other way. In fact he does the reverse, maintaining his work is fiction when in reality it is based on many notorious events from his own life. Many critics considered his work was not really creative writing; it was diarising.

There is some similarity here between the lives of Defoe and Fielding in that Defoe was a notoriously duplicitous person (Drabble 1996). He had been a spy and counter-spy, and a bankrupt. Some critics have suggested he didn't know himself when he was lying (creating fiction) or telling the truth (through the *roman á clef*, satire or allegory). In contradistinction, if what Fielding presented as fiction was in reality 'fact' then, presumably, he did know he was lying.

So, according to Davis (1996), factual fiction and fictional fact had become a well-established literary device by the eighteenth century. Whether this should be considered a deliberate, creative literary technique or a response to social, legal and political necessities is another matter. My exegesis explores the techniques of creating the illusion of fact through fiction in more detail later as a series of case studies. These case studies provide perspectives on authors, cultures and epochs to explain why fiction can be presented as fact. They allow me, as the author of *OWL*, to entertain the notion that the illusion of fact through fiction is quite plausible. This has been very important when trying to achieve some sort of social shift through a written document.

Davis also writes about the notion of the library and how it arose during the middle of the seventeenth century. He talks about the function of the library as a 'public stock' of learning and knowledge, in particular 'knowledge belonging not only to the present but to the public' (Davis 1996, p. 141). Of course, the notion of aggregating vast amounts of 'public' knowledge is certainly not new to the twenty-first century. One of the ways in which this is achieved today is through Google, which has the stated aim of converting every book it can access into digital form. This will create the biggest library in the world, instantly available to all who can access it. Herein lies another problem. If fiction can be used to disguise facts (allegory, satire, *roman á clef*, etc.) and fact can be used to describe fiction, the controller of the Google library (if there is one) must be a

⁵⁶ first published in 1749.

powerful person. This is expanded upon in the DCA hybrid fiction novel itself as one way of controlling a conspiracy.

Twentieth century novels: fact and fiction

Whilst Flis (2012) generally supports Davis's assertions on the status of the novel in the eighteenth century in terms of factual fictions and fictional facts, she places far more emphasis on the emergence of American documentary narratives in the nineteen-sixties and beyond. Her focus is based largely on four contemporary authors; Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, John Berendt and Don DeLillo, in particular Capote's book *In Cold Blood*; Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (1979) and *The Armies of the Night* (1968); Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1994); and DeLillo's *Libra* (1988). The latter is a sometime fiction, sometime factual biography of Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of John F Kennedy.⁵⁷

Flis also cites a large number of different types of novels. She talks about creative non-fiction. She talks about the documentary novel. She talks about literary journalism. She talks about new journalism. She even talks of new, new journalism. She says 'the blurring of the border between fiction and non-fiction writing has been in existence for a long time, probably for as long as there has been narration, oral or written' (p. 178).⁵⁸ She accepts that 'fact' has been an integral part of the convention of the novel and considers 'that until the 1960's factual narratives were frequently considered insignificant and not really valued for their own sake' (p. 178). She says some authors

take non-fiction as their starting point (an historical narrative, a biography, an autobiography, a journalistic text) and stretch their branches towards fiction. Others still have a fictional core but rely to a large degree on external facts (p. 178).

Flis writes of Tom Wolfe's opinions of the status of the novel in the nineteen-fifties, one being 'that the mostly American novels were burning their last bright flame as the holy of holies' (p. 196). As well, 'New journalism and the simultaneous re-rise of the documentary novel in the nineteen-sixties denotes that powerful literary reaction to the weaknesses of conventional journalism and the failings in traditional fiction writing' (p. 196). She talks as though in the revolutionary social movement of the nineteen-sixties a distinctive interest developed in topical and up-to-date social, political and cultural

⁵⁷ This book is of particular interest to me as the crux of the *OWL* novel is a series of conspiracies. The Lee Harvey Oswald story is rich in conspiracy.

⁵⁸ In this assertion I understand she is sympathetic to Davis's notions on fact and fiction in the novel, whatever the novel's form.

events as well as in history. Daily newspapers as well as historical books and archives became the centre of writers' and journalists' attention.

Flis envisaged new terms for describing different types of novels, depending upon where they are on the spectrum. However, the purpose of this DCA and this exegesis and in particular – the hybrid fiction novel *OWL* – is to demonstrate not only old and new techniques for fabricating the truth, but a new 'use' of the novel. As Ewan Morrison says (and I as author *try* to), 'Let the world in and speak through the many forms that the world already speaks through' (Morrison 2012 p. 13).⁵⁹

Like Davis, I accept that factual fiction and fictional fact are already well-established literary devices and will continue into the future. As the author of *OWL*, I am perpetuating these phenomena, albeit with some innovative applications.

In the historical, cultural and social contexts of the novel I go one step further. I suggest a new and different approach to the creation of the illusion of reality: the creation of a new political party within my novel, with the reader helping and with the support of the Internet in all its manifestations. But other ways of creating the illusion of reality that were not available to earlier novelists now exist.

The role of metafiction

Regardless of the plethora of novel types and the style that ultimately arose, the metafiction style, in particular, had to be considered seriously as a possible approach to my hybrid fiction novel in creating the illusion of fact from fiction, as certain aspects of metafiction are relevant to my search for the appropriate literary form. Metafiction is a way of creating the illusion of reality that might not have been available to earlier novelists. From my perspective, however, metafiction is just not a powerful enough device to attain the levels of authenticity I seek in my hybrid fiction novel. I believe readers of metafictional novels will always know they are reading fiction.

Novels like John Barth's *The Sot Weed Factor* (1960) and *Giles Goat Boy* (1996) are claimed by many to be heavy influencers of the metafictional form. There are historical contexts to his novels and as such are considered as being metafictional, or at least historiographic metafictional reflections. But neither of these books makes any claim to fact or truth. They do not fabricate the concept of 'truth'. *Breakfast of Champions* (Kurt Vonnegut, 1975) is more science fiction than anything else; although the sketches and drawings by the author give it strong surfictional status. (The term surfiction is

⁵⁹ Morrison is discussed in more detail later in this exegesis.

discussed in detail later). But again it does not present as the truth or fact; nor does it claim to. My intention is to take a much more direct and probably less literary/artistic approach than these writers of metafiction.

Metafiction is an interesting concept but it has to be transitioning fiction to fact if it is to fit into the context of my DCA creative work. The case studies described in Chapter 4, namely, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2004) and Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God* (1996, 1997, 1998), are presented in present time trying to convince the reader of a 'truth', now. This is the reason I selected them as the supporting case studies in my quest to demonstrate contemporary 'fiction to fact'. This is in contrast to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which at the time of its publication would have been perceived by many as truth, 'now'; meaning for those people alive at the time of Defoe's publication.

Metafiction, if defined literally, would mean 'the fiction behind fiction' or a 'higher fiction' or 'fiction about fiction'. This means it is fiction that includes within itself a reflection of its own functionality. Words used to describe metafiction are self-conscious, introspective, introverted or narcissistic. In *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh (1984) suggests that the use of the metafiction technique actually extends from modernism and is a questioning of consciousness and in particular 'reality. It is the latter that is of interest to me in the creation of *OWL*. Waugh suggests that 'by studying metafiction one is, in effect, studying that which gives the novel its identity' (Waugh 2003, p.71). She goes further, describing metafiction as 'fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality' (p. 2). She also suggests there does not need to be the dividing of contemporary metafiction from older works containing similar types of self-reflective techniques. Rather than seeing metafiction as a twentieth century technique, she and many other authors trace the notion of self-reflectivity back to Cervantes's fifteenth century novel *Don Quixote*. However, I dispute this and suggest metafiction (or at least hard metafiction as described later in this chapter) is a twentieth century literary phenomenon. Those novels considered to be hard metafiction stand alone as a modern genre.

Characteristics of metafiction vary widely, although patterns can be traced. Some that relate to my hybrid fiction work include:

- Presenting and discussing fictional works of an imaginary character (or narrator)

- 'Playing' the narrator by involving him or herself with fictional characters
- Rejecting conventional plot
- Directly addressing the reader.

Metafiction and historiographic metafiction

In *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, Hutcheon uses the terms 'metafiction' and 'historiographical metafiction' (Hutcheon 1980, p. 24). The latter is to do with consciousness and self-reflectivity, but is particularly concerned with history. It appears that as the notion of realism matured, history came to represent supposedly objective views and the novel to represent subjective fiction. Both modernists and postmodernists challenged history by acknowledging 'facts' as presented as being just authors' subjective interpretations. Historiographic metafictions, according to Hutcheon, are 'novels that are intensely self-reflective but that also both reintroduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge' (pp. 25-26). What Hutcheon is saying is that to rewrite the past through fiction and open it up to the present prevents the past from being conclusive. Historiographic metafiction 'plays upon the truth and relies on historical record. Historical details are deliberately falsified ... to highlight the failures of recorded history' (p. 26). Thus there is, or can be, an alternative truth to the past, but it is all in an historic context. My hybrid fiction *OWL* is more to do with creating a 'new' future, not a 'new' past, so historiographic metafiction is not considered further.

In a word, metafiction typically involves 'games'. In these games the levels of narrative reality and the readers' perceptions of fiction and fact are deliberately confused. But there are other aspects of metafiction I had to consider when finalising the form of my literary work, including surfiction.

Surfiction and other approaches to literary form

The term 'surfiction' was coined in 1975 by the writer Raymond Federman in *Surfiction and Fiction: Today and Tomorrow*. He experimented with typography and had it climbing up and down and across and around the page. His books *Take it or Leave it* (1976) and *Double or Nothing* (1979) challenge readers' preconceptions about fiction, but also about reading it itself. Lawrence Sterne also did this in the eighteenth century

with *Tristram Shandy*.⁶⁰ Federman rejected both metafiction and experimental fiction in describing his own work, promulgating the term surfiction:

[Metafiction] self-consciously advertises its own fictional status. It doesn't necessarily attempt to be meaningful or truthful or even realistic; although it can achieve the affect of realism by its unusual approach. It could be accepted that surfiction, like surrealism, goes beyond realism ... It's the kind of fiction that constantly renews our faith in man's imagination and not in man's distorted vision of reality. (Federman 1975 p. 7)

However, having said this, metafiction would seem the appropriate holonym that includes surfiction. I conceptualise two sorts of metafiction – 'soft' and 'hard' – the latter incorporating surfiction, and the former having more to do with the traditional novel, with an emphasis on reflective, self-conscious or introspective writings. This first definition could accommodate Waugh's notion of metafiction being apparent in novels of all ages.

One recognisable link to surfiction I use in *OWL* is the typographical challenge. For example, in one chapter I link the initial formation of the political party to a future in which the party is established and use a series of faux headlines with brief incomplete journalistic notes under those headlines to indicate the progress the political party has made over a prescribed period of time. This removes the necessity to engage the reader in unnecessarily long, wordy sections describing how the new political party ingratiates itself into the contemporary social psyche. The same surfiction technique, is used elsewhere in the novel to shorten potentially prolix monologues and to move the reader into the future, when necessary. So, while some surfictional techniques are used in *OWL*, it should be considered not as a surfiction novel but as a novel that uses some surfictional techniques to expedite the story. Below are examples of some faux press headlines used in this respect.

⁶⁰ *Tristram, Shandy, The Life and Opinions of*, Lawrence Sterne (1759 – 1767) was written as a series of volumes. It was regarded as the precursor to the twentieth century stream of consciousness novels. He parodied the 'new' novel form of his contemporaries providing no consistent plot or conclusion using unusual typography which included rows of asterixes, dashes, diagrams, blank pages, etc. I consider his work as a one off that was prophetic and ahead of its time by centuries.

THE AUSTRALIAN

THE HEART OF THE NATION

OWL says 'Let's Fly Together'

OWL, (One World League) the newly established 'participatory party' urges voters to help it 'run the country' ... and why not the world?

THE AUSTRALIAN

THE HEART OF THE NATION

OWL (One World League) Flies

OWL gains its first seat in government as a result of last week's election. New OWL Senator Mark Vellon in NSW said 'This vindicates our faith in the public's aggregated wisdom and creativity. We're not partisan; we are driven by a public participatory approach to policy formulation. We have the technology to ...

FINANCIAL REVIEW

OWL Seems Greener than Green

It was only two elections ago the Greens had the balance of power in the Upper House; now it's OWL's turn. 'We use a wise and sensible consensus driven approach to all policy areas. It's all done online. Everybody has the opportunity to have a say'

Is the website surfiction?

The website that I especially created and accompanies my DCA work of hybrid fiction will enable its readers to interactively help formulate policies for the new, 'real' political party. In the context of surfiction, it is worth noting that the website will be introduced by a key character, one who in the last section of the novel vies for the authority of the omniscient narrator and talks directly to the reader. Such introductions to 'real' sections in the novel are devices that possibly could be considered an aspect of metafiction or even surfiction.

In the introduction to this exegesis, I mentioned there are ways in which the <http://owlvoter.com> website is an important adjunct to both the *OWL* novel and to the exegesis itself. In the first instance, the website in its completed form will hopefully attract its targeted readers. As discussed earlier, the targeted readers are generation Y, the more youthful thinkers of generation X, and baby boomers. It will be attractive to these readers in the sense it is *applied information technology* and, being online, it apparently has its own inherent attractiveness, at least to generation Y. The second compelling reason is that the website with its immediacy of technology and supporting eBook, has hyperlinks that take the reader to easily accessible detail on complex conspiracies that are relevant to the story line.

The third and most important reason is that <http://owlvoter.com> allows true participation from the readers through its public forum and voting capability. The *OWL* message board will challenge readers to offer innovative political policy ideas on this new political entity and debate issues raised in the novel itself. They can also blog about specific issues. For example, the notion of a highly effective, fair and easy to implement tax is introduced in the novel,⁶¹ as illustrated below. This is supported by a character in the story, who asks readers the challenging question, 'Who in their right mind wouldn't support a tax like this?' Additionally, a real Australian Federal politician has been exposed to the same real tax information, and I have recorded his⁶² response:

This idea has been raised a number of times over the years and I have wondered why it has not been pursued by governments. It certainly sounds appealing, although I suspect if it was as simple as it sounds, it would have

⁶¹ The tax idea introduced in *OWL* is also real and the source is identified in the attached graphic. The tax idea has been around for years. yet despite its fairness it has not yet resonated with the public.

⁶² This statement came from the former Federal Government Chief Whip who generously replied to an invitation to read a draft of *OWL* and to respond to the message board debate.

been, particularly given the budgetary difficulties recent governments have had. A couple of possible barriers come to mind –

How do you adequately differentiate between genuine financial investments and speculative flows?

More significantly, if only one country such as Australia, or indeed a small number of countries was to go down this path, I suspect the speculative activities would just relocate to where they are not taxed – and this would be so easy since it is all done electronically anyway. In short, it would not “kill the speculation that it is taxing”, but simply cause its relocation.

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Independent Political Party

7th of May 2014

An effective budget solution: tax speculation

0.1%

“Unbalanced minds cannot balance budgets!” —Lyndon LaRouche

The solution to the national budget deficit that actually helps people, instead of killing them, is a tax on the damaging financial speculation that drains the wealth out of the real economy.

A 0.1% tax on financial speculation is a tiny little tax, only \$1 on every \$1,000 of transaction, compared to the “great big” taxes such as, say, the GST (\$100 on every \$1,000).

BUT... it will raise a massive amount of money: \$135 billion in one year—enough to cover the \$123 billion of deficits that Hockey is projecting over the next four years!

This is because the scale of financial speculation that it will tax is mind-boggling.

Australia's annual gross domestic product is \$1.4 trillion; by contrast, the Australian Financial Markets Association (AFMA) annual report reveals that for the year 2012-13 total turnover of all financial markets was more than \$135 trillion!

Virtually none of this \$135 trillion turnover had anything to do with the real economy: government bonds, which the government issues to borrow money, accounted for \$1.7 trillion of it; turnover in shares on the stock market was \$1.15 trillion; and foreign exchange on the import and export of goods and services was \$620 billion.

The balance of over \$130 trillion was in all manner of speculation in derivatives—futures, options and swaps—and speculation in foreign exchange (only 1.4% of foreign exchange trade relates to import/export).

Win-Win

The 0.1 per cent speculation tax is a win-win: not only will it raise more than enough tax revenue, it will kill the speculation it is taxing.

A tax of \$1 on every \$1000 will not be a burden on genuine investors in stocks and bonds and genuine foreign exchange transactions.

It will, however, destroy the “business model” of the financial speculators, who rapidly buy and sell and buy and sell on massive volumes in order to skim profits from driving down prices for producers and driving up costs to consumers. It will end this unproductive, predatory and parasitical paper-shuffling that is draining the life out of the real economy.

Consequently, it will be a short-term source of tax revenue, but the real economy—farming and manufacturing production, skilled trades, etc.—will, freed from this burden, be able to prosper, which will expand the normal tax base.

That this 0.1% speculation tax will solve the current budget deficit is a bonus; its intention is to protect the real economy from financial predators, like the CEC's other policies of a Glass-Steagall separation of retail from investment banks, and national banking.

To fight for these solutions, join the CEC.

Another participant to the message board discussion responded:

You don't need to differentiate between genuine financial investments and speculative flows. Just tax the lot. It is only 0.1%.

With Australia having such a relatively stable government and with such a small tax would people really think to relocate?

Interactions like this make the whole OWL concept (fiction to fact) even more real, with

the balance of fiction (the character from *OWL*) and of fact (a real tax issue from real sources).

Another surfictional approach?

So in a modern literary context the Internet could be considered as technology that is generating new forms of communication and thus more innovative approaches to literary forms. Is this surfiction? As previously mentioned, the journalist Ewan Morrison wrote in 2012:

A score of new books and e-books with mainstream publishers are motivating young readers to find out more by interactively mixing historical fact with first – person fictionalised accounts and embedded video ... Multi-format, open access, Internet ... Wiki-learning is in the process of demolishing the walls that protect the novel ... Whether we like it or not, the net is rewiring our reading habits ... the novel must break into new hybrids and leave the nineteenth century segregation of fact, fiction, memoir and essay behind. The novel must let the world in and speak through the many forms that the world already speaks through.⁶³

Fiction or non-fiction

A number of books ⁶⁴ span genres such as memoir/history and fiction/non-fiction, and experiment with work across media platforms such as graphics/digital and embedding videos. These speak to Morrison's injunction about 'letting the world in' and pushing the boundaries of traditional divides in literature. This is especially important when considering the divides of fiction and non-fiction, particularly when they appear to be fused.

While one might not necessarily attribute the advent of digital media as the origin of this phenomenon, it has certainly facilitated and strengthened what has been called a 'post-truth' era.⁶⁵ 'Fiction demands verisimilitude, reality forces no such exigencies,' says Roy R. Luna, writer of *Lord of Reason* Vol 1, in which the omniscient narrator and the fact checker quarrel over the story's authenticity⁶⁶. On the other hand, Graeme Macrae Burnet's book *His Bloody Project: Documents relating to the Case by Roderick Macrae*,

⁶³ Morrison, Ewan (2012). *Factual fiction: writing in an information age*. London Guardian Newspapers Limited.

⁶⁴ It is beyond the scope of this exegesis to explore which books, how many etc. One might have to accept Morrison's assertion that there are 'a score of new books and e-books', as quoted earlier.

⁶⁵ There has been a significant revolution in historiography which has had an impact. See Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?*.

⁶⁶ Roy R Luna, *Lord of Reason* Vol 1, Solution Hole Press, LLC 2016.

which was shortlisted for the 2016 Man Booker Prize, fictionalises various sources such as court proceedings (though not all) so effectively that readers are left with the uncertainty and unease that often characterises the crossing of these traditional literary boundaries⁶⁷.

An example of how this uncertainty gap can in fact be exciting for readers in the twenty-first century is the response to Dan Brown's thriller *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), which by 2008 had sold over 70 million copies and been translated into 40 languages⁶⁸. Brown was deliberately obfuscating about the fiction and truth of his 'novel', attempting to convince readers through the use of a DVD that his narrative was non-fiction. He claimed to be inventing a new literary form that was not historical fiction but 'fictional history' and devised conspiracies that of necessity drew on conjecture. The public pronouncements by the Catholic church and debates between academics about its historical veracity created a veritable cottage industry of subsequent works⁶⁹. *The Da Vinci Code* is discussed in more detail as a case study in Chapter 4.

As mentioned previously, traditional fiction can take many forms – epistolary, diary, and so on – and draw on a wide range of techniques and different narrator styles. These forms and styles are possibly more restricted in non-fiction⁷⁰. Fiction can provide mystery, intrigue and complicated plots to capture the reader's imagination, possibly more readily than a completely non-fiction creative work. *OWL* is aimed principally at youthful audiences and the 'digital native' generation, that is, those who have lived in a digital world since birth. These are perhaps the same readers who were childhood Harry Potter fans and later enjoyed fantasy stories (the *Game of Thrones* TV series is a good example adapted from the fantasy novels of George R. R. Martin). Maybe their interests have moved to global political awareness but they still need the excitement of

⁶⁷ Graeme Macrae Burnet, *His Bloody Project*, Text Publishers Melbourne 2015.

⁶⁸ Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* Doubleday New York, 2003; Stephen J Mexal 'Realism, 'Narrative History and the Production of the Best seller: the Da Vinci Code and the Virtual Public Sphere' *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol 44, No 5, 2011, p. 1085.

⁶⁹ Mexal lists some of the works about Brown. Mexal, S. J. (2011). Realism, Narrative History and the Production of the Best Seller: the Da Vinci Code and the Virtual Public Sphere. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 44, 5, p. 1085.

⁷⁰ With the exception of creative non-fiction and narrative journalism, now a burgeoning field. See Matthew Ricketson, who uses Anna Funder's *Stasiland* (2002) as an example of the confusion in 'Not muddying, clarifying: towards understanding the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction' *Text Journal* (AAWP), Vol 14, No 2 October 2010.

fiction. I have no direct evidence of this but I have made an important assumption in marketing terms when I targeted the readers for *OWL*. In addition, Steven K. Baum claimed in 2012 that American booksellers estimate fiction outsells non-fiction by a factor of 3 to 1⁷¹. But while particular genres of fiction or fantasy 'help us formulate our needs, desires and wishes', Baum is wary of a Gallup Poll at the same time that indicated that three quarters of the American people believe in some form of superstition or conspiracy theory.⁷²

I experimented with different styles of the novel and at first relied on satire and social commentary, which I have used previously in my published novels. However, I soon decided that these styles would not achieve the level of participation I required from the reader. Satire can be used as a powerful warning to an audience that dramatic social change is required, but the warning can go unheeded. For example, in Salman Rushdie's *Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights*, Rushdie specifically warns of global malfeasance within a magical realism framework, including greed and so on, but also religious intolerance, terrorism and environmental destruction⁷³. However, the power of Rushdie's warnings are weakened by the completely fictional fantasy context. His message, no doubt intentionally, remains unclear. By contrast, books which are too obviously didactic often lose readers by telling them what to think or believe. Indeed, when Don DeLillo was considering his role as a storyteller, he stated, 'It's curious to think about what a fiction writer can do as opposed to a journalist or historian. They say that journalism is the first draft of history. And maybe in a curious way fiction is the final draft'⁷⁴.

Central to the previously mentioned analyses by Flis of the works of Capote, Mailer, Berendt, and de Lillo within a cultural and literary postmodern frame, is her argument that they utilise contemporary political and social concerns and relate them to the experience of 'everyman'. She is not alone in this. The influential book by American critic James Wood, *How Fiction Works* (2008), passionately defends the traditional

⁷¹ Maybe this suggests Americans are unable to distinguish the difference between the two. Steven K. Baum 'Fiction outsells non-fiction' Essay *Loyola University, University of Chicago Law journal* No 43, Issue 2, 2012, p. 413 <http://lawcommons.luc.edu/luc/lj/vol43/iss2/7>.

⁷² Ibid. Baum is concerned that more people are anti-semitic in the US than believe in superstition.

⁷³ Rushdie, Salman (2015) *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights*. London. Penguin Random House.

⁷⁴ Michele and Melissa Block, Interview with Don DeLillo <http://m.npr.org/news/front11223451?singlepage=true>.

novel because it encourages readers to 'feel' the experience of the characters⁷⁵. What he commends is a kind of writing that may be understood as 'psychological realism' that promotes empathy. There is no agreed definition of empathy, but in my hybrid fiction work I do involve what Hoffman calls 'psychological processes that make an individual have feelings that are more congruent with another's situation'⁷⁶. As I noted in Chapter 2 in relation to the question of identities, people have more of a tendency to empathise with those who are like themselves, not different or 'other'.

Lies and literary form

Obviously the blurring of fact and fiction has a long tradition in English-language literature. But what particularly characterises these works analysed by Leonora Flis is a generalised concern with mass media, which is central to my own creative project. Norman Mailer poignantly observed: 'Each day a few more lies eat into the seed with which we are born, little institutional lies from the print of newspapers, the shock waves of television, and the sentimental cheats of the movie screen'⁷⁷. This was well before digital media but has a similar dystopian message for the twenty-first century. In this way, Flis argues that the documentary novel marked a 'rupture within established literary genres'⁷⁸. Or as Haun Saussy put it so eloquently, 'literature is a kind of resistance to information's charm'⁷⁹.

So quickly we arrive at the conclusion that most novelists were often liars of some sort (and have been for centuries, apparently). But is that still the case? Michael Duffy⁸⁰ writes:

Deceiving ourselves and others is an evolutionary necessity ... deception was common, not just among humans but in other primates ...we are born to deceive and be deceived. Parents lie to their children about Santa Claus and why Uncle

⁷⁵ James Wood, *How Fiction Works*. 2008 see especially chapter on 'Truth, Convention, Realism', pp. 168-187 and also Stein Haugom Olsen 'The Concept of Literary realism' *How to Make Believe' The Fictional Truths of the Representational Arts*, 49, 2015.

⁷⁶ Definition of empathy is taken from Martin L. Hoffman *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, 2000, 2012 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 23.

⁷⁷ *New York Times Book Review*, 17th September, (2010) 'Mr Mailer interviews himself'.

⁷⁸ Flis, op cit, p. 68.

⁷⁹ Cited in Marcel Cornis-Pope (ed) (2014) *New Literary Hybrids in the Age of Multimedia Expression: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genre*. Amsterdam. John Beyamins Publishing Company.

⁸⁰ Duffy, Michael (2011), In Truth We Are Natural Born Liars, *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 20th p. 34.

Barry wobbles after Christmas lunch. Adolescents lie to their parents about where they were last night. (Duffy 2011)

Duffy writes about the role played in the evolution of fiction in the form of spoken and written stories. He suggests that fiction could have helped our ancestors think about and even cope with feelings and problems to impart group identity and values and thereby increase the group's chances of survival. One of the main themes in my DCA literary work is 'denial'. Everybody it seems denies they are in a state of denial even though there is irrefutable evidence of this. Very few people are not in denial of their own mortality. Maybe Duffy is correct when he links lying to survival. Of course, lying and denial are similar, an example being the denial of certain real, well-documented conspiracies such as the one surrounding the sinking of the Lusitania until it was proven true, as explained in *OWL*.

There are two other influences which have helped my consideration of literary form. The first is what Ulka Anjaria calls the emergence of 'new social realism', seen particularly in the work of Indian journalist and novelist Aravind Adiga, who won the Man Booker Prize with his first novel *The White Tiger* (2008) and has followed this with others such as *Last Man in Tower* (2011)⁸¹. Both novels are blistering critiques of the Indian middle classes and are intended to have a political impact – to shame or stir the Indians out of their apathy and greed – much as George Orwell attempted to do in twentieth century England. However, Anjaria remains adamant that Adiga's realism or critique 'is not transparent or self-evident but raises a set of open-ended questions about the nature of interpretation.' I am not necessarily convinced by this argument since Adiga's object of ridicule is rather thinly disguised. But I do agree that his work, as Anjaria claims, 'marks a return to realism as a means of exposing political inequities,' which is certainly my own objective.

The narrator role in *OWL*

In *Surfiction: Fiction Now and Tomorrow*, Federman writes: 'The main didactic job of the contemporary novelist is to teach the reader how to invent his world' (Federman 1975, p. 40). The narrator can assist in this process. The narrator can ask the reader to help create a new reality, and ask the reader to work out how to help run the world. This happens in *OWL*. The hyperlinks in the eBook, intended as a corollary to the published version of the novel, will enable instantaneous veracity on various important

⁸¹ Ulka Anjaria, 'Realist Hieroglyphics: Aravind Adiga and the New Social Novel' *Modern Fiction Studies*, 61, 1 Spring 2015, p. 114.

social issues, especially those linked to conspiracies. This will enable readers to form or readjust their worldviews. Federman also writes:

The narrator is no longer situated between the subject and the reader. He no longer stands on a fixed vantage and he no longer encloses the subject between the frame of his visual imagination. Indeed as he enters the frame, the medium asserts itself as an independent source of control. The narrative voice loses its independent and dominant status. And what the reader sees is no longer a clear picture contained within the narrator's purview but an erratic image where the narrator, the subject and the medium are brought into the same imaginative build of interaction, an image that is shattered, confused, self-contradictory but with an independent and individual life of its own. (Federman 1975, p. 48)

In some senses *OWL* might seem chaotic in structure; especially with its 'flashbacks' where other of the same author's books (d'ettut) are quoted. The flash forwards are relatively simple in that they push the reader along, speeding up anticipation in terms of denouement through the faux headlines as discussed. The flashbacks might not be so obvious, as even characters from other books have been transposed. That is, to make a point, the author / narrator changes an earlier character from an earlier work of d'ettut's into say, Sebastian. This, as mentioned, is to reinforce a particular moral point. So for example alluding to Dan Dare of the Eagle comics and the fact the 'goodies always win, don't they Dad, in the end' (so says a childhood Sebastian in the hybrid fiction novel in chapter 1, p. 5). This is intended to be the harbinger, at least at one level, that begins Sebastian's moral quest for a benign political party. This small section is taken directly from d'ettut's *Vampire Cities* (2000) p. 4.

Other narrator devices in the hybrid novel

How does one go about creating a plot with sufficient veracity, intensity and intrigue to attract a global market of readers like Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*? I would suggest unless a readership is engaged it is unlikely to facilitate social change, or at least come to the realisation that a new political party needs to be set up. However, the chief literary means of engaging an audience has been my use of different voices for narration.

The novel *OWL* has a fictional nom de plume author d'ettut, the ultimate manipulator and creator of the characters. As such, he has real power. Especially when he as narrator, or through the characters, reveals truths through footnotes, references, the website and so on. The characters become aware of the author/narrator decision to

move from a participatory democratic OWL to side with a global elite to create a global feudal society. They try through various means to escape their inevitable demise of being written out of the story by d'ettut because they want to champion democracy.

What the characters have to do is bring the reader to believe in the reality of what is happening to them and to ultimately have the reader demand the 'real' creation of the One World League Party, OWL the new political party to save the world but not the way d'ettut the author/narrator now envisages it. This is brought to a head in the final chapter of the novel when the reader is entreated by a fictional character to actually do something, by supporting or joining OWL in reality.

In *OWL* the author/narrator is an important component in the unfolding of the plots and the messages communicated to the reader. The author as narrator is both a stand-alone entity as well as a character of sorts. There is a deliberate conflation of author with narrator to build the credibility of the story. But one of the twists in *OWL* is the usurping of the author as narrator by one of the characters, who also becomes narrator.

Where the story is relayed by the narrator who is actually a character within the story, the first person narrative is used to directly convey otherwise unspoken thoughts of the narrator to the readers. The first person narrative allows the author/narrator/character to be further developed through his or her own style in telling the story. With d'ettut (the nom de plume author) this definitely happens! For example there is an unravelling of this character in parallel with the moral unravelling of his (other) key protagonist, Sebastian.

The first person narrator may or may not be the focal character in the storyline. In *OWL* the primary narrator, d'ettut, interacts with two other characters, Sebastian and Virginia. Virginia, as character/narrator, takes actions, makes judgements and has opinions and biases. In fact, she usurps the primary narrator role of the author at the very end of the story.

Probably the most infrequent mode in literature is the second person narrative in which the narrator refers to the reader as 'you'. This makes the reader feel as though he or she could be a character within the story along with the narrator. As the *OWL* novel evolves, there are occasions in which the second person narrative mode is used to engage the reader. In one instance the author/narrator tempts the protagonist, Sebastian, when he is wandering through the streets of Adelaide. This deliberately alludes to the temptations of Christ by Satan, when Christ wanders in the wilderness.

This is Sebastian's temptation regarding the leading role he will play in a new political party. But it could also be perceived as an attempt by the author for the reader (you) to be 'put off' by Sebastian as the leader of the new party, and possibly open the way for another leader (Virginia) to take over. Additionally, I have also utilised an even more unusual version of the second person narration. This is where the reader is actually directed to do things, to make decisions and to have opinions. This occurs at the very end of the DCA novel. There is almost a 'dare' to the reader by the 'then' new competing narrator to read and seriously consider the bespoke website, and take actions that could lead ultimately to social change.

Sometimes, when using the narrator as the first person, the writer will try to be less involved by also using a third person for important action scenes. Epistolary novels (common in the early years of the novel) use a series of letters written by different characters and change from a first person point-of-view to a third person point-of-view, quite easily. Thus emailed communications are used in the *OWL* novel with the same intent. This is done as the twenty-first century equivalent to using the epistolary style and helps set the scene for the activities of an assassin who belatedly plays a significant role in the overall story. It also alludes to a 'longevity' conspiracy that incidentally will be featured in the sequel to *OWL* (see Chapter 5, the conclusion).

The 'unreliable narrative voice' involves the use of a non-credible narrator who is 'untrustworthy'. This technique is used to create a deliberate sense of suspicion as to what information from the narrator is meant to be true or false. It could be inferred that the narrator is psychologically unstable. This particular approach is used in the DCA novel as the primary author/narrator evolves within the context of the novel. Through his own words, *OWL*'s author/narrator is on a trajectory of ever-increasing malevolence. But in the last chapter the author/narrator's universe is challenged. One World Government through an oligarchy, as promulgated by d'ettut, is challenged by Virginia, who ostensibly is to take a more democratic approach to achieve the same end. At this point she has taken over the leadership of *OWL*. The reader's universe is also suddenly inverted by Virginia's declaration to the reader of her future intentions both as narrator and character.

The omniscient narrator in *OWL*

On many occasions in literature, God, or one of his manifestations, has either been used implicitly or directly as a narrator. Zusak (2008) in his novel *The Book Thief* is one instance of this type of voice that has been used as a model for d'ettut, who is the author of *OWL*, the omniscient narrator, and the author of this exegesis. But there are

fundamental differences. My primary narrator is not an abstract notion like 'death'. The narrator is real in that he is the author of the book. However, d'ettut has been used as a *nom de plume* not only for this book but more importantly for previous books. This history of authorship could create, or at least add to, the credibility of the book as being perceived as 'real' even though it is fictional. This perception could occur at an unconscious level in the reader to avoid active denial already discussed.

The narrator d'ettut is one dimension removed from the novel's characters, and as such is not 'total reality'. He stands both inside the novel's universe as a character and outside of the universe to manipulate it to his own godlike ends. But he is not always successful. For example, his characters Sebastian and Virginia, yin and yang, male and female, bring 'new life' to this fictional universe through a 'new political party' that is ultimately destined for another direction to that ultimately espoused by d'ettut.

Initially d'ettut⁸² is to the character's world like God is to the human 'non-fictional' universe. He is the one who extends the forced foreplay between Sebastian and Virginia, thus delaying the introduction of any 'new life' to the fictional universe. This is in much the same way that anything 'good' in a non-fictional way always seems 'delayed'. Delayed gratification in this context is very much to do with denial in the world conspiracies that come to light in the world of Sebastian, Virginia and other characters. Once disbelief and naiveté is suspended, the notion of creating a new political party seems to be the only way the characters can respond.

The characters become not only absorbed in their own universe but also aware of the manipulator of their literary universe. They realise (or at least Sebastian does) the 'new politic' they think they are trying to create, that they want to be real, is a whimsical fiction (or is it?) on the part of the creator. They wish to change that.

Finally d'ettut becomes aware that 'they (the characters)' are aware of 'him'. Not only is d'ettut reality, he is also scepticism. He becomes alarmed and eventually wants to close down the creation of the new fictional political party, OWL because its 'reality' is not going in the direction he intended. But to do this he must fight against the very characters he has created.

The irony of the structure is that d'ettut has to create the vehicles by which Sebastian and Virginia can strike back at him. Virginia is thrust into the creator's universe. This also reflects Virginia's concerns regarding control of all literatures' every word, by

⁸² The lower case 'd' in d'ettut is deliberate and is explained by the author at the beginning of the book *OWL*.

'higher agents'. The denouement comes with this occurrence and is discussed further in the Conclusion.

Ethics in hybrid fiction

Apart from creating fear in the characters and the reader (perhaps this is always the intent) it is ultimately d'ettut himself who wishes to make in his own way the fictional reality the real world reality. This he does by incorporating into the novel (or his main character does) such things already mentioned that would make a website credible for the reader: a real Constitution for the political party, and so on. These are devices to add credibility to the fact that this novel should ultimately lead to the creation of a real and new political party. The complexity of the characters' roles and the author/narrator's changing desires all happen very quickly towards the end of the story. It is the author/narrator's hope that the quickening momentum will draw the reader into action.

In essence, having completed the novel, youthful readers who followed d'ettut's revelations and the key characters' rebellion will say, 'Why don't we start this party, if it hasn't already been started using all the technology at our disposal, because if we don't we are all doomed.' By seeing d'ettut as evil, having perhaps become as psychotic as Sebastian and with the initial benign creation of OWL now compromised, the reader will realise that aligning with Virginia is the only option that remains to do. Otherwise the cataclysmic creation of a feudal society run by the elites will inevitably happen.

Flis (2012) says that 'hybrid genres, are specifically prone to arousing ethical concerns, particularly when the borders between fiction and facts merge. This leaves the reader somewhat apprehensive about the text he is reading' (p. 97). She goes on: 'Hans-George Gadamer and his work *Truth and Method* (1960) in discussing the fusion of horizons is suggesting the 'reader and the writer perceive the external as well as the literary world on the basis of their subjective knowledge/experience and their ethical stance towards the two worlds' (p. 98). She uses this notion of horizons or worldviews to claim readers and writers are affected not only by past assumptions and present ethical dispositions but also by their expectations about the future. 'It is of crucial importance how truthful the writer is about possible fabrications' (p. 98). This is where the ethics dimensions come into play. Quoting Clark 2000 (pp. 9-10), she talks about

the ‘unhealthy influences of careerism and profiteering’ that may tempt a writer to “tweak or quote or bend a rule... or even invent a source”⁸³.

Hybrid fiction, as I have developed it in the DCA creative work is neither ignoring this ethical notion nor trying to avoid it (these are different things). The novel itself, though fictional, is dripping with factual references to convince readers of its authenticity and hence provide the reason for them to support or join the new political party OWL. This hopefully will be seen as an ethically correct thing to do.

Readers are expected at the completion of reading the novel to be motivated towards helping the actual creation of a new political party, or at least to support or become members of one they believe could bring back good to the world. In effect, the reader is anticipated to ‘help’ the author/narrator (or narrators) achieve in reality what exists in their fictional universe. This brings the discussion back to Social Identity, as described in Chapter 2, and individuals wanting to be members of a group. How then can an author involve readers in some higher order function, rather than having them just be entertained by the novel itself? There are historical examples of this particular approach.

The tenuous link to Enid Blyton

In the nineteen-fifties Enid Blyton was a powerful literary figure in terms of her impact on child readers. She created at least two series of children’s novels, in particular, *The Famous Five*⁸⁴ series and the *The Secret Seven*⁸⁵ series. During that period of ascendancy for Enid Blyton, many children found her stories so compelling that they wanted to *be* a member of an actual Famous Five or Secret Seven club. Or at least they wanted to start one of their own. More to the point, sixty years or more after Blyton’s children’s books were published a new series of Famous Five books has just been released, obviously targeting the original Baby Boomer readers.

Comic books published by Marvel were also very popular at the time, *The Phantom* comics in particular, especially with boys (I was one of them!). Buying the merchandise, the Phantom signet rings and other paraphernalia were ways young readers could immerse themselves in the fantasy of becoming ‘the Phantom’ or part of his coterie, and it was similar with other comic book heroes. So in the DCA hybrid fiction novel, the readers are being subtly solicited through various techniques (including the website) to

⁸³ Refer to Leonora Flis *Factual Fictions* . p. 98.

⁸⁴ 21 novels published, 1942 – 1963 (four children and their dog who outwit local police).

⁸⁵ 15 novels published, 1949 – 1963 (a society of seven children who solve various mysteries).

want to become a part of the new political party ('their' secret society). Even today authors and clubs unite. More overtly than Blyton, Rowling has whole theme parks to continuously garner support from her readers.

The notion of a club, cult, coterie, or whatever it was that endeared Enid Blyton to her young readers was successful. Through her prodigious output of an estimated eight hundred books over roughly forty years she achieved something indefinable, much more than just loyal readership. Why include Enid Blyton as a fiction to fact author? What does it have to do with Social Identity theory? It is the end result of her writings that provides perspective in the context of this exegesis.

Blyton involved her young readers in a series of activities. She launched a magazine, *Sunny Stories*, aimed at her 'friends' and started several clubs. The Famous Five club raised funds for a baby's home in Beaconsfield, the Sunbeam Society raised funds for blind children and the Enid Blyton magazine club helped children with cerebral palsy to attend a special centre in Chelsea. There was also the Busy Bees, a junior section of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals. All of these endeavours brought her close to her readers. Here we have the 'action' component as discussed by Thomas et al. (2010) in their article on Social Identity theory previously mentioned in Chapter 2.

It appears Blyton was a complete workaholic and knew how to exploit the Blyton brand. She was dedicated to her young fans and would frequently hold tea parties for them. Her genius was to understand something about childhood imagination in ways that many children's writers have been trying to replicate ever since. It would appear that childhood imaginations want a level of escapism. She knew that children want to be free of grownups and have a world of fantasy and imagination that deflects against the real world. However, it would also appear childhood imagination doesn't change that much as they grow. Even adults want escapism and Walt Disney was very aware of this⁸⁶.

In the fiction-to-fact paradigm, the technique Blyton used was to create the illusion in children's minds that they had the independence of an adult; that they could achieve

⁸⁶ Walt Disney developed the Disneyland concept for adults not just children. He seemed to intuitively understand something that maybe Blyton didn't; or maybe she did. Disney's inclusion of adults needs for escapism is described in detail in *Disneyland: The First Quarter Century* (1979), particularly in an extract quoted by Eric Sevareid in the CBS Evening News December 1966 (p. 83) 'but Walt, Disney seemed to know that while there is very little grown-up in a child, there is a lot of child in every grown-up. To a child this weary world is brand new, gift wrapped; Disney tried to keep it that way for adults...' This book in several places expands the notion of Disney's consideration of the adult dwelling in fantasy. This links very much to the notion that adults might wish to immerse themselves in a political fantasy, maybe like OWL.

adult decision making and using her techniques to solve problems as well as any adult, particularly problems of crime and mystery. Most importantly her contribution was to involve her readers. Is it too much of a stretch of the imagination to believe that through the medium of a new style of novel adults too could create exclusive clubs, secret societies, coterie, pressure groups, or perhaps new political parties? This is the thesis behind this exegesis!

OWL differs significantly from Blyton's work in the way readers are recruited to a cause or asked to become a member of a club or coterie. The very last page of OWL is a challenge; there is the 'dare you' to the reader to progress to the website:

What comes next is not for the faint hearted. Only read on if you are a true 'warrior for democracy'. OWL is ready for assembly and waits for you.

Click on to <http://owlvoter.com> now.

Then there is an entreaty on the website itself for the reader to interact and help create OWL.

It's time! Here is your opportunity to interact with OWL. You can add to, modify, or in any other way change the vision, mission, code or policies or even the constitution of OWL. Here is your chance to change the world for the better.

Please click onto <http://owlvoter.com> and become a member of our exclusive club.

To summarise my approach to the final form of the creative work, I refer again to my approach to the hybrid form described in the Introduction but recommend holding judgement until the Conclusion. It is not an easy form to define.

Chapter 4

Case Studies: Historical examples of truth creation in literature

The following three brief case studies reflect techniques for creating the illusion of truth, from the traditional early novel to recent reinventions of the epistolary. Of the many novels that try to achieve or connote 'truth', these three quickly and clearly demonstrate alternative approaches. The case studies are not intended to be in-depth analyses. Space doesn't allow this

The first case study is Daniel Defoe's adventures of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). This is an important historical starting point. Case study two is Dan Brown's (2003) *The Da Vinci Code*. In the case of Dan Brown the techniques to create the illusion of reality were manifold. DVDs, for example '*Cracking the Da Vinci Code*', were used as devices to encourage the reader to believe there was something 'real' here. This is an early but not exclusive example of using technology to support the illusion of 'truth' or 'fact'.

Case study three relates to the three books by Neale Donald Walsch called *Conversations with God* (1996, 1997, 1998). This is a completely different approach that, to a certain degree, reflects the triangulation referred to earlier in this exegesis as described by Lennard Davis, that is, the nexus between religion, politics and, in this case, literature. But Walsch adds in the implicit omniscient narrator God (or is it Walsch!), answering his (that is Neil Walsch's) questions and offering guidance through his 'automatic writing'. Clearly to most readers, the work is fiction. However, there are many readers who believe it is fact. I will present a deeper explanation of the techniques and devices he uses to create this illusion of fact.

Case Study One: Daniel Defoe's *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*

Robinson Crusoe was first published in 1719. It was written by Daniel Defoe, who was originally a journalist but in later life became a novelist. To many, this book is regarded as one of the first true novels. The book is, perhaps, a fictional autobiography. It takes the form of an epistolary, a confessional, and is written in a didactic form. The title *Robinson Crusoe* is an understandably short version of the original title *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With an Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates.*

It is considered to have been inspired by a real life event. Many suggest Crusoe was

Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish castaway, who lived for four years (not the twenty-eight that Robinson Crusoe did) on an island in the Pacific. However, there are many other stories of real life castaways in Defoe's time. There is evidence that a surgeon, Henry Pitman, who took part in the Monmouth rebellion, was actually the subject or part subject of *Robinson Crusoe*. He wrote a short book about his escape from a Caribbean penal colony and subsequent shipwrecking on a desert island. Pitman appears to have lived close enough to Defoe (both geographically and temporally) that Defoe may have met him in person and learned of his experiences first hand (Drabble 1996).

But there are many other interpretations of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. By some it was considered to be an allegory of Defoe's own life. The isolation on the island corresponded, allegorically, to the time Defoe spent in jail (Drabble 1996). Novelist James Joyce has indicated that *Robinson Crusoe* represents, symbolically, the British Empire: 'The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe; the manly independence, the unconscious cruelty, the persistence, the slow yet efficient intelligence, the sexual apathy, the calculating taciturnity' (in Prescott 1964, pp. 24-25). What Joyce is saying is that Crusoe attempts to replicate his society on the island. Crusoe refers to himself as the 'king' of the island. The master-servant relationship between Crusoe and Friday can also be seen as cultural imperialism.

I spoke in the previous chapter about fact being disguised as fiction in the seventeenth century, primarily because of legal constraints. In this instance, it is quite likely Defoe was writing about fact; the fact of his own incarceration, the fact of Selkirk as a castaway or indeed any other castaway at that time. But then again everybody has accepted the text as fictional. But it is Defoe himself who creates the illusion of the truth by writing in the epistolary as Crusoe, and also as a confessional. So, the creation of the illusion of reality at the time was predominantly by the use of the epistolary. So from Robinson Crusoe himself (through Daniel Defoe) here is a true story, capitalising on the credibility of writing on contemporary phenomena, namely, shipwrecks and castaways, that were an exciting part of the culture of the eighteenth century.

Notwithstanding this, and despite the simple narrative style, the book has been one of the most widely published texts in literary history and has been popular since the day of its publication (Drabble 1996). Perhaps this is an indication of our (and the readers) credulity. We want to believe and be simultaneously entertained (fact to fiction; fiction to fact). Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* marked the beginning of realistic fiction as a literary genre. Its success led to many imitations.

Case Study Two: Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*

Published in 2003, *The Da Vinci Code* is a novel, part of which is the exploration of alternative religious history (see Hutcheon and Historiographical Metafiction in Chapter 3). The central plot is that of the Merovingian Kings of France who were purportedly descendants from the bloodline of Jesus Christ and his wife, Mary Magdalene. The novel starts with the investigation into the murder in the Louvre Museum, which reveals a battle between the Priory of Sion (French for Zion) and Opus Dei (an order within the Roman Catholic Church).

The book has been extensively denounced by certain Christian denominations as an undisguised attack on the Roman Catholic Church. It has also been criticised for its historical inaccuracies. Nevertheless, the novel sold eighty million copies and has been translated into at least forty-four languages⁸⁷.

In terms of fiction to fact, I believe *The Da Vinci Code* has one of the most powerful openings. Prior to the prologue there is one page with 'FACT' written at the top of the page. When this book was made into a film, the real Opus Dei asked the producers to indicate the story as being fictional at the commencement of the film. That request was refused. Under FACT, the Priory of Sion is said to be a real organisation. Certain highly prominent members are identified, including Sir Isaac Newton and Leonardo Da Vinci. Here are the beginnings of a club. Grown up Enid Blyton readers are being asked to accept a reality or fact that there has been a secret society in existence for hundreds of years⁸⁸ (a lot more powerful than Blyton; but nevertheless we want to believe!).

In the 'factual' statement Opus Dei is also described in detail. And to add even more credibility it is indicated that Opus Dei 'has just completed construction of a \$47 million world headquarters at 243 Lexon Avenue in New York City' (Brown 2003, prior to Prologue). The FACT goes on to say 'all descriptions of art work, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate' (ibid). That is one way in which Dan Brown begins to weave the tapestry of fiction into truth. But an even more powerful tool is used to support this. A ninety-minute DVD called *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* was released in 2004 shortly after the release of the novel itself. This DVD has credibility. So called 'experts' probe 'new revelations in an exclusive discussion with

⁸⁷ This information has been gleaned from a popular DVD Cox, Simon. *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, 2004, video recording, Kaleidoscope Films and DVD. Details will be found in the bibliography.

⁸⁸ Again this is drawn verbatim from Cox, Simon. *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, 2004, video recording, Kaleidoscope Films and DVD.

authors Clive Prince and Lynn Picknett, whose book *The Templar Revelation* is reputedly the main source for the Da Vinci Code.

[They explain] previously untold secrets. Dr Stephen A Hoeller, renowned expert on comparative religion and Gnostic history, uses current thinking in Christian history to reach startling conclusions. Mark Oxbrough, Templar expert and writer on the Rosslyn Chapel reveals new Rosslyn mysteries (verbatim from the DVD)

Additionally the DVD does an analysis of several of Leonardo Da Vinci's works. These are detailed and dissected to 'expose their remarkable conspiratorial symbolism and their true meaning' (verbatim). So in the context of the *OWL* novel and the associated e-Book, this fits into Morrison's idea previously quoted of 'the novel must break into new hybrids and leave the nineteenth century segregation of fact, fiction, memoir and essay behind.'

Considering the number of copies sold and that he has made manifest a conspiracy theory that has supposedly been simmering for centuries, Dan Brown has been startlingly successful in his ability to create the illusion of reality in a well-written and exciting international best seller. He might not have 'actually' created a secret society like Blyton; but he certainly went a long way to convincing readers that such a society could exist. This is evident in the large number of people annually who actually visit a church that is prominent in the story.

But what is the metafictional aspect of this story? As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 Hutcheon (1980) distinguishes between the term metafiction and historiographical metafiction. In this case, the latter especially relates to the real life Catholic order's request to indicate the story as fictional. Dan Brown 'is problematizing the entire question of historical knowledge', (Hutcheon 1980). That is, acknowledging facts presented earlier in history as the author's subjective interpretations. *The Da Vinci Code* and especially the DVD contain a range of literary devices to convincingly demonstrate 'truth'.

Case Study Three: Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God* Books 1, 2 and 3

Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God*⁸⁹ Books 1, 2 and 3 (1996, 1997, 1998) are described by unnamed reviewers on a back cover as 'life changing best sellers' and

[These books will] amaze you with complex paradoxes that make perfect sense, profound logic and astounding truths. Here are the answers that bring together as one, a deep meaning of all beliefs and traditions. Here are answers that will change you, your life and the way you view other human beings⁹⁰.

This is a completely different approach to creating purported fact or truth, from fiction. In this case the author actually adds in the implicit omniscient narrator, God. Walsch evidently went through low points in his life as described in the preface of Book 3. Why is this not covered in Book 1? Is it a technique to enhance credibility? Or, more cynically, has he, now over a period of six years of writing come to actually believe what he has written?

If you've read the Foreword to either of the first two instalments, you know that in each case I was a little bit apprehensive. Scared, actually, of what the response to those writings might be, I am not scared now. I have no fear whatsoever about Book 3 (Walsch 1998, introduction Book 3).

Walsch decided to write a single letter to God at one of his low points. Evidently he received a response (albeit in his own handwriting). As he continued with his letters more answers came back, all apparently from God. These are then reflected in Books 1, 2 and 3. He writes, modestly perhaps,

I believe this to be sacred spiritual material. I see now that this is true of the entire trilogy, and that these books will be read and studied for decades, even for generations. Perhaps, for centuries. Because, taken together, the trilogy covers an amazing range of topics. (Walsch 1998, Introduction Book 3).

In the first instance, as a psychologist, I can suggest the technique used to create the illusion of truth is what is known as automatic writing. This is used in many contexts including psychotherapy. A general consensus is that automatic writing is more to do with the conscious mind contacting the unconscious mind than with contacting any

⁸⁹ Walsch, Neale Donald. 1996, *Conversations With God: Book 1*, Hodder & Stoughton, London; Walsch, Neale Donald. 1997, *Conversations With God: Book 2*, Hodder & Stoughton, London; Walsch, Neale Donald. 1998, *Conversations With God: Book 3*, Hodder & Stoughton, London.

⁹⁰ Note. This commendation also was on the back cover of Book 1; presumably coming from the publisher or more probably, once more, from the author himself.

other being or entity, especially God. However, Walsch has hit upon a formula that in many respects has created a new form of epistolary. He writes a paragraph or two asking questions, then receives answers. Walsch's technique of painting the truth is best described by quoting him directly from Book 1:

To my surprise as I scribbled the last of my bitter, unanswerable questions and prepared to toss my pen aside, my hand remained poised over the paper, as if held there by some invisible source. Abruptly, the pen began *moving on its own*. I had no idea what I was about to write, but an idea seemed to be coming, so I decided to flow with it. Out came ...' (Walsch 1996, p. 1)

And then, as he indicates to his great surprise, his series of questions were followed by God's answers. This is the technique used all the way through the three books. Perhaps one could consider this approach as the twentieth century epistolary; or at least an equivalent. However I think the twenty-first century epistolary equivalent should be through emails, YouTube, and other information technology techniques.

The technique of creating the illusion of conversations with God starts in the introduction to Book 1 where he writes about himself: 'You are about to have a conversation with God. Yes, Yes. I know ... that's not possible. You probably think (or have been taught) that's not possible.' He suggests that the book (Book 1) was not written by himself but it 'happened' to him. And then he suggests to the reader that by reading the book it will happen to the reader as well. To add more credibility, he says,

My life would probably be easier if I had kept all of this quiet ... and whatever inconveniences the book may cause me (such as being called a blasphemer, a fraud, a hypocrite or not having lived these truths in the past, or perhaps worst, a holy man), it is not possible to stop the process now. Nor do I wish to (p. 1).

He also writes that his work could be thought of as 'the over-workings of a frustrated spiritual adulation or possibly the self-justification of a man seeking vindication from a misled life ... "oh, I thought of all those things -every one of those" (p. 1). He gave his material to a few people to read in manuscript form. 'They were moved. And they laughed for joy and the humour in it. And their lives, they said, changed. They were transfixed. They were empowered.' (p. 1).

He then goes on: 'That's when I knew this book was for everyone, and that it had to be published' (p. 1) The book, he says, addresses everything: sex, power, money, children, marriage, divorce, life, work, etc. 'You could say that this book is God's latest word on things' (p. 1) He implies, that for him, God stopped talking like that in the Bible

some two thousand years ago.

I knew that I was talking to God. Directly, personally. Irrefutably. And that God was responding to my questions in direct proportion to my ability to comprehend. That is I was being answered in ways, and with language that God knew I would understand. That accounts for much of the colloquial style of the writing and the occasional reference to material I had gathered from other sources and prior experienced in my life. (p. 1).

This is an interesting approach from an author. It really puts a new twist on the epistolary. I don't doubt the author's sincerity, but whether he is delusional or not is another question. In Book 3 he writes

Somewhere along the way I realised a book was being produced – a book intended for publication. Indeed I was told specifically during the latter part of the dialogue (in February 1993) that three books would actually be produced. (Walsch 1998, Introduction Book 3)

He is able to say what these books are about in the introduction to his first book. The first would deal with personal topics and his individual life, challenges and opportunities. The second would deal with global topics of geopolitical and metaphysical life on the planet and the third would deal with universal truths of the highest order. This is extraordinarily convenient. God tells him he is going to write three books. He goes on to suggest that all of them, what he calls now dialogue, were transcribed by hand and he circled words and sentences that came to him with particular emphasis.

He begins Chapter 1 of Book 1: 'In the Spring of 1992 – it was around Easter as I recall an extraordinary phenomenon occurred in my life. God began talking with you through me' (Walsch 1996, p. 2). The next 211 pages are filled with questions and answers, done apparently through automatic writing, but produced in standard text. So, is this a writer's clever device, a new device, to transmit 'truth' or 'fact' to the reader; or does he believe what he is saying; which as mentioned previously would probably make him delusional? As discussed earlier with regard to Fielding, there is a strong sense of denial coming through. Although in Fielding's case it was quite the reverse. He was saying his fiction was not fact.

In the closing chapter Walsch indicates that he has received many questions and enquiries about his first book. He talks of the many phone calls and the letters and how he personally would like to respond to every one of them. Enid Blyton shared the same

fate; but hers was a more philanthropic response. But Walsch has decided this is impossible; so he has decided to write a monthly letter/newsletter with questions or comments regarding the dialogue described in Book 1. He then goes on to say that in the beginning, the letter was made available at no fee. 'But now unfortunately because of the mounting cost there needs to be a minimum donation of \$25 per year' (Walsch 1996, p. 213). It now appears you can buy the 'exclusivity' of his experience with God. It does sound like a club membership fee. Then in Book 2, released a year later, the newsletter has escalated to US\$35, or US\$45 for international supporters. Even more startling is his ability to sell the next Books 2 and 3, by saying God would organise him to write them and even tell him what was going to be in them, so people could prepare themselves for their publication.

Interestingly in Book 2 the acknowledgements become far more significant. Apart from his mother and father who he had already acknowledged in Book 1, he now goes on to acknowledge the influence of Dolly Parton, Neil Diamond, Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Ron Howard, Gene Roddenberry (the author of *Star Trek*) and a host of other celebrities. This is where I started to disengage. It sounds like credibility through familiarity (probably it's all untrue).

In his introduction to Book 2, he says in his own words,

This is an extraordinary document. It is a message from God and in it God suggests a social, sexual, educational, political, economic and theological revolution on this planet, the likes of which we have never seen, and is hard to imagine. (Walsch 1997, Book 2, p. 3)

He indicates that God says we can really build a world in which there is a revolution that captures all the niceties of elevating our consciousness to a newer world. He talks about his humanness '*again*'. 'God has communicated to me, in answer to my questions. I promised God I would ... make public these conversations ... and I can't break that promise' (Book 2 introduction).

And another interesting trick, a second person command (please refer to the second person narration discussed in Chapter 3 of this exegesis):

You can't break your promise either. Obviously you have made a promise to allow all of your thoughts, ideas and beliefs to be continually challenged. Clearly, you have made a deep commitment to continually grow. Only a person with such a commitment would pick up a book like this. (Book 2 introduction)

In the introduction to Book 3 he says again 'this is an extraordinary book ... I say that

as someone who has had very little to do with writing. All I did, really, was to show up, ask a few questions, then take dictation, to questions written out.' But the reply was a little unusual, in the author's words, 'The reply came in the form of words whispered in my mind by a Voiceless Voice. I was fortunate enough to have written those words down. I have done so now for over six years.' He then tells the reader that the writing of his Book 1 was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for ninety-one weeks.

Interestingly enough, Book 3 took four years to write. But one must remember he had already indicated he would be writing Books 1, 2 and 3 because God told him so. Then he goes on to claim that 'everywhere I have gone since 1996 all I have heard has been "When is Book 3 coming out? Where's Book 3, when can we expect Book 3?"' (Book 3 Introduction).

Again is this a late twentieth century version of an epistolary, a form of novel as early as the seventeenth century? Are we regressing in novelistic style? Or more to the point, has Walsch cleverly and knowingly manipulated the epistolary to take it to new heights of 'popular' novelistic writing to achieve the illusion of truth or fact? Or is it really just automatic writing? Or does it matter at all? If he is a charlatan, he is a successful one; successful in utilising a traditional literary device in a new way to have the reader believe fiction is actual fact (I hope so). One thing is certain, two decades later, the 'social, sexual, educational, political, economic and theologically evolution on this planet' (Walsch 1997 Book 2 introduction) hasn't apparently occurred. Rather, social media has more likely left its mark than have Walsch's 'new epistolaries'.

One final point: there is some evidence the title of his first book was to have been *Imaginary Conversations*. This is found on the page preceding the acknowledgements page in Book 1. It would appear this book was first published in 1995, presumably under that title. Is this not sufficient ground for suspecting that the retitling to *Conversations with God*, if true, is an after-thought?

Chapter 5

Exegesis conclusions

This exegesis examines a number of points: the creation of a hybrid fiction to non-fiction book that aims to facilitate social change through the forming of a new political party; the literary aspects inherent in the form of the book; and the psycho-social considerations of its readers. Because it discusses the fiction-to-fact, denial and lying factors at play in the work, it also needs to elaborate upon the fictive elements contained in the book itself. This conclusion therefore starts with a synopsis of *OWL* to provide a substantial context to the creative work. This context might not be readily apparent from reading only the first four chapters of this exegesis.

The story of *OWL* in *OWL*

What if the sinister conspiracies of the world are real? The perpetrators don't care because public scepticism of conspiracies, supported by a nefarious press, gives a shield of invisibility to the devastating realities of the conspiracies. And so the world in general is living in denial and the conspiracies flourish.

What if a new political party (*OWL*, One World League) arises, baptised in fire and exploiting global Internet capability, unravels the conspiracies? What if this novel's author as a narrator becomes part of a major conspiracy? What if a leading character of *OWL*, finds out by using a literary trick she can become a narrator also? She assails the readers' conscience, facilitates global support through the Internet, creates a new political party and saves the world.

Another character, Sebastian, the ultimate solipsist and imminent politician, is intent upon defining his place in the world to the extent he sits in a graveyard writing his defining epitaph. There is a flashback to the murder of his daughter and granddaughter. Hong Kong's Disneyland disintegrates. He fights a dark past that includes and the accidental death (or murder) of his wife. Another woman, Virginia, the epitome of Eurasian sensuality, appears. She is the focus of Sebastian's unsuccessful seduction but she becomes a powerful ally in the dramas to unfold.

In Adelaide, Sebastian unloads his frustrations to Eleanor, the old-university-days political patrician. She is beguiling and takes Sebastian from his advertising agency past to a new dimension in politics. All the while the omniscient narrator is setting up Sebastian. Out of the darkness an owl swoops through Eleanor's drunken party and becomes a new political mascot and the eponymous name of the new party.

After the successful formation of this new political movement, Virginia uncovers the first conspiracy with Eleanor in the Washington Library of Congress. Apparent (but revealed as not real in the story) terrestrial communication leads to the unearthing of more conspiracies. Sebastian meanwhile has hallucinatory visitations imposed by the narrator to weaken his leadership of OWL. Meanwhile Eleanor is murdered tracking down these conspiracies. Sebastian and Virginia visit St Deiniol's library in England. A further murder pushes Sebastian (and Virginia) to beef up OWL's confronting of global conspiracies.

It is here they use a hi-tech/low-tech technique to fast track the education of the masses. They combine the simple use of flash cards with the power of YouTube. (As mentioned previously, the information technology implications of the *OWL* story are alluded to rather than being played out with specific technical detail).

Sebastian and Virginia return to Australia. More OWL founders are murdered. Sebastian and Virginia now wish to urgently confront the conspiracies' authors (including royal and other eminent families) and fly back to England. They are arrested at Dubai as part of a set up. It looks like the end of Sebastian and OWL.

Sebastian falls into a psychotic state and, for this book at least, is removed from the story. Virginia as the new narrator confronts the d'ettut narrator's evil plot and changes the course of history and thus saves civilisation as we know it (but with much more to come!).

While this prophetic story unfolds, the world's unwitting masses are *really* being duped by the cruelty of the greatest conspiracy of all – the Rothschild Formula. This conspiracy could lead to the annihilation of the planet.

Through Virginia, the reader is asked to collaborate with OWL's characters to create a new movement: a redemptive political party for the twenty-first century to bring sanity and fairness to a world hell-bent on self-destruction. She also promises to return to the reader (in a sequel) to complete the quest now underway.

Fusion fiction

In initial DCA discussions describing the form my creative work would finally take, the term 'fusion fiction' was introduced briefly early on and then rejected. Further exploration of this term is required now to bring this exegesis to a satisfactory conclusion. There were some who advised I should not use the term, though at the time I thought it more than adequately captured the essence of my approach. I was not suggesting a new genre or sub-genre, just a way of describing the interaction of all the

fiction-to-fact literary components I describe below rather than only using a generic descriptor such as 'hybrid fiction'.

This argument about defining a particular form of a literary work is not new and precedents abound. I will take just one example. In his biography of Truman Capote, Gerald Clarke (2006) disputed Capote's claim that he had coined the term 'non-fiction novel' when Capote was talking of his book *In Cold Blood* (1966). Clarke said,

A non-fiction novel makes no sense. A novel, according to the dictionary definition, is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length; if a narrative is non-fiction it is not a novel; if it is a novel it is not non-fiction. (Clarke 2006, p. 359)

While this might have been historically correct, the metafiction and surfiction styles of some novels already discussed in this exegesis challenge this narrow definition. I agree with Capote there can be non-fiction novels. Arguably other forms of fiction will also eventually evolve.

So I have left the explanation of this term until the conclusion of this exegesis. I say fusion fiction is where veracious statements or truths mix with conceivable fictional interpretations. In fact, sympathetically to, but differently from Capote, 'fusion fiction' could be called a fictional, non-fiction novel. There is nothing new about this, so I take the definitions to other levels.

Fusion fiction, as an eclectic approach, combines traditional fiction with metafiction, surfiction and new opportunities opened up through information technology and social media applications. These could include YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, but in this case these social media techniques are shared by characters and readers alike.

In summary, some key characteristics of the fusion fiction approach are:

- The fusion of acknowledged but not always referenced or formally quoted slabs of text from other sources. Later in this conclusion this is called 'creative plagiarism' and I compare it artistically to Andy Warhol's approach. As an example there is one section in *OWL* where an ex-FBI head is involved in the investigation of a murder. A whole section describing him is lifted from an actual article in *Time Magazine*. A casual reader might take note of the relevant footnote in *OWL* and pursue this out of interest. It ironically describes the very same person who is at the time of writing this exegesis was heading an investigation into US President Donald Trump's discussions with Russian diplomats.

- The fusion of didactic writing drawn from dialogue laden with critical factual information to educate the reader with a fictional thriller subplot, replete with murders and intrigue to simultaneously entertain the reader.
- The fusion of references of acknowledged real life conspiracies to the fictional storyline by use of the Internet.
- The fusion of various established literary forms such as metafiction, surfiction, epistolary and so on as described in Chapter 3.
- The fusion of different sorts of narrative voices also described in Chapter 3.
- The fusion of a collage of vignettes of Sebastian's life representing everyman's travails in life with a murky need to right the wrongs of the world by forming a new political party.
- The fusion of author to narrators' to characters' differing universes.

New technologies and old ways for fabricating the truth

Has the fusion fiction novel as envisaged worked in terms of creating the illusion of authenticity sufficiently enough to be a lever for social change? The novel incorporating the website, with the critical components of political membership party applications, constitution, code of ethics, etc. has been created. But without the sustained exposure of the recently published novel it is impossible to gauge the level of success at this stage.

More critically, any notion of a positive movement in social change as a consequence of the novel's release is an even harder question to answer. In fact, given the release of the novel, both in its traditionally published and electronic forms, measuring its effect in terms of social change could possibly be a longitudinal post-doctoral study in its own right. This is well beyond the scope of this DCA submission.

Overall, I am not saying that within my creative work I have created something totally unique; something totally new. In fact I believe such a claim is not achievable by anybody at any time. All human creativity, especially so-called breakthroughs, is achieved by leveraging off other people's thoughts and ideas in the first place. It's when all the ideas are aggregated that the breakthroughs occur and some lucky individual gets the accolades. I am saying I have formulated something innovative and tangible. The whole DCA package as presented is my contribution.

Publication and ethical issues

We have now considered what constitutes the fusion fiction novel. It includes historical antecedents of fact to fiction and fiction to fact; contributions of different literary forms like the epistolary, the *roman á clef*, metafiction, surfiction and information technology, especially the bespoke website with its social psychology implications. The latter, and the main thrust of this exegesis, is consistent with Ewan Morrison's approach to a multi-modal novel. These are all technical aspects – and there are certainly more.

The novel *OWL*, as construed, is going to be controversial and possibly rejected outright. There are footnotes and direct references that lead the reader to certain inescapable truths. This brings up the whole notion of the ethics of publication. So I would like to refer again finally to Heather Brooke:

The ethics of publication is a vast discussion but it can be distilled down to a simple rule: what is in the public interest? This often gets confused with a politician's interest, a wealthy person's interest or the interest of the current people in power. Sometimes reporters can confuse the tittle-tattle that interests the public with journalism in the public interest. What defines the public interest is that which informs and enlightens society. (Brooke 2011, p. 179)

She goes on to analyse some US diplomatic cables regarding the protestors in the Middle East in 2011 (Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Egypt):

What becomes clear from reading these is how poorly most political systems are built, allowing the ruling classes to raid public resources for personal gain and use the security services as a tool to maintain and expand their power. The public's interest quickly becomes the King's interest. (Brooke 2011, p. 235)

She concludes by writing, 'We now have a technology that unites individuals in such a way we can create the first global democracy (Brooke 2011, p. 238).

Fusion fiction, utilising information technology breakthroughs in conjunction with the novelistic form in all its historical manifestations, might just become a critical first step in moving towards this 'global democracy'; or should it be called 'cyber democracy'? The second step could be readers' positive responses to this new fusion fiction novel *OWL* such that they might feel compelled to facilitate One World League into existence, which ultimately could lead to the social change necessary as a precursor to global democracy.

I believe a book can sway human action on a mass scale if given enough time. As

alluded to in Chapter 1 of this exegesis many examples could be provided such as *Mein Kampf*, the *Bible*; the *Quran*; *Das Kapital* and so on. This can be the case if the rich repertoire of literary devices is successfully exploited, especially in conjunction with the opening of new dimensions of these literary devices through information technology. These devices when combined can close the critical space between fact and fiction, between a novel and real life, even perhaps to the extent of affecting social change.

OWL is not fact, yet it is not fiction either. It is a conscious conflation of both. Its structure is made up of acknowledged and referenced sources but not formally quoted slabs of text from magazines, books, websites and so on. In this sense, parts of *OWL* are unapologetically called 'creative plagiarism' (referred to earlier) and could be compared in artistic terms to Andy Warhol and his borrowing of cultural and commercial icons (like Campbell's soup cans) to make his artistic statements. So there is a fusion of some material, mostly fact, with the story line. This is all done to create something different that hopefully engages readers.

In keeping with contemporary antecedents, there is a need to create a fictional ride within the overall framework of creating a new political party that will excite the reader. But simultaneously, that ride will need to have relevance to the creation of the new political party. Thus we are talking about 'credible' fiction. This seeming tautology needs explanation.

The characters in the novel are aware there is one global conspiracy at least. That conspiracy is very much to do with the 'dumbing down' of society to facilitate the establishment of a new world order – a one world government. But the one world democratic government envisaged initially by the author/narrator does not remain benign. Alluded to already, it is all to do with the international network of oligarchs creating a modern version of a feudal society whose insidious impact is global. This conspiracy takes the form of press and media barons working for the oligarchs, trying to take control of all literature and then censoring that literature in any way they wish (similar to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*).

On the other hand, overpopulation is considered in *OWL* by both the narrator and characters (at least initially) to be the root cause of all global threats such as starvation, pollution, water scarcity, war and so on. Ultimately, the author, d'ettut, decides that governance at a global level, or the lack of it, is the key problem, not overpopulation directly. Achieving effective global governance will remedy overpopulation. Implicitly, nuclear war and rapid depopulation is now his solution to achieving a governable global

feudal society. Other characters still wish to arrive at a peaceful, cyber-democratic, global model. What has to happen is for *OWL* to entice the reader out of complacency and denial into believing the harsh reality of what is *actually* happening in their, that is the readers', world. Ultimately the aim of *OWL* is to have the reader demand the 'real' creation of the One World League Party, OWL, the new political party to save the world. This is a very difficult if not impossible challenge as I suspect the majority of readers or potential readers will sigh and think 'Oh god, more conspiracy theory.' Such I would argue is the depth of their denial, which is a result of a lifelong rehearsal in denying their own mortality.

What the future holds

'There is no such thing as bad publicity' was reportedly said by Phineas T. Barnum, the nineteenth century circus owner⁹¹. *OWL* embraces this concept. It is apparent from reviews already garnered that some readers will not like the style of the novel. (If it is to be called that. Perhaps it should be just called the 'creative written work' or even the 'sugar coated political treatise'). As an integral part of the website there will be opportunities for readers to vent any frustrations they have in this respect. They will be encouraged to blog their criticisms and d'ettut, the author, will respond by inviting readers to offer their suggested remedial ideas for a second edition of *OWL*. This is a dangerous strategy, but what it should do is facilitate interaction with the website and thus enhance participation in the more important areas of OWL membership and even policy formulation.

The *OWL* sequel

The substance of a sequel to the novel *OWL*, already commenced, would see the maturing of OWL. Ostensibly the new leadership is under Virginia Hoo. And there is her ironic temptation by d'ettut (as he did with Sebastian in Adelaide) to become one of the powerful global elite. This is achieved by d'ettut enabling her to amass one of the world's greatest wealth legacies. This would be in exchange for her fealty and her acquiescence on two crucial issues. First there would be a tightening of Internet laws (what Heather Brooke fears in reality) and the owning of the 'word' by the oligarchs, which is the character, Virginia's, greatest concern. Will she succumb? Or will she fight for a democratically evolving, Internet-driven, one world order (a cyber democracy)

⁹¹ Phineas T Barnum, the 19th century circus owner, was a self-publicist who never missed an opportunity to profile his business to the public.

rather than the new d'ettut-supported, neo-feudal system of one world government probably brought about by global nuclear conflict.

The sequel alluded to in the *OWL* novel can only be momentarily mentioned for the greatest effect. This again is achieved using the surfictional technique of a future headline or two. This is done at the very end of the novel *OWL* and is displayed below.

So has the creative work succeeded? I don't know. The exegesis should demonstrate the earnest intention of my work. The literary form is not ordinary fiction or an ordinary novel. It is something else as a part of the clarion call I have mentioned to start a new political movement to save the world as we know it. Indeed, does it matter what the form is called?

Will the OWL party or entity really be formed? Only time will tell. Perhaps the sequel will be needed to bring it to fruition. This clarion call could well be augmented by the Internet and social media as promised in the 'novel' and is happening now in the real world.

THE AUSTRALIAN

THE HEART OF THE NATION

Trillion Dollar Scam? Is OWL Leader Joining Global Elite?

Has the 'Virgin Who' (Virginia Hoo), Leader of OWL (One World League), the party that promised global harmony through her new style 'digital democracy', succumbed to greed?

It has been leaked an unnamed benefactor has developed a masterplan to place her at the head of a reported trillion dollar organisation.

The facts are scarce. Investigations reveal there is a plan to acquire 1,000 tracts of land worldwide, of a thousand hectares each.

Reportedly the land acquisitions so far are in barren, but accessible places. The barren land is to be fertilised for a billion trees to be planted. The fertilisation process is unknown. But rumours are rife. The reasons for, or the types of trees are also unknown. Speculators know the

carbon sequestering potential is huge. But the trillion dollar number doesn't stack up. We are still investigating.

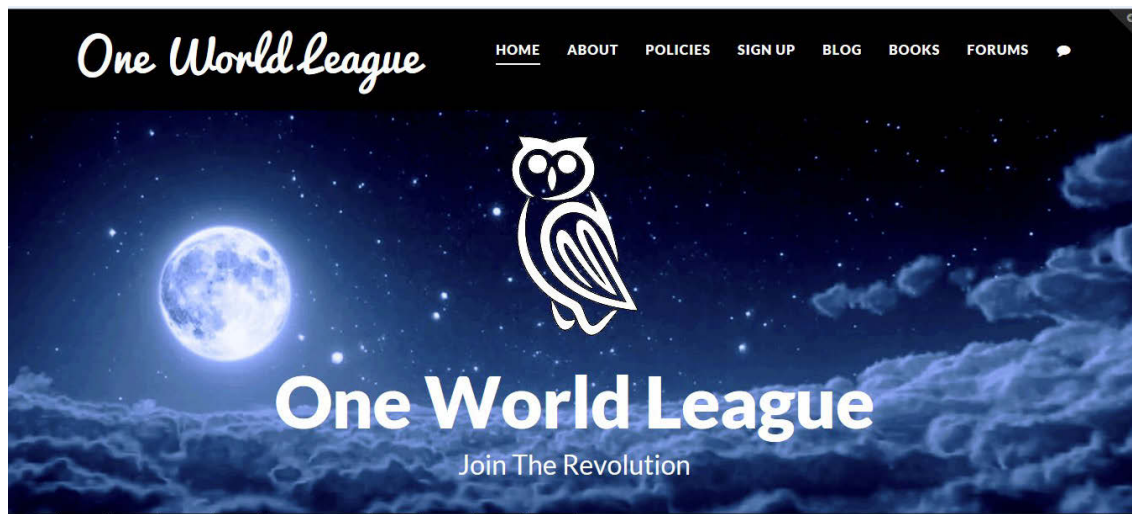
Miss Hoo is reported to have been invited to the infamous Bilderberg gathering this year. Other sources report she has also been asked by national governments to consult on their policies of political constraint on social media ventures; the very area to have gained her and her party world acclaim for developing 'digital democracy'. This, she promised, would be the vehicle moving the world towards a peaceful one world government concept.

Sebastian Spector, a charismatic but some say psychotic founder of OWL disappeared mysteriously many months ago, presumably in Dubai en route to London.



Addendum

This is the full text of the bespoke OWL website (5,800 words) to be considered part of the exegesis for examination reasons. This is the bridge between fiction and fact. It links the readers of some fictional yet allegorical plots to dangerous and real conspiracies. But it also provides the factual statutory structure, (Constitution compliant with legislated requirements), content and format to enable the creation of the real OWL political party as envisaged in the hybrid fiction novel *OWL*.



OWL (One World League - Australia) Membership Application Form

Applicants for membership must:

- * be 18 years of age or over,
- ** be an Australian citizen/or British subject on the Commonwealth electoral roll as at January 25th, 1984
- have lived for at least one month at their current address.

Member Details

Surname: _____

Given Names: _____

Address: Street: _____

Suburb/City: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone Nos
(Mobile and
other): _____

Date of Birth: _____
DD/MM/YYYY

Email: _____

Applicant Signature

Office use only

Annexure Number:	
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Party Security Signature	Witness (to the Statutory Declaration)

* special conditions apply for some 17 year olds

** special conditions apply for some people seeking Australian citizenship

What is OWL?

OWL is the acronym for **One World League**. This is a league of men and women, young and mature, who wish to see the evolution of democratic politics into something more meaningful for as many people as possible, as soon as possible, wherever possible. Our existing political parties, worldwide, are steeped in nineteenth century rituals, assumptions and biases. This is a revolution.

OWL is the foundation for a new political party that is based on integrity, collaboration and common sense, and aimed at global good. It is a party that is going to take time to develop its policies through the participation of many. It is a party that is aimed at all age groups, but in particular is trying to take on board the aspirations of young voters. It is also a party aimed at those mature voters who would like to move into the twenty-first century and leave behind the old-fashioned notions of the nineteenth and twentieth century politics.

It is a foundation for mature youth, and youthful maturity. OWL seeks tangible social progress and equity for all in a global society by exploiting e-technology.

OWL is not intended to be a new world order or a world government. Its ultimate intention is to set up flexible and credible alternative political parties that operate in various countries, while taking on board those countries' political constraints and realities. OWL will redefine democracy within compassionate sovereign states. It is intended to build up the party's core policies by a process of global member participation. Members will construct and iterate policies from all those who wish to contribute to the www.owlvoter.com site. Initially OWL will be created and set up as a registered political party in Australia (we have to start somewhere!)

The Wisdom of Many

OWL represents the new 'spirit of the times' or the 'predominant psychological force' I believe exists in our global society today. OWL is therefore constructed of many people, holding similar values and thinking similar thoughts. Certainly the spirit of the times could now be poised on the edge of the destruction of the world. Ultimate cataclysmic warfare is not impossible; nor is global environmental collapse. Alternatively, we could be poised on the brink of a new society brought about by a new awareness, and a new 'will' to do things wisely and compassionately.

OWL is about a group of people who are connected electronically around the world and who have the aggregated intelligence, achieved through collaborative decision making, to provide a cumulative wisdom never before achieved in the history of any democratic

(or any other) political movement.

Now the time is near for a group of wise people to be a real force in politics and society; to make a statement; and to leave a signature – one of benevolence for future generations. For this reason our logo is the owl. The owl is a symbol of wisdom.

This is the party which is 'electronically' participative, balanced and fair, and for the twenty-first century.

Building OWL

OWL surely and unapologetically is intended (ultimately) to be a political party, an alternative to the disappointing options that currently exist. But it is more than just a party. It will continue to borrow ideas and processes that are beneficial from any religion, philosophy or body of thought that exists, or has existed, that has something to offer that is successful and positive. OWL is non-sectarian, non-violent and non-discriminatory in its core philosophies.

Historically, declarations, constitutions, policies, charters, etc. have been compiled by the few, frequently acting in isolation of the issues 'real' to the people. Rather than being the result of a few isolated individuals writing the policies of OWL, as draft policies are completed, OWL supporters and members, throughout the e-world, will read the drafts several times. The first time will enable members to test whether the issues being addressed are the right ones for inclusion. Then members will refine, modify or add to these policies. Final policy statements, using email for rapid iterations, will include these 'inspired' contributions.

The participating groups will be more than an editorial panel. They will consist of people who are able to make significant contributions from philosophical, academic, social, or experiential points of view. They will be you!

Universal Link

We all have moments of extreme clarity of thought. Some have called these 'epiphanies'. The unfortunate thing about these epiphanies is that they are so transient that our long-term memory, sometimes even our short-term memory, cannot capitalise on them. But what if we are able to use an instantaneous, cumulative, digital link into public arenas of consciousness, for example, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook?

As people have their epiphanies, they use these technologies to record them immediately for all humanity to share, evaluate and refine. This cumulative knowledge will help OWL frame future policies or test existing policies. We might be able then, as a human race

to derive huge benefits from those thoughts when they are aggregated over a long period of time, and put together as part of the collective consciousness. We won't have to constantly re-invent the 'social' wheel. This is the twenty-first century, not the nineteenth century.

Selfish or Selfless

Will the world over many generations to come evolve into narrow, increasingly isolated groups? Will this isolation be reflected in dysfunctional ways in the individual, the family, the community and even nations? Or will these groups, through education and global access to information, become more culturally sensitive than their predecessors, able to absorb new ideas from other people, groups, and nations that gather, collaborate and communicate worldwide electronically? Will these groups continue to pursue a course of immediate gratification or will they learn to empathise with other's needs?

Will immediate gratification lead to rampant global crime, or will the ability to empathise lead to true social responsibility? Will there be the unpleasant manifestations of unbridled overpopulation in the future; or will there be responsibility born of forward planning with prophetic scenarios of humane and fair international resource sharing?

All these questions are important with respect to the individual when he/she views life and what to make of it. From the individual's point of view there is only one shot at life. Should not each of us grasp that one shot and make the very best of it together, wherever we possibly can? And then, with a group of enlightened individuals, we can work to make the world a better place, using the technology now at hand and a political party that will facilitate this. This truly is the time for a 'soft' revolution.

Listed below are the attributes of OWL and its Constitution.

The Vision of OWL:

To create the opportunity, through the exploitation of the latest information technology and social networking for all eligible people, anywhere, to be able to express their views on critical policies, to in turn achieve a harmonious global community through whatever form of governance, is required, to bring politics from the cradle of Australian democracy to the world stage.

The Mission of OWL (see the Constitution objectives):

To create a new political party, which in the first instance will serve the voting public of Australia by attaining Senate seats for the Australian Federal government.

The new political entity so formed, by implementing the appropriate participatory

platform, will allow the maximum number of Australians of voting age in the twenty-first century to be able to responsibly guide their representatives in government on their areas of concern, to enable stable, compassionate and fair government to all.

OWL Policies:

We have a BASE LOAD of policies (we have provided a beginning below). They are there to start the process of participation and ongoing construction. No individual on this planet knows all the answers. Only on a collaborative, participative basis can we build the policies until they are workable enough to help OWL, ultimately flourish across the world. OWL will start in the cradle of Australian democracy and then spread across all nations, in step with globalisation.

The big invitation is to ask you, the wise world of individuals as a group, to create and add to policies. Now!

Please build on them, refine them, and when the time is right, and the policies have been crystallized, we will launch the party.

We will do whatever is appropriate, and legal, in selected countries to unleash a truly "alternative and realistic" democratic political party. It will be born; evolve, and not just survive but thrive with the enthusiastic support from a great and wise global majority.

Please read the beginning of the policies below. Make your suggestions for refinement ON A CONSTRUCTIVE BASIS with the best wording you can put together and enter it on the MESSAGE BOARD under policy improvements (we have provided an example below).

With your input, help OWL start the journey on what should be the appropriate policies for a world, nation, or region, with respect to these BASE LOAD policies:

Environment

- Preserve wild animals and wilderness
- Understand global warming versus climate change versus pollution
- Manage natural resources within a thousand year scenario
- Reduce world population; link to carbon trading/credits

Energy

- Review all alternatives dispassionately
- Implement multiple solutions (not either/or)

- Share resources especially creative water management and water ownership policies
- Investigate thorium based nuclear power

Economy

- Limits on "obscene" wealth
- Separation of wealth from power ; especially the military
- Encouragement of philanthropy
- Raise retirement age for the healthy
- Tax religions

Governance

- Long term dissolve state government, amalgamation of local governments
- Electronic voting
- Electronic plebiscites on matters of significant national importance
- Heads of state: no monarchies (other than symbolic)
- Consider triumvirates (three wise people) versus one head of state

Health

- Reasonable contribution, with government support from all tax payers
- Centralise medical storage carried by individuals
- Scrutiny of medical practitioners/specialists and access to government subsidies
- More emphasis on preventative rather than curative medicine
- De-criminalise drugs

Defence and national security

- 12 months community service after leaving-school
- Community service; split into military, environmental, crisis management, community

Law/Crime

- Incentives to shorter court cases
- Disincentives to litigation (especially civil)
- Plain language law
- Screening reviews of magistrates and judges
- Alternatives to incarceration where appropriate

Education

- More emphasis on apprenticeships and linking of education to vocation
- Mature entry teachers and other professions
- Training to parents for child rearing
- Access to low interest loans to all people for continuing education

Employment

- Continual training and education for all but extreme cases of disability
- Reinforcing work by the post sixty-fivers is valuable and healthy for individuals and the economy

Planning

- Integrated national, regional and local planning
- Councillors/members of community councils to have same responsibilities as public company board directors

Censorship

- Protection of children
- Avoidance of racism
- Ban on religious, gender proselytising
- Recognition that advertising in a film does affect child modelling
- Parents to take responsibility for censorship as well as the television channels or movie promoters

Immigration

- No religious proselytization to those under 18 years
- Deportation to country of origin for adult second offenders of racial violence, inciters to racial disharmony or to national disunity

The Next Steps

If any policy ideas above look trite, flawed, incomplete, inconsistent or look like they could be improved in any way, give us the solution in your words on the OWL website "message board", under "policy improvements"!

OWL Message Board

This is our primary point of contact and policy formation

Policy Improvements

"We need a policy on carbon trading under the "Energy" policy; or maybe a new heading "Environment..." (Alison Mahony, Australia).

To (Alison Mahony, Australia) The way to approach this is as follows...

"How about developed nations negotiating per capita carbon consumption in exchange for population caps in developing countries (Christine Zammit, Australia)

Comments and Feedback

"As I see it: absolute genius in its formulation, constituting a new global movement, for new times coming. Truly democratic" (David Stevens, Australia).

"Incorporating socially responsible participation is the only paradigm that can work. The old paradigms keep imploding because of flawed foundations. I think this will have far reaching consequences of an immensely benevolent and beneficial nature and form an umbrella system over the existing systems...I am with you all the way" (Nev Sagiba: Australia.)

Forming the OWL Party

Helping OWL Start?

The easiest way to help is to fill in the OWL membership form already presented

Please email your details to www.owlvoter.com website. Note: All members who sign applications for registration must be eligible to be on the Commonwealth Electoral Roll.

Then please pass on this "invitation to participate" to at least 5 people you know who would be interested, asking them to repeat the process to another 5 people and so on.

The Code of OWL (OWL's Guiding Principles)

Here is OWL's starting point; OWL recognizes the individual and the 'world group':

- Every individual has a responsibility to fully realise their own human existence, and to facilitate as much as possible the "realisation of the existence of other individuals", especially those closest to them.
- Every individual must establish a structure for attempting to understand their position in the universe with respect to the beginning of the universe and their own existence.
- Every individual has a responsibility for developing a strong self-ego and respecting valid egos in others.
- Every individual must formulate a "responsibility-need" with respect to their parents and to their children, and to link these responsibilities into a notion of extended family which is, independent to government support; as much as is practically possible.
- Every individual should formulate a notion and strategy of their role in terms of community, nation, and a whole world experience.
- Every individual should accept the inevitability of their own death and the striving for a long, long, healthy and productive life. Don't wait for the hereafter.
- Every individual should accept the difference between 'bad' and 'good' within the context of their society, and accept that actions of goodness are more conducive to a sense of well-being and strong-ego than acts of malice, evil, or intimidation. Religion does not dictate universal morality.
- Individuals should never demand or expect other individuals to do more than themselves; and be prepared to, acknowledge, and learn from, mistakes.
- Every individual should accept behaviour can be changed by punishment and reward but that reward is by far the most powerful changer of behaviour.
- Every individual must accept that ultimately all human endeavour is a consequence of team effort, therefore the notion of perfect singular discovery is impossible. We are all indebted to other members of the race for all success, and for that matter, all failure.

The Final, Overriding Rule - At any time any individual should formulate supplementary rules to assist him/her in the attainment and the implementation of a strong moral code

that will guide them through all societies, all religions, and lifestyles that will be to their greatest personal good, and ultimately for the greatest good of all others they interact with, world-wide.

OWL Governance

Let's make this a sincere effort. Let's find the innovation to create a party that generations of the future will want to support, and want to refine and want to be part of.

OWL will follow an "Open Book" policy in that all donations and subscriptions to the party will be publicly shown. All monies will be accounted for., acknowledging donor and/or subscriber unless instructed not to by the donor/subscriber.

All donations and subscriptions will go towards direct costs of running the party which include:

- Registration of the party at AUD \$ 500
- Refining the website
- Creating a database
- Gaining the 500 individual registrations to "register the party"

There will be no payment for labour. This will all be covered on a voluntary basis. For the party to be registered as a "Non-Parliamentary Party". An application fee for registration may be made by 10 members of the party; one of whom must be the Secretary of the party. There must be 500 members, or more, who are eligible to enrol on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

Constitution of OWL (ONE WORLD LEAGUE)

Definitions

- OWL: is the acronym of One World League and until otherwise stated refers to the one national body being formed initially in Australia as a political party.
- MEMBER BODY: Member bodies are Australian state and other international political parties that agree to abide by this constitution and "the Code of OWL".
- CONSTITUENT GROUPS: those OWL groups (Regional Branches/Groups, Electorate Branches/Groups, Local Branches/Groups) within each state and other countries (international affiliate parties) which together make up OWL.
- MEMBERS: are "persons", not organisations, companies, associations, etc. Members of member bodies or constituent groups are automatically members of

the national organisation of OWL.

- RELATED PARTIES: as defined in Part XI of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. Clause 123(2) of this Act states that "For the purposes of this Part, 2 political parties shall be taken to be related if:
 - one is a part of the other; or
 - both are parts of the same political party".
- POLICY CONCEPT: Each policy of OWL will have a policy concept as a preamble. Policy concepts are to be sufficiently general to permit people's opinions to differ over the details of the policies; which will finally be arrived at on an iterative, participative base.
- FINANCIAL YEAR: means the year ending on 30 June.
- OWL COUNCIL: This is the OWL organisation based on representation according to the Constitution.
- LEAGUE: Aggregation of persons, parties, states (with a common cause), a confederacy.
- INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATE PARTY: A group of OWL members in a particular country outside Australia, who form an OWL Party, in that country, abiding by this constitution; and the "Code of OWL", and working within the sovereign laws of that country.

The Constitution of OWL

This document is the initial and draft constitution of OWL. It sets out an initial organisational structure that is to be refined as OWL develops. This constitution seeks to maximise opportunities for productive collaboration and participation between members.

This constitution requires all members of OWL on a voluntary basis to agree to:

- The Code of OWL and to agree generally to abide by this constitution and the proper decisions of the OWL Council;
- Participate equally in developing policies and campaigns;
- Share similar decision making procedures and membership criteria and procedures;
- Support affirmative action and practise participatory, democratic, transparent and

accountable internal decision making processes;

- Share information and ideas.

Chapter 1 - Purpose and Code

1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the party is OWL.
- 1.2 This constitution identifies the principles and the rules governing the conduct of the party's affairs.

2. Constitution: Member Parties and their Constituent Groups

- 2.1 OWL is intended to be a world confederation of members comprised of State, Regional, Electorate and Local Groups in Australia. The constitution of each constituent group is to be defined by the one OWL Constitution. Also there will be International Affiliated Parties, to abide by this constitution.

3. The Code of OWL

- 3.1 The Code of OWL is the document of agreement which defines the basic principles and aims of OWL. As such Members may not publicly forward ideas at variance with the Code.
- 3.2 To change the Code an amendment must either be decided by consensus through an electronic (email) plebiscite by at least 75 per cent of eligible party Members. For the result of such a plebiscite to be valid, at least 51 per cent of Members must have participated.

4. Objectives

OWL's main objectives will be the following:

- 4.1 To seek the election to public office in Australian State, and Australian Commonwealth Parliaments, people who are committed to OWL's Code, policies and objectives
- 4.2 To be a registered political party pursuant to the Commonwealth Electoral Act in Australia (for other countries to follow the appropriate protocol to achieve the same);
- 4.3 To encourage other political parties to adopt OWL's policies and principles;
- 4.4 To promote the development of and participate and communicate with the OWL political movement, initially nationally and then internationally;

- 4.5 To further a vision of the world characterised by peace and nonviolence, social justice, participatory democracy and ecological sustainability;
- 4.6 To engage in education of the community to raise awareness of the issues and concerns covered in the Code of OWL

Chapter 2 - Membership Criteria

5. Membership

- 5.1 Persons will be welcomed as Members provided that:
 - 5.1.1 They have read and agreed to the Code of OWL and agree to abide by its constitutional rules;
 - 5.1.2 They pay an annual membership fee;
- 5.2 Members who move from one state to another will be accepted as members of OWL in the new state subject to any local provisions.
- 5.3 OWL may establish rules regarding the suspension or expulsion of members, including appeal rights. All decisions regarding the suspension or expulsion of members and appeals against these decisions will be handled by the OWL Council.
- 5.4 The Secretary shall keep and maintain a register of members and make the register available for inspection by members at reasonable times.

6. Membership Entitlements

All Members are entitled to the following benefits:

- 6.1 To be eligible to be elected as Office Bearers to the OWL Council;
- 6.2 To participate in discussion, debate and decision-making in OWL meetings, according to the Constitutional agreements;
- 6.3 Upon being accepted as a Member, to receive a copy of The Code and the Constitution of OWL;
- 6.4 Upon request, to receive a copy of the audited accounts of the previous year;
- 6.5 To communicate about matters pertaining to OWL with the entire membership through the OWL website;
- 6.6 To participate in policy formation according to the Constitution;
- 6.7 To seek nomination for Public Office as a candidate for OWL; and

- 6.8 At any reasonable time to inspect without charge the books, records and security of OWL;

7. International Affiliate Parties

- 7.1 Can be set up in any country under the name "OWL" with approval of the OWL Council.
- 7.2 International Affiliate Parties of OWL are not entitled in Australia to:
- 7.2.1 Vote or block consensus;
 - 7.2.2 Hold any official position within OWL's (in Australia) organisation as defined in this constitution;
 - 7.2.3 Stand as candidates or hold public office in-the name of OWL (in Australia);
 - 7.2.4 Make public statements in the name of OWL in Australia.
- 7.3 International Affiliate Parties will apply in a similar way to membership application as defined.
- 7.4 International Affiliate Parties will pay an annual fee as set by the OWL Council.
- 7.5 International Affiliate Parties must agree to abide by The Code of OWL and Constitution.

8. Joining Procedure

- 8.1 An individual may apply for membership by completing a membership form which will have the following components:
- 8.1.1 Name and DOB of Applicant.
 - 8.1.2 Residential Address, including postcode, of Applicant.
 - 8.1.3 Postal address, including postcode, of applicant, as well as phone, fax and email contacts if applicable.
 - 8.1.4 Applicant must sign a declaration that they agree to the Code and Constitution of OWL.
 - 8.1.5 Any individual becoming a member of OWL can be a member of another political party
- 8.2 An application for membership must be emailed to the Party Secretary who

will place the member's name on the Register of Members once the application has been accepted.

- 8.3 Membership details will not be passed on to any outside organisations without the written permission of the Member.

9. Membership Fees

- 9.1 Each Member will pay an annual membership fee to the OWL Council. The Council in consultation will determine the amount of the annual fee.
- 9.2 In the event that the membership fee of any Member is not paid by the due date, the Member will remain financial for no longer than six months, after which membership will lapse.
- 9.3 There will be no special joining fees or rejoining fees.
- 9.4 After acceptance of membership, membership fees are not refundable.

Chapter 3 - Structure

Section 1 – General

10. Composition of OWL

- 10.1 OWL will be a confederation of Member Bodies and will comprise individual Members who form the following bodies:
- 10.1.1 Local Branches and/or Local Groups
 - 10.1.2 Electorate Branches and/or Regional Groups
 - 10.1.3 State Parties
 - 10.1.4 International Affiliate Parties
 - 10.1.5 The OWL Council
 - 10.1.6 Working Groups and Election Campaign Committees and has been described in the body of this constitution.

11. Relationships between Groups

- 11.1 OWL will operate as a national Australian organisation in conjunction with a confederation of Member Parties comprised of constituent groups.
- 11.2 Within OWL, Member Parties and constituent groups will have the autonomy to make decisions relating to their own affairs according to the OWL Constitution provided that:

- 11.2.1 These decisions are consistent with the Code of OWL;
 - 11.2.2 They remain within OWL's policy concept; and
 - 11.2.3 They take into account Australian National and State campaign priorities and election strategies.
- 11.3 To ensure that decision-making is driven as much as possible from the grassroots; emails to OWL's website will be de rigeur.
- 12. Affirmative Action**
- 12.1 At no time will any Member be discriminated against due to gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, sexuality or marital status.
- 13. Office Bearers**
- 13.1 Office Bearers of the Council OWL will be the Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- 13.2 Office Bearers for the Australian based organisation will be resident within Australia. Should an Office Bearer be outside Australia at the time of the National Meetings or National Conference, a temporary Office Bearer will be appointed to fill the vacancy.
- 14. Spokespersons**
- 14.1 The only persons with authority to make public statements on behalf of OWL are:
 - 14.1.1 Spokespersons appointed by the OWL Council;
 - 14.1.2 Members of OWL in the Federal Parliament; and
 - 14.1.3 Endorsed Candidates for Federal Parliamentary Elections.
- 15. Working Groups**
- 15.1 The Council may establish Working Groups and in so doing will determine their membership, terms of reference and duration.
- 15.2 Working Groups will be accountable to the OWL Council.
- 16. Election Campaign Committees**
- 16.1 The Council may from time to time establish committees to conduct campaigns in support of candidates endorsed for public office, in conjunction with local campaign committees.

- 16.2 The Election Campaign Committees will appoint a campaign coordinator.
- 16.3 The Election Campaign Committees will at all times be accountable to the OWL Council.
- 16.4 The Election Campaign Committees will provide all necessary information to the Moderator, the Secretary and the Treasurer, Party Agents and Registered Officers for the purposes of compliance with the relevant Electoral Acts.
- 16.5 Each Election Campaign Committee will keep its own separate set of record books.
- 16.6 Accurate financial records must be returned to the Australian Electoral Commission for them to check. The following will each need to be recorded separately:
 - 16.6.1 All gifts as defined in section 287 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act;
 - 16.6.2 Record of election expenses;
 - 16.6.3 Claims for reimbursement of electoral expenses up to the amount allowed.
- 16.7 Financial records relating to election campaign expenses will be kept for up to four years (minimum for one year) after an election. (The Commonwealth Electoral Act has recently been revised. This may affect the accuracy of the above requirements. Ref. Guidelines for further details.)

Section 2 - the Australia National Body

17. The OWL Council

- 17.1 A body of Members known as the OWL of Australia Council is empowered by Members with the task of coordinating and organising the policies, functions, and administration of OWL.
- 17.2 The OWL Council will comprise two delegates from each State Party and one delegate of any International Affiliate party; if and when state and international affiliate parties are formed.
- 17.3 Office Bearers of the OWL Council will be the Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 17.4 The OWL Council will convene at least 3 times a calendar year by available

communications technology

- 17.5 The OWL Council will convene meetings in person at least once per year
- 17.6 OWL Council Members will normally have at least ten days' notice of any face to face or teleconference meetings. In no circumstance will notice be less than seven days. The OWL Council will reside in Australia.
- 17.7 Delegates to OWL Council will be nominated by their State Party or International Affiliate Party.
- 17.8 A quorum for OWL Council meetings will consist of 50 per cent of the Delegates to the OWL Council.
- 17.9 Proxy votes will be permitted at OWL Council and must be presented in writing to the session Moderator. Only Delegates may hold proxy votes.
- 17.10 Decisions of the OWL Council will be made primarily by consensus. As a last resort at least a two-thirds majority vote will be required to change the status quo.
- 17.11 The OWL Secretary will keep minutes of the OWL Council's decisions.
- 17.12 The powers of the OWL Council include the following:
 - 17.12.1 To establish Working Groups and a National Election campaign Committee;
 - 17.12.2 To employ such persons under such conditions as the Council may from time to time determine;
 - 17.12.3 To authorise three particular Members to sign cheques on behalf of OWL; three signatures required for each cheque.
 - 17.12.4 To raise funds and incur debts in the name of OWL;
 - 17.12.5 To authorise Members to raise funds and incur debts in the name of OWL to a specified limit.

18. Annual National Conference

- 18.1 The OWL Council will convene an Annual Virtual Conference not more than five months after the close of the financial year (June 30th).
- 18.2 The Annual Virtual Conference is the Annual General Meeting of OWL.
- 18.3 At least 30 days' notice of the date, place and time of the Annual Virtual

Conference and the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at the conference will be given to Members via email.

18.4 The OWL Council will appoint a Returning Officer in due time for the Annual Conference;

18.5 Business will include, but not be limited to, the following items of business:

18.5.1 Presentation of the Annual Report by the Moderator;

18.5.2 Presentation by the Treasurer of the financial statements for the previous year;

18.5.3 Discussion of proposed amendments to the Constitution; 18.5.4 Discussion of party policy and campaign strategies subject to constitutional requirements

18.6 The powers of the Conference include the following:

18.6.1 To recommend the adoption of policy.

18.6.2 To nominate spokespersons who may publicly articulate policy.

18.6.3 To establish Working Groups

18.6.4 To establish Election Campaign Committees

18.6.5 To authorise Members to sign cheques in conjunction with the Moderator

18.6.6 To agree by consensus on amendments to the Constitution.

18.6.7 Election of Office Bearers.

19. Registered Officers of OWL

19.1 Candidates for the positions of Registered Officers must have been a Member for longer than two years.

19.2 If a Registered Officer resigns from the position in writing, or ceases to be a Member of the party, or refuses to fulfil their designated responsibilities, then the Council may accept the Registered Officer's resignation or discharge the Registered Officer and elect a new Registered Officer for the period until the due time for the next election of Registered Officer.

20. The Moderator

The duties comprise:

- 20.1 Perform the following tasks with regard to all Council meetings:
 - 20.1.1 In conjunction with the Party Secretary, ensure that the appropriate notice of meeting, agenda and motions on notice are provided in good time.
 - 20.1.2 Ensure that the business of each meeting is properly addressed.
- 20.2 Present an Annual Report to the Annual Conference.
- 20.3 Perform such other duties as the Council may from time to time determine.

21. The Party Secretary

The duties of the Party Secretary comprise:

- 21.1 In conjunction with the Moderator, give notification of all meetings of Council and.
- 21.2 Prepare the agenda of meetings, table correspondence and record the attendance of all persons present/or electronically participating.
- 21.3 Ensure that minutes are kept of all meetings of the Council.
- 21.4 Maintain and update a draft agenda for the next Council meeting.
- 21.5 Coordinate the correspondence of the Council.
- 21.6 Maintain the Party Register.
- 21.7 Keep custody, during the term of office, of all books, documents, records and registers of OWL, except those which are the responsibility of the Treasurer.

22. The Treasurer

The duties of the Treasurer comprise:

- 22.1 Responsibility for the receipt of all monies paid to OWL, the issuing of receipts and the deposit of those monies in accounts as determined from time to time by the Council.
- 22.2 Responsibility for monies paid by OWL with the authority of the Council.
- 22.3 Ensure that all cheques are signed by at least three authorised Members.
- 22.4 Submit to the Annual Conference the financial report, balance sheets and financial statement, and submit those particulars to each meeting of the Council.
- 22.5 Keep custody of all securities, books and documents pertaining to the

financial records of OWL

22.6 Ensure that bookkeeping will be carried out by a skilled bookkeeper, paid if necessary, who is accountable to the Treasurer.

22.7 Advise and assist Member Parties in financial matters.

Chapter 4 - Procedures: Meetings and Decision Making

23. Decision Making in Meetings

23.1 Decisions at all meetings of OWL will be made primarily by consensus. Predominately meetings will be "virtual"; that is by electronic means.

23.2 To ensure maximum participation and collaboration in decision making. The OWL website will be used to encourage members to interact.

Chapter 5 - Candidates and Representatives

24. Endorsement

24.1 The OWL Council will finally select candidates for seats in Federal and State elections, with electronic plebiscites guiding the final selection.

25. OWL's in Public Office

25.1 The actions and activities of all Members of OWL in public office will be consistent with the Code of OWL.

25.2 An elected Member of Parliament will also adhere to the policies of OWL:

Chapter 6 - Formal Matters

26. Liability

26.1 The Members and Parties of OWL are not partners and none of them will be liable in any way for the acts or defaults of any of the other Member Parties.

26.2 Members will not be liable to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of OWL or the costs, charges or expenses incurred in winding up of the party.

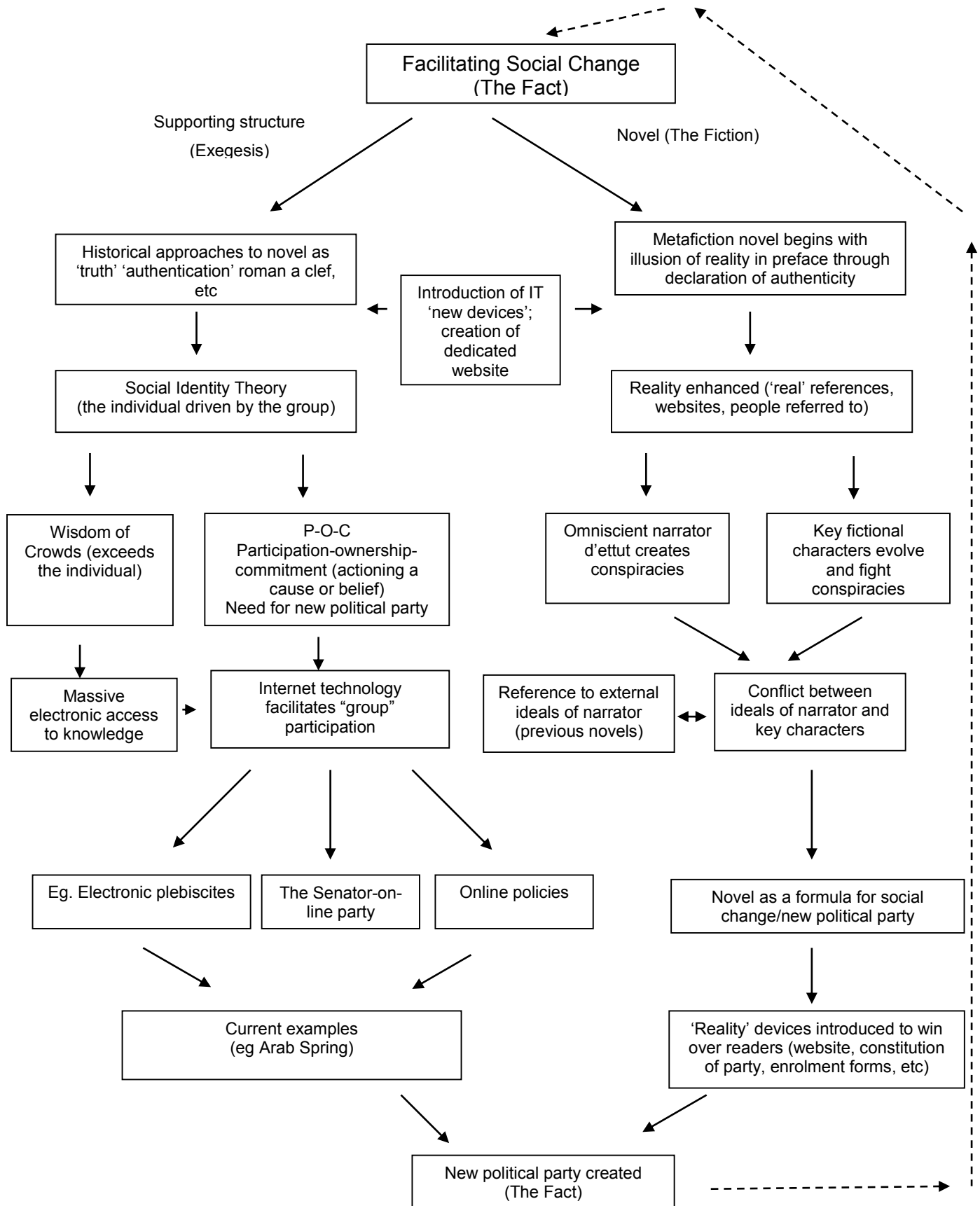
27. Dissolution

27.1 OWL will not be dissolved except by a resolution passed by email of all members in which two-thirds or more of the votes cast which favour the resolution and the total number of votes cast is at least 25 per cent of the full membership. Provided that the total number of votes cast is at least 25 per

cent of the full membership, the dissolution of OWL will be effective within 30 days after the result of the ballot, or whichever day is stipulated by the email ballot.

- 27.2 If, when winding up OWL, any property of OWL remains after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of OWL and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, the property of OWL will be distributed to another organisation having similar aims and principles to OWL

Addendum: Diagrammatic representation of the DCA structure



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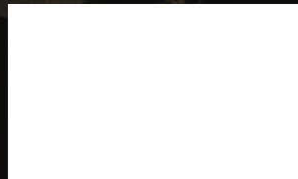
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OWL: ONE WORLD LEAGUE

This is a complete copy of the creative component of the DCA as it appears in the published work.

Note ; footnotes run on from the exegesis but pagination does not.

by d'ettut

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This story is entirely a work of fusion fiction⁹². No specific character in this story is taken from real life. However, some characteristics, especially certain foibles are; these being common unfortunately to many human beings. Any resemblance to any particular person or persons living or dead is accidental and unintentional. The author, their agents and publishers cannot be held responsible for any claim otherwise and take no responsibility for any such coincidence.

Cover design by James A Gosbell and Ally Mosher
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⁹² As defined by d'ettut in various documents

*Dedicated to Bill Nikoloudis, the owner of Peronis
restaurant, Parramatta, where this revolution began.
But alas Peronis is no more ... his wife ... you know ...
the 'full catastrophe' (Zorba the Greek)*

ALSO BY d'ettut

Vampire Cities

Pie Square

Amber Reins Fall

Greenwars: The End of Mankind

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Book 1

Fledging OWL; the Journey

*‘What does drive a person to politics? Is it an
undetectable but subtle psychopathy, driven by a
voracious solipsism?
Or is it a pathological desire to help society heal; to
mend a broken world. It can't be for the money ... at
least not directly!’*

(Sebastian ... in one of his more lucid moments.)

Chapter 1

Sebastian and his Past: Innocence and Death

My name is not Ishmael; nor is it Daedelas. It is d'ettut. Pronounce this 'day 2'. Reverse 'tutte' and add the 'd' to make 'de' and then you get 'of every man'. Note the lower case 'd'. That's deliberate too. I want people to feel the equality between us. So I am not a proper noun; just common.

This story *is* about everyone, and is a means to an end. But you will need to understand what the end is. Well, we will do that closer to the end. Not now. Some farmers love to fuck sheep. That is a means to an end. But that is nothing compared to what I will reveal to you.

Please see me as your friend. What I am about to tell you is a caution. As a friend, with that caution in mind you might well embark upon a course of action you might never have taken without reading this story. There are things everyone should know about. But they don't.

There are things in this harsh world that are hidden from us in a variety of ways.

Some might say this is a beneficial thing. The shepherd looks after the sheep. Supposedly. But the sheep don't have to know everything. Many would consider citizens of the world, or most of them, to be sheep.

As our story unfolds I will introduce characters and let you be the judge of the revelations that befall them. But there are lots of other things to consider, things you must know about ... unless you are a sheep.

One thing I am going to ask you is please believe what I tell you through this story. And yes I am calling it a 'story'; but it is all based on the truth. So the story is didactic. You will

actually learn!

I have even gone to the extent of directing you to particular websites and making particular references and footnotes. These are all there to substantiate what has been told to you through the story. I say ‘through the story’ because the story is there to protect the innocent. There are parties in the story who do need protecting, and so do I.

They will look like fictional characters; but in fact they are drawn from real characters, in a dangerous real world, that has real conspiracies and conspirators. This is a lethal concoction.

But, again I beseech you as a friend. If you are looking to be entertained by some light, popular fiction rather than a scary portrayal of what is really happening in our complex and confusing world, move on. There is plenty of literary fantasy out there to keep you fixated. Dramatic, action-packed movies to watch. Thrilling novels by the masters to keep you enthralled. But if you want to save our civilisation then read on. And please follow the footnotes ... in places they will reveal evidence which no doubt you will seek. Sometimes the mundane, even the boring, has a message that if ignored spells doom!

Let’s start with Sebastian. He is going to be a very important character. We need to know a little about his past; even his early childhood. His apparent righteousness came about at a very young age. His father represented all that seemed good and stable in his universe, at that time. But that, like other aspects of Sebastian’s life, would start one way and end another. A peep at his early childhood will give us a perspective on what’s to come.

‘And there you go, Sebastian,’ his father said. ‘The goodies win again. The baddies are done for.’

Sebastian knew this always happened. His Eagle comic⁹³ told him that PC 49, an honest hard-working policeman, like a cheerful uncle who was frightfully clever, always caught the crooks. And Dan Dare – he always beat the Treens, those horrible green things from outer space. Yes, Dad was right. Good always won. Bad always lost.

‘Why do the baddies always lose?’ asked Sebastian. ‘Because of the Nemesis,’ his father replied.

Sebastian felt secure with the weight of Dad pressing down on the end of the bed. ‘What’s a nemesis?’ he demanded.

‘Ahh,’ his father started in a distant tone.

Sebastian wondered whether his Dad really knew what he was talking about. ‘Even when the baddies think they have gotten away with it, they haven’t. There is something in the universe that dumps on the bad guys but not the good.’

‘Oh,’ said Sebastian.

Sebastian thought about King Arthur and Merlin and the knights. Good knights, the ones in white, always seemed to win. Black knights, well, they won a few fights, but not always.

‘At the end of the story, the goodies always win, don’t they Dad?’ He said this again to comfort himself as the weight on the bed disappeared.

‘Of course,’ his father reassured him. ‘Good night, son.’

The room was plunged into the darkness of desolation as the bedroom light was switched off and the door closed. Alien territory now. Sebastian shivered. ‘Good night, Dad,’ he called out into the void.

⁹³ In the 1950s Eagle Comics brought many a baby boomer’s literary mind to fruition, including Sebastian. The internal struggle of good and evil manifested as a comic strip, influenced Sebastian’s life; especially anything that smacked of conspiracy.

OWL: ONE WORLD LEAGUE

Sebastian tugged at his pillow with both hands, burrowing his head into its protective field. Thoughts flooded in. Grownups seem to forget so much. Mummy said ‘out of sight, out of mind’. It was true. They said one thing. Weeks later they forgot they had said it. But Sebastian didn't. He knew the truth. He had seen things. And when he saw something, in his mind, he would never let it go. He would explore it. Think about it. Add it to other things he knew. Build up, bit by bit, a bigger truth.

One of his friends, who talked to him in the night, told him, ‘Man's greatest failing is his forgetfulness. Sebastian, you mustn't forget, you must create awareness from all the little truths.’

‘What's a truth?’ Sebastian asked his friend.

His friend whispered, ‘The super-rich are like aliens, like the Treens. They have everything. They govern this world in secrecy.’

‘Wow,’ Sebastian said. ‘Does Dad know that?’

‘He keeps forgetting,’ his friend said, ‘he has thought about it, but his awareness crumbles quickly with time. These aliens rely on you not seeing the whole picture.’ Sebastian pondered on this then and thereafter.

Now, let us move on a long time into Sebastian's future. This is before the events in his life that are so dramatic they change the world. Even so, *this* tragedy happens which involves him, his daughter and granddaughter. It is one of those moments that explode into his life and becomes a legacy that shapes him and his exploits decades later.

But perhaps I haven't described Sebastian sufficiently. Sebastian is a hard-nosed, pragmatic, materialistic entrepreneur. For example in this day of gender irrelevance his idea of gay marriage is that it is an artefact of some bizarre psychologist's experiment with rats. He knew from his

university studies John B Calhoun had carried out a lot of experiments in the 1950s and 1960s with rats in controlled overpopulation situations.

Three things happened. Rats became homosexual. They killed each other. They ate each other. That stabilised their population which in turn reminded Sebastian of today's human society. Well, certain aspects of it!

And Sebastian's thoughts would always go to his daughter Simone and his granddaughter, Lola. Simone, before the bitter-sweet birth⁹⁴ of Lola, had been a compassionate and very effective overseas aid worker. She had worked in Bangladesh, Vanuatu, the Philippines, the Congo, and other dangerous yet exciting places of human drama. But in her youth she had displayed an incredible capacity for mathematics; topping her classes at school and then in her first year at university.

That talent was soon overtaken by a deep interest in what makes the human body work best. This was the result of a visit to East Timor as part of a university excursion. She was horrified at the extent and impact of malnutrition there. She was determined to play a role in eradicating this scourge and dedicated her remaining years at university to become the best she could in her chosen career. As a highly skilled nutritionist she was often raced to emergency zones. Sometimes these were a result of man-made trauma in the aftermath of civil wars. On other occasions she walked in the footsteps of a natural calamity like a devastating earthquake or flood. It was her passion to help others that drove her to these challenges, until her role as a mother took precedent.

⁹⁴ In this context what is meant by a bitter-sweet birth is the bitter pain actually associated with childbirth as well as the pain of leaving a part of life she really loved; overseas aid work. Of course the miracle of her daughter coming into the world was as sweet as anything could be.

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Simone and Lola's recreation was to revel in the innocence of Disneyland. So Sebastian constantly spoiled them when he visited them in Hong Kong. They were his everything. His life. So we find Sebastian, his daughter and baby granddaughter at Disneyland in Hong Kong, crammed into the crowds, lemming-like, pushing forward to find seats to see *The Lion King*.

In this *mêlée*, so characteristic of the Chinese-dominated Hong Kong Disneyland, where queuing and crowd etiquette is generally disregarded, Sebastian is separated from his family. He looks around disappointedly for a seat. He sees, a few rows ahead, Simone and baby crushed against a young Asian, or is it a Middle Eastern man.

Then there is this malicious act that taunts him forever and changes his life.

Terrorists take the soft side of society. They target those emotional things that symbolically represent everything that terrorists hate, because they are decadent, self-serving, psychopathic losers. Let me describe the thoughts that swamp those of a psychopath who hasn't quite worked out what the big picture is. If Sebastian knew him; and he doesn't, he would be immediately reminded of Calhoun and his rats.

This time the rats aren't screwing other rats of the same gender; they are senselessly on a killing spree. The body count goes up. The population in this utopia, yes Calhoun called it utopia, goes down.

This is what our psychopath, Mustafa thinks. 'Soft target. Soft target. You incredibly stupid piece of Western shit. Your decadence oozes. Your stupidity is your shadow. I will kill you all. I, Mustafa will kill you all. That is my destiny.'

He is diminutive; almost childlike. Slim build. Quite feminine. His hand movements are slow and affected, raising his left hand occasionally to cup his ear. He seems to be

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listening to something. Something that is not there. He simultaneously flicks back his long shiny black hair. He could be in a concert hall straining to hear the soft notes before a crescendo. His slow effeminate movements are planned to reduce the menace. He mingles well with the older children as they scramble to get off the Disney express from Central. His Mickey Mouse tote bag, black plastic ears and all, hide the devastation of his intent.

He picks a queue of medium length. He stands behind a family and then smiles at another family who join behind him in the queue. The perfect camouflage. His calm patience, his soft appearance, his small stature are all endearing features. Those around him chat to each other and throw him the occasional smile. His yearly ticket attracts another flash of a smile from the Chinese gatekeeper who is high on a swivel seat. The yearly ticket, the winning smiles, the Mickey Mouse tote bag and the Disney t-shirt have him quickly waved through the shambles they call security.

Soft target. Chinese infidel. He was prepared to detonate then and there if security had blocked his progress. Casualties would have been massive. The carnage would have been horrific. He visualised a wave of Chinese infidel blood and body parts spewing out of the gates of Hong Kong's Disneyland. A blow to the Chinese unbelievers and to the satanic, imperialistic Americans they serve. He hastens down Main Street, not too fast. He would look suspicious. He stops randomly and raises the camera strapped around his neck, focussing for a few moments on a point of interest. The fake castle tower. A popcorn vendor. Ah, the delicious smell of butter-coated popcorn dents his hatred. But he can't weaken now. He makes his way along the flower-adorned walkway towards Fantasyland. Snow White holds children's hands and is photographed incessantly. She is so close he can almost smell her. He too raises his camera and notices the contrast

between the pure white radiance of her unblemished face and the moist soft brown of his own hand. He moves towards the huge auditorium that features *The Lion King*. He is early because he knows the queue will be huge. Another food stall takes his eye and he pauses and slips dollar notes to the vendor and takes his hotdog. His other weakness. Double ketchup.

Double American mustard, not the hot English type. He takes a seat alone and mashes the sauces together inside the bread roll and then heads off again to *The Lion King*, guiltily enjoying another Western temptation.

He had visited the show on an earlier occasion to identify a seating position that was to his utmost advantage. But he had forgotten how competitive the race to the seats can be. The queues are suddenly unleashed. There is a stampede, pushing, shoving, and jumping over the low benches, people forcing their way through to their preferred seat. He joins this melee grunting his way forward.

Mustafa has no trouble securing a position in the middle of a row at the centre of the auditorium. Nobody selects this area as a preferred choice. His aim is for maximum devastation. He sits alone at first, but the row he is in quickly fills from either end until finally he is crushed between two different families. Immediately on his left, is this an American? The American wears shorts and sneakers and has a baseball hat on sideways. He holds a bucket of popcorn. Mustafa feels hemmed in. The lights dim. The frenetic crowd settle into their seats and silence falls. The centre stage bursts into light and he fumbles for the detonator. As an assassin he knows his mission. He thinks. They are all enemy. The fat, sunburned American on his left looks with alarmed blue eyes deeply into his brown-eyed soul. Mustafa is close enough to smell the cheap Brut splashed on the American's cheeks. He looks to his right at the blond but tanned young woman and child. The woman's eyes stare deeply into his. Simone

suspects an impending horror. Is it the tote bag he constantly fiddles with? Is it the metallic clunk as he places the bag on the floor? Is it the furtive looks to his left and to her? ... and he does look Middle Eastern.

She is about to become what they call collateral damage in a war of faith and stupidity. Her longevity in this story is miniscule. And she was always a mathematical genius of the Einstein calibre. Alas, she is to be no more and her intuitive and unrealised genius is lost forever. Such is the ephemeral nature of human life; and the eternity of death.

Simone thinks, 'Look at me, you Middle Eastern failure of humanity. Look me in the eyes.' She reaches out to shield her child. Her thoughts are instantaneous and for once in her life self-righteously hateful.

Mustafa screams, 'Blue Eyes, why are you staring at me, you bitch? Die!'

Detonation. Devastation.

And time freezes. The one millisecond eternity of hell⁹⁵. The butcher shop hanging art, the tsunami of flesh, bones, entrails and blood. But Mustafa is consumed by doubt. His conscience is crystallised, his soul is stabbed a billion times by an invisible intangible force that simultaneously freezes and burns. Suspends time. Contracts time. Stretches time to the edges of a cerebral universe. Reality begins where the story finishes. He feels his own disintegration in the million years of an eye blink. With his immolation comes cosmic enlightenment. The speed of thought is immeasurable.

⁹⁵ There is a philosophical aspect of death here ... Some of those few who have had near death experiences have spoken or written of time slowing down. Others of having their whole life flash before them. So this subjective experience of time is for this writer, negotiable. Stranger things happen in our unfathomable universe.

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He thinks. My mentors have raped me. My place in life was to share not take! Nano-music pours into his everlasting consciousness. Too late to die peacefully. Now an eternity of hell.

Simone's death was a logical conclusion to life. Probability of one point zero. She didn't know *The Lion King* was to be the harbinger of her demise. Partial disintegration of her child was mercifully instantaneous. Her own body vanishes. But her mind raced on (or is it *soul* in a timeless dimension).

Absolute insight came as instantaneously as the demystification of the numbers, the forces, and the concepts that had frustrated her mortal existence. She had struggled with light. If light is particular and the mass of any object increases as it approaches the speed of light C ; then photons must be of infinite mass ... intergalactic space travel will be impossible. Space vehicles approaching the speed of light would have infinite mass. The impossibility of it all. She didn't want the speed of light to be unconquerable. To block human progress. To create the inviolate physical rule that stumps human progress ... the wall of light moved towards her. Even at the speed of light space vehicles would impact cosmic particles producing extraordinary explosive power, annihilating such spacecraft.

The wall of light crept slowly towards Simone. The numbers jumped into her soul. Focus! Deflectability of massive objects approaching the speed of light. One point zero equals total deflectability of objects of the same mass or less.

$$Df = M + V^2 / C$$

So as space vehicles approach the speed of light, deflectability increases. Cosmic particles of any size will be deflected by any object of significant mass approaching the speed of light.

Simone could not understand the sudden void. A sound

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abyss. Her baby daughter had vaporised. Instantaneous nothingness. And then never-ending love. An eternity of memory of an entire life with no temporal boundaries, with no walls of time. The ultimate beatitude was her soul. Limitless enchantment upon reflections, from the instant of awareness to death itself. An ultimate acquiescence as perpetual as the cosmos.

The cacophony of screams started with a low pitch moments after the deafening shockwave ebbed. Sebastian's daughter Simone and granddaughter had disappeared. There was nothing. Twisted girders and torn plastic ripped from the fake ceiling.

Thick smoke and dust made visibility nearly impossible. He looked for pieces of his family. Nothing. He had been forced to sit rows behind his daughter and granddaughter. Where they had been sitting was now a crater a meter deep and the width of two rows of seats. The warm stickiness of his own blood seeped from the jagged tears down his left arm and leg. The screaming intensified as he scrambled over bodies in the rubble. He found a huge jagged hole blown into the wall and stepped through it. Smoke, small plastic and paper fragments and coloured vapours billowed out with him as he escaped the wreck of the auditorium. He fell into the brilliant sunlight and the noise of sirens.

‘Why, oh fuck, why?’ Sebastian was swamped with pain, utter despair and then lapsed into unconsciousness.

Chapter 2

Virginia Who?

Coincidence. Without it, life for humans wouldn't have much meaning.

Sebastian was floating in a sea of waratahs. A never ending greenness. A breeze rippled the waves to red. He was thankful for this cool zephyr that played on his cheeks and brushed away the sticky flies that tormented him. Paddling through the gorgeous wall of groaning flowers his narcotic-like crimson dream started to fade. Pain began pulsing. There was a presence nearby. He began to float out of blissful unconsciousness into a deafening world of chaos and carnage.

Like Simone, Sebastian's daughter, Virginia had decided on the life of an overseas aid worker. Coincidence always begs credibility; but it is true this time. Virginia had been in Disneyland, in Hong Kong, at the time of the terrible terrorist explosion. But she wasn't at the *Lion King* show. She had been thrown off her feet by the force of the blast as she had strolled past the theatre. She had seen a dishevelled and bloody figure struggle from the tangle of wreckage. Her immediate and compassionate response was to help. This was how she first met Sebastian. It could easily have been in a war torn village in Africa or the Middle East. But her response would have been the same. Help this man. And she did. She cradled his head as he lay bleeding on the footpath. Slowly he regained consciousness. His first impression after this catastrophe was of a beautiful angel bringing him back to the stark reality of an insane world. Virginia had the beauty of the Eurasian goddess men found so alluring.

Her grandmother was born in England, and was an

English teacher in Hong Kong in the 1940s. The only mystery in Virginia's family was her grandfather, who was Chinese. He was ostensibly a diamond importer. However there were some rumours he was really a senior member of some Chinese triad. Nothing really came of that and Virginia wasn't particularly interested in digging into his past. Her Eurasian mother unfortunately died of cancer. She had worked with the Hong Kong Housing Authority and evidently her Eurasian features were highly attractive to the ex-pats who dominated the scene in Hong Kong at the time. This was decades before the handover to the Chinese. She then met Virginia's father.

Her father had a long career with Bass Charrington, one of the major breweries and hotel owners in England. He went on to set up his own business replicating the interiors of English pubs around the world. He had set up a very English '*Bull and Bear*' interior hotel façade in the old Hilton Hotel in Hong Kong. And that's where they met. They married. Had Virginia. But didn't have any more children. As soon as Virginia was old enough she was sent to a private girls' boarding school near Sydney in a place called Mittagong. That's where a lot of the wealthy farmers' daughters went and also the daughters of various diplomats who worked or travelled overseas a lot. It was a great school. There was a lot of camaraderie. All the girls got on well, apart from the occasional bitch. The occasional bitch became a little more frequent as they grew into their teens. But that never concerned Virginia. She was good at sport and that was all that was necessary at that time to be popular.

After school Virginia had a varied career. She had done well in matriculation and then went to Sydney University. She studied politics and psychology and English literature. When she graduated she felt a bit unfulfilled. She had met a few of those alpha-male types who tried to, well, mentor her. Mentor would be a kind word. One of them convinced her to go into

the fashion industry. So for a couple years she studied fashion at a private college. But didn't complete the course. To Virginia the people of the fashion world were basically vacuous and totally materialistic.

Apparently she looked good on the catwalk and the clothes hung well. But she just wasn't motivated.

She then picked up on information technology and did a basic course at a technical college which she actually appreciated. It was very practically orientated. More so than the stuffy academic pretence of university. Funnily enough the tech college also offered a cosmetics course. She did that as well and learned how to preen. She learned how to do this very quickly and effectively. Virginia considered all this as part of the packaging. To her, clothes and grooming sent signals. These were data packages that signalled prestige, power and independence.

One evening in a lucid dream, a dream where she was walking with children through a mud spattered village of flimsy huts, she realised her calling. Virginia would be committed to overseas aid work, unconditionally. She would help others in need.

She had inherited wealth; was well educated and just didn't need to be constrained in that place they called a relationship. She was free and generous. Beautiful and intelligent.

But morphing a dream to become reality was a circuitous path. A veritable wandering from image to image. Meandering from iconic experience to tattered disillusionment in the selfishness of human society. But never did she question the feeling that drove her. The feeling that some great good would arrive as an all consuming, blinding revelation. Or perhaps more subtly as a glow that would trickle into her consciousness leaving clues as to how to live a better, holier awareness.

She had small life events that justified her quest. One time

she saw herself as the Waratah Warrior. On many occasions she had walked the ragged, stony and sandy fire trail to the gravity defying Hanging Rock near Blackheath. Blackheath is one of those touristy- quaint villages on the spine of the Blue Mountains.

On these walks of solitude, she could feel herself becoming immersed in a shallow rain of red, the late September blooming waratahs. At the beginning only one, two or three flowers struggled to splash colour on the craggy path. But then the clumps of a few would festoon into a crimson sea. How wonderful the juxtaposition of blood red to stone white gums. On her frequent visits she would cuddle individual flowers. She treated them like babies of the bush.

Nauseous, frustrated anger would well up inside her as she confronted the broken necks and fallen heads of her mutilated babies. Half-hearted attempts by tourists, most probably, to illegally pluck the wild flowers. But waratahs are tough and strong. They can't be simply plucked. They need to be neatly cut; manicured in fact. Massacre of the flowers she called it. Callous and insensitive, these murderous tourists who pathetically couldn't even cleanly decapitate the frozen rose beauty. She stroked the broken, stricken victims and gazed at the fading of the ones that had lost the fight and died tragically in the dust of her path.

This was her clarion call. Be the Waratah Warrior. Hunt down the terrorists who denied life to these creatures who miraculously flourished on Armageddon fire. Her dramatic dreams of peace and beauty rolled on. Lofty passionate cause to lofty passionate cause.

And now her fingers were softly winding a makeshift bandage around the crimson sludge, the blood that oozed from a gaping wound in Sebastian's arm.

This was the first real catastrophe Sebastian had encountered in his rather ordinary but safe life. He had just

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been catapulted into a cauldron of terror. His private boys' school education had sheltered him with prestige. His university days of the 1960s were indolent spates of heavy drinking with his many comrades. The limited danger of joining an anti-Vietnam march was the height of his adventures.

More will come of his work life later. But now, right now, there was serenity as he gazed into Virginia's ever-so-caring eyes.

Ah, now you see how Sebastian and Virginia met. Improbably. Idealistic, passionate Virginia and Sebastian; well he wasn't completely devoid of compassion!

Chapter 3

More of Sebastian's Past: No Heroes Just Fools

Sebastian has had his problems. However we need to know even more of his dark, unfathomable past to be able to understand his behaviours later in life. There are various shades to his behaviour which could be construed on occasions as psychotic. From deep delusion; periods which are not too frequent, fortunately, to a lesser state of denial where he finds people around him are invariably wrong. They are especially wrong on critical matters. Matters that he has a fabulous insight into and knows he is right.

And now we are some years past the Disneyland disaster. Sebastian lost his daughter and granddaughter and confronted terrorism first hand. Virginia has struck up a very strong friendship with Sebastian. Possibly Sebastian reads more into the friendship than Virginia does. But they spend a lot of time together. Sebastian has experienced a shift in his psyche. Amazingly at this stage Sebastian is still married. He would frequently take long walks with his wife in the Blue Mountains.

Coincidentally, and completely unaware, he would walk the very same waratah path Virginia had walked years before. On these walks he would half talk to himself and mumble to his wife incoherently but frequently indulge in dangerous thoughts. Let me illustrate.

Sebastian asks himself this question, time and time again. 'If death is inevitable, for everything; then why is life so precious, especially when it is abundant, perhaps even superfluous?' The darkness of his lower soul softly leaches into his consciousness. His wife walks beside him. They are

alone on a somewhat treacherous walk in the Blue Mountains. Sebastian mumbles aloud. He is thinking things that pervade all male minds at the age of testosterone saturation. A dangerous age that allows unscrupulous exploitation from those who find power over others as an imperative in life.

‘War, war. You wouldn’t know what war is. War is taking the fine point of your bayonet. Stabbing it slightly into that stupid little gook who didn’t know what he was talking about. He couldn’t speak English. First snipping out part of his entrails.

Then disembowelling him, uncoiling his innards. And then while he is still alive, chasing him around a tree with his own disembowelment wrapping around him and if you plan it right, strangling him as his guts wrap around his neck.’

Verity his wife, is one of the few who has witnessed, no actually experienced, his aberrant ravings.

It was these psychotic-like episodes that reminded Sebastian of ‘techno-therapy’.

He had invented it – or at least he had thought of it. Very creative stuff. But then again Sebastian is very creative. Not quite the same thing of course, thinking of something and actually inventing something. But close enough for him. A marvellous, new, total immersion, virtual reality induced conscious state where you could do anything. Literally anything you could think of and it would feel ‘real’. The irony was you could be as depraved as you like. You weren’t breaking the law – technically. Just like a dream; only more realistic. But, if you were *actually* indulging in depravity the therapy wasn’t working. The idea was to restructure the notion of guilt because video games on a global scale were doing the opposite.

Sebastian played lots of video games. Actually it was more than this. It was to try and restructure moral ascendancy in the techno therapy clients. Technology has outstripped

morality in modern society. You can rape and kill; rob and maim as much as you like using recreational technology. You know, the video games. But with techno therapy you had to *resist* temptation. Prove your goodness. Be a saint; and so on. Sebastian wasn't sure he would make it, especially if ever his techno-therapy was used on him. Now back to Sebastian as he mumbles dangerously to himself.

'That's war. Never did I think war was something that you fought from some passionate point of view. You know, being a hero for some noble cause.

'Anyway, our war is the war of screaming bloody horrible things. The guy next to you just exploded. You didn't. But you could very soon. That's old-fashioned war. That's the war of actual battleground stuff. You thought you were really fighting for something that *really* counted like your life and a cause of unknown importance. You didn't realise at the time then as a soldier there were whole worlds you couldn't see. Whole dimensions behind the war you could never know about. Not even dream about.'

Sebastian starts to talk again. But thinks better of it. He hesitates. His wife is looking uncomfortable. He says nothing. He knows his thoughts are at least invisible. So these he keeps trapped inside. You see, he *is* struggling with something universal. Universal to most men, full of testosterone, that stuff that bubbles up somewhere between 16 and 40 years of age. A most unfortunate characteristic in a world that ostensibly *doesn't* want wars. Then he continues his rambling.

'It is fabulously wealthy people telling me what to do. They are telling me to go and fight for some fucking reason I have no idea about. But I am just a soldier, in my mind at least.

'That's the sort of stuff *I* think about – what it would be like to be a soldier. What it is like to kill'

And this brings Sebastian to the brink. He looks at his wife with a weird detachment, mumbling incessantly. Making

her nervous. Does it matter her name is Verity? Does it matter she has remained silent through the rantings.

‘Deep pools of light. Look down and see them. Look up. Vertical chasms of wet shiny rock. Vertigo, again, whirling colours.’ Sebastian is screaming.

‘War is in my head. Violence is everywhere. I know that violence is human. To kill is to kill. There are billions of us. And we will all die as surely as we are born. That is life. Life *is* death.’

Sebastian looks around. And the sun daubs the rocky dripping walls with an unbelievable psycho orange. Something he had never seen before. And the whoooooop, whoooooop, whoooooop of those Vietnam helicopters. Whooooop, whoooooop, whoooooop. They are pterodactyl mosquitoes.

‘Hey mate, we don’t blame you. Shit, this is a very treacherous area. You obviously tried your best.’

‘I didn’t think we were that far down the valley. I didn’t think helicopters ever went down here. Just whoooooop, whoooooop, whoooooop. Rope ladders dropping. A whole pile of heroes trying to find someone who has already dropped a thousand feet.

‘She just slipped from my grip. We were climbing up these awful steel ladders, slippery as hell. I held out my hand. She let go. I didn’t push her. And then she just fell. No scream, nothing. Just nothing at all. She just fell into this giant hole of green, blue wilderness of nothing’.

Sebastian lapsed back into more ranting.

‘Okay now I am a solider again. What does that mean? Why am I burrowing into a hole? Why do I do it? It is pointless. Nothing protects me now from what they can do. What you *really* know is that the enemy knows *exactly* where you are. They have got some sort of heat seeking thing that will get you anyway. So why am I digging this hole? Why am I lying here? I am lying here because there is some supremely

rich bitch in the USA, from one of those dynastic families, who thinks I should be here. It is a person who wants me to be here because of their incredible power. Because of their incredible wealth. Because of their incredible belief that they have to have an Armageddon at my expense.'

Sebastian looks at the rescuers who are moving closer to him. Stony, concerned apprehension etched on their disbelieving faces. Sebastian is oblivious and continues his ranting.

'Okay, she was my wife. We like taking these Blue Mountain bushwalks together.

Now, I never knew how she was going to die, obviously. I didn't know if I was going to die before her or if she would die before me. I always thought there was a chance that death would come through a bushfire. One of those heat blast things that you think is going to happen to everybody except yourself. I fantasised lots of times about the rolling, flickering flames of hell boiling up the escarpment across the road from our house. The single row of housing that perched on the edge of the escarpment would take the full blast of nuclear holocaustian proportions.

'But when it finally happened. When she disappeared into the abyss below. Death was so sudden.

'Just like being a soldier. What does the soldier, the pawn in the game know? Michael Collins Piper⁹⁶ talks of New

⁹⁶ Piper, Michael Collins. He is famous for suggesting Israel's and Mossad's involvement in John Kennedy's assassination. This is all explained in his 2005 book *Final Judgement: The Missing Link in the JFK Conspiracy*, 6th Edition, America Free Press, Washington. But also his 2011 book *The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*, American Free Press, Washington describes the purported undemocratic influence this particular brand of the elite has over the press and politics.

Jerusalem. He is talking about the United States of America and its conversion from a WASPish state to a Zionist state. The Zionist elite. Boy are they a wealthy clan. What I mean is there are hundreds of families, all allied; working to maintain their own continued dominance. They want to make sure their fortunes keep on growing exponentially. Even if they have to exploit wars to perpetuate their power. Would they really suffer if they had to give up everything except a paltry \$100 million or so. And if the hundreds of extremely wealthy families in America (and not just the Jewish ones) gave up their fabulous wealth and that wealth is redistributed into education, looking after the elderly, looking after the infrastructure and so on, wouldn't the world be a better place. Aaah yes.'

You see, Sebastian can be very articulate in his latent psychopathy. His conscious and unconscious fuse to bring to the fore the dark thoughts *all* men really think; but live a life of repression and denial, less they be seen for what they really are. He continued.

'And there are so many conspiracies! The politicians secretly in league with unknown devils. The rich always perpetuating a class system. The industrial military complex in league with everybody. Secret societies. Low profile but powerful families and clans. We're really screwed. I've got to do something.'

Sebastian was still raving when he was taken to a psychiatric hospital. He was dosed with chlorpromazine before he calmed down. This episode or episodes like it were fortunately not repeated, often. Or at least not publicly.

But these things that float up from the murky depths of his past, later in life, give him an unconscious 'guilt trip' which makes him compassionate. Sort of. Passionate about social change maybe. I am sure you have wondered why we are all

arriving at the inescapable conclusion that murder, or even war, is becoming fashionable. This is quite apart from the subtle urgings to murder, fantasised by many in social media. Of course there is the link to realistic, vicarious, thrill kills through video games.

Yes, you *are* right. And so is Sebastian. These are the unconscious responses of the entire human species to the spectre of global overpopulation. Think of Calhoun's rat experiments again. Pollution, clean water shortages, starvation and of course poverty are all subordinate to human overpopulation. We need to cull! Somehow. Otherwise the human species is doomed. But can we cull with compassion?

What needs to happen immediately is for us, the masses, to light the fire that starts this process. This story of Sebastian, Virginia and later of others should provide us with the material for that ignition.

But what if a process has already begun, is invisible to the masses, and is not in the best interests of what we know as humanity?

And herein lays one of the realities of all of our lives. The arrogance of the perpetrators of a scheme to be revealed to you is such that secrecy is not necessary for them. Conspiracy and counter-conspiracy promulgated by the press is their modus operandi. It is the intrigue we can all see but don't recognise.

Chapter 4

The Graveyard; the End at the Beginning

Humans live in a constant state of denial. They actually *learn* the act of denial. For most of their life they deny their own death, otherwise they wouldn't survive. But the spectre of denial has a far more insidious effect. They even deny those things that are far more obvious than death; conspiracies ... that are real! And the conspirators know this.

Death comes to everything and everybody. Every human. Every species. Every planet. Every sun. Every galaxy. So true is this, the more sacred a brief human life is, the more aghast we must be at murders, war and societies' other multiple rituals for killing. But we aren't!

At some time late in your life, after all that denial, you will acquiesce to the notion of your own mortality, to your own death. But few people, apart from the madman, can acquiesce to the death of all humankind (Wait, let's say humanity). What if there is a vast and perverse plot to rule the world. This might well have been the aspiration of past insane autocrats and dictators. But what if it is now part of a well prepared and globally orchestrated plan which will take humankind to the depths of despair; to the very pits of hell.

So, Sebastian is important. He is our key protagonist in this story. In fact he will be my foil. You will see at this moment in his life he already feels as though there is a conspiracy against him. A conspiracy that will damn him to an eternity of irrelevance. He is greatly troubled by his insignificance, like all those who are aging. He rebels, hoping he can find a way to justify his transient existence. Virginia though is like the vampire's mirror image. She is there. She is

real. But, at least now, she is invisible to most.

A cloudy dawn is cracked open by a devastatingly blue sky. Warmth rolls down the hills, between the trees, bathing the tombstones at Wentworth Falls' cemetery, throwing off their icy loneliness. The bees hum in the sun, shimmering between the long brown shadows. They suck nectar from the wilted flowers clogging the tombstones.

A bugle sounded long ago.

Soldiers marched to death.

An unknown tombstone heralds *Tempus est Nihilum*. Bees bumble over the words, dancing in the time eroded granite groove of a soldier's name, long past reading.

A honey sucker twirls. A whirling dervish of a bird. It floats over the decaying flowers on another crusted epitaph. '*I fear not death, my life is infinity.*'

A solitary magpie strafes myriad tombstones.

In a leafy corner, shaded and still dim after dawn, there sits a large owl overstaying its night-time sentry. Its stony perch starts to glisten. Sun on night's dew. This out-of-place owl knows something!

Sebastian, accompanied by his now Executive Assistant, Virginia, has retreated to his favourite spot of relaxation to reflect on his dreams and ponder the injustice of his lack of fame as well as how he can in fact transform his irrepressible but flawed enthusiasm into something useful, like saving the world. His melancholic episodes, as Virginia has called them, have all but disappeared, aided by her forbearance and patience.

He has now been sunbathing midst all the death and the engraved epitaphs to past lives. He is irradiated by the eternal energy of the living sun. He basks magnificently in the solitude of a graveyard. Some would think this odd, somewhat weird; perhaps demented. Sebastian doesn't. He whacks at a blowfly.

Filthy obverse ugliness to a pristine, beautiful morning. He returns to sheet number seven of *his* epitaph.

Smudges all over the sheet – sun tan oil and sweat. The brilliant sky is dangerous, ominous; cancer everywhere. The blue stain, darker on the horizon, drips between tinderbox trees ready to explode in a fiery arc, ready to roast everything in its path. We are in the land of devastating bushfires.

Sebastian has mastered the art of philosophical self-indulgence. Why fame and history has eluded him he cannot fathom. Something soon should inevitably release him from his failure. He fiddled and penned:

'From dust of stars I come.

As cosmic detritus I go.'

But then, to him, his masterpiece, a wordy work of utter solipsism was jotted down.

'History missed me.

One who thought greatly,

Did endeavour mightily

But was ignored completely'

Sebastian has learned how to counter his insignificance in his lifetime. In the next incarnation he might just get lucky.

He turned to the willowy Eurasian lying next to him, slowly basting in the sun, exciting body contours accentuated by the shiny coconut oil. iPod plugged in.

She was oblivious to all except Beethoven's Ninth. Virginia's working with Sebastian since Hong Kong has had a sybaritic theme. Arduous, sometimes frenetic work catering to Sebastian's many clients has been offset by frequent bouts of hedonistic indifference to the demands of his commercial world. There is a little unacknowledged and unconsummated flirtation from both sides especially on those lazy days of summer.

'Virginia,' he yanked out her earplugs. The beautiful,

perfectly high cheek-boned countenance twisted towards him. Her long black hair flicks over an ear and shoulder in slow motion as she executes a sensuous, mock salute.

She knew his querulous quest, and without listening said. 'My song of joy is better than yours.' She hardly moved her lips, such is her sibilant protest.

'No doubt, no doubt. But nevertheless, I am trying to define my place in an overpopulated, underwhelming world; not compete with Beethoven.'

'You can't justify insignificance, Sebastian,' her lips curled.

He sensed something predatory and haughty about that look. This tugged hard at his blotting paper ego.

'Writing and rewriting your epitaph is hardly the fast-track to fame,' she cooed.

But he persisted.

'Listen to this. When I reached the age of enlightenment and clear articulation ... ' 'Not long ago, eh,' butted in Virginia.

'Well, anyway, I had this theory my brain was giving off electromagnetic waves or something similar. Ultimately these would be detectable, using the right equipment. I also believed the waves would just keep radiating into space forever at the speed of light. So in a hundred years' time they could be picked up by some extra-terrestrial intelligence a hundred light years away. I made a conscious effort to think of my introduction to this intelligence, getting them to recognise the breakthrough. You know, consciously creating the right thought for them to get it.

'This would prove my fame. What do you think? Even if it is a bit late for me to enjoy it or capitalise on it.'

Actually Sebastian, with limitless optimism, envisaged a future universe in which super-intelligent beings would 'soul harvest'. They would roam the cosmos with magic so fantastic

they could pick up the vibrations of the souls of beings long dead. Especially Sebastian's. They would effectively evaluate or screen the souls; and bring back to life the ones considered worthy. Especially Sebastian. Such was his solipsism. He had told all this to Virginia on countless previous occasions.

With languid disinterest Virginia sighed, 'From fiction to fact. You're the world's last great hope Sebastian!' The sarcasm oozed ... 'You should be in politics!'

Sebastian, in a mood that can only be described as a fusion of internal optimism and self-love with diffidence in confronting an unknown future, continued with his epitaphs. He was desperately searching for the ultimate maxim, pithily describing his fabulous life in which he was yet to become great; which he confidently knew had to be near. Yes it had to be!

That night Sebastian had a strange dream. This was an obscure, surreal sort of dream. He had these weird dreams frequently and sometimes wondered if there was a message there. This night he was flying high, alone, above the earth. Like an astronaut detached from his spacecraft. Infinity in every direction. The sun energised and sustained him. The earth below was like a giant beach ball slowly turning in front of an endless abyss. In an instant he grasped the insignificance of his own life and the finality of his own death. The conciseness of his mortality. Briefly he saw an orange glow creeping across the lighted earth. He knew in the glow's aftermath, in its wake, no life survived. His was a feeling of utter hopelessness. He knew instantly the individual can do nothing to save all. But he would gladly lay down his life to save the rest of humanity, today, tomorrow and forever more.

In a microsecond he comprehended the fallibility of humans. Their inexorable climb from primeval slime to a technology so vast and fast, morality could never keep up. A helix of social evolution, a never-ending revisiting of grave

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social ills that had for the sake of humanity to be remediated. But within a generation those same ills were forgotten and repeated. Maybe though, given long enough, human existence would mature into something unfathomably beautiful. But it isn't going to unless Sebastian can help. Sebastian's intentions, as is always the case, from his perspective, are honourable. So long as they can ultimately be played out on the grand world stage.

Chapter 5

In the Forest of the Night

Virginia is the second most important person (maybe the most important) on this journey. Here we begin to understand a little more about her, albeit through Sebastian's eyes. He still carries the hallmarks, the prejudices, the social wounds of his father. He is an out-of-date male chauvinist, despite his sometimes enchanting and seductive, but mostly glib, tongue.

In the age of cougars, *Fifty Shades of Grey* and new age feminism, Sebastian is fighting for something he calls sexual existentialism. Perhaps it should be called sexual resurrection. He is becoming increasingly aware, so subtly, that his fantasies are fast waning. He believes therefore he is totally justified in his lustings for Virginia. So frequently his puerile affections are offered as male dominance. This consciously, or unconsciously, is part of his power game called politics. At this stage, and with this game, he is really still a novice. He tries so hard to hide the horror he perceives as being in the age of imminent flaccidity. If only he realised he was the foil. Virginia is not a sexual plaything.

Right now Virginia is our Mona Lisa; coquettish and intriguing. You will wonder why she puts up with Sebastian. But that will be made a lot clearer later. Is it that poor Sebastian, the master seducer, is outwitted, outmanoeuvred and out-seduced? We will start with Sebastian. Recently he was speeding towards Sydney airport on a wet winters night; Virginia acting as chauffeur.

Sebastian noticed Virginia was tapping her long slender fingers, replete with highly polished perfectly enamelled black fingernails. They were like talons on an eagle, except a lot

cuter. He didn't know whether she liked wearing the tight fitting chauffeur's uniform, but it worked for him. The top was obviously a size too small. But that helped. She always had the top button or two undone. The pressure of the tightly wrapped material pushed her breasts together and up. It created a marvellous cleavage. The skirt, part of the uniform was also tight, black and short. She had fabulously long legs. That's why he sat in the front passenger seat with her; never in the back seat. He was a snob though; he always sat in the back seat of taxis. It's just that he liked sitting in the front with her in his black mafia-like Chrysler. It was a big car. Tinted windows. Bone white upholstery that always looked good at night; especially when the outside of the car was so clean it sparkled. And Sebastian made sure that happened all the time.

Sebastian enjoyed the trappings of success. Not that he was *that* successful. He had spent some time in advertising agencies, sucking in everybody by sharing fantasies and telling lies convincingly. Plenty of government contracts now to feed his own consultancy. Good margins. Ten years of ripping out capital cost from major infrastructure projects around the world. He liked working his way around the world. A good per diem and very generous success fees all added up to a lavish lifestyle.

Lots of free days exploring all sorts of leisure activities. Virginia helped to make his lifestyle exquisite if not romantic. She was the ultimate Executive Assistant, stunningly everything. Beautiful, calculated, articulate and loyal. Her chauffeur's cap added a little bit of formality. It gave her an almost military demeanour. Sebastian and Virginia arrived at the valet parking counter and before the valet could leave his booth, Virginia threw her chauffeur's cap into the back seat and undid the remaining buttons of her uniform vest and slipped it off. Then she slipped over her head a tight fitting black diaphanous top that perfectly complemented the black

uniform skirt. No more chauffeur. And Sebastian wondered how deliberately provocative she was; especially at his expense? They both got out of the car at the same time and headed for the check-in.

Sebastian had never seen a busker at the airport. He said this to Virginia. A plaintiff song was heard. He stopped and listened to the words. It was almost a Bob Dylan, nasal twang but the words were clearly articulated.

'... dulled by demented democracy.

The plague

nihilism must go away,

because all human society

will not be sullied,

will not be bullied,

by extravagance,

by expedience,

by false honour,

by games of the parlour.

It will be strengthened

by love for humanity;

not self nor vanity.'

'Great voice, wrong venue,' he said.

'Sounds like a budding Cat Stevens,' she replied, not particularly interested.

Sebastian led the way to the Business Class lounge. Sebastian always secured the privacy and prestige of a boardroom. He always indicated he wanted it for several hours of interviewing. In the good old days this used to be free of charge – now he had to pay. But it wasn't a fortune and it gave him ample opportunity to freeload from their generous complimentary bar and use the boardroom table to its greatest capacity.

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They settled into the boardroom. A small one at that, with a whiteboard, six comfortable chairs, a long slim dark polished wooden bar with granite on top and a desk in one corner.

‘You’re as cool as a cucumber, Virginia,’ he said.

Sebastian said this because he was constantly impressed by her aloofness and seeming disregard for him in particular. But she worked well with him.

Constructively compliant to *virtually* everything.

‘You are like my father,’ he said. ‘But much better looking and of a far more relevant gender.’

‘Oh really. In what way?’

Sebastian could tell she wasn’t really interested. ‘He was an undertaker.’

‘What?’ exclaimed Virginia. ‘I remind you of an undertaker. Thanks a lot!’

Sebastian quickly replied, ‘No, no not that sort of undertaker. Not the sort to cart dead bodies around and put them in holes and let them rot. Or burn them and add more pollution to the planet. No, he was a liquidator. Actually he was a combination of administrator and liquidator. The worst of all breeds.’

‘Now *I* am the worst of all breeds.’ Virginia looked bemused. ‘You really know how to sweet talk me Sebastian.’

Sebastian ignored her and continued. ‘No he was a money making machine. As the administrator he was supposed to go into failing businesses and turn them around. His real secret was that he would go into a business that was in some sort of trouble as an advisor. He would then give the ultimate proclamation: “You are trading insolvently.” There would be panic. A board would appoint him so the Directors would not be held personally liable, and be dragged under by insane visions of an intemperate CEO. He was very smart, very incisive and also decisive like you. That’s what I mean.’

Virginia was enjoying his discomfort.

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‘Anyway,’ Sebastian continued, ‘he would do a quick assessment of the financial situation. If there was a million dollars or more to claw out in terms of fees, he was the man. The formula was always the same. He specialised in not-for-profit organisations and charities. He knew they were rich pickings. CEOs would always treat NFP organisations like their personal fiefdom. They’d always start off cautiously in the first couple of years and then take their eye off the ball, rack up huge expenses and then start treating the various donations, government grants and other forms of funding as their own money.

‘He would walk into the room, appoint himself as the administrator and then immediately after sacking the Chief Executive Officer announce he was now the CEO and the board rolled into one. “I have ultimate power,” he would claim. He would then do a couple of sacrificial offerings. He would take one or two key executives and sack them on the spot. He would then take the rest of management and look them all in the eye. A very steely look. I know because I went to some of these meetings when I was young. He would pause. A very pregnant pause. He would then say: “I don’t blame you if you hate; it is cathartic. Especially some of those senior executives who no doubt contributed to this mess. I don’t blame you if you hate them all. Get the hatred off your chest. Don’t forgive them. Look what they have done to you”.

‘This was his masterpiece. He would then start talking individually to the remaining members of the staff, playing one off against the other. His job was relatively simple. Find an auctioneer to auction off premises. Place a few advertisements in the newspaper to sell off assets, plant, machinery, properties, whatever. Get valuers to do valuations. Have a team of his own people running around doing whatever they do but also retaining a lot of the existing staff doing what he wanted them to do and then charge them out at ferocious fees.

And when the administration didn't work – that is, he couldn't turn the business around because of the cataclysmic aspects of the business he discovered after becoming the administrator – he would then suggest the company be wound up. The poor schmucks who were the creditors would always fall for this. They had to. They were usually mother and father businesses who didn't know any better. He would always have the bank onside as a secured creditor. Anyway, he would ask for nominations to continue as the liquidator to wind up the company. He would always have a stooge in the audience that would move this way, with a seconder there to second the motion before the motion had even been read. The whole thing was always a stitch-up.

‘And listen, this is the weird bit. Why would any legislation allow for the same person being the administrator and the liquidator? The conflict of interest is so frigging obvious. Are there some underlying reasons the relevant government agencies like ASIC,⁹⁷ the Tax Office, and so on want businesses to fail that we don't know about? Is there more in it for them or their cronies? A sensible political party would put an end to that. Ensuring administrators can't be liquidators. What a conflict of interest. Anyhow, it all played beautifully into my father's hands.’

‘Well, he does sound smart,’ Virginia said, ‘even if

⁹⁷ ASIC – Australian Securities and Investment Commission. As ridiculous as it sounds, it is true administrators can leverage themselves into being liquidators under Australian law. Sebastian understood this. Also the fact he clearly understood corporate matters, almost certainly gained from his father's influence, augured well for his understanding later in life, for some of the complexities of perverse global financial dealings.

selfish. I hope you aren't carrying those genes, Sebastian.'

Sebastian continued. 'He enjoyed this life tremendously.

' "Better than shooting Germans," I said to him one day, with what I thought was a brilliant sarcastic strike. This referred to one of the few times he spoke of the war and said he had been shooting Germans when he was fifteen. "Better by far," he responded coolly. "A lot more power. I love whipping CEOs and executives who thought they were so smart." '

Virginia was sucking quietly on a bourbon and coke, discreetly, through a red and white, barber-pole striped, very thick straw. Her sucking was deliciously sensual.

'Interesting,' she said, with about as much interest Sebastian has in what the Pope ever says.

'My father didn't really have a high opinion of me,' Sebastian uttered, hoping to get some sort of sympathetic response.

'Well,' said Virginia, 'if that is the case, why do you keep talking about him.

Sebastian, I think you are a deeply troubled person and one who needs to find something and find something soon. I understand, I appreciate, I empathise, with the fact you have had some rough times in your life. Wife dies, daughter and granddaughter murdered. And I think you are bright. I will help you as much as I can. But you need a cause. You need to get outside of yourself. '

'Yes,' he said, ' I need a cause. Things lurk in my dark, dark mind. Things are sometimes better unsaid. You know that psychologist friend of mine, Floyd. The one that looks a bit like a sheep. He's got that sort of white, curly thick hair. Nice guy.

But he said some pretty rough things about me. Something along these lines. He said my visible consciousness is like an English country field. He said something like I am soft, lush and gently undulating. According to him, "below my

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infernal innocence lies a toxic waste tip of wanton lust and this is only temporarily capped.” He reckons that if my psyche was accidentally dug up, all the poisons of the past would come out and be unleashed and all those within striking distance would be maimed. Well so much for his analysis Virginia. Is it true?’

‘Every word of it. Floyd is a genius. Sebastian, you’re at best a sociopath, at worst a psychopath. You even sound like a US presidential candidate. You know, like that Carson person. You are really well contained when you are with other people. Others think you have cool logic. You have a very mellifluous tone and you have an exuberance that comes out all the time. All this comes across as natural traits that make for an imposing persona. But you are still a sociopath. And I don’t trust you totally.’

Sebastian knew better than to take her deprecatory remarks too seriously. Or did he?

‘Why, Virginia, Virginia Hoo. Why that name?’ (Change the subject, he thought).

She paused, ‘Some Eurasians and the Chinese in particular have a first name that is awfully English and a second name that is awfully odd.’ He knew he had asked this question a hundred times before and the answer really wasn’t relevant. He began unclipping Virginia’s bra and moved his fingers to her shoulders. He knew she liked that touch. Well, he thought so. There was no resistance. Did he detect a shiver of excitement? He hoped so. He gently massaged her back. He nudged her forward slightly and she lay face down on the boardroom table. She did this obediently. She really did enjoy

the massage. And she liked the danger. The boardroom door⁹⁸ wasn't even locked. His hands glided from her beautifully proportioned shoulders to her firm buttocks. He did this in slow but strong movements. He then moved her legs slightly apart so he was able to massage the inside of her legs from calf to thigh. She unzipped her skirt and he slipped it off. Her legs were weightless. He feasted on her exquisite curves. He hoped his panting wasn't too obvious. It appeared she was passive and obedient; or so Sebastian thought.

But Virginia was not only enjoying herself but also the powerful position she put herself in. It wasn't with innocence when she thought, albeit fleetingly of the future and what return she could get on this well, stimulating investment.

Sebastian's words tumbled out.

'There are two types of lovemaking for men,' he said. 'The love making of the young and that of the mature. For the young it is explosive hormones. For the mature it is not the frenetic dash, it is the last supper stuff. Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.' Sebastian was on a roll. Or so he thought.

'For youth, lovemaking is about dizzy mountain heights plunging down to depressing deep canyons. To the experienced man it is about subversion and frightfully creative plots. It's about the perverse and bizarre. It's about manipulation, but ever so exciting.'

Virginia said nothing.

He gushed forth. 'For the mature it's sophisticated depravity that lasts an aeon. It is of Machiavellian complexity.'

⁹⁸ As irrelevant as this may seem to some, there is an immense adrenaline rush to such escapades. There is something symbolic, perhaps even prophetic about 'getting off' on a boardroom table. Many a politician has tried it.

A cocktail of lust and pure emotion. But for the young it's just testosterone simplicity.' He didn't tell her what he really thought.

That would be an end to it. Sebastian knew it was all about power; and particularly domination by a sexual hedonist heading rapidly to the age, Sebastian called 'loathsome flaccidity'.

Now he knew he was panting, audibly. He started mumbling a Beatles lyric – *'Let it be, let it be.'*

'I'm a virgin,' Virginia said coolly. 'Yesterday, today and tomorrow.'

Sebastian was incredibly frustrated. There were places he wanted to go and couldn't. He realised this wasn't foreplay, this was eight play. It was never-ending. Who would believe at thirty-five, with her looks and shape, she was still a virgin? The virgin Hoo. What a joke. The world's most accomplished prick teaser. At his expense. He thought about it. Who was the teaser? He was forcing his arrogant depravity onto an innocent. He wondered if he was deluding himself yet again. He wasn't sure.

'That's enough,' she demanded.

'I feel like a loser,' he said, hoping for some kind of sympathy. Some sort of second chance.

'You are not a loser Sebastian, just impetuous and in certain ways chauvinistically naïve.' She sighed the first few words, totally unconvincingly.

She slipped off the boardroom table and clipped back her bra and pulled down her top. She slipped on her skirt.

Sebastian supposed he had to display the usual male indignity, so he said to her with absolutely no embarrassment: 'What now? I am not talking about us, obviously. Love is just a socially conditioned and blinding situation that blocks creativity. Now maybe it's time to storm the ramparts of humanity and start to think of bigger and better things. Things

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that transcend the self. I think a lot of people my age have done the materialistic, conspicuous consumption thing. Perhaps they want to move to some sort of spiritual state.'

He always felt a fraud when he talked like this, but she seemed to be listening. He kept on going.

'The longer the time a flower takes to bloom the greater the bloom will be. We have orgasmic affairs in youth. We gain some sort of superficial social awareness in midlife and then with true maturity maybe we reach spirituality.'

Virginia was unperturbed. She straightened her skirt and patted out invisible wrinkles, looking at Sebastian with a gorgeous aloofness. Her delicate fingers jingled the ice in her bourbon and coke.

'Sebastian, you talk too much, sometimes. We have an agenda in Hong Kong.

Let's go and fix it. More work, less play!'

'Great for you,' he thought. 'You get the orgasm. I get the frustration.'

Why dwell on the carnal, you probably think? Well, let me tell you. It is all-important. Sex and politics are inextricably related.

Chapter 6

Eight Play for a Sad Seducer

To parrots, poets and politicians, words are vital.

It should be obvious by now that Sebastian is infatuated with Virginia. She is to him seemingly unattainable; like all those things significant in his life, even perhaps politics. He would do anything within his power to seduce her. He is much older.

But does that matter? He is doing nothing more than trying to perpetuate himself through someone else's youth. A common trait in educated (and probably uneducated) middle-aged men.

Virginia can look after herself. And we must ask the obvious question. Will his lust ultimately compromise a political career, as it has done for so many? But let us not underestimate his persistence. He is skilled and clever. Let him explain his methods. His persistence and style epitomises his, and many others', approach to life in general, and perhaps politics in particular. The notion of seduction is not unfamiliar to politicians. However Sebastian is clever enough to be familiar with induction. After all, he is, or was, a psychologist. But politics is gradually creeping into his lexicon. In this case 'word induction' is an important concept. Keep repeating a particular proposition you want to become reality to the unsuspecting, and presto, it will happen. Just ask anybody skilled in hypnosis; or an effective politician; or even a skilled member of the press. Let Sebastian justify his new approach.

With Virginia, he had tried every trick in the book; but perhaps his book was a little too slender. Remember the joke, what's the thinnest book in the world?

Answer: *Italian War Heroes*. He was convinced any book he wrote called *Sebastian's Successful Seduction Techniques* would be about as long as the synopsis to *Italian War Heroes*. Anyway, he was getting desperate. They'd gone to Hong Kong on business. They were staying at the Sheraton in Kowloon. As usual they had separate rooms. He tried every excuse under the sun to share a room including an economic advantage of a two-bedroom suite as opposed to two separate rooms. A spacious and ornamental lounge to share. That made perfect sense. As usual she would have none of it. When they travelled together it was always as business colleagues; but as far as he was concerned it was all part of her 'eight' play. In other words part of her extended and viciously cruel foreplay.

There was no way around it. On the very top floor, open to the elements, next to the swimming pool was a large Jacuzzi. At the right time of the day (or evening), you can have the Jacuzzi to yourself. So on one of those warm Hong Kong evenings, he took her through this elaborate discussion describing what he had defined as the *hypnotic stimulation of the erogenous zones*. A fancy title. It referred back many years before when he had actually carried out a diploma in hypnotherapy. He was investigating everything he could at the time on ways to influence or engineer situations to his advantage; particularly in the advertising agency field. So the ultimate seduction of Virginia had to be achieved by any means. She was a formidable opponent.

'It appeared to me there could be legitimate therapeutic values for this form of *'hypno-sexual'* therapy. In fact colleagues have suggested I prepare a serious and professional paper which outlines in detail aspects of the hypnotic inductions used to achieve the results I have achieved.' Sebastian continued his erudite monologue with increasing expectations of a payoff.

Virginia, however, showed all the signs of extreme

boredom.

‘During lighter moments I have speculated upon the other implications of these techniques. It would, for example, be extremely simple to use a post-hypnotic suggestion to have some recipients of the hypnosis remember and re-live the erotic explosion experienced in a first hypnosis session, where in simple terms orgasms are achieved and magnified in intensity many times over. A simple cue, like re-iterating a code word to themselves a certain number of times, could give an instantaneous orgasm. This might be marvellous for people who are feeling a little low.

‘Alternatively a technique could be carried out remotely, by telephone. An extension of the heavy breathing technique.’

He turned to Virginia who was cloaked in darkness. Hers was an ethereal, shimmering silhouette, backlit by the soft ambience of the Jacuzzi lighting. He said, ‘Well Virginia what do you think?’

She took her bikini top and bottom from the side of the Jacuzzi and flowed effortlessly into them while still in the water. She climbed from the Jacuzzi and wrapped a thick white towel around her hips and sat on a flowerbed ledge.

‘I am still a virgin, but you can try your persuasion if you like. Here. In the dark.’

He leaped out of the Jacuzzi and took her by the hand to one of the poolside lounges. They were all alone. ‘My God, was this it? Sebastian relished the thought.

‘Please just lie down. I just want you to relax. Just relax and think of the most relaxing situation you can possibly think of. What is that? Lying on a beach. Snuggling into the sand on a soft sunny, spring day, you say.’ For obvious reasons Sebastian had to quickly slip into his shorts. Given his state as a more or less participant in this hypnosis experiment, his erection, seemingly unnoticed by Virginia, made the swimming shorts assembly very difficult.

‘What I want you to do from this point on is keep on imagining you are in that situation and just listen to the tone of my voice. Just listen to my voice. Other noises, other things, other aspects won’t be important, just listen to the tone of my voice. I am going to say a few things. But listen to the tone of my voice. Listen only to the sound of my voice.

‘What I would like you to do as you relax is breathe in. Okay your eyes are open. Breathe out; your eyes are closed. Breathe in your eyes are open; breathe out; your eyes are closed. Now as we are doing this, breathing in; breathing out; eyes open, eyes closed. Relax absolutely, relaxing absolutely, relaxing absolutely.

‘I want you to look at that lamp. That point of light. Just look at that point of light. Breathe in. Eyes open. Breathe out. Eyes closed. Relaxing. Breathe in; eyes open; breathe out; eyes closed. Just keep listening to the sound of my voice.

Everything is okay. Just keep breathing in; breathing out; breathing in; breathing out; looking at the light. Now breathe out, this time your eyes stay closed. Your eyelids are heavy.’ And so Sebastian continued with his marvellous word induction. His rambling incantation continued for several more minutes.

Finally he thought he had reached a hypnotic denouement.

‘Now you are totally relaxed and you lie on your back. My fingers massage your breasts and slowly move down over your stomach; down further until now they massage the most exciting part of your body. My forefinger is energised. You can feel the energy coming from it. You feel such excitement as you have never experienced before. I am moving inside of you.’

‘No you are not,’ Virginia cooed these words and pushed his hand away with a very un hypnotic determination.

‘Damn it,’ he croaked, ‘the spell is broken.’

‘Not completely, Sebastian. That was very, very relaxing.

This tremble is real.’ She sighed this out as her whole body convulsed. ‘I am not saying you can’t make me relax again sometime in the future. But that is enough for now.’

He knew he had failed again.

Virginia’s soft cadenced voice, forever the vocal chameleon, soft tone when vocal seduction is necessary, a harsh tone with ego-crispness when she is direct. She had pleaded many times: ‘You remember saying we can work together Sebastian. Let us try.’

He could do nothing now but think the most lascivious thoughts. Hong Kong was as frustrating as Sydney. He felt like Sisyphus forever pushing something immovable up a relentless hill.

But then again, he thought. Hypnosis, is that not the mellifluous call of the demagogue politician? ‘Listen to the sound of my voice; listen only to the sound of my voice’ ... Perhaps even in politics hypnosis has its place. And he knew he could do that stuff. Well, the hypnosis part at least.

Chapter 7

The First of the Epiphanies

Sebastian needs the opportunity to explain himself now. He is frequently frustrated. He is like a sun-hot magma filled volcano that is somehow capped. There are deep rumblings and a gargantuan tension needs to be released. Sebastian is not a contented person. He is looking for something important to fill out his life.

Whenever Sebastian is in Adelaide, especially when he is without Virginia, he lapses into a quasi-psychotic state. He imagines surreal shapes and colours, flashbacks to his days of LSD, methedrine and marijuana. Words that pop into mind are magic mushrooms. HAIR, not so much the furry stuff that hangs off our head, but more to do with the stage production, naked people dancing around. The Family. Murders. Homosexuality. Schutzenfest. Vietnam protests and free love. Drug experiences, all things of the past still resonate in his synapses decades later. But why not! His formative years were the rebellious baby-boomer years of the 1960s.

One had to indulge, didn't one? After all, yesterday's hippies; the ones with imagination and intellect, are now elder statesmen with significant political clout.

However let's not digress. Let's indulge Sebastian. Let him speak. After all in this universe, he was originally from Adelaide. And of course there is Eleanor. Eleanor was, or maybe still is, the quintessential Adelaidian, of student days. Her high profile in 1960's university politics always prompted Sebastian to think back to days when he had minor political aspirations of his own. These were neatly tailored to meet important social imperatives like going to the pub or even

attending wild parties.

A chilled white wine, a tingling Pinot Gris, all of this on a startling blue-skied autumn's day. Reminiscing came easy to Sebastian and Eleanor. The two of them sat in the Olive Grove café. White, starched tablecloths. Perfect service. Just the right level of background chatter from other contented winers and diners. And they were into politics. Eleanor looked interested. She interrupted Sebastian's focus, 'When you say *your* politics, what do you mean by *your* politics, Sebastian?'

'Ah well, Eleanor, there is just something about Adelaide. It is the incubator of social change. It made the Beatles famous and we had our polymath Premier Don Dunstan, poet, gourmand, and statesman.' Slight pause. Eleanor's eyes flicked to the ceiling. Sebastian was not sure. Maybe she was bored. 'Again, surely that's the foundation for any new political initiatives.'

Sebastian's mind flashed back momentarily. Wine capital of Australia. Bizarre murders. Ah, Eleanor was strikingly beautiful. She was the Jackie Kennedy of Sebastian's student days. The only thing that inspired him to go to the library was to leave her secret admirer notes. Strong woman now. Still beautiful. Handsome.

Patrician looks. And forty years later!

'Why would *you* wish to start a political party?' Eleanor interrupted, 'if that is what you are on about.'

Sebastian paused. He grimaced and began. 'Because I hate advertising agencies with a passion and I am getting bored doing what I am doing now. Making money for the sake of it ... If you are *really* interested ... ' he paused again.

Eleanor nodded slightly.

He didn't need further encouragement. 'We have to go back to Kuala Lumpur 2004. I was at a conference centre. It was not all brilliant and new, ultra modern, over-the-top stuff. Probably it was about fifteen years old. The centre had seen

hard service in the tropics; frying in the sun, sodden with the monsoon daily deluges. I sat in this wooden gazebo bar with a crowning of intricate wooden carvings. Enjoying a beer. I gazed through to the entrance which was an aura of brightness and whiteness. He came out of nowhere like a tsunami. The aberration appeared. Slack jaw hanging, white legged manifestation of a bygone demented empire. Imperious nature.'

Sebastian searched for words. He started to sing, *The minute you walked in the joint. I could see you were a man of distinction. A real Big Spender ...* . A Shirley Bassey flashback ... Eleanor he was such a shit. "Boy ... Boy" ... he strafed his command to one and all. Irritation bubbling through the veins that sprouted a grey fibre-like shadow across his balding bony skull. Sherman tank stature rumbling to a stop. No-one curtsied. And he saw me at the bar!

' "Oh, you're here," he said. I knew he hated me. And Eleanor, I remember all this with photographic retention. Well most of it, I think.'

' "Another beer, Sir," the barman asked, looking at me. He liked me of course.

I'm Australian. Gratuitous familiarity. All that sort of stuff.'

'Fat advertising man comes to the bar and growls something inaudible. Jesus, Eleanor he was a first class prick!

' "Part of the conference Sir." The barman ignored the tank and asked me. "Yes," I replied. "Unfortunately. He's running it." I pointed at the tank. Familiarity the Australian way. Not really ingratiating, just being nice. Better than this supercilious dumb pommy prick with his slow, oh so tongue-in-his-mouth enunciation of what he thinks is Queen's English. He rumbled closer to the bar'.

' "Sebastian, buy me a drink." Even before he got across the moat. Christ.

Typical. Invading my castle. He wants capitulation and he asks *me* to buy the drinks. “Sure Guy.” I distinctly remember thinking of at least sticking a skyrocket up his arse. He had me cornered.

“You're on show, Sebastian?” he persisted. “Eleanor, I remember all this as though it was yesterday. And that’s why I hate self-serving advertising agencies.”

Eleanor was used to Sebastian’s monologues. Mostly she put up with them. But this was surpassing reasonableness. ‘What? You were both really talking like this? I would have thrown a glass of beer over him and told him he is a complete wanker.’

‘No, no, Eleanor, let me finish.’

Eleanor looked up from her drink. ‘Did it never end, Sebastian?’

‘I’m nearly there Eleanor. It was *then* I decided advertising agencies, communications consultants or whatever you want to call them were a scourge. They trivialised humanity and worked like hell to get everybody on the planet to a state of psychopathic materialistic consumption. I remembered the movie with Marty Feldman. *Everybody's Home Should Have One*. These guys are hell bent on destroying the planet. Everybody has to eat, sniff, drive, smell, fuck and generally annihilate everything. That's when I had the epiphany. I was going to start the uber-agency.’

Sebastian paused, just long enough for Eleanor to say something. ‘Well Sebastian, that’s all very dramatic. And yes I’ve got the point, he was a pompous prick. Yes, he probably personified the worst in advertising agencies which incidentally, if I’m not mistaken, helped you make quite a bit of money.’

Sebastian ignored her. Well, I call it an epiphany. Maybe I’m overstating an insight. Anyway, advertising agencies are the cancer of capitalism. Solipsism personified. The world is

screaming out for justice. Who said “this child had dirt to eat for Christmas?” There is so much wealth globally. There just needs to be a sensible system of distribution. Reward creativity but don’t punish inability.

‘I had to do something to save the world. I wanted to start my own advertising agency that would, yes, promote consumption. But only consumption of environmentally sustainable products. I wanted an agency that wasn’t ageist or sexist. Not one that forever praised the young and loved the body beautiful. I also wanted people who worked in it who were not convoluted, cowering or pompous. I wanted an agency that actually presented real figures. Figures that were based on reality and not based on how neat they looked. But I was tilting at windmills. You just don’t get more arrogant and psychopathic than advertising agencies. Walking manifestations of hubris; they are. Every man was seeking his fame (women as well) within the framework of their own mortality. Alpha males *and* alpha females too.

‘The whole lot should be put on an island with a few thousand whiteboards and a limitless supply of felt pens and leave them there until they find the way of the lemmings. They will all line up in a suicide queue and jump off the highest cliff. Good riddance. Those greedy pricks.’

‘That’s a little dramatic, Sebastian. Though you are probably right ... about them being greedy pricks.’

‘Eleanor, then I suddenly had another of those epiphany things. Through this turd of a man, I realised that violence begets violence. Violent films and violent videos form a vicarious violence which gives any communication medium the power to perpetuate real violence in society. If that was not the case advertising wouldn’t work. The billionaire moguls of media know very well the influence they yield. At this moment Eleanor I made the link between the billionaire elite and the military industrial complex. Violence creates demand for

weapons.

‘Anyway that's where it all started. When I realised it would be impossible to create such an agency I decided it would be easier to change the world by creating a new political party. And that can't be so hard. The old political diehards will always say that we shouldn't be bringing in inexperienced people. But if we worked on that principle there would never be any new blood in politics. Or for that matter any job or any position. How can we justify not accepting new people in new political situations, whatever their capacity within reason, when we have a parliament full of egotists, playing full fiddle with never a music lesson. They become Ministers, sprouting unprepared policies in areas they know nothing about. They create havoc and deliver those policies from the highest level of power.’

‘This isn't completely true, Sebastian. Perhaps you are a little too harsh. I can think of numerous older, experienced, politicians who talk about mentoring younger apostles. Mind you I can't think of *any* who've *actually* done it. Well not when they are still actively involved in politics. Hmm.’ Eleanor tapered off long enough for Sebastian to break into monologue again.

‘Surely the hallmark of a good democracy is taking ordinary people, perhaps with some exceptional ideas that are timely, and giving them a chance to govern. But rotating them so that there is always somebody there with some experience at least. And here is the greatest tragedy. How desperately bad are we to give a freeloading politician an enormous annuity. Gold passes and first class tickets for him/her and partner for life. Fantastic superannuation. And then take a young soldier who will give his life for nothing and send him to some god forsaken country, for some rich prick's lust for energy, and I mean oil!’

Eleanor put down her half glass of wine. The rivulets of

chill, the ones that run down the sides of a frosted wineglass, had all evaporated. So too had her patience. 'Well, 'she said, 'I certainly understand how you hate the advertising life. I understand too, nobody in Australia likes politicians. They certainly don't trust them. And in this day and age it probably applies to every country on the planet except for some draconian dictatorships where people are lucky to be alive. They love their masters and trust them. Of course until someone in their family disappears or they get beaten by a police baton or get shot in the back of the head.'

There was a finality in what she said. This was emphasised by her quickly draining the remaining wine in her glass, which she then placed firmly on the table. Without another word she stood up and said 'I have a surprise for you tonight and Sebastian, let me remind you, you are still not short for a word even all these years later' She abruptly left. Sebastian was left with the bill and a sneaking suspicion he had monopolised the discussion.

Chapter 8

It's my Party

The afternoon in Adelaide turned to dusk. And there was the surprise as promised. Eleanor invited Sebastian to a party that night. She had said it was with a bunch of ex-Adelaide University political types. Sebastian might remember some of them. As it turned out he didn't ... except for one!

It was one of those typical outdoor Adelaide barbeque parties. A lot of cold beer. Cold white wine, slightly chilled red wine. A gleaming new mega barbeque replete with kitchen sink shimmered in the dark, bouncing back the coloured fairy lights in a magic mushroom vortex. Here was five metres of stainless steel with every contrivance known to the cooking world standing on it, hanging off it, pulling against it. Eleanor's guests all sat at a long wooden table that seated twenty. There was a touch of Italian alfresco dining here. The only light came from the barbeque itself, the fairy lights, and a few flares that burnt and stank of citronella. But at least the mosquitoes were pacified. Sebastian looked around the table in the flickering light and recognised, or thought he recognised, some of the faces. A faint recognition, yes. Remembering or knowing them, no. Albeit it had been four decades or more since he had seen any of them. The faintly recognisable ones were the ones who were still wearing those sorts of clothes or the style of clothes (if not the very same clothes) they wore at University so long ago. They hadn't done anything to change their hairstyles either, apart from the men with receding hairlines that made their ponytails look like a giant question mark that had slid backwards on the top of their skulls ... except for David.

He immediately recognised him. He hadn't noticeably aged. Even after decades, his baby face shone through the very few creases of four decades of decadence. He was like that. It was highly unlikely he would have moderated his unabated hard living, punctuated by frequent bouts of mass consumption of good South Australian red wine. And his hair was still blonde and boyishly styled. No slipped ponytail here. He looked straight at Sebastian. Was there a flickering of recognition? Maybe. But certainly no overt response of familiarity.

This bunch was still as boisterous as they were eons ago in student days. They were all politically active, at least from a cognisance point of view. Left leaning, of course, with quite a few moving to the centre. Probably a function of mortgage repayments or paying alimony.

It didn't take long for the inebriated ramblings to turn to the serious topic of politics and political parties. 'Yes, what a great idea to start a new political party.' Somebody shouted out of the darkness. 'Here, here.' David responded, now looking more intently at Sebastian.

Sebastian was sure they were *all* looking at him. He suspected Eleanor had had a chat with this crew before he had arrived at this soiree. David suddenly gave him a thumbs up and called out 'How are ya, ya old fart. It was *you* Eleanor was talking about. Jesus, I wouldn't have guessed it in a million years.'

Sebastian had a rush of memories as he returned the thumbs up but said nothing. David and he had hung out together in the first year at university. Then they fell out over something Sebastian couldn't even fully remember. He thought it was when they had been sparring at karate and he had broken David's arm when he blocked a punch with a sharp kick. Nothing intentional. But with his arm in plaster, David couldn't sit his chemistry exam; failed that year; never

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returning to university as far as Sebastian knew; and blamed Sebastian for all his failings ever after. But, Sebastian remembered, this didn't dent David's enthusiasm for attending anti-Vietnam protest marches. Until the police grabbed him and deliberately slammed the police car door on his left hand, breaking a few fingers. But life moved on.

Sebastian was about to move over to David and try a civil reconciliation. But something quite bizarre happened. Suddenly out of the darkness an owl swooped down and strafed the table. Swooping low, only a few inches above their heads, from one end of the table to the other. The party were awestruck and silent. They froze acoustically, for an unnerving period. The raucous rabble had been slammed quiet.

'This is a sign, an omen.' David finally called out. There was some quick banter. Too facile to mention here! Some fatuous suggestions. 'What a hoot.' 'Hoot, Hoot. Owl is our eagle. It is our symbol.' There was a clinking of glasses and a stentorian roar 'OWL'. It all happened too quickly. As one collective they chanted 'OWL' again and again, with the gusto of a drunken football crowd. Sebastian got caught up in the chanting. His mind raced and he called out 'One World League'. It just seemed the right thing to call out.

He thought a new political party should be called One World League anyway. The group latched onto it. What a coincidence was this. They debated, backwards and forwards. Is this the renaissance party? Is this the neo-communist party? But in the end they decided on OWL. One voice, one humanity, and definitely not communism. This filtered out of the chaos.

David launched into an inebriated yet articulate soliloquy. 'OWL is to portray itself as a group of trusted and wise advisors. They are to position themselves against other political parties in the non-partisan, participatory and pragmatic way they will address policies.'

Sebastian was impressed. Clearly the red wine had not dimmed David's oratory powers. Something he had been blessed with at least in the time Sebastian had known him.

Eleanor had been uncharacteristically quiet for a long time. She had been sitting next to David. She stood up, looked straight at Sebastian, lifted both arms like Sebastian imagined Moses did when he parted the Red Sea and called out clearly and slowly 'One of the basic tenets of OWL will be to embrace the notion of the wisdom of the crowd.'⁹⁹ This is to be done on a scientific rather than an anecdotal basis ... Evidently, elegant algorithms are referred to in the development of self-aware AI¹⁰⁰, particularly in the context of survival of flocks or herds, and so on ... OWL therefore denigrates immediate self-gratification of the individual. Rather, the individual is seen in the context of the wiser, broader community ... What we are saying here is the emphasis is taken right off the individual, unilateral decision-making, solitary leadership. Collaborative decision making *is* back with the tribe – (a pause) and that's not communism, just common sense in an Internet linked society.'

David stood up beside her and called out 'Rampant individualism and immediate self-gratification are the bane of today's society ... so few of us *really* cares about anything or anybody outside ourselves.'

⁹⁹ See Surowiecki, James, 2004, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Little Brown, London. He writes of the incredible efficacy associated with groups in making wise decisions. He goes on to describe many instances and many examples of where the aggregated wisdom of a group of people clearly demonstrates superiority to any individual expert. This is a very important concept. Remember it for later.

¹⁰⁰ Artificial Intelligence for those not in the know.

Sebastian was starting to believe there was an element of rehearsal in all this. But how could there be? Owls don't suddenly appear and swoop on command. This was spooky.

Well, that's very much how the conversation progressed. Sebastian didn't think the flapping wings of an owl at a boisterous wine-consuming soiree could produce such dramatic effect. Perhaps this *was* mere coincidence.

To Sebastian, the flickering flares of the flames reminded him, just for a moment, of a Nazi night time rally. He knew this vicariously. He had seen all the right movies and accepted that to make a strong social statement people needed bold rituals, like bonfire meetings. Juxtaposing the brightness of flames against night time darkness.

Sebastian looked at Eleanor and saw the ultimate temptation. The copious amounts of wine started his head spinning. He looked at her in the flickering light. She was political and sexual seduction all in one.

She sidled up to Sebastian and whispered, 'I will paint greatness into history. I will paint *you* into history.'

Sebastian's ego was stoked white-hot like a blacksmith's furnace. Sebastian liked Eleanor one hell of a lot. She was a prominent painter and artist of the seventies. An Archibald Prize winner no less, and all at a very tender age. She had always been flirtatious.

Eleanor rubbed her hands up and down his thighs. She mumbled: 'There are two sorts of people in the advice (hiccup ...) department. The first of those want to be directors of others. These are the so-called coaches in life. Ha! ... they have no fucking idea about anything. But they still tell you what to do and how to do it. Then there is the second type (hiccup ...). The evangelical type. They see the light. But they always see it through somebody else. Their role is to elicit support from other people for the ones who direct.' Sebastian could see that she was definitely feeling the effects of the

wine.

‘If you want to do something revolutionary, get rid of the most political, the most divisive fuckwits in your organisation. The ones who never listen to anybody else but tell everybody else what to do (long pause ...). Get rid of your human resources department! They are evangelical directors. The worst of the lot.’ She sounded triumphant in this self-evident revelation. ‘*Everybody* hates HR departments.’

‘The same applies to your new political party or whatever you might call it. We can’t have divisive demagogues in this organisation. Our advisors, our policy makers must be the people themselves. We only want people within the party, initially, who will help us achieve this (hiccup, long pause again ...). Ultimately the party *will* be the people.’

Sebastian loved the way she was saying *we*. But she was definitely losing it.

‘You Sebastian have to take a lead. Good luck. I would like you to lead as an anti-fundamentalist Islamic protagonist ... (more hiccups). Perhaps you can form a secret society like the Ku Klux Klan which should be radically anti-Islamic. Although you never hear anything about that! Where are the KKK when you need them?’

Great stuff; great way to start a new political party, he thought sarcastically.

It was time to leave the party. Sebastian missed Virginia. He started to feel old.

As Eleanor moved away he glimpsed briefly, but long enough to flush him with guilt that the noble, patrician features had started to sag over the years. It was more than forty years ago that they were students at the University of Adelaide. Sebastian remembered politics being such fun in those days. Walking into the quadrangle, flanked by the University refectory, library, and the union hall, anybody could select which anti-Vietnam protest group to go on. There were usually

three or four to select from. His selection was simple. The group which had the most liberated women in it. And Eleanor had been so beautiful then. But now, even if she moved out of the dancing light of the barbeque and party flares, he realised that age had not *crept* up, it had mercilessly bombarded her. In the flickering light the illusion of beauty should have still been there. But it wasn't.

Sebastian realised he was being extremely critical and insensitive. He thought of himself. What vanity? Should *he* consider cosmetic surgery? Transplants for the thinning hair? Moving the loose flesh from the upper eyelids? Draining the fat from the bags on the lower eyelids? Removing jowls and strengthening the jaw line? But that was putting decay into a holding pattern.

He considered that when somebody had passed the reproductive age it was a test of acceptance of the inevitability of nature's uglifiers. Perhaps at his age he should accept the twilight and either die now; or try and transcend the fascination of the narcissism of youth and find a late life cause that works. To die now would be easy. A strong mixture of mogadon and vodka. What an easy way out!

His thoughts of Eleanor pulled him back to reality. She had returned and suddenly smothered his lips with hers. His immediate reaction was to repulse her. He pushed her away. Clearly upset Eleanor then disappeared into the darkness and so too did his decades of lust and longing. As he walked away from the party, in flickering shadows and gossip, he thought of OWL and its potential to give him that one last burst. Maybe that would energise him, motivate him for another ten or twenty years.

He pulled out his cell phone and now feeling guilt and remorse called Virginia. The dial tone continued scarily and unanswered. Finally he made contact. 'Is that Sebastian?' she answered coolly or coyly, he couldn't work out which.

Chapter 9

Cosmological Thinking. Can politicians do it?

Sebastian does have a tendency to become morosely philosophical when he has had too much alcohol. This is not a trait unique to him. No! In fact I maintain that becoming intoxicated allows for the acceptance of various nasty things in life like cruelty, poverty, death and so on that shouldn't be acceptable. But Sebastian had another problem; to keep talking, endlessly, when others would know it was time to stop. To think maybe, but keep the thoughts to themselves. Not Sebastian. He had a general idea of where he was and where he wanted to go. Moonlight popped through the clouds every now and then to give him clues as to his whereabouts. Sebastian sighed as he stumbled along, mostly in the dark, talking rather loudly into his cell phone, making the local dogs bark and howl. 'I am fucking depressed. Alcohol always brings out the worst in me. But I have come up with an idea which might just make me famous. And your talent is required.'

'Why the depression? What's the new deal? ... How can I help?' Virginia asked.

Somewhat querulously, Sebastian thought. But it was always good to hear her voice. It was re-energising. She always brought him back from the brink, as long as he *actually* heard her voice.

'I am either going to die very shortly or do something profound like the formation of a new political party. We talked about a new political gig tonight. It has got some merit but so too does dying, as long as it is not painful. You know the old clichés.

We are all going to die anyway. It is a matter of how fast

we do it.'

'You are always so dramatic, Sebastian. What do you think is going to happen when you die? Are you going to go to your heaven? ... Ha!'

'My heaven, Virginia. *My* heaven is simple. I will have no notion of time. No past, no future, I just *am*. And because of that I see everything. And I see myself in everything. I can't look at myself in a mirror because I am everywhere and everything. I would have complete peace of mind through my insights.' He thought for a moment and added hesitantly, 'I am just trying to be smart I suppose, when actually I'm pissed.'

'It sounds very godly to me,' she said.

'You asked me what my heaven is. Not what *will* or *could* really happen. This is what I would like as opposed to total oblivion which is what I *really* think will happen. Oblivion is like eternal sleep without dreams, like what it was before I was born, before I came into existence.'

'Well, I'll be more explicit, what do you *actually* do in your heaven?' she demanded.

Sebastian knew he was fooling himself if he thought he was going to win this discussion. 'Influence where I could situations that bring happiness to whatever beings are affected by my actions or thoughts. We are really talking of ineffability. Either I have total oblivion, or something so different that it can't be described. That means all religious interpretations are wrong. They are effable and my concept of heaven, the usual basis for religions, is not.

She hesitated for a moment. 'Sebastian, get back to basics, you're rambling.

What's all this about a new political party?'

'Virginia, we've had this discussion before. There are oligarchs; elites, dynasties, whatever you want to call them, holding the whole human race to ransom. The ransom, in simple terms, is for the masses to be bled dry financially by an

elite few, who continue to amass vast fortunes by exploiting whole countries and drilling down, right down, to the last few unaffordable cents from those with the least money. The existing political parties are just a front for this exploitation.'

He hesitated and then added, 'It is like these elites, or families of elites, really believe there is a natural order, by birth of what I call entrepreneurial stealth, to govern, to rule, to exploit, to do whatever they like.'

'Sorry –' There was a pause on Virginia's end. 'It sounds like you are heading towards the famous "killing the rich" syndrome. Sorry, I am not a communist. Do you really expect me to believe that a group of families, these so called elites, have networked themselves together, so effectively and so efficiently, over many generations and many centuries. And they have been able to do this without it being noticed?'

Sebastian continued, 'There are the Rothschilds and others. There are the American Zionists who represent hundreds of billions of money in the private sector. Not in publicly listed companies that can be scrutinised; that have to have transparency. No, they are smart enough to keep their very existence so secret we are almost unaware of it. But even if we were aware we would simply ignore this fact.'

'We would deny their existence, because it is so unpalatable. We all live in a state of denial. We are actually trained in denial through our constant denial of our mortality.'

'Just think how powerful a group of persons is when they operate a private company which has the exclusive contract to build, say a nuclear submarine. They could, in effect, start a world war on a whim. They could take out entire countries. They are obviously going to maintain a sort of covert control once they have built and sold their submarine to the governments who in turn, no longer *really* have control. Now let me tell you this. They get the contracts in the first place by their influence on Congress. They, that is these very wealthy

families, the ones of limitless power.

Virginia interjected, 'Do you have any proof for this?'

Sebastian continued, 'Have you ever read Griffins' *The Creature from Jekyll Island*?¹⁰¹ The creature is the United States Federal Reserve. And Jekyll Island really exists. It is on the eastern coast of the US. It is where, early last century, a half a dozen or so people met, including JP Morgan, Rothschilds and various other people who represented, at the time, a quarter of the world's wealth. Here they developed this fabulous system. This Federal Reserve. But the word *federal* was, and is, only a con. It was to convince people it was a government institution. But it is nothing of the kind. It was, or is, a clever, private company set up. A cartel of sorts. Anyway without going into detail, the Federal Reserve lends money to the banks which in turn lend it to us. Banks are supposed to keep reserves of their own, so if there is a run of money from the bank they can pay it back to their borrowers and of course banks need borrowers otherwise they don't make any money. But what the banks have been doing most recently, and part of the cause of the global financial crisis, has been to keep little or no reserves. However all of this part of the conversation is pretty irrelevant. It *is* the Rothschilds I want to emphasise.'

'Well then go for it,' said Virginia, 'Your rants sometimes amuse me; especially when I'm bored.'

¹⁰¹ It is important to read Griffin, Edward G. 2009, *The Creature from Jekyll Island. A Second Look at the Federal Reserve*, American Media, West Lake Village California. Forget the corny title. It is misleading. I encourage the reader of this book to read *every* page of *Jekyll Island*. You *will* want to create a new political party. What it reveals is scandalous and true; all the evidence is there, documented for all to see.

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Sebastian feigned not hearing the last sentence and continued. He was on a roll. ‘One of the famous stories goes back to the Battle of Waterloo. The Rothschilds had developed this fantastic system of communication albeit on horseback; a bit like the Pony Express in America only a lot more efficient. At the time they could get information from one place to another faster than any other system. Remember they didn’t have emails, telephones or anything similar. So what happened at the Battle of Waterloo was brilliant. The Rothschilds sent one of their senior people to London who in turn advised the stock exchange that Napoleon had won the battle.

‘Immediately the share prices crashed. The Rothschilds then bought all the shares. And this was done at a ridiculously low price. A fire sale, in other words. But, here is the real twist. As you know from history Napoleon didn’t win the Battle of Waterloo. That news didn’t reach the stock market for another twenty-four hours or so. By the time it did reach the stock market, the Rothschilds had pretty well garnered every share. The share prices then went up again. They created a massive fortune by that one single incident of manipulation and lies. And that story pretty well represents what they and their cohorts are on about, and have been for centuries. That is why they *are* the world’s elite.

‘Let me tell you one more thing. In *The Creature from Jekyll Island*, Griffin writes about the Rothschild formula. That’s what it is called. The formula is based on keeping countries in a constant state of war. Wars require money. So the Rothschilds would fund a war they would actually provoke in the first place. In many instances they would finance both sides of the war. They did this with the American Civil War; and I believe with the Russian Revolution, and many other wars.

‘The Rothschild formula accepts the fact that peace is not good for their business of lending money. They realised that if

wars didn't occur naturally or through insurgency they would have to provoke them. They would create, through clever manipulation, states of paranoia.'

Virginia asked 'What's the point of all of this?'

'Well, any new political party needs to be aware of this global manipulation. To have us in a constant state of war. We were reminded of this in George Orwell's *1984*. A new political party needs to accept this reality and bring people in on this secret. Promulgate everywhere that this has been going on for centuries and has been almost subliminal in its pervasiveness, leading to corruption at the highest political levels. Make the people aware and they will demand reform.'

'It all sounds like conspiracy theory to me. How do we know aliens aren't involved?'

Sebastian thought about this. 'Virginia, are you trying to be smart? The depressing thought is I suppose if aliens were involved, and we are talking about the extra-terrestrial type, the Rothschilds would probably end up being their representatives on earth.'

Virginia interrupted. She could tell Sebastian was getting onto one of his high horse monologues. 'You are saying, no self-respecting alien would want to deal with six or seven billion ordinary people. They would only want to deal with earth's elite group of representatives and I suppose that *is* the Rothschilds, or their ilk.'

'Yes,' replied Sebastian 'The alien contribution or factor only makes it worse. No redemption there. The only redemption is self-realisation by the people of this planet through a new political awareness; and of course through their new found power, the Internet.'

There was a black silence. A real hole in Sebastian's self-hortatory spiel. Virginia broke the silence, 'Sounds like you need, or *want*, a revolution.'

'Ha, ha.' Sebastian realised he had been on the cell phone

for a long time, probably at a high cost. It was late. Virginia probably wanted to get off the phone anyway. So he said: 'Let's catch up when I get back to Sydney. We have a lot to discuss, *even* revolution.'

'It sounds good to me,' said Virginia.

Sebastian thought he detected a slight rising intonation which usually meant she was either seriously interested or just teasing him. 'See you on Wednesday.'

Sebastian felt the need to debrief. He had endured a long and complex day. One that was full of potential. He knew that much. But he needed to deflate. He reached into his pocket and pulled out an old, non-digital dictaphone. He carried this with him everywhere. Frequently he would dictate notes of importance from his point of view. Now was one of those moments. He wanted to clear his mind. He was looking for links that could lead to, or could justify, a new political party. He clicked on the dictaphone and began.

'I am drawn to the conclusion, the longer I live, that some supreme intelligence probably does exist. That's not because I am scared of death. That's not because I crave religion. Because I don't. In fact religion is just a way humans try to make the ineffable, effable. And they don't succeed. Because "ineffable" means exactly that. Humans don't have the language to express what "God" is. Probably our brain development, through everlasting evolution, if there is such a thing, will never get there.

'Does God exist? Is there life after death? Is there any other life in the universe? These three big questions are *almost* everything we would like an answer to. Well, to the first question, there is no answer; because 'God' is ineffable. To the second; it is an irrelevant question. You can't know until you're dead. It's a non-sequitur. Death is the absence of life. To the third question, the answer is certainly 'yes'. A probability of 1:0. It's just that we don't have evidence yet.

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‘I have said *almost* everything is contained in the three questions. Well there *is* more. Why am I here? Why is any human in existence? The simple answer is “to do the best they can”. How? For citizens of the planet, young and old, to ‘change the world’. How again? ‘act on instincts; reduce suffering globally. How? Join together to create a global government system that is fair. How? Let OWL fly.’

Sebastian is only a man. Just one man. His experiences and thoughts are not rare.

In his case I have chosen to expose his foibles to show he is truly human and ordinary. The common man. Sebastian found a private corner of sorts in the deserted laneway and urinated away the evening’s inspiration. He looked around. In the distance the party lights still flickered. The smoke from burning fat gently wafted through the darkened streets and magnified the night time haze. He was alone, but he knew he was also part of a calamitous world. The world was in a perilous state. One of overpopulation combined with a technology that would enable elites unbridled power to control every action, every thought, and every person on this fragile planet. And surely that was wrong. There also seemed another level of callousness superimposed onto this diabolical concoction. It was apparent there was a fairly recent thrust of barbarity into society. Video games allowed rehearsal after rehearsal of virtual murder and mayhem. ISIS, and the like, brought the *virtual* into the *real* world. Guiltily, Sebastian thought of his dark lamentations of his past. Just quickly to avoid the pain and ownership. He suddenly realised everybody was beginning to think this way. That it was normal. Forget ‘thou shall not kill’.

He clicked off his dictaphone and continued the short walk back to his hotel. An indescribable uneasiness tingled inside him.

Chapter 10

A Sheep Called Floyd

We the people (you know, ‘of the people, by the people¹⁰², and so on); we, humanity, at one stage seemed to get a handle on democracy. This wasn’t during Abraham Lincoln’s presidency. It was in the time of Solon¹⁰³, several hundred years BC. For a while it looked as though legal institutions would be created, refined and evolve into something very special. But alas, a couple of thousand years later, there is no evidence of progress. In fact, in many instances quite the opposite. Our own base morality slackens, not improves, hand in hand with each technology leap.¹⁰⁴ We are falling into an ever-deepening social vortex. Motion film and television has

¹⁰² Gettysburg Address, one of the best known speeches in American History given by the US President at the time, Abraham Lincoln. It was delivered during the American Civil War. The exact wording of the speech is disputed but it is generally agreed the quote referred to is ‘the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth.’

¹⁰³ Solon. A hero of Ancient Greek democracy, is referred to on other occasions. However, he is generally credited with being one of, if not, the fairest leader in any democracy, ever.

¹⁰⁴ d’ettut, *Greenwars*. Available as an eBook (2013). This entire book describes this human moral degeneration in detail through animal allegory. It juxtaposes the exponential growth of amoral technology against a declining human morality.

brought more violence, at least vicariously, to the masses. The Internet has taken pornography a step further. This time directly. Sexual predators exploit the net.

Weapons of mass destruction. They are everywhere. Thorium¹⁰⁵ could have been the basis of peaceful nuclear power with little of the dangers in using uranium-powered reactors. But the military and industrial complex won out. It adopted uranium because that begat more powerful weapons. Terrorists with nuclear bombs. It is only a matter of time.

And the world is held in a state of dynamic tension by invisible dynasties like the Rothschilds, just one of the world's elite. Until a global social media revolution erupts they could stay invisible.

Of course a powerful, global elite can and probably will ultimately control the Internet anyway; and to their great advantage. But it would appear that there is a brief moment in history, where, if careful, a group of concerned people could unite, through a new political party and break the global nexus of the elite. It could be the dawn of something of phenomenal consequence, including global harmony.

Now Floyd is an important character in this tale. He is a long-term friend of Sebastian. He has been mentioned before. You know, the sheepish one. Floyd is fiercely philosophical and completely atheistic, well most of the time. He also has some quite strong political views.

Sebastian and Floyd were sitting outside in the bright sunlight watching the seagulls scrounging for whatever they could find. Stealing chips; a bit of bread, all that kind of stuff;

¹⁰⁵ Google 'thorium' and find out for yourself. A thorium based nuclear plant is under construction in India. Waste and other bi-products can't be used in the production of nuclear weapons unlike processing uranium. Interesting?

getting braver and braver, moving closer and closer to the rest of the restaurant tables. They were at Salamanca Wharf, within walking distance from the middle of Hobart. Well, everything is pretty much within walking distance in Hobart. A good, clean day. A sparkling blue sky was brushed with tissue-texture cool breezes, probably flowing in from the Antarctic. In fact, if it wasn't for being in the direct sunlight the breezes would have been cold and bracing.

'Global warming and the twenty-first century,' Floyd said, as he dunked a potato wedge into a mess of sweet chilli sauce and sour cream. 'Hugh Jackman¹⁰⁶ reckons global warming's inextricably linked to poverty. Good psychology I don't think!

'Hugh Jackman should stay with acting. If he wants to be an ambassador in starving and developing countries, all well and good for him. But he should take time to reflect he is not a world expert on global warming or any of its causes.' Floyd paused for another potato wedge.

'He is talking a lot of crap,' Sebastian agreed to this with a certain animosity. 'I believe there is one overriding consideration in terms of feeble attempts by humans to do anything more than make vague promises and fatuously believe they can stop climate change. It pisses me off that politicians have jumped on the bandwagon with the press and are really beating it up. And now they are blaming bushfires on climate change. Give me a break! So if we fix climate change ... as if; the bushfires will stop.'

Floyd had thought about this a lot. It hadn't appeared as some sort of epiphany, flashing out of the night while wandering alone in a desert, drinking cactus juice and wondering how he could save the world. It was all a matter of common sense. The two had fallen quiet, sipping beer.

¹⁰⁶ Famous Australian actor; his views as almost quoted in the press.

‘Well what was that?’ asked Floyd.

‘What was what? My memory is not as good as it should be.’

‘The one overriding consideration you started to talk about!’

‘Ah, that,’ Sebastian said. ‘Climate change has occurred on many occasions throughout the geological history of our planet. Yes, we might have exacerbated or even accelerated a natural occurrence. But pollution has been spewing out since the beginning of the industrial age. But then again, how much pollution do you think gushes out when one of those massive volcanoes goes up like Krakatoa. And what about billions of flatulent cows farting out millions of tonnes of noxious fumes? And not just cows’. He looked accusingly at Floyd, who gave an almost subliminal but audible fart in response. ‘Anyway the cause is obvious. Do you think we would be terribly concerned about the effects of pollution, of carbon dioxide outpourings, if the world’s population was five hundred million instead of six to seven billion and I am told nine billion by 2050? Trust me Floyd, it is overpopulation. Nothing more, nothing less.’

Floyd stuffed another wedge into his mouth and left a small red stain on what should have been a full white beard. But it wasn’t. He had obviously dyed his hair and then his beard to match. His hair wasn’t the colour Sebastian remembered from earlier years. Not the pure white sheep colour of nice clean New Zealand sheep.

‘Sebastian you’re right. Solve the overpopulation problem and we will have done as much as human civilisation can in terms of mitigating climate change effects.

‘People not fucking one another for two generations. In fact you don’t have to stop them fucking you just have to stop women getting pregnant. They can fuck as much as they like, as long as they don’t get pregnant. And while we are at it, how about we introduce a bit of novelty into the carbon trading

system. Do a mathematical calculation on how much carbon each individual human will produce; especially in emerging and developing countries where they are buying highly polluting motor vehicles and other manufactured goods, and do a deal. Countries with a small population like Australia can loosen up the environmental constraints on developing countries but only if they curb their population. Let's say over a lifetime one individual is capable of producing five thousand tonnes of CO₂ directly or indirectly. And let's say between them, the developing countries, working to a formula, reduce their population over a generation or two by a billion people. There goes five trillion tonnes of carbon emission. Not so difficult is it really. Although it could take a lot of guts from our self-serving, policy-devoid politicians.'

Floyd looked into the top of his pint of beer. It was good beer. You can always tell good beer because as he drained the glass, streaks of the white fluffy stuff would cling to the inside walls of the beer glass and there was always a head on the beer, even when it was down to the bottom of the drink.

The fluffy froth was a bit like his hair used to be. Sheep like.

'What I don't know Sebastian is how to go about stopping people breeding? Put something in their water. Forcibly sterilise everybody. I don't think any political party would have the guts to do it. What do you think?'

'Well, what's better? See the world and all its resources consumed by a plague of locusts called humans over the next hundred or so years. They won't leave anything you know. They will eat all the fish. Kill all the animals. They will pollute all the rivers and everything else. A bit of compulsory sterilisation. A bit of something in the water. What's worse?'

Sebastian paused and then continued, 'In some democracies this might appear just wrong. And guess what; there are a lot of different sorts of democracies. But is it wrong

for a global democracy? No! It's just being humanely responsible.'

Floyd interjected, 'Nothing more, nothing less. That's what I said. Ah well, there *is* actually something more. Internecine war. Simultaneous global conflagrations spurred on by a knowing elite. Dramatically reducing the world population in an instant. No social evolution of group conscience and collaborative decision making. Yes, there is more. The messages are clear and strong. We have had enough. We want change. We feel cheated. We, the people, need to do something now. And that Sebastian is all it will need to get a new political party going. *If* you exploit social media, big time.

'And then there's the Pope? Get him to agree with population control. That should help.' Coming from Floyd this was a bit of a joke. He was an atheist.

'What about the Pope?' Sebastian retorted. 'Evidently he is in on the big bang theory and a whole pile of science. If he had his way he would use nano-technology to reduce humans to the size of cockroaches, complete with their brains, and especially their souls. In fact, he would probably have his scientists at the Vatican work out a way in which we could all become cockroaches, at least in terms of their size, as long as they still believe in him and his factious proclamations. And then you could have a trillion of us scuttling all over the planet, maybe ten trillion. As long as we paid homage to the Pope and the Vatican. He would like that.'

'Yeah. I have always wanted to be a cockroach, scurrying around in the dark!' Floyd added sarcastically.

'The problem,' Sebastian added 'is that we all live under this illusion we're all part of some personally fulfilling democracy where we can do what we like, consume what we want and breed as much as possible.'

Sebastian, suddenly and unknown to Floyd, considered he

was having another epiphany. These epiphanies seemed to be occurring with increasing frequency. He felt, well, exalted. 'There are those,' he continued, 'who promulgate high population growth with high consumerism. Very probably the elites. A very short sighted world view; especially for the long term.'

Floyd added, 'You're right again. All that has happened is that the feudal lords, that is, the rich guys who have historically pushed the poor guys around, are still out there. There are a couple of nice ones like Bill Gates. But at the end of the day they are the captains of industry. Some of them have more revenue generating power than a nation's gross national product. Then of course there is a new version of the aristocracy like the lifetime Lords in the House of Lords. And the elected representatives in our parliamentary system. I suppose you could say the difference is that the people who actually govern us do so because they work hard and get into government and maybe deserve it. But *they* don't do it forever. They just do it for whatever the term of government is and if they are lucky they get voted back in. But in terms of the man on the street, it doesn't make much difference whether we have transient representatives or whether we have bloodline, landed aristocrats.'

Sebastian could see Floyd had sparked into activity. Was it the Tasmanian, pure-water, infused beer? And it was only his second pint. He hadn't even started on the wine yet. But he was in full flight. Sebastian added, 'Hold on Floyd, hold on.'

'Western democracy has to be worth something. It is better than being ruled by the Taliban or Al Qaeda. Or some other demagogues or group of demagogues.'

'Obviously in the developed countries, with a form of parliamentary democracy, even in those instances where there is a monarchy which is more symbolic than anything else, we have a pretty good life.'

‘Sebastian all I am saying is that in terms of decision-making needed the ordinary man hasn’t progressed very far at all. He is still the little person. It is the big guys in the game that get to make all the decisions. And, the problem is, there is no evidence that they are any smarter than anybody else.’

Floyd ran his fingers over his sheep-wool hair. ‘Anyway you’ve always resented the notion of *every man having a say*. You always wanted a benign or benevolent dictatorship haven’t you? Even though you make out you are some sort of sophisticated socialist who wants a people’s party’

‘Not at all Floyd. Well not quite. I think we can do a lot better with what we *have* got. What we really have now that no-one ever had before is instantaneous communication around the world. And it is pretty well available to everybody. Even people in developing countries. There has to be a better way.

‘Yes we are talking about an evolutionary step for man. And somewhere in that evolutionary step there will always be a person who has got a foot in the past and a foot in the future. We’re at a crazy historical moment in the social evolution of humanity; perhaps in the actual physical evolution of humans. Some of us still exhibit primitive instincts. Predatory instincts. Whereas others of us have already evolved to a future of compassion and act accordingly.’

Sebastian suddenly realised time was running out. There needs to be a new world order *now*, he thought. Most people probably agree with this. But then again, aren’t they all in a state of denial anyway? The next mortgage payment removes the obligation to individually help democracy’s evolution. It is imperative now for a new political party to be actually created not just thought about and talked about. Those who have relinquished their primitive and selfish instincts would be welcome; no actually encouraged to join. Before we all kill each other and ourselves.

Sebastian had intended to be sarcastic, but held back. He was beginning to realise he and Floyd had more in common than he previously thought. Perhaps they *were* reading from the same page. Perhaps they should move together on something Virginia and others have been thinking about ... for a long time now, on and off. Yes, a new political party.

He said, 'Let's wait until Virginia arrives before we talk more on this. While we wait, let's liberate the Sauvignon Blanc. It helps when Virginia's around.' Sebastian poured Floyd a glass of wine. He poured one for himself. Just that little bit larger than Floyd's.

Floyd looked up from his nearly finished beer. He raised his ale glass and drained it. Straight to the Sauvignon Blanc from the beer. No punctuation here. Nothing sheepish.

'Yes to both, the wine and Virginia,' he said.

Chapter 11

Virginia Hoo?

Ah, well it is obvious. Any story worth telling needs a virgin, especially if religion is involved. Also of course there needs to be the feminist counter balance to testosterone toting troubadours. And again, we need a heroine too, riding into a glorious sunset. That's the big bang; the singularity, if you know what I mean? I will let the discussion linger on. They might reveal some more interesting insights into politics.

Sebastian could immediately tell by the lascivious look on Floyd's face that Virginia had arrived. He was looking past Sebastian and smirking. He waved and gestured for her to join their table. He dragged one of the vacant steel chairs from the adjacent table, screeching it over the tiled floor. Her translucent white dress hung seductively; the sunlight from behind silhouetted her sensuous body.

'Hello Floyd,' she said as she royally raised her hand to shake his. None of this European touch style three kisses on the cheeks for Virginia. Too intimate.

'Hi Virginia,' said Floyd. 'You look as beautiful as ever. Oh, but if I weren't married I would try.'

'Floyd you flatter me. But I don't want to crush your feelings. You wouldn't have a hope. Power holds much more attraction than romance.'

Floyd feigned a shattered ego, silently pulling another wine glass in waiting from the ice bucket. He deliberately dribbled a Sauvignon Blanc ever so slowly into the frosted vessel. He passed it to Virginia who graciously accepted.

Floyd carried on, 'Virginia, I always wondered about your past. It seems so secretive. Sebastian tells me nothing. It is all

so intriguing.’

Sebastian countered, ‘Floyd you’re on a need-to-know basis with Virginia. I don’t want you to get your hopes up.’ He had already indiscreetly clicked the attention of the waiter and ordered another bottle.

‘What did you like most about university?’ he asked. ‘What really got you going?’

‘Funnily, English literature was my passion. I knew there was no practical application at the end. Vocationally it would have been a bit of a disaster unless I wanted to be an academic, which I didn’t. But there is a whole new world in literature that fascinated me. In fact, still does. Things are happening.’

‘What sort of things?’ asked Floyd.

‘Haven’t you ever wondered,’ she replied, ‘about what’s going on in literature?’

Why is Google buying up the copyright of virtually every book in existence? Do you see anything sinister in this masterstroke of intrigue? It is a masterstroke of intrigue from my perspective at least. I believe there is a deliberate dumbing down of the world’s readers.’

‘But what makes you think Google’s buying up of the literature means there is a dumbing down of the readers?’ Sebastian asked, ‘Surely it means that Google just makes books more accessible. Probably easier to read with a greater variety and a lot cheaper too.’

‘Yes, that’s what it looks like superficially. But I believe that there is a darker side to the whole thing. Do you know what happens to any book that is ever published? Did you know for example that a copy of each book goes into vaults and there are vaults in London and vaults in Washington? They are the two main vaults. But there *are* others. They have been nuclear bomb proofed to preserve the literature of the world. Did you also know that there are media barons who are so incredibly wealthy and incredibly powerful that it is being

suggested they are trying to get access to all the books in these vaults? Now I don't know if they are in league with Google. It would be impossible to know. But I suspect there really is a connection.

That is a connection between the media barons and their rather obvious attempts at dumbing down the population through their tabloids and Google's acquisition of all written knowledge, and the shadowy world of access to the vaults. And here is the crunch ... rewriting the texts as they wish.'

'But why? What is the point? Why dumb us down?' Sebastian asked.

Virginia quickly replied 'More power. Absolute power. And ... to edit everything written so far that compromises this ultimate power.'

'This is starting to sound like a Dan Brown conspiracy,' Floyd added.

'Don't for a moment underestimate what I am talking about.' Virginia had that Mona Lisa look which she successfully pulled off when it was needed.

Sebastian couldn't resist himself. 'Look there are some tremendous books around. They are freely available to the public.

'One is titled *Life is a Cliché – We Want More!* What I like about this book is that the author recognises there is a limited amount of experience one can manage in one's lifetime. Even the instant gratification of a self-indulgent generation Y knows this. And funnily enough, that indulgence seems to be satiated for some at ever decreasing ages. That is younger people are saying, *enough is enough. I have done everything*. In fact from my point of view this is a tremendous springboard type book because it is calling out for a new way of looking at politics. Perhaps we do want more. Perhaps it is not meant in a materialistic sense. Perhaps it is more to do with power over the direction of the world. Surely that is not

dumbing down people, Virginia. It is exciting for people to think at a higher level.'

Virginia sighed, 'After seeing all those nauseating selfies on Internet; and most by baby boomers, I am not sure "enough is enough" is working. Maybe if we look at younger generations, yes, you could be right Sebastian. You could start a political party to answer the *we want more* side of your equation. In fact we could call it the *We Want More* party. However I believe all good books have been *vett*ed. They *have* been controlled by the editors who are in turn controlled by the owners of the media empires and who knows *they* could in turn be controlled by an even higher authority. I believe they are all linked even if I can't prove it. Yet there is a link, as I said between the newspaper magnates, Google,¹⁰⁷ the book publishing companies and probably the film industry. So what little, if anything, gets through, is probably considered not to be dangerous.'

Sebastian had to interject. 'Virginia you know darn well we have been talking about setting up a new political party for some time. You know what happened in Adelaide. But you never, ever mentioned this literature intrigue to me before.'

'I was saving it for a rainy day, like today, although today is gloriously sunny. I have been mulling it over. Sebastian, you know I've got leave coming up in a few months time and I was actually thinking of visiting the Library of Congress in Washington to explore a little bit. I was in fact going to mention it. I mean no offence. I am not challenging the way you think your political party should be shaped. I knew that

¹⁰⁷ Come quickly, very quickly to grips with the whole Google notion of putting into digital form everything in print by reading the following article on the Volokh Conspiracy. The reference is <http://volokh.com/2011/03/24/google-books-dead-for-now/>

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Floyd had an interest in politics, but I wasn't sure how deep that interest was.'

'I am now more determined than ever to create a successful party,' Sebastian said. 'I have never asked you this before Virginia. What sort of shape do *you* think the political party should or should not take?'

'Well first of all, seeing as you asked, it should start in Australia. We probably have the easiest democracy to work with and the freaky control systems here are probably nowhere near as freaky as they are in Europe or the United States. Forget all the other countries; they are not real democracies anyway. Well, maybe some Scandinavian countries get close. Anyway, take the word '*controls*' I mean government controls that allow or disallow the setting up of a new political party. So yes an initial setting up of a political party in Australia makes a lot of sense to me.

'Especially if we are the ones kicking it off. And it should also be cell-like in the sense it could be replicated fairly quickly on a state basis initially in Australia and then internationally. In fact it should be a bit like the Al Qaeda. But an Al Qaeda with a positive outcome, not a negative outcome. This cell-like organism would be able to replicate itself rapidly around the world.'

'Is that all?' Sebastian asked. 'It sounds like Marxist communism.' Sebastian was intrigued and Floyd was quiet, if not flummoxed.

'No,' she said. 'No that's not all. Yes, it sounds like communism. It's like communism in the sense that it would be a political party vying against other established political parties in those countries where the communist party is or was allowed to be in existence. But the ideologies *I* think we should be adopting are very different to communism. They are not anti-capitalism. They are not anti-private property.

'This new political party should be exploiting the

technology we have at hand.

‘There were stuff-ups using a fairly simple technology in the United States when they erroneously voted in George Bush as President. I’m not even too sure what form of voting technology they used, but obviously it didn’t work. This part you and I have discussed before. But we haven’t discussed it with Floyd, so please let me explain.’

Sebastian raised his glass of chilled white wine in a mock salute. ‘Keep going, Virginia, you are on a roll.’

‘No, we have the technology now for electronic voting from home. We do it all the time for things like reality shows and celebrity shows. So why can’t we do it for political matters. They are not much different and it is not only electronic voting, it is the power of instantaneous plebiscites. Any issues raised by the government, federal or state, goes to the House of Review. We could ask the entire voting population to critique the policy or the supposed mandate. We could use some sophisticated statistical techniques like factor analysis or cluster analysis to pick up on the main trends. The politicians then, that is the people’s representatives, take electronic data feedback, process it and make sure they represent it, that is the population’s will, truthfully on critical areas. When there is confusion we simply do some reiterations again through electronic voting. And this is *not* just focus groups.

‘It is much more sophisticated.’¹⁰⁸ But whatever happens we have to have access to a real IT guru. An Assange-like hacker. Someone like that guy recently busted, that Snowden guy.’

¹⁰⁸ Actually this concept has been described in detail by Heather Brooke in *The Revolution Will be Digitalised: Dispatches from the Information War*, 2011, William Heinemann, London

‘Well I know we’ve discussed that before,’ Sebastian said, ‘And I totally support it. In fact I suggest there is some sluggishness on the side of the current government and probably the opposition to introduce that sort of instantaneous plebiscite, which would really give people a powerful say in new policies and in particular new legislation. And they wouldn’t like that. Perhaps that’s the point.’

Virginia continued, ‘Interestingly in the last elections a few candidates ran for seats in the Senate, and the Senate only, for a party formed just before the 2007 elections called Senator-Online¹⁰⁹. It worked on a platform of, believe it or not, no political policies. I think that’s the reason it didn’t succeed. Its objective was to give ordinary Australians a direct say on every Bill put to parliament. The idea was that online it would run website forums and polls for eligible voters. The polls would have to attract more than a hundred thousand voters and more than seventy percent of them would have to give a clear position for or against a particular piece of legislation.’

Sebastian interrupted, ‘Those numbers seem huge. I can’t see how they would have got anywhere near the voters required to do what they proposed.’

Virginia added, ‘So Senator-Online was kind of getting there but didn’t. It *could* have been lack of public computer access or literacy but that doesn’t seem to stop the public mucking around with reality programs and the like.

‘Something that is blindingly obvious is the role of youth. They are the real pioneers and owners of IT and social media. We will need the young to implement a real IT savvy party. You old farts can provide strategic direction. But you need to stay out of the operational side.

‘And for what it’s worth, I *still* believe there is a

¹⁰⁹ www.senatoronline.org.au

conspiracy to dumb down the population so they, that is *we*, don't ask questions.'

They all fell into a slightly alcohol induced reverie. They were all thinking the same thing. Well, especially Floyd and Sebastian. It was the cogency of Virginia's words. Sebastian had not fully appreciated her desire to be involved in any manifestation of power, whether it was at the higher levels of business or politics. She hadn't made any claims to this. Perhaps he had misread her approach. Her candour on the literature conspiracy was quite surprising.

Sebastian sipped his Sauvignon Blanc. It really did look like they were heading for the third bottle. On top of the several beers they had consumed, this guaranteed a vibrant evening. And he did feel slightly miffed at being considered an old fart. Clearly Virginia couldn't be categorised in this way. Ah, youth ... its potential. Its waste.

Virginia broke up the reverie. 'I forgot. There is one other issue. Sustainability. If we start talking about sustainable global growth, or just sustaining planet earth, clearly, *decreasing* not just stabilising the world's population becomes a high priority.'

There was a stifling pause.

'And if that means a dampening down of the propagation of the human species, I am prepared to remain sexually innocent, symbolically, if that's what it takes. If it is just self-restraint. However the old ideas of introducing something into the water like fluoride, which was to strengthen children's teeth and was done in the interests of public health, and was, and probably still is, highly contentious, needs rethinking.

Floyd couldn't contain himself. 'Sustainability and symbolic virginity. How novel, but astute. Virginia, I don't like to pry personally but your sexually innocent claim kind of shocks me. Don't you two, umm ...'

Virginia looked as sternly as she could. Even when she

did there was a glow, could it be of sexual promiscuity, unintended as it might be. 'Mind your own business, Floyd.' She said this softly, but firmly.

Sebastian interrupted. 'Always best to stay out of others' bedrooms, Floyd' He looked at Virginia. Did he detect a slight pink tinge of embarrassment, or was it rage?

'Well?' said Floyd.

Sebastian responded quickly, 'I can neither confirm nor deny that ... whatever anybody says.'

They again fell into a subdued and wordless state. It was a refreshing quietness.

The spell was broken by Floyd.

'Virginia you certainly have the where-with-all. I see you playing a very significant role if we create a new political party.'

'Me. I've never thought of myself as a politician, but maybe you're right. But ... I am not going to be a real contender for any throne. I am happy to contribute politically. I am happy to help administratively. I am happy, even excited, about the prospects of travel around Australia, perhaps even internationally creating a new political party. I am happy to be wined and dined at every possibility. And I am more than happy to be an invisible part of any political conspiracy. To me that is fun. When I say part of a political conspiracy, I mean the unravelling of one. No, I am not a leader. I am a supporter. I am a team member. I am the quiet lady at the back of the room who helps makes things tick.' That Mona Lisa look of inscrutability flushed over her face again. What was she *really* saying?

Sebastian felt a distinct thrill rush through his body. Not a contender to the throne! They hadn't even formed a party. We are still just talking about it. And we are already delving into the very power politics we are trying to eradicate. Not a contender? Hah. That means I am a contender. God, I have to

make love to her sooner rather than later, he thought.

It was time to eat. It was time to break the spell that had been cast over them.

Sebastian had come to the inescapable conclusion that Virginia was going to play a very profound part in the formation of the new political party, if they got to that stage. Things seemed to be moving quickly. Far more quickly than Floyd or Sebastian had expected. It was obvious they needed a constitution and a structure for a new political party. There was a journey coming up that was going to be an exciting one. Sebastian said: ‘Come on team let’s head up to Mures¹¹⁰ for a healthy seafood debate. If there is any more wine there is no more talk of politics.’

‘You’ve got me,’ said Floyd.

‘I *am* starving. I will go along for any ride,’ said Virginia.

¹¹⁰ Mures is an excellent seafood restaurant at Hobart’s harbourside. That it would become the birthplace of a powerful political phenomenon, yet to be clearly articulated, had a certain irony to it. After all, Sebastian was a Bertie Wooster fan. So too was Floyd. They agreed with Bertie’s valet. Fish was brain food.

Chapter 12

Surf, Sand and Peace

Virginia has an innate poetic streak that underlies her artistic sensitivity. Almost as a premonition she wrote some words last night. This was on a business flight with Sebastian to London via Athens. She had an uneasy feeling that something was gnawing at the smooth sailing so far. For her, and Sebastian, their now half articulated journey into politics had come too easily. Something didn't add up. So read her words!

Silently, as a treacle-black sea heaves on a sticky summer's night

Silently, as a comet explodes onto an airless moon in deep space

Silently, as a rapturous plague slices soft tissue from an unsuspecting body

Silently, as the whole of humanity is consumed by a conspiring elite.

But stay with me reader! The plot will unwind, eventually. But first certain notions, further characters and perspectives need to be put into place. Ah, peace. Everybody likes the notion of peace, don't they! Perhaps there are some exceptions. The families of the privately owned companies that sustain the industrial military complex wouldn't be too keen on peace. No, consumption of their product is important for profit.

Perhaps we *really* don't like peace.

We don't like infanticide or homicide. We tacitly accept suicide. We live with it. (Is that because some of us are intuitively insightful, such that we look at the mess we call humanity and ask 'what's the point?') We have done so as sentient beings ever since we moved into civilised

communities. And we will probably be like this for hundreds of thousands more years. If we survive. Perhaps we have to consider terracide. The death of the planet and homosapiens (or whatever replaces it) and all other life. Sooner or later the weapons will be so powerful, the exploitation of the planet so immense and so vast that planet earth simply won't exist.

So let us see where this notion of peace could possibly fit into a new political party. Let's see who champions it. Let's see if it is realistic. (Sebastian had frequently spoken of Solon¹¹¹ and had a tendency to highlight him as one of the greatest leaders democracy ever had. And now here we are in Greece, the cradle of democracy!)

Sebastian and Virginia were staying at the Hotel Apanemo. What a delight.

Typical Santorini. Solid concrete structures; bright egg white on a windswept and barren island. Barren but beautiful. Domed and barrel vaulted roofs. No provision for rainwater disposal. No gutters. Fabulous views of the deep blue sea. Deep and cold. Even in September. Looking towards Thira from Akrotiri, the rugged landscape first looked like it was snow-capped. Sebastian could see it was the icing sugar coating of hundreds of concrete white-domed structures. He had been in Rhodos years before.

¹¹¹ Solon was a hero of ancient Greek democracy, already mentioned. But he is frequently referred to as the father of democracy. He legislated against political, economic and moral decline in Ancient Greece. His reforms were extensive and in many respects were the precursor to modern democracies. I hesitate, but Wikipedia's accounts of him are sufficient for the reader to quickly gain an appreciation of his contributions to a former democracy that worked at the time for a time.

And still things were the same. A lot of unfinished concrete forms. Reinforcing rods sprouting up into the sky; probably waiting for another level of accommodation to be added. Everything on hold until the last bit of money comes in to complete the building. Maybe another generation of the owner's family grabs the space. No rush. This is Greece. Remember Santorini is donkey country. Slow but sure. Very relaxed; laid back in fact. And eventually tax free, or at least tax resistant!

Apaneno was a sprawling structure with twenty or thirty rooms of different assortments with multi-level open terraces, most of which had 270 degree views of the surrounding beauty.

Virginia was basking by the infinity pool which was precipitously perched on an outer wall. Standing in the pool, looking across its surface, the water merged with the sea.

Sebastian had walked down the cobblestoned slope leading from their apartments to the pool. Again, despite his legendary sales pitch, he and Virginia had separate rooms. Alas, he thought, the price we pay for alleged professionalism. She was there basting herself deliciously, saturated with tanning oil. There was no notion of the porcelain white beauty of the Asians. She was fiercely Eurasian and exploited the western component, bronzing herself to the very heights of pulchritude.

As Sebastian walked towards the pool, he noticed Randall. Standing there, dark tan, not tall but lean and very fit. He waved at Sebastian so he waved back. It was a glorious September day, but past the European holiday frenzy. A slight breeze.

Brilliant sunlight. Perfect tanning weather for an Australian moving into Spring.

'G'day,' he said as he waved. 'I'm Randall.' Randall was sea swept and sand blasted. The hallmark of the addicted

surfer. He had surfed on every continent except for Antarctica.

‘How did you know I was Australian?’ Sebastian said. The *G’day* was the international recognition sign for all Australians in overseas countries. The only other time it was used was for foreigners when they arrived in Australia to mimic Australianism, first hand.

‘You are carrying a Heineken and not a Fosters. No self-respecting Aussie would drink Fosters.’

‘Oh, is it that obvious?’ Sebastian said. ‘Pretty obvious,’ he replied.

Then they got down to the serious business of talking about everything and nothing in particular. He was sucking from a water bottle. A very healthy sign. Sebastian sipping from a Heineken.

Calling Randall a peacenik would be an insult.

His background was far more profound. Surfing had been his passion for more than five decades. School had not been. He had avoided the mundane aspects of life, like work, for as long as he possibly could. And then, on a whim, he took a short paid-for course on information technology. Evidently he had a natural talent in this area. Some people find writing algorithms almost intuitive. He was one of them. And he was right in the middle of the dotcom boom. So he played around with some algorithms, developed some software and then proceeded to sell the software to credit card companies and banks. It worked like a dream. So successful was he that he floated his company and was personally paid out nearly \$AUS 200million .

There was something almost transcendental about his approach to money. He wasn’t frugal but nor was he extravagant. He respected what money could buy including power and prestige. The Zen of surfing had led him to explore a variety of the spiritual aspects of life including meditation. This balanced his newfound wealth. Randall became a

philanthropist of great influence, but of a very low profile.

He had an interest in ensuring public access to potable water in developing countries. He was extremely generous to some of the faith-based aid agencies in Africa, giving them substantial donations to work on water projects. And while he was passionate about these causes this was not his main passion. This is where the notion of peacenik came in.

After the frivolity of exploratory talk between two new acquaintances he exclaimed quite suddenly, 'I have a relentless desire to champion the peace movement but not as an ideological quest. I am determined to put some science into the process to give it not just academic credibility, but to prove to the world that there is a formula that could be used to demonstrate the superior economic benefits of peace over war.' Randall recited his words like an incantation.

Sebastian noticed this. He knew he was dealing with an eccentric; but one who had vision and passion. 'How so?' he said.

'Many times I have heard the old argument trotted out about how war makes money. I have also heard the definition of a mechanical engineer and a civil engineer. Mechanical engineers build the weapons. Civil engineers built the targets. Equally of course one could argue the civil engineers rebuilt the targets after they were destroyed and this would have some positive economic benefit for somebody, somewhere. They call it the multiplier effect. I call it obscene.'

Sebastian suddenly thought again of the Rothschilds and their propagation of war as a way of making wealth. 'The Rothschild formula' he blurted out.

'I know it well,' replied Randall. 'Money from misery.'

Sebastian was amazed to think there could actually be a formula in the reverse.

The conversation went quiet for a few pregnant moments.

Randall briefly interrupted Sebastian's flow of thought.

‘Well, what brings you to Santorini?’

Sebastian replied, ‘Probably the same reason you’re here, to drench myself in sun and Retsina. Plus of course to revitalise my nutritional intake with fabulous Greek cuisine. But more seriously this is just a leisurely stop over on the way to London for some business.’

Randall looked at Sebastian. ‘I’m here for the first part too, but I have another agenda. My daughter is here for the grand send-off. It is her wedding celebration and we are holding it by the pool this evening. Do you want to come along? We only have a dozen or so guests. They are arriving this afternoon. Bring your friend along too. She will definitely add to the decor.’ He had obviously been spying on Virginia. She had by now removed her bikini top.

Virginia briefly lifted her head, raised her sunglasses to her forehead and looked through slitted eyes at Randall. ‘Our pleasure,’ she said. ‘What do we need to wear?’

‘Nothing fancy. Just neat casual.’

Sebastian was impatient now to direct the conversation. He didn’t know where. But that was unimportant to him. Talking for the sake of talking, hoping it would wind up as a profound insight, somehow, was sufficient for him. ‘You were taking me down a challenging road. Tell me what is your favourite project?’

Randall was quiet for a few seconds. ‘You know we were talking about a possible antithesis to the Rothschild formula, demonstrating that peace as an industry can be more productive than war. Well my biggest project is exactly to do with that. I have set up a centre. It’s a hub for the various peace studies and related organisations worldwide. While we are linking all these studies, we are trying to move away from their primarily ideologically based approaches. We are embracing economic theory and econometrics. We want to demonstrate, not by sophistry, but by mathematics, and in

particular economic modelling, that peace industries and the quest for peace is not only achievable but it is preferable from a financial point of view. There is a multiplier effect and it generates much more wealth than the opposite; and it creates joy not misery.'

Sebastian was absorbed.

'But perhaps you are one discipline short in your approach, Randall. I am a psychologist and for all of the fluff that surrounds pop psychology, traditional academic psychology is rigorous and scientific in its approach. The research studies do follow scientific research discipline very thoroughly. Perhaps there could be a contribution here?''¹¹²

'What have you got in mind?' asked Randall, 'I had never thought of using the psychological sciences as a reinforcer to

¹¹² In the context of Kurt Lewin and Social Identity Theory, when people get emotionally embroiled in a cause like reducing poverty and the issue becomes deliberately politicised, and there are techniques for doing that, the end result can be pretty dramatic. The research indicates that when people are actively involved and participate in any given social issue they have a much higher level of ownership and commitment to that particular cause. The notion of commitment can be facilitated in many ways. Participation does not have to be face-to-face. Of course it can be gained to some degree with written papers and conferences. But probably by far and away the most powerful tool right now is the Internet. There is considerable research in this area. Start with Reicher, Haslam, and Hopkins (2005) *Social Identity and the Dynamics of Leadership: Leaders and Followers as Collaborative Agents in the Transformation of Social Reality*, *Leadership Quarterly*, 16, 547 – 637; Simon, B. & Klandermans, B. 2001, *Politicised Collective Identity: A Social Psychological Analysis*, *American Psychologist* 56, 319-331.

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economic theory. I always considered economic formulae by themselves would be sufficient to convince people of the viability of peace industries. But perhaps I am mistaken. To get that dramatic buy-in and that overwhelming commitment to do something does need personal ownership. And I guess you are right, we can only gain that by enhancing participation. What do you suggest, Sebastian?’

Sebastian was clearly infatuated with the idea of enhancing his own vision. He thought about it and then replied, ‘You said you have not gained any political commitment. Look, I am setting up a new political party. All the indicators are there that people are fed up with the primary parties. Look at recent Australian election debacles. It’s interesting how people perceive situations. Both leaders of the two primary parties indicated they were equally popular. What they didn’t realise is they were equally unpopular. People are looking for a new outlook. What I have in mind is a political party that will engage people, online, to enhance participation and commitment. In fact, in the Senate, we will be pushing for electronic plebiscites on major issues. Giving voting power back to the people through their representatives. We could even possibly do it at the government level in the lower house. So to include, as one of our platforms, a real global peace initiative, I think could be mutually advantageous. What do you think?’

Virginia, who has a great capacity for appearing to not be listening, suddenly raised her voice at the same time as she modestly held her bikini top to her chest.

‘Look Randall,’ she said. ‘The political party we are forming is called One World League or OWL. The symbolism is obvious. The convergence of an organisation like your own, or at least the forming of some sort of link, with our new political party could indeed be a differentiator. There is absolutely no reason why peace wouldn’t sell to the public

right now. If it's packaged the right way, we'll be on a winner.

Sebastian abruptly changed the topic.

'I'm looking forward to your wedding ceremony tonight. See you tonight. We will talk more then.'

Virginia was already clipping back her bikini top and seductively, yes always seductively, flowing to her feet and wrapping a towel around her waist.

As they walked back over the cobblestone courtyard area Sebastian said to her: 'Were you listening to all that stuff?'

'Yes I was. He has got something, linking us to the peace movement. Perhaps we shouldn't call it that as it does have some very left wing and 1960s' type connotations. Let's just say we link peace industries to the political party. It definitely needs more thought.'

They moved back to the apartment and settled in on the patio which was just so Greek. Startling white tiled floor, icing sugar rendered cement balustrades. A beautiful view over the sea. Chilled white Retsina sitting in an ice bucket. Dolmades stacked on a porcelain plate; a plate ready to be thrown against the wall or the floor in jubilation. Virginia actually liked Retsina. She was the only other person Sebastian knew who liked Retsina. All the other Australians he knew compared it to some sort of toilet cleaning fluid. However, there was something about its bitter taste, probably because of the resination, that appealed to him and obviously her.

They sat in the sun indulgently chewing dolmades and washing them down with crisp wine. The one thing that seemed to be missing was seagulls. But that was no great loss. All that was needed was a little Greek music to create the perfect atmosphere. That would have to wait until the evening. It was on the second bottle of Retsina when Virginia started on her totally predictable quixotic tilt at Sebastian's alcoholic behaviour.

'I sometimes think you live on the brink of self-

destruction, Sebastian,' she said while casually throwing back her fourth glass of Retsina.

'Yes,' he replied. 'So much so that it gives me great enjoyment. I hover on the brink because of the stimulation. Inebriation brings those epiphanies that sobriety never can. Between the two of us, I believe we could create a personal social vortex of mutual destruction. That could be fun. The reality is that we all live on the brink of destruction. We could *all* do better. We could *all* be fitter. We could *all* eat healthier. We could *all* be politically more responsible. But the reality is we don't. We all know, whether it is conscious or unconscious, that there is an end to life. And I think the secret is to see life as an eternity at least from the subjective point of view, no matter how many years you actually live. You don't remember what it was like before you were born. You feel as though you have lived an eternity, already, don't you Virginia?'

She nodded. Her beautiful black hair glistened in the setting sun which filtered through the vines on the trellis that formed a sort of enclave over the patio. She kept sipping the Retsina and spoke.

'And what of great success in this materialistic world. It makes those who achieve it, fearful of death. Too much to lose. You know the old lyric. When you've got nothing, you've got nothing to lose. Well the opposite is also true. Do you know what I mean?'

Sebastian continued, 'I live on the brink because it brings me a certain self-loathing with a confused feeling of immortality. You know I spurn society even though I try to be reasonably respectable. I would have loved to have been a proper artistic bohemian. But this got tainted or morphed into some sort of social dereliction. I love the Australia that talks about sun-addled brains and convict descendants, and doesn't give a fuck about anything. This is a significant part of my, or even our, mutual psyche. But there is always a price to pay. As

I have said to you before, the moment of death is the eternity of hell or heaven, of an individual depending upon the universe they create for themselves. Virginia do you remember the Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne?

‘We were there once on business – I never told you. You were asleep, but I stood on the thirty-fifth floor looking over the internal balcony at the atrium floor below and estimated it would take about four to five seconds to hit the ground if I jumped. I wondered if I tried it whether I could prove my thesis that four to five seconds would last an eternity in my mind. It wasn’t so much a suicidal thought as an experiment with time. I figured, like in the movies, time would slow down to an incredible slowness, such that not only would my life flash before me but my entire future would also. In fact at that moment, a bit like a singularity I suppose, time would virtually stand still and that would be my eternity. But that eternity whether it was heaven or hell would be determined by my state of mind at the time. Anyway, as I looked down to the bar area below I decided the epiphanies on the way down were not as good as the ones I could get through a good wine. This was preferable to a bizarre experiment with time.’

Virginia looked around. ‘It’s that very talk,’ she said, ‘that makes me wonder about this living on the edge, living on the brink stuff. You know we are going to a function this evening so I suspect it is better to stop at the end of this bottle. This Randall might just turn out to be a great ally and getting pissed at his daughter’s wedding probably won’t enhance the relationship. In fact, quite the opposite.’

She was right. So Sebastian grabbed a towel, lay it on the tiles, basked in the sun and immediately fell asleep. It was a couple of sunburnt hours later that Virginia woke him. He felt surprisingly clear-headed. He put on a pair of chinos and a white linen shirt which looked okay; although his face and arms had taken on a deep mauve tinge.

And, of course, Virginia was sensational. Delicately thin shoulder straps held up a flowing, seductively diaphanous dress that tumbled all the way to the ground. She had obviously put on high heels. Her silken slenderness was now multiplied a thousand times by the additional height she had gained. Her extraordinarily brief underwear was just visible through the swirls of muted but varied colours. This added to the excitement. Sebastian was sure Virginia would have been very aware of her trophy status; but equally aware of how her commitment to a cause transcended Sebastian's simple lascivious state.

Sebastian proudly led her down the cobblestone courtyard to the pool, saw a dozen or so people milling around in groups of two or three, and immediately headed towards Randall.

'Hi Sebastian,' he called out passing over an ice cold Mydhos. Greek beer at its best. 'Had any further thoughts on the peace politics? You've had an afternoon to reflect.'

'In fact I have,' Sebastian said. 'Cold Retsina and sun are the two great creative drivers in the universe. Of course that's why the Greeks invented democracy and the basis of western civilisation. It was definitely the Retsina and the sun and perhaps the figs and olives; and of course the dolmades.'

At this point Virginia couldn't resist herself. She could see Randall was not ready for more of Sebastian's well-meaning monologue. 'Randall, you don't want one of Sebastian's drawn out answers to a simple question?'

Virginia, whose arm was in a loose hug around Sebastian's shoulders, was able to give him an unnoticed but severe pinch to his back. 'Boring, boring,' she whispered.

He flinched but took the hint. 'I will keep my thoughts for the moment. You have some important duties to perform so nothing on peace for the moment at least. But that is not to say it is not important. What do you think? Common sense stuff.'

'Common sense stuff,' said Randall a little impatiently.

‘However common sense is one of the rarest senses around. And I have a party to attend to now. Please stay and be our guests. I will be busy after the event and I am leaving early tomorrow morning. Let’s make a date. Let’s meet up back in Australia in a few weeks’ time.’

Randall shook Sebastian’s hand and then headed towards the cluster of twelve or so guests who had gathered around one end of the pool. The bride and groom both arrived splendidly dressed in vibrant white. She wore a Greco-Roman style dress that vestal virgins must have worn. He had a two-piece open necked linen suit. The service was short and so too were the speeches. Sebastian heard snippets from the other speeches. There was hope, loyalty, compassion, generosity and of course peace.

Sebastian had jettisoned his Greek beer for champagne. As he sipped Veuve Cliquot, deliciously chilled, he surreptitiously stroked Virginia’s back. She didn’t resist. That was always a good sign. They slipped away into the darkness and left the crowd to celebrate. Sebastian had resolved he would definitely meet up with Randall in Sydney at the earliest possible convenience.

Chapter 13

From Cambodia to Katoomba

Virginia was seated by the window in business class heading towards Ho Chi Min en route to Cambodia. She had a champagne flute in her right hand and was conscious that Sebastian was holding her left hand. But do we know what Virginia *really* thinks? Certainly she is not the epicene character of Shakespearean plays. Sensuality is a powerful weapon. It can manipulate. It can seduce. But let us hear what *she* has to say. After all to create a new political entity, a really new political entity, means busting paradigms; political and personal paradigms set throughout centuries of talking and achieving nothing. The latter, she thought was something Sebastian did a lot of.

She liked Sebastian. She liked him a lot. She was thirty-five. Nearly half his age.

But there was charm galore ... and mystery. And he did excite her. He had been extraordinarily persistent in his attempts to make love to her. She knew Sebastian certainly wasn't boring. He was unpredictable. Sometimes moody but never, ever, boring. Sometimes she thought he was even boyishly naive. So she was not sure how far they were going to get with this new political party idea. She was going to help him and support him as much as she could. She sometimes thought her ideas were better articulated than his. And certainly she wanted some sort of say in critical and strategic matters, if the whole thing was to be successful. Who could tell so early in the journey? But it would be exciting.

She was aware of his craziness too. She didn't know if that was because he was traumatised by the death of his

daughter and granddaughter in Disneyland. She certainly didn't know what happened with his wife. She believed there was something sinister there. But everybody seemed to think it was an accident. What if it wasn't? What would that make Sebastian? He definitely had an aggressive side. She had seen that in his psychological profile. The 16 personality factors. There was definitely a controlled aggression. She had only ever seen him lose his temper once or twice, but when he did he really went off. But life goes on. She would always be a little cautious towards him.

Probably his greatest positive attribute was his creativity. And he was certainly innovative. That had both been his upside and downside. Some of his creative entrepreneurial endeavours crashed. Others didn't. In the balance he had come out of it pretty well. But it was not the money that attracted her. It was the sheer excitement of being with him and sharing his enthusiasm.

She felt a tightening of her left hand. Then Sebastian started stroking the back of her hand and forearm. She knew where that could lead. Especially if he turned off the reading light. So she slowly moved her hand away and patted his knee.

'Sebastian you're not drinking. Surely it's time to relax.' He normally didn't need any encouragement to imbibe.

Sebastian looked at her. 'I have just been thinking about this particular gig. I am not too sure what to expect. I am used to running a specific risk management program on a specific project. This is a little different in that it is a group of thirty or so different NGOs with different agendas, different people and different teams – I am not absolutely sure what to do.'

'Well I have never seen you so pensive. You are not nervous are you?' It was almost impossible for Virginia to conceive of him being nervous, especially for a relatively simple job like this.

Sebastian shrugged. 'No, I am not nervous. I am just not

absolutely sure how to present this. I am so used to doing it on a unified group of people for one project. Any ideas?’

‘Why don’t you just do a risk management study on a generic basis? Why don’t you do a risk identification, risk analysis and risk management on being an NGO in Cambodia? That will show them the techniques; but it will come to some sort of a conclusion they can all share.’ Virginia looked at him for an answer.

Sebastian remembered then what he had known for a while – that he had been trained in, and took groups of people through on a regular basis, rigorous problem solving activities. Politicians aren’t trained in problem solving. They have no methodological basis for their decision making. He gazed across her to the window and looked unblinkingly into the blueness. His response was quick.

‘Hey, that’s a great idea. Now you can give me a champagne.’

They settled back in their relative luxury and their hands met again and clasped. The remaining flying hours were hypnotically shallow; more champagne and movies superficially absorbed. They had a quick transfer at Ho Chi Min and flew onto Cambodia.

Sebastian was lazing by the pool at Raffles in Phnom Penh. Virginia had taken the tuk tuk to the Russian market to do what Sebastian considered was innate in all women. They would look for clothes. Shopping, shopping and more shopping.

Sebastian liked Phnom Penh. He liked it despite the torture chambers, stains of blood on walls, the instruments of torture, the horrific photographs and the psychological heritage of a period of mass homicide. Many of the perpetrators never went to court. In fact virtually no-one had. The very same people who were the murderers were now working, serenely it would seem, in various government departments and in some

instances in their own businesses acting as if nothing happened so many years ago when skulls were smashed with farm implements to save bullets; when children were literally ripped apart; and when whole families were systematically executed in front of each other, one by one, and thrown into a river. Sebastian visualised the flotilla of corpses bobbing gruesomely down the river. Deathly silence. A grim reminder of the insanity of man when he goes unchecked.

When he is given a licence to kill and maim. And the killing fields were like a warped archaeological dig. Fragments of bone were still to be found there. In the museum a huge totem pole of human skulls. Sebastian didn't know whether the totem pole was just the work of sick minds or whether it was a cogent signal of the atrocities that had occurred. Had the people forgiven the perpetrators? If so, Sebastian couldn't imagine they had forgotten. Life goes on. It repairs itself slowly but surely. But the corruption is still there. The links with the French, the colonial masters, still lingered. They were the only ones who were unscathed in the horrific wars. The French. Pol Pot studied in a French university. Possibly that's why they were spared. Their properties weren't damaged. The French who remained during the time of Pol Pot were left unbothered while other nationalities were slaughtered; even those with no direct connection to Cambodia. And corruption. It still occurred blatantly. The five hundred riel note with its picturesque bridge was a wanton example of the corruption. Look carefully. Look carefully. See the car on the bridge. It is a Porsche. How amazing is that?

The risk management session was a success. Sebastian wasn't *really* surprised. Virginia was right. Again! Now for a diversion to reward himself; and Virginia too. She had always assisted him magnificently. Perhaps more than he really appreciated.

The bus trip to Siem Reap was a surprisingly comfortable experience. A much more modern coach than Sebastian or Virginia had expected. Sebastian was thinking of something along the lines of open windows, rusted seat frames and torn seat fabric with goats and chickens in the back seats. But this was not the case. However the trip was punctuated by near misses with tuk tuks, pedestrians and cars at least a dozen times in the five-hour trip. The only other thing on the bus that drew Virginia's attention was the woman in the seat across the aisle munching and cracking what looked like deep fried grasshoppers or locusts. The woman gobbled up the insects in the same way as she would eat popcorn.

But it was time for reflection and time for discussion; well at least Sebastian thought so. Virginia always took the window seat. This way she could avoid, or at least minimise, Sebastian's monologue.

Sebastian began abruptly. 'Town planning doesn't loom large in people's minds. It doesn't smack of death or starvation or nuclear radiation or for that matter global warming. However solutions to high profile problems can be addressed to some degree with good town planning,' he said.

Not much response from Virginia. A shrug. A half smile. 'Town planning is not high on my list,' she said. Sebastian continued.

'Virginia do you remember Katoomba? Remember I took you for a trip to the Blue Mountains. Beautiful area. But Katoomba is run down. It has been since the beginning of the twentieth century. Tell me what you think. There are a lot of tacky, old, undeveloped hotels that date back fifty to a hundred years scattered all over Katoomba. Most of them have a dining room or a restaurant. My suggestion is that all the hotels confederate. They have a sinking fund to which they all contribute.

They all get developed. Each hotel has a different theme.

This would be reflected in the décor and the restaurants. All the hotels consolidate into one company. Guests can then stay in any hotel and eat and dine at any other with a central charge system and a central booking system. So easy. We can do the same sort of thing with the shabby retail outfits. Basically we would be forming one large company with all the individual retail owners and hotel owners becoming shareholders in the one large organisation. Basically we would be selling a town. If that experiment worked we could take on other towns in a similar situation.'

'It sounds commercial or entrepreneurial, rather than political,' Virginia said.

Sebastian paused. He was deep in thought. He had his entrepreneurial friend Richard, or Dick as he was usually called, on his mind.

'Ah yes,' he thought. 'We could at least arrive at policies written by our political party with perhaps an equity involvement in such experiments, if that is legally allowable, to fund our party. Hmm, equity involvement does sound a bit tacky and probably is illegal. Nevertheless it is something we could pursue as a party. Richard is the one I need to check up with. Hmm, I need to see him as soon as I get back to Australia.'¹¹³

'What about bushfires?' said Virginia, almost out of context. Virginia was now reflecting upon Sebastian's entrepreneurial naivety. 'Yep, what about bushfires? Surely that would always be a problem in the Blue Mountains. It would keep people scared.'

'Oh, I even have an answer to that. In fact we can

¹¹³ Richard – Dick – had been a long time friend of Sebastian. He knew everything about business. A lot like his father did. He enters the story a little later.

combine two functions. Why don't we dam up several of the valleys in the Blue Mountains? Create huge expanses of water which can be used for recreational use but they also act as firebreaks and sources of water for bushfires.'

'The Greenies would love that,' said Virginia. 'Aren't dams supposed to be very damaging to ecosystems?'

Sebastian thought about that for a moment. 'I don't quite understand that. Dams don't fill up overnight. They take a long time. Surely the animals would be able to adapt to their new habitats and slowly move up the hills as the dams fill.'

Virginia seemed distracted. 'Very creative Sebastian,' she said.

Sebastian could see the daggers in her eyes. She really thought his ideas were crazy and said, 'But I think you will find there are logistical problems, political problems, and definitely community resentment. Besides don't the ideas smack of a regional bias; when we probably will be aiming at Senate seats, *if* we ever get a party started?'

'But that's exactly the point' Sebastian replied. 'Yes, political. And we keep on repeating the process, derelict town after derelict town being regenerated. Creating employment, creating wealth. OWL's intellectual property. It is the political initiatives that would make this thing work.'

Sebastian was already thinking of ways to create a people's party app. Sort of like Facebook. People would get used to voting for hypotheticals at first. Simple ones.

Things that are easy to understand and generate immediate benefits. He would call the app Katoomba Time and make it like an on-line board game with lavish prizes. Any way get a million people online like Zuckerberg. Once that's established, then and only then, form the real political party.

'I know the whole thing *should be* driven by state or even national politics; not by the local government; or local community issues. We've got to break the paradigm. The Blue

Mountains was always a marginal seat, state or federal. Good place to start. Lots of influential people, of all party persuasions. Easy to get the press on side.’ The bus hit a gigantic pothole.

Startled, Virginia looked up. ‘Look I don’t want to burst your bubble but don’t you think things like education, global warming, pollution, defence and the like might be a little more important? Especially if you are doing this in the context of setting up a new national political party. You have accused me of being idealistic. This sounds like idealistic entrepreneurship with a shade of mountain boy egotism.’

Sebastian thought about this for a moment. Probably she was right. He was getting into the detail and forgetting about the strategy. But then again, he thought entrepreneurial creativity could be OWL’s hallmark. OWL could make lots of money and make the party self-funding ... Oh an idea for another day.

‘Well,’ he said. ‘It is just an idea. The areas of defence are obviously a hell of a lot more complicated. When the party is formed we will, by consensus, arrive at a starting point in our policy deliberations on the key issues. They will then be shared with anybody who wishes to interact on an online basis, refining the policies as we go along prior to an election ...’

Sebastian knew his voice was trailing off. They were arriving at Siem Reap. The bus pulled into a depot that looked more like a refugee camp than a bus terminus.

There were literally hundreds of people waving bits of paper. This was supposed to be a rewarding, relaxing, experience.

The bus driver called out in clear English. ‘Don’t be alarmed. They just want to take you by tuk tuk or taxi to the town centre. For those of you who have organised rental cars just take that narrow alleyway over there.’ He pointed vaguely in the eastern direction. ‘The rental cars are quite separate.’

Chapter 14

Moving Towards Self Actualisation

This is not dogma. This is ‘everyman’s’ common sense. Humanity per se has not really evolved over the millennia. Apart, that is, from infrequent iconic institutions like the RSPCA. There has also been an apparent rise in philanthropy. This has been brought about by wealth created through technology and global entrepreneurship.

There has been a lot of that. So rapid, so abrupt, so out of control. Yet creating instant billionaires around the world.

There needs to be a transformational move from greed and covert manipulation to collaborative and open progress to achieve a new level of human social evolution.

The fundamental human weakness is that we are forgetful and not forgiving.

From one devastating war to the next we sublimate atrocities. Base human emotions operating on an intuitive and almost reptilian level take control of us. We build a fantasy around irreconcilable actions, justifying them on external environmental factors rather than accepting that we as individuals are being driven by these intuitive forces. Now we need to use technology to achieve the next ‘social’ evolutionary step in humanity.

Phylogenetically¹¹⁴ the individual human develops, replicating the life of all organisms on earth through its various

¹¹⁴ Right from conception the development of an individual human life from a single cell through to a complex living being mimics the evolutionary process of all animal life on earth.

stages of evolution. One hopes then that human society's evolution will reflect an individual human's aging process. Human society has been through the brash selfishness of the neonate. Society has unconsciously held onto the puerile sense of the immortality of youth. But is yet to progress to the selfless maturity of the collaborative senior citizen. Technology could help accelerate this evolution.

But no doubt you don't want to keep listening to my thoughts; you're much more interested in observing Sebastian's joy at the sight of the car he'd organised.

Sebastian was extraordinarily glad he had organised a rental car. They struggled with their bags to get off the bus and push their way through the crowd to where they found a narrow corridor that took them to the rental cars. They were surprised to find out that they were being supplied with a driver. Sebastian decided to accept the recommendation and not argue the point.

They headed to the hotel. The hotel was exactly what they needed. It was dripping in bougainvilleas. The swimming pool was exquisite. Sebastian very soon developed an ear infection after swimming in it. It was an exquisite, crystal clear, germ dump. A fabulous, magical cesspool. Nevertheless it was placed in a courtyard surrounded by generous rooms; two of which were Sebastian's and Virginia's. Easy access to the pool. Cool dips frequently. More to the point were the one dollar drinks and small dishes. One dollar bought any form of drink: cocktails, spirit, beer, coke, lemonade. It didn't matter what it was. The same for the entrée sized snacks. One dollar regardless. Great value, Sebastian thought, these developing countries.

Recovering from the risk management workshop was not arduous. Sitting by the pool, sipping a beer was the appropriate environment to do a little reparation.

Virginia uncoiled the soft mattress and laid it on the

wooden slatted lounge by the pool. She had on her best bikini. She knew Sebastian loved it. She knew he was staring at her as she bent forward. She was lucky to inherit the full breasts of her grandmother. If this titillated Sebastian so be it. He can take responsibility for his own lasciviousness. She thought, such a boy. Where's the man?

For her it was fun to tease him in a sexually provocative way. His naiveté had certainly been revealed on the bus ride from Phnom Penh. His idea of redeeming Katoomba was trivial at best. Dams, selling a town and so on, while being creative, were not profound. She could see Sebastian needed a process to bring a party to fruition. Anyway, why a party? Why not just a social movement? After all George Washington said political parties were the bane of democracy. Or something like it. And after all, OWL is the One World League. Why not play on the league concept. Maybe the notion of a self-sustaining league would be a good one. Then again, maybe Sebastian's entrepreneurial ideas for a self-funding entity could work. No donations. No corruption.

Sebastian was on the right track. Intuitively he knew there was a psychology that would support a new approach to politics. He had studied psychology. But so had Virginia. Both knew of, and understood, Maslow's hierarchy. There are five levels of self-interest. The most fundamental is seeking food and water. Following that in a progressive hierarchical development comes the need for shelter. After that a need for sex and propagation of the species. But at the next level more abstract features come in like self-realisation. That means being able to express oneself as an individual and be recognised as such. It is about transcending those basic elements and becoming a whole person. Finally there is self actualisation. This is where Sebastian needed to be. Well, at least from Virginia's perspective. Self actualisation is that need for humans to move beyond themselves and be part of

something much bigger. And of course the creation of a new political something could achieve this. This was the critical point of intervention he needed and he had to realise it.

It was time to interrupt Sebastian. Virginia knew he was starting to slide into a state of slightly inebriated, bewildered lethargy. ‘Sebastian if we are going to get a political party together we need to act soon. We need to bring people together. We need to start articulating things like a constitution, or some sort of code of ethics or guiding principles for the party. Have you thought about this?’

‘No, I haven’t. In fact I have been kind of putting it on hold for a while.’

‘Why, why put it on hold? We need to take the initiative. We need to seize the day. Why can’t we bring your advisers, if you can call them that, together and lay down some strategy for the implementation of the party?’

‘There is no real reason. I suppose like many things in life I have had the idea and I have gained satisfaction from the actual idea itself rather than the implementation. If you think it is important perhaps you might think about where and when and who should be there. I am happy to leave that to you, at least while we are in Cambodia. Can you give it some thought?’ As frenetic as Sebastian’s life could be, there was always room for a little laziness.

Virginia was relieved. This at least was a starting point. ‘Of course I can. I will start doing exactly that. The when, the where and the who. Leave it to me.’

Three days later she had done what Sebastian had asked. And she thought she had done it very well. She had put down some notes and was lying by the pool in complete isolation. She saw him come out of his room, towel in one hand, glass of champagne in the other. Sebastian was a consistent drinker. Although usually around once a year he would stop for four to

six weeks. This he said was to repair his liver. He also said that it was obvious God had intended humans to drink otherwise they wouldn't have been blessed with a liver that was able to repair itself totally in such a short period of time. To him any justification was good.

As he sat next to Virginia he started to undo her bikini top. Without thinking she said 'Sebastian why don't you find someone your own age? Why don't you move along a couple of decades at least?' She blurted this out. 'I wasn't planning to say this, but I've been thinking it for ages and it's good I've finally said it.'

Sebastian paused; he appeared flushed and said, 'Don't worry. But you deserve an answer. The reason I don't hang out with women more my own age is because I don't want to. In fact I am convinced, and you won't like the sound of this, that once women get to menopause they basically turn into men. They become arrogant, irritable and demanding in the sense that they want to take charge of everything.'

'They become vitriolic, and hell bent on squashing any fun in life out of any men they meet. No, it's quite simple, Virginia, it's not the youth of the body so much as much the youth of the mind. And that's why I like you. Notice I don't flaunt it around all over the place.'

She had to admit Sebastian had had very little sexual success with her. And he was very persistent. But he didn't seem interested in other women. Perhaps she should take that as a compliment more than an annoyance.

Sebastian was interested in what progress Virginia had made. He had given her a task to do and as usual would expect she would have done a good job. So he asked: 'How have you gone with the planning of our inaugural meeting of OWL?'

'Quite a lot of progress actually, Sebastian.' She said this with that professional air that discerns work from pleasure. She had moved into her business mode. 'I have drafted an agenda

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for your confirmation. In the very first instance we need to confirm the name OWL and I think we need to get some sort of idea of a logo. We can handle this in very much the same way as your advertising agency days. The second item has to be the addressing of the constitution. This has to be formulated in accordance with federal regulations. This is an absolute must if we are going to form a new political party.'

Sebastian interrupted. 'You are making the assumption that we start at the federal level. Weren't we going to start at the state level?'

'Actually you are right. The second item on the agenda should be whether we start at the state level. Whether it is in the lower or upper house? Or whether we move straight to federal government? Again, whether it's the lower or upper house? Yes, that should be the second item on the agenda.'

'The third item is the constitution. The fourth item should then be our guiding principles, our code of ethics or our underlying moral code or something like that. I think we need to spend some time on that as it will be the foundation of our decisions.'

'Hmm,' Sebastian was searching for some ideas. She realised he always needed to add something even when he thought she had done a good job. 'I think you have missed something, Virginia. Our *raison d'être* needs to be clear. It needs to be dramatic. It needs to be vastly different. Right now terrorism rules. It takes every headline space. As horrendous as it is there needs to be a counterbalance to this media preoccupation. And OWL can do that!'

Virginia was perplexed. She thought her rallying to get OWL moving was an achievement. 'Sebastian I don't know what you are talking about.'

Sebastian replied, 'I have mentioned this before. OWL needs to act like a terrorist group but at the end of the spectrum that delivers good not evil. It uses the same principles. Exploits

social media. Forms cells. Wins over youth. You know? But all for constructive not destructive reasons.'

Virginia nodded agreement and continued anyway. 'And then of course I believe we need to have a session on implementation strategy. You know that we have to get, I think, five hundred or so signatures before we can actually make an application to form the party. And that about covers it, I think, Sebastian.'

'Ah, what about the venue?' Sebastian asked, starting his inevitable immersion into detail, much to Virginia's irritation.

'Actually I was thinking of Jenolan Caves. We have run a few conferences up there. It is in splendid isolation. I know the accommodation is only just three star. And the conference room itself is a bit tacky. But I think the isolation is the key. It is also sort of central, at least from a national point of view. Most of the people involved are in Sydney with the exception of Floyd down in Hobart and if we are going to invite Eleanor, she is in Adelaide.'

'I am not too sure about Eleanor,' Sebastian offered. 'She made a couple of statements to me when I was last in Adelaide that were a little disturbing. Definitely she has an anti-Islamic stance. I might have some sympathy for that, but I certainly don't want to go down that route as a political party. However she had been drinking a fair bit that night, and who knows, I haven't spoken to her since. Perhaps she is more moderate when she is sober. We will check it out. But I am okay with Jenolan Caves. I think they call the hotel Caves House.'

Virginia's voice was tense. 'I think we need to meet as soon as possible. I would say in a fortnight or so depending upon people's availability. There is some real urgency around this.'

Virginia hesitated for a moment and continued. 'We are in a muddle in Australia.'

'You know that. I know that. Everybody knows it. We've

got the potential at any time for a hung parliament. We only need one or two of the independents to change their mind or defect or even for some of the governing party to defect to the opposition and we are all in the crap. Seems as though we are balanced on a knife-edge. I really can't see any politician letting the current situation survive.'

Sebastian listened intently. He suddenly realised Australia *was* the place. Raw democracy was ready for change. This would be the birthplace of a new global movement. She was right.

'I totally agree. See if you can set it up for about three weeks time. Obviously the venue has to be available as well. And I suppose we'd better go through who it is we want there. I will accept Eleanor at this stage. Definitely Floyd. You. Me. I was wondering about Randall. I haven't caught up with him yet but intend to do so in the first few days we are back in Australia. So put him down as a potential. That peace industry stuff might just work. I have been thinking about a way of leveraging on it.

'We also need to get Richard, umm, Dick Cunningham in. I don't particularly like the man, but he is the only one of us who has got a feel for numbers. I need his expertise. Never liked liquidators and administrators ever since the time of my father. However we need someone who is numerate. I am not. You are not too bad. The rest of us are pretty hopeless. Floyd is a psychologist. He might be good on the statistical side. But certainly he is not on the financial side.

'We will also need to balance out Dick on the psychological side. I was also thinking of Mack Vellon. His Mozart haircut disturbs me slightly. But I guess we need a Mozart anyway. But it is his political contacts and his mastery of political intrigue that makes him essential. I can't think of anybody else. What do you think?'

'I think that's about it.' Virginia replied, 'Although only

six people is a bit under critical mass even if we do include Eleanor.'

Virginia was thinking of the gender imbalance and how she might address this. But she realised for the founders, they had to take the talent available, people who were also amenable to Sebastian's quirky ways. This area could always be revisited later.

Sebastian deliberately diverted the conversation when he said, 'You don't really want me to look around for an older woman do you?'

Virginia was annoyed at the irrelevance of this statement. 'Sebastian I am not making any admissions. But you know I don't care at all about age. You still have some strong attraction although perhaps it has faded a little with age.'

Sebastian quickly looked up at her. Is it possible to have a sarcastic smile?

Something like that seemed to flicker across her face for a split second. It's like a bloody Mona Lisa again. She did this a lot. Sebastian really didn't know where he stood in relation to this mysterious woman. After all the years.

Sebastian had another diversionary thought. 'You know this literary intrigue, this literary plot to dumb people down you were talking about in Hobart. Do you think there is anything real about this? Or is it just more conspiracy theory?'

'Sebastian I feel there's a real connection between the world's wealthy elite and a struggle for some sort of world government. We've discussed this before and we are both in agreement. I think there is some sort of extension to the Rothschild formula. Perhaps war is not so easy to use any more as a financial leveraging tool. But the media is. I would like to think that we address that issue as one of the political imperatives for our new party. I will let you in on some further research I've done.

I'll tell you because as soon as we get this meeting out of

the way, I'm following it up with a trip to Washington, like I promised.'

'First of all let's talk again about Google. There are curious things floating around about Google. One is well documented by the Volokh Conspiracy¹¹⁵. But, that's not what I consider to be the key aspects of the conspiracy. If you are interested I can fill you in at a later date.

'There is a concept called 'Orphan Works'. An orphan work is a piece of literature less than seventy-five years of age. This is where the author can't be located and a settlement can't be agreed with Google. The author does not have to even be alive. The authorship might belong to their estate.

'Anyway, Google intends to proceed regardless. They can process the publication of the authored works without settlement. All they have to say is they presumed it to be in the public domain. If the orphaned work is actually in the public domain there is no problem. If the work is orphaned and the rights holder does not come forward then there is no problem. If the work is orphaned and a rights holder comes forward then Google can simply settle with him or her or cease publication of the disputed work. In fact it is said that if the rights holder of a work, which is so neglected it is orphaned, they would probably be happy with Google attempting to publish it because no-one else bothered.

'That's just part one of what I consider to be the Google conspiracy. Essentially they can get what they want. Such is

¹¹⁵ The Volokh Conspiracy is a blog which covers mostly legal and political issues in the USA. For years Google has been negotiating what they call 'The Google Books Settlement Agreement'. In essence it's all to do with existing copyright law. The agreement Google was trying to reach would undermine that law. If you are interested it is worth Googling.

big business.

‘But there is another part to this and why I want to get to Washington. It’s all to do with the Library of Congress. I won’t go into its history apart from saying it was established in the eighteen hundreds, and has around twenty-three million books.

When you include monographs, serials, pamphlets, technical reports etc there is more than one hundred and forty-seven million items. All very impressive. But there are two points to be considered.

‘In the 1950s, there was a chap at the time who was the Librarian of Congress. He started the Library of Congress Missions around the world. Essentially, I think this was just a front for gathering intelligence. Ostensibly the purpose was to look at all aspects of cultures, literature and so on. More importantly in the nineteen nineties the Library of Congress developed what is called the “National Digital Library”. At the time this was controversial within the library profession.

‘In 2005 the library announced it was going to launch the World Digital Library.

Good for saving books and other objects from all world cultures. Here comes the rub. In April 2010, it announced plans to archive all public communications on Twitter including all publications since Twitter’s launch in March 2006. Ha, so much for innocuous Facebook!

‘Do you think there is something sinister in this? And I just don’t think that I’m that paranoid. One of the stated missions of the Library of Congress directs all publishers to submit copies of their published works to its library, to what is called its Mandatory Deposit. That in itself mightn’t seem sinister but who has access to all these publications? Can the publications be corrupted by unknown persons? To finish off, the Library of Congress retains copies of every publication in the English language that is deemed significant. Of course who

deems something significant?

‘That could again be very much an authority I haven’t even identified yet. Sebastian, does that make sense?’

Sebastian could see she was deadly serious about this matter. It occurred to him that he might drop the subject right now. But perhaps when they have the meeting, the first summit, he could reopen the case and see what the others felt. But he started thinking of Twitter, and Facebook, and all the social media. It *was* being monitored. He suspected it was not just for terrorism suppression. No, it was much more than this. Sebastian was beginning to appreciate the complexities of the world he had naively ignored. He knew it would conflict, ultimately, with OWL’s *raison d’etre*.

They flew from Siem Reap back to Phnom Penh and decided to take the bus back to Ho Chi Min. There was no direct flight to Sydney. They thought it was a good idea to see the countryside. The only real snag on the bus trip was crossing the border. It was sheer chaos. There were no lines or queues. There was no one point of contact regarding the processing of immigration. All the passports, when they had been finished with, were dumped in a pile leaving the frenzied mob to claim their own. It was amazing they got their own passports back.

They decided to return to Sydney from Hanoi. And the most exciting way to get to Hanoi was on the train. A long and slow trip but one that was worth it. They needed time to reflect. Sebastian was thinking of how to create an OWL cell in a place like Vietnam. Virginia was immersed in the agenda for their impending inaugural OWL meeting. Sebastian bought out an entire cabin. He paid for the seats that were not used. It finally gave Sebastian a chance to share his room with Virginia. But he didn’t hold out hopes. There was plenty of space between the two benches that served as both seat and bed. The sanitary conditions were amazingly bad. The toilet

emptied straight onto the railway tracks. No-one seemed to clean the bowls. However, all said and done, the trip was scenic, cutting through jungle, struggling over rocky, high hills and straddling the coastline for quite a distance with unblocked views to the sea.

Hanoi was the complete opposite of Ho Chi Min. It reminded Sebastian of Moscow in 1980. Wide streets. Austere buildings. A real smell of Cold War. Even the queue through the mausoleum to see Ho Chi Min's preserved body reminded him of going to see Lenin in Moscow. Ho Chi Min city on the other hand was a vibrant, colourful and westernised city. There were none of the signs the communists had won the Vietnam War. They didn't seem to have imported the culture from the north to the south. But the city was definitely stained and stifled by the grey communist legacy. How would OWL work in such a small country but with such a dichotomy of governance? The full spectrum from unbridled capitalism to dreary communism. Sebastian was fascinated by the challenge; or was it an impossible dream?

They flew back to Sydney via Hong Kong. Hong Kong was transit only. But they were fortunate enough to be able to indulge themselves in the Qantas First Class lounge. This was achieved, not so much by intemperate wealth as using Frequent Flyer points. But the hedonistic effect was the same. More champagne and on this occasion, one of Virginia's favourites, Haagen Daas cookie flavoured ice cream ... ah, even Virginia has a vice!

It was here that Virginia managed to finalise a draft invitation and an agenda together with a proposed date for the inaugural meeting of the "political party to be". Sebastian had made some amendments to the agenda, based on the original conversation. But the changes were constructive. The agenda also promised a draft constitution and draft code of ethics. Neither had been done. This meant much work throughout the

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next few weeks. Of course Sebastian would keep on with his diminishing art of seduction; and so too Virginia with her increasing sophisticated art of rejection.

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Dear (insert appropriate name)

You are enthusiastically and wholeheartedly invited to attend an “idea generation” session in which we (the undersigned) aspire to aggregate the wisdom of some of our most influential and intelligent friends and colleagues to put together the basis of a new political entity.

Your contribution is considered essential. We urgently need your attendance so please RSVP to this invitation in the affirmative.

Attached are the details.

IDEA GENERATION DATE: NOVEMBER 22ND

Venue: Caves House, conference room, Jenolan Caves
(accommodation will be provided on the evening before and the evening after the scheduled event at our cost)

Invitees/Attendees: Sebastian Spekter, Virginia Hoo, Floyd Shepherd, Eleanor Regent, Randall Paxen, Richard (Dick) Cunningham, Mack Vellon

Agenda

8.00am	Informal breakfast
8.45am	Coffee in the conference room and introductions to those who need it
9.00am	Formal opening and welcome (Sebastian)
9.15am	Overall rationale for a new political party Vision: create a common sense twenty-first century political party, exploiting electronic communication Mission: justify the need for this new political entity in Australia

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	<p>Name of the party (suggested OWL – One World League)</p> <p>The obvious logo</p>
9.45am	General discussion on these points (ratification, alteration, post workshop actions to be carried out)
10.30am	Morning break
11.00am	<p>Strategic direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Starting point – federal level or state level</i> • <i>Guiding principles/code of ethics (review draft – attached)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review of the draft constitution (attached)</i> • <i>Implementation strategy – gaining 500 signatures, making formal application, etc</i>
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	Introduction to the notion of draft policies substantiated by party members' iterative electronic refinements
1.45pm	General discussion on this approach
2.00pm	First draft formulation of policies for topics below
2.10pm	<p>How green is our party?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whose science do we accept?</i> • <i>Carbon credits for population reduction</i> • <i>Pollution control versus climate change versus global warming</i> • <i>Encouraging green energy</i>

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2.30pm	<p>Controlling unscrupulous wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Financial regulation</i> • <i>Remuneration control</i> • <i>The link to war (Rothschild formula)</i>
3.00pm	<p>Keeping us alive (and healthy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Differentiated retirement ages (industry/profession based)</i> • <i>Insurance frameworks and changes for “grey workers”</i> • <i>Health incentives</i>
3.30pm	Break
3.45pm	<p>Politics without religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Non-proselytising regulation (for underagers)</i> • <i>No political leveraging from religion</i> • <i>The right to individual cosmology and faith</i> • <i>Taxing religions</i>
4.15pm	<p>Policy on politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Federal versus state versus local government relationships</i> • <i>Voting on-line</i> • <i>On-line policy/plebiscites</i>
4.45pm	<p>Next step (who does what)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Constitution review</i> • <i>Guiding principles</i> • <i>500 endorsers /members</i> • <i>Policy refinement (if necessary)</i> • <i>Next meeting date</i>

Chapter 15

Party Time: A 'singularity' of Purpose

On arrival back in Sydney Sebastian's first task was to get in contact with Randall. He knew that to drive his mission he needed powerful personalities, at the right time, united in some way and consciously aligned to some defined cause. Randall and he needed to further talk over some of the peace issues already discussed, albeit superficially, in Santorini. He was still keen to have peace as an integral part of a new political entity. But as he had explained to Randall previously, when he Googled 'peace parties' what came up was a cacophony of ideologies most of which were on the left fringe.

Sebastian took the train to St Leonards on the North Shore of Sydney to visit Randall at his offices. He didn't take Virginia with him. Randall ogled her just a little too much for his comfort when they chatted at the pool in Santorini. Sebastian had to talk to him face to face. He needed to convince him of an idea for a party that clearly required fine tuning but did not represent any particular cause like peace or sustainability; or was as narrow as the Family First party or the Shooters Party.

These were single-issue parties that just did not have the traction, didn't have the momentum, and didn't have the aggregated wisdom, to represent multiple causes.

Randall's executive assistant led him into the boardroom and he waited for Randall to arrive.

And in he came. Sun drenched and chocolate tanned. The whole effect was to embolden a crisp, brilliantly white, severely pressed shirt. He lent over the boardroom table and shook Sebastian's hand.

‘Hi Sebastian, you are looking great.’

‘Not as great as you, I am afraid. It has been weeks since Santorini and you still have a magnificent tan. I can tell it is not bottled. How did you keep it so long?’

‘Well I kind of recharge it every weekend when I go surfing. We are in late Spring in Australia now and there is enough sun to keep up the old surfing persona. But let’s get to business. I did what you asked. I looked up peace parties and I agree with you. They are all swimming in ideology. Again you are right; most of it is left wing.’

Sebastian knew that Randall, while a master of diplomacy, always wanted to cut to the chase. Pleasantries had been exchanged and now it was time to ‘quick-step’ together.

‘Have you had a chance to respond to our invitation to our meeting on November 22nd? You know, at Caves House up at Jenolan Caves?’

Randall hesitated somewhat. ‘I have always had a yearning to link the peace process, the peace work I have been doing, to some sort of new political notion. I am very open in this respect. But to answer your question directly, no, I haven’t RSVP’d. But yes I am interested in attending. I have wiped out the day on my calendar. I am not sure I will be able to be there the evening before, although I will try. I don’t know most of the people you’ve invited apart from obviously yourself and Virginia. I have heard of Mack of course. I also think I might have met Dick on a couple of occasions before. So the very short answer is yes, I will be in attendance. Is that the only reason you came around?’

Sebastian had to admit it was. ‘Yes, you are right – but no reason why we can’t have a coffee downstairs.’

‘Why not?’ responded Randall. ‘I know the barista. He does a fantastic job. Let’s go!’

Sebastian was extremely excited that Randall was going to be

included. Now, all but two of those invited had accepted. But these two were an important part of the equation. Sebastian had ensured, despite the occasional misgivings expressed by Virginia, to surround himself with people who were like-minded. From the many relationships he had crafted over the years he had quietly built rapport with those he could rely on for total support in a crisis. In many respects his carefully selected group were a mirror image of himself. Ambitious, energetic, entrepreneurial and, well, not at all humble.

Ah, it was going to be a stirring occasion and there was only a week to go. He now had to lobby the two remainders. He would start with Richard Cunningham. He had made the appointment deliberately at 1.30pm. He knew by then that Richard wouldn't have been able to hold out for a lunch. Had there been a lunch it would have been a long lunch and probably unproductive. While Richard was a frenetic worker he also enjoyed wine and food, especially in copious amounts. He occasionally slept at the office and because of the inordinate amount of work he was able to get through, lunchtimes were treated as recreation times. No, it was better to keep this short, sharp and professional.

Richard surrounded himself in luxury. Sebastian wasn't overwhelmed by the experience of entering his personal office. But he was surprised. It was the size of a small auditorium. It was complete with mini boardroom table, huge ornate and antique wooden desk, matching cocktail cabinet, small lounge area and surprisingly enough, a dartboard. Three feathered darts protruded. He didn't move from his desk.

There was a quick shaking of hands across Richard's desk. Sebastian started. 'I will keep this as brief as I possibly can. I know you're a very busy man. We sent you an invitation for our idea generation session in the Blue Mountains just over a week away. We really want you to be involved. You haven't responded. It's on the 22nd. Can you make it?'

‘I never received the invitation. Was it email or posted normal mail? In either case I didn’t get anything. I would be interested. Let me have a look!’

Sebastian knew he *must* have received the invitation. The fact he didn’t remember was of no consequence. This was a game Richard played to minimise the significance of anything apart from his own successes. But he never wanted to be excluded from anything that smacked of intrigue. And this meeting did.

He checked his computer and clicked on Outlook. Clicked on the 22nd. ‘Hey, hey it is a clear day.’ He smiled and said he would attend. ‘Count me in. Besides, I would like to know Virginia a hell of a lot better; and I guess she will be there.’

Sebastian was quick to answer. ‘Everybody says that. She is a great asset.’

Richard looked pensive. He twirled a pencil between his fingers. ‘You know, Sebastian, there is something I want to get off my chest. Been thinking about it for a while. Maybe your meeting will be the catharsis I need.’

‘Oh, what’s the problem?’ Sebastian was genuinely interested. But not surprised.

He knew he would come and there would always be some underlying reason.

‘The world right now is a shit-hole. It is broken. There is a complete disregard for the idea of driving humanity to its highest level. We are now at base survival level. Probably worse off than our primitive forbearers because we are swamped in a massively consumptive technology that only heightens anomie.’

‘What’s anomie?’ queried Sebastian.

‘It’s loneliness. It is separation of the individual. It’s isolation, especially socially and morally. Anyway let me keep going on my rant!’

‘It’s facile to blame religions, to blame ethnic groups, to

blame nation states. Why? Because they are all manipulated by an elite. Yes of course it is difficult to identify and define the elite group; because that's how they want it. They saw how easy it was to pick off piss-ant monarchies. And then even mainline monarchies. You know, revolutionary France and others.'

'What about the Islamic State movement?' Sebastian asked.

'They're not a nation state. They are a big "dirty dozen". A band of psychopaths gathered from around the world. Let's say it's only 0.1%; it *isn't* that low but let's say it is because we only want disenchanted, unenlightened loser males, sixteen upwards to thirty-five. But even that gives a pool of 3.5 million psychos. Pretty depressing isn't it?

'But here is the upside. More than 99% *aren't* psychopaths. All we have to do is harness the goodness, the honesty; that is the heart of the vast majority. But we have to leverage it from the clutches of the elite. Which gets us back to basics. The world has to wake up to the manipulation, through the media, through the financial systems, through the puppet politicians, and others.

'You can bet your bottom dollar ISIS is being supported directly or indirectly by the elites, because it will fit in with some grand plan. If it didn't, ISIS would have been wiped out in days. I suspect ISIS's actions are a force to facilitate a much bigger scenario, probably global war. Back then to massive depopulation the expedient way, paving the way for a new global society.'

Richard stopped abruptly. Sebastian was curious as to Richard's lengthy tirade but he understood his frustration. Again a thought flashed. It was Virginia who had raised it originally. Use the terrorist cell approach to recruiting, growing globally and quickly and obviously through exploiting social media. But do it for benign reasons. It might just work

especially if the proselytizing is effective. Hmm!

‘Is there anything else you need to know, Sebastian? We haven’t seen each other for quite a while.’

Sebastian was most gratified with his acceptance of the invitation. ‘No, Richard. Thanks very much for that. It’s going to be extremely exciting. This country; no this whole world needs a shove. There is just a complete dearth of leadership. At local, at state, at national, and at international government levels. And even, I hate to say, with the major corporates. Just no notion of leadership. Too much political correctness. Not enough effective decision making. We seem, culturally, globally, to have fallen into a hole of stupidity or ignorance or pure laziness, or perhaps more to the point, short sighted careerism. I don’t know what it is but we ought to really do something about it.’

‘Amen,’ said Richard. ‘I look forward to the event. And, hey, don’t limit your criticism. Individually we have all become desensitised, complacent and inured to matters of the world. Too much overstimulation through excessive entertainment. We’re going back to the days of the Roman gladiatorial spectacles. Selfishness. No compassion. Bread and circuses stuff. They supply the bread; nice and cheap. And the circuses. Think elections.’

Sebastian shook hands again over the desk and walked out of the office calling over his shoulder. ‘See you in a week or so. Cheers.’

Well that was quick, thought Sebastian. Richard’s comments made the concept of OWL so relevant, so necessary, and so timely.

The time had come for Sebastian to focus. The various threads needed to be drawn together and urgent action taken. I believe he is now on the right track. But much more is to come. And he needs to transcend his obvious personal limitations. There is no time for arrogance or complacency; for

diversion, or worse still, lust, solipsism, and laziness, his three worst attributes.

The last appointment was with Mack Vellon. Mack was a different sort of creature. He wouldn't meet in an office. It was always more appropriate for Mack to meet in a coffee shop. On this particular occasion they were to meet in one of those ubiquitous coffee salons, always found on the ground floor of any high rise building in Sydney. And in this case the high rise building was where Mack operated out of a serviced office complex.

Mack was already waiting at the lounge with two double strength cappuccinos sitting on the table. His presumption that Sebastian would be on time was typical of his obsessiveness, especially with time. He found an as-discreet-as-possible spot in the rather open spaced area.

Mack was in his mid-sixties. A receding hairline; but his very long hair reminded everybody of an eccentric classical orchestra conductor. He was a very experienced lobbyist. He had worked at some stage for all of the major political parties in Australia. He was a regular Army officer and did duty in Vietnam. His political career began when he worked as an Adjutant for the then Minister for Foreign Affairs. He did extensive work in Africa and also spent time in France. It was reputed that he had an extensive military intelligence background although he rarely mentioned it. However it seemed as though this was probably correct as he had such incredibly good contacts both within and outside of government (although many of these contacts would have been developed in his later business life as a lobbyist).

On two separate occasions he was successful in developing media relations companies which he sold off and became wealthy in his own right. His personality was quite volatile in his younger years and he had known moments of depression. But buoyed by his wealth and by his growing

profile in the media, he gained an extremely high level of self-confidence.

What used to be arrogance, over the years had been transmuted into a *laissez faire* attitude towards life. He now said what he liked to, to whomever he wished. He pulled no punches and delighted in his new-found honesty. For years he was truly Machiavellian and said whatever had to be said to score a political point. That, apparently, had now changed. He shot straight from the hip and was not worried at all about the consequences of his statements, both private and public.

Mack relished the role of social celebrity and tried hard to be seen in all the right places. His marital career however was less than successful, depending upon how one looked at it. He would probably consider his three failed marriages and ending up in the de-facto relationship he now had, as just being a trajectory of learning in the ways in which relationships with women can be complicated. After a period of indulgence he put on quite a lot of weight. But by regularly working out in the gym he managed to keep himself in good shape.

He had been a personal contact of Sebastian's for more than twenty years and the relationship had had its ups and downs. Sometimes they didn't hear from each other for months on end. But somehow Sebastian had been able to secure from Mack a deep interest in the formation of a new political party. Although Mack could easily, at any point, detach himself from that enthusiasm.

Sebastian had reservations about Mack becoming one of the founding members of the party if he decided to do that. From his perspective he was the one member; the one weak link who could easily dissolve into dishonesty. Eleanor might be unstable. She could even prove to be vindictive. But Mack could well compromise the future of the party in other ways. He could 'sell out' to another party or other forces. He was quite capable of colluding in the very conspiracies that

Virginia feared. If anybody was aware of ‘higher order’ functionaries that do exist on the planet, who do in fact subscribe to the Rothschild formula, he would know them. Being Machiavellian to him was not a technique. It was an intrinsic characteristic. But all these characteristics had the potential to work very much for the party, if he held the line. Of course Mack and Richard and to a certain extent Randall all reminded Sebastian of himself. Has it not been said on numerous occasions, through the ages, that we recruit others in the image of our self?

There was a key characteristic Sebastian had looked for in the founding members. That one characteristic was decisiveness. Every one of those who had accepted so far were decisive people. He knew that if they were in a position to draft constitutions; to draft policies; to draft codes of ethics; the feedback would be immediate and decisive. It would either be agreement or disagreement. If it was disagreement he could always count on a constructive alternative. The same would be true of Mack if he agreed to participate.

They shook hands and gave each other a quick un-Australian hug. Mack said, ‘I know why you are here. I know it is rude of me. I got your invitation. I just hadn’t got around to replying. Things have been crazy. You know I leave things to the last minute. I get so tied up with myself.’

He brushed both hands through his hair. Something he did on a regular basis. He had a lot of it, but his hairline was *definitely* slipping back. Having that Beethoven look, longer at the back, compensated.

‘But, no need for importuning. No sales. I am in. I have already crossed out the 22nd. I will come up the evening before. I will stay for the whole festive occasion. I have already started thinking about it. Count me in. But, by the way, and its probably more Dick’s area, we have to do something about the fucking banks. They’re getting beyond themselves.’

‘Go on. Let it out,’ said Sebastian. He was beginning to feel like a therapist or priest listening to cathartic confessions. But Mack’s words would resonate very loudly in the time to come.

Mack continued, ‘The banks, the finance wankers, are now the high priests. In the olden days it was the witch doctor; the shaman who had arcane language to confuse and mystify the masses. They all wanted to understand the gobbledygook; but couldn’t. Then came the godly ones. For centuries, until now, they represented the word of God. In Latin of course, which they made sure nobody, apart from the inner sanctum, understood.

‘And now of course it’s the banks. They have contrived and named financial products which they make sure nobody understands. Except themselves. You know derivatives in all the various spurious manifestations. Funny the only Latin term they make sure we all hear is caveat emptor. So, they can justify exploitation of the masses by saying. “Hey, you thought you could make a quick buck using our trendy packages. You didn’t. You lost your house. Bad luck. You should have read the 750 pages of small print on the product disclosure before you signed up. Sorry pal. Your fault. Bugger off. We told you: Buyer beware!” I mean, how many people actually realise when they deposit money in the bank, the bank owns their money. The depositor becomes a creditor and a creditor long way down the line. No favours here.

‘If the bank gets into trouble, and it looks like bankruptcy, you lose your money before the bank does. How many people know that?’

Mack looked a little dispirited, thought Sebastian. Probably because he had millions in the bank and in unstable

times would panic about losing it all to some crazy bail-in¹¹⁶. This undertone of dissatisfaction augured well for a soft revolution. This is exactly the sort of thing Sebastian had hoped for. He also knew enlightened self-interest was a good facilitator for soft revolution. Mack was in!

They finished the coffee interlude talking about the total ineffectiveness of most politicians. Mack knew them all.

Once again Sebastian felt thrilled at the prospect of what was going to happen at Caves House on the 22nd. He knew all the ingredients were there. The chemistry was right. Could be a hell of an experience, he thought.

But somewhere else in the world; a dimension away from the innocence of OWL, a diabolical conspiracy was being borne. The conspirators had a plan. But OWL unwittingly, was about to run head long into that plan. There would be disastrous consequences. This email starts the saga of the conspirators. Their aims will become apparent very quickly.

¹¹⁶ Bail-in is the opposite to bail-out. Banks confiscate individual deposits en masse. Bank depositors become unsecured creditors. Their money is used to restructure and save banks when in fact they should go bankrupt like other failed businesses. That is why banks are seen as too big to fail. More emphasis on this later.

OWL: ONE WORLD LEAGUE

From: H.E¹¹⁷

Cc: FALC¹¹⁸

Subject: WOW!

To: G.G¹¹⁹

Overpopulation is the raison d'être.
Rapid depopulation is the strategy.
World government is the mission. Put
WOW into effect. FALC will help. We
are all behind it. Target three year
timeline to install global fear. Leak
it slowly and carefully.

¹¹⁷ His Excellency

¹¹⁸ Friends at Library of Congress

¹¹⁹ Gentle Giant

Chapter 16

Wisdom in the Cave

Things have finally begun to coalesce. Sebastian has found a constructive outlet for his chaotic energy; which if unregulated could become dysfunctional; very dysfunctional. In this universe, my universe, the neonate universe of the fledging OWL, the key characters are now defined. The political aspirations of Sebastian in particular and Virginia are being tested. Others will make their contributions one way or another. The stage is set. The players are in place. The curtain is about to rise. The first scene is to be acted out. Fledging OWL is perched precariously, but ready to fly. I can make the whole scene flow effortlessly. But of course I could wreak havoc if I really wanted to. Perhaps I will. There is more than one manipulator or controller in this universe. But let us see where the characters take us.

Sebastian had arrived early in the afternoon. It was a startling blue end-of-Spring November day. He had noticed on driving up to the Blue Mountains with Virginia that the strong sun had sucked a lot of the eucalyptus oil out of the gum trees to create that famous blue mist effect over the mountain ranges. Entering the portal to Jenolan Caves was no less spectacular. He navigated his way through the enormous cavern entrance that led into the mystical valley where Caves House hid. He drove carefully, dodging the pedestrians who ambled through the narrow but neatly defined road into this triumphant entrance. He parked the car at the reception of Caves House and noted at once the dilapidation of this once majestic building. It was in urgent need of not just a refurbishment but a complete reinstatement in terms of its

grandeur. However, it was the location Virginia and he had selected and had in fact exhorted everybody to attend. And as far as he was concerned it was a fitting location for the wisdom he was hoping would ensue. The bright spring sunlight slightly assuaged the dilapidation. What great things could be borne now? What destinies could unravel?

He immediately noticed, and was pleasantly surprised, by the bright red E-type Jaguar with the numberplate *peace1* on it. He knew it was Randall's car and was delighted he had arrived early. He ogled the beauty of this magnificently restored V12. He half mumbled to Virginia next to him: 'Those cars must be fifty or so years old now – I think that is veteran class – and they still look modernly sleek. Even their design oozes speed.'

Virginia didn't reply. She was disinterested in something as trivial as an old sports car made new. Bright red at that. Like a giant red Viagra tablet. A sure sign of male menopause.

They hadn't talked very much on the trip from Sydney. It was only when they pulled over at a cute little restaurant at Medlow Bath for a light lunch that there had been any extended discussion. Virginia had been expecting a continuous flow of non-reflective excited prattle from Sebastian the whole way to Jenolan Caves. But he had been unusually quiet. Almost serene. Perhaps the expectation of finally pulling a group of people together who were showing strong support for his initiative had humbled him into silence. Perhaps he had verbally worked through so many of the policies on so many occasions that he felt it best now to let things lie, at least until the formal discussion took place. Tomorrow should reveal a lot!

As they checked in Sebastian was seriously underwhelmed by the level of service but that didn't daunt him. They were offered a key each for rooms which ironically were called the "newer parts" of the building. These were located at the back of the actual Caves House structure and

must have been fifty or more years old. They certainly hadn't seen any recent renovation.

The main structure itself was over a hundred years old. It was still imposing despite its tackiness. Its design was reminiscent of a Swiss skiing resort. The tiled, steep pitched gables enhanced that impression. In fact Sebastian had seen old sepia photographs of Caves House after a sprinkling of snow. Anybody would have been forgiven for thinking this place was thousands of miles away, hidden in the valleys of the Alps in Europe.

Sebastian had noticed how quiet Virginia had been on the trip. At Medlow Bath she had briefly mentioned her suspicions yet again, on what she now called the word conspiracy. Her comments now were embellished with what she had learnt about the Library of Congress National Digital Library. This she quite plausibly linked to the CIA and NSA¹²⁰. But from his perspective, she had no proof of this.

She hadn't gone on about it for as long as she normally did. Sebastian was convinced that was because he wasn't responding. Silence breeds silence. He had deliberately held his tongue all the way from Sydney. Life was going to be exciting enough, soon enough.

First things first. The bedrooms were liveable. Although he knew Randall had arrived he didn't want to find him at this moment. He suspected he had gone on one of those enchanting subterranean cave tours. But that was his business. Sebastian wanted to get the logistics of this situation right. After unpacking and giving Virginia a bit of relocation time he knocked on her door.

'Let's go down and make sure they've set up the conference room the right way,' he said. They traipsed down

¹²⁰ National Security Agency.

to the conference room. It was big and comfortable but also dilapidated. They had set up the seating arrangement as a boardroom and whilst Sebastian would have been happier with several smaller working groups with more people he knew he just made critical mass with seven people. The table had been arranged with three chairs on each of the long sides with single chairs at each end of the boardroom style arrangement. That ostensibly allowed for eight people. He removed the chair from the head of the table to make that a standing speaking point and placed himself at the opposite end.

‘Virginia, do you have the name tags? Let’s put them out now before anybody arrives and starts setting their own seating arrangements.’

To Sebastian the dynamic of groups was very important. His study of group psychology, eons ago, had taught him that interpersonal relationships, for better or worse, could grow from particular seating arrangements. He wanted Virginia to his right so at least as Chairman he could turn to her occasionally to ask her to record particular notes. She had generously agreed to do this, possibly to ensure the accuracy of the meeting outcomes. No, he thought, more probably she would see this as an opportunity to emphasise her presence in this important meeting. He guessed she wouldn’t see herself serving a somewhat demeaning secretarial role.

He wanted Eleanor to the left of him, more from a control point of view if she started to get onto any of her anti-Islamic, right wing rhetoric. The rest he wasn’t too concerned about so he decided to put Floyd next to Eleanor on the left hand side of his table. He knew he had to separate Mack and Richard so he put Mack as a last person on the left hand side next to Floyd. That left Richard and Randall. He definitely wanted to put Richard next to Virginia and between Randall (he was still a little concerned about Randall – that little twinge of jealousy) and that completed his seating arrangements.

‘A lot of people would think I am fastidious about this sort of thing, Virginia.’ ‘Yes, Sebastian, I am not going to argue with you, or them.’

Sebastian sat in his newly appointed chair and gazed around the room. There was a faded picture of Queen Elizabeth II peering down over the boardroom table.

Fading in importance and influence, thought anti-monarchist Sebastian. Two dusty chandeliers hung from a very high ceiling which must have been more than four or so metres high. The wallpaper was a regency stripe and looked original to him.

Peeling in places. Probably a hundred years old. He noticed there had been some trestle tables abutted against the walls presumably to take their morning and afternoon teas. He also hoped to have their lunch in this room and there was a lot of space for it.

Sebastian didn't really care about a formal dinner this evening as he was not sure what time people would arrive and was leaving them to their own devices. Even the bar wasn't the sort of place that one would be excited about meeting in. It too was quite run down. Breakfast in the restaurant and dinner tomorrow night in the formal dining room was the way to go. Although rambunctious, he congratulated himself on the choice of venue and the potential for making history in such an historic building.

Sebastian left Virginia to finalise the remaining logistics. The placemats, the orders for breakfast, ensuring everybody had been allocated the appropriate accommodation, rearranging the conference room to accommodate lunch, checking the luncheon menu and so forth. He wanted some solitude. He took himself on one of the many walks, not inside the caves themselves, but over the rambling hills, some steep ones at that. This gave him a great opportunity for reflection

(which he knew Virginia suspected he never did). This had been a long time coming. He could not suppress the excitement or fear. He remembered his first parachute jump years before. Somebody had asked him if he was excited. He had replied, 'I don't know if it's excitement or if I am shitting myself with fear. All I know is the adrenaline is surging mightily.'

He had hoped the alignment of people he had selected was right. But then again he hadn't much choice in this respect. They were all the people he knew who could make a valid contribution. The mix of skills was right. And they had all accepted the invitation to be there, graciously. The agenda was ambitious and challenging but he felt he was amongst friends and all would progress well.

After an hour or so, he returned to Caves House and as he walked past reception someone called out.

'They are all here. All of the guests. They are all in their rooms.'

He looked around to the owner of the disembodied voice. The receptionist was hidden away at the back of the office but had noticed him going past. Sebastian was a little confused. He had assumed most would accept his offer of accommodation but could arrive anytime at night, given their busy lives. Moreover he didn't think drinking together at this juncture would prove to be fruitful.

'Well let's leave them in their rooms. They can organise themselves for tonight's dinner. If we run into each other, well, so be it. Otherwise let's keep it casual. That was my understanding and I told them so. Do you have room service?' Sebastian was always keen on that little catering luxury.

'Sir, for you, we can arrange that.'

That was how the evening turned out. He had decided against another attempt at seduction of Virginia knowing he wouldn't be successful anyway and he ended up compromising by sharing a room service meal and a single bottle of wine

with her. He was determined to keep a clear mind for the morning. A little bit of discussion on unrelated topics and they both had an early night.

At 8.45am, they were all there in the conference room. Sebastian was the only person who knew everybody in the room and reception had let him know they had all had breakfast. He let them casually mingle over the excellent coffee that had been prepared (and this was only achieved by him by bringing the ground coffee beans himself).

He could tell there was an air of palpable anticipation in the room. There was that first meeting ‘graciousness-and-politeness-with-a-little-nervousness’ atmosphere.

Like the embarrassment of the first meetings at a cocktail party. Knowing one or two people slightly but a lot of people not at all.

He sat down and invited everybody else to do the same. They did. Surprisingly they took notice of their place cards and sat as appointed.

‘Welcome to everybody for coming to what I believe will be an historic and august affair. I am looking forward to each and every contribution we make at this discussion; at this workshop of enlightenment.’

He said this as he reversed from the table on his chair as the others were seating themselves. He walked the length of the boardroom and stood at the head, the especially created standing-speaking area. He had taken that first step as Chairman, initiating the first formal words. ‘Welcome to everybody again. I look forward to your aggregated wisdom, creativity, expertise and experience. But let’s begin by going around the room and asking each one of you to introduce yourself, and then please state to the rest of the group what your stake is in being at this workshop.

‘Let me start the ball rolling as I believe I am the only person here who is known to everybody else. You know my

name. And my stake is very simple. I want to see the formation of a new political party that brings, at least initially, Australian politics and politicians into the twenty-first century. I want it to be participatory. I want this party to exploit the best communication technology we have. And by that I mean the absolute best in exploiting the social media, much like ISIS or whatever they're called today.' Sebastian paused and let the last few words settle in and said. 'This I believe will take us out of nineteenth-century politics and politicians.' He ended abruptly for effect. 'And that's all I have to say. Over to you, Virginia.'

'For those few of you who have not met me I am Virginia Hoo. I've worked with Sebastian for many years now. I believe I've been more than an executive assistant. I believe I have helped him develop approaches not only in terms of his ideas about a new political entity but also in various business strategies we've been associated with over the years. My stake is to help all of you achieve what you want in any reasonable capacity you wish me to work within. That could be logistical, it could be secretarial – within reason of course – it could even be inspirational if you buy me the right combination of cocktails.'

Light giggles rippled through the rest of the group. Sebastian wanted to keep the familiarities short and had assumed, correctly that most of them had met on the preceding evening or at breakfast, so he interrupted.

'Yes, Virginia, you have certainly been much more to me than an Executive Assistant. And now to you Richard.'

Richard pulled himself up from his chair. He was lean. Late forties. Significantly balding with thin-wired glasses perched on his nose, looking a lot like a Los Angeles based Hollywood producer of films or maybe even sitcoms. The nerdy Arthur Miller look.

'My name is Richard. Some people call me Dick. But

usually not as an endearment. Most of you would have heard of me if you haven't met me. Although I do think I ran into a couple of you at dinner last night. My stake in this meeting is to ensure that financially the thing stacks up or at least ultimately stacks up. That is, it's all functional from a financial point of view. I have been accused of being mean and tight fisted on occasions, but never wrong. I am not here to squash creativity but to facilitate it so that it doesn't implode upon itself. I desperately want to see an alternative to the mess we have got ourselves into in Australia. And yet, we are but a mere reflection of what is happening in a lot of the western world today.' He paused. 'Forget the east politically, it's a basket case, if we're talking democracy. *Our* voters in *our* democratic system are disenchanted. I want to help us all find enchantment again with our politics and politicians.' He paused. 'That's me.'

Unannounced Randall immediately stood up. As usual he had that energetic aura about him. Always tanned. Always slim. Also balding but hair so short and a skull so brown, lack of hair wasn't even noticeable. He oozed fitness.

'Apparently we've dispensed with surnames. My name is Randall. It must be. It is written on the place card in front of me. I stand for peace. I have started an organisation that acts globally to facilitate the peace process and engages in peace industries. I will talk about those matters later on in the course of the day. My stake is to ensure that whatever new political entity emanates from our discussions and thoughts and probably as a result of a lot of digressions, leads towards a more harmonious and financially stable world. We are living in aggressive times with subservient self-serving politicians who have either become aggressive themselves or service these aggressive times by pushing militaristic deals rather than peaceful strategies. Peace is my vision.'

The pace was quickening. Mack stood up. 'My name is

Mack. I am sure most of you have either heard me on radio or seen me in the press or on television. I have been a lobbyist and political advisor come commentator for many years and yes, I know I look like Mozart or Beethoven – I can't remember which one had the same mane as I have – and yes I can see it is receding. But nevertheless I am comfortable with the image.

‘Why am I here? I am here because I am in my mid-sixties and I have heard it all before. I have heard from every political party and pretty well most independents as to the promises they wish to deliver and they never do. I want to be associated with a political party or as Randall says a political entity that actually achieves some, if not all of its stated aims. I am sick and tired of the career politicians who blame the vicissitudes of the world economy, war zones and everything else on everybody else when they are not delivering their initial promises. I am here to be a bit like Don Chipp, the founder of the Democrats in Australia – “to keep the bastards honest”.’

His last sentence was delivered with a flourish of his arms that looked like an orchestral conductor reaching a crescendo. He looked his years. He stood around average height with average build but he oozed self-confidence with just the right balance of humour that would mask any Machiavellian intent.

Sebastian was eyeing him off carefully. Sebastian was convinced he could either be the mad monk, the Rasputin of this party, or the JF Kennedy/Bill Clinton, Camelot building, political genius.

Floyd was already standing before Mack had finished. There he was, redolent in his woolly hair and beard, looking every part the professional psychologist that he was.

‘Umm, hmmm. Well I'm Floyd. I haven't got a lot to say. I kind of agree with pretty well everything everybody else has said so far. I guess my most significant stake is to ensure we

end up with something that is viable. Not from Richard's financial perspective but from a human perspective. Something that's based on, yes what Randall said, peaceful development rather than aggression. That takes into account the fact there are more than seven billion of us on this planet who are really all transient aspects of the one great entity called human life. I am not driven by any particular ideology.' And Floyd sat down abruptly. And then immediately stood up again and added. 'And yes I want to make sure there is a clear separation of state and religion. Not because I am an enlightened and compassionate atheist. Because I am. But because this separation has been clearly compromised. Have you noticed the beaming countenances of our various leaders featured on page one of the best of our press, standing in front of a church of their choice?' He sat down again equally abruptly.

This just left Eleanor to put forward her views. What really was her stake? She was from a wealthy family. She had the patrician looks. Tall, slim, coiffured like Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffanys*, designer clothes from the best boutiques in Adelaide. There was elegance in her unhurried command of attention.

'What's my stake? My name is Eleanor. I want to see a new political entity ... I am happy with that word; entity or a new political party if it has to be ... that cleans up the messes, the big messes, that we've created for ourselves. We, the voter, the public, have the government we deserve. We voted it in.'

Virginia interrupted. Sebastian thought he detected a little chagrin in her voice. 'You keep on saying *we*, Eleanor. Yes, we the public, we the voters, etc, etc. But there is much more at stake. I am convinced there are manipulative powers that play us like puppets.'

She was about to continue when Sebastian held his hand up. 'Please let's keep the comments until later. Let's get the introductions completed without the interruptions.'

Eleanor, full of self-confidence, raised her voice ‘I am not happy with the way immigration is currently being handled. We are not getting a balanced integration of particular ethnic communities. I think you all know what my stance is on that. If you don’t, well, it’s based on the proselytising by some Middle Eastern faiths of Australia’s youth *and* non-absorption of certain Middle Eastern nationalities into the Australian way of life. I want to see a party that does something about it. And I am not a supporter of Pauline Hanson¹²¹ and never was, just in case you think I am some sort of rabid racist. You remember when John Howard spoke when he was Prime Minister. He said he didn’t support a multicultural Australia but he supported a multiracial Australia. What he meant was very simple. He embraced all the different races who migrate to Australia and form part of our mighty nation. But he didn’t support jagged cultural differentiation within Australia. He believed there should be one Australian dominant culture that all races share. And that’s the reason they should come to Australia.’

Mack butted in. ‘We don’t want it to be too much of a monoculture; otherwise we will lose all our good ethnic restaurants, independent films, fashions and so on.’

Sebastian was about to put his hand up, but Eleanor continued.

‘Yes, I know. The nineteen fifties in Adelaide in particular and probably everywhere else. Grey flannel suits. Roast dinners every Sunday. Meat and veg and every meal at home every night. So on and so on. No we are not talking about

¹²¹ An extreme right wing politician in Australia who galvanised racist, especially anti-Asian sentiment. She became a very decisive distraction to Australian politics. She is still around and would not be welcome in OWL.

giving away cultural nuances. We are talking about stripping away differentiators usually manifested in different religious beliefs, and moral values and to a certain extent differences in language that have the potential to divide Australia. You all know what I mean without going into specifics.’

Everybody looked at Mack, the doyen of politics. ‘Well put,’ he said, ‘well put.’

Eleanor continued, ‘Also I want to see what we can do to clean up the political mess and I mean the partisan mess that has been made of our approach to pollution control. And I am very glad to see that on our agenda we will talk about how green is our party. And finally, whether I come from a wealthy family or not, I want to see, as you so well put it, Sebastian, in our list of policies, the controlling of unscrupulous wealth. There has to be some urgent financial regulation or we are going to end up with another global financial crisis ... or even worse. And that is where I am coming from.’

The more assertive, even the more aggressive had been left to last. And that was the way Sebastian had planned it. All was going well.

Sebastian stood up. ‘We have already got a good balance of views. We have a good balance of stake holding. Let’s see that aggregated creativity and wisdom and everything else now work for us, not against us. We need to start addressing the agenda.’ He paused for dramatic effect.

‘But let me begin with a bit of background to the whole situation. Australia might be one of the least financially corrupt countries on the planet. But it still has more corruption than it needs. Badly thought out economic incentive packages seemed an answer. But if there is not sufficient surveillance, even they end up creating rip-off situations somewhere along the lines for the consumer and the taxpayer. So corruption *is* an issue.

‘The next big issue is self-serving politicians. We have

definitely moved from an ideal Athenian democracy in which older people, who had gained status in life, and who admittedly were male and not slaves, who would see themselves moving into some form of government role which was not self-serving. We have politicians now who are career money grabbers. They know that surviving two or possibly even only one sitting of government will give them generous pensions for life or board positions on large corporations or some other form of largesse.

‘By exploiting the technologies that exist now we can defuse the base and power hungry motives of those who want to fast track a career paid for essentially by the public. We are different. Locked away for discussion later are ideas to self fund our politicians. That is, we will be the first party to work like a corporation by paying our own salaries and expenses through creative and I emphasise successful creative enterprises. Yes, you may say Eleanor we have the government we deserve. But we need to form a political party. Or, I agree with the two who mentioned it, a political entity – it doesn’t have to be a party – that can fast track political development required to give the voter a fair go. We need to develop a collaborative participatory model. A model that is based on a triple bottom line economy¹²². Finally what I want to say is that we need to move away from the cult of the individual. Let’s abandon the search for those photogenic, talk-show host type personalities and sports heroes who beam out at everybody on billboards and especially t-shirts, like Che

¹²² The triple bottom line relates to illustrating a company’s performance in three ways. Firstly, and traditionally as the bottom line, the commercial way is measured by profit. The second bottom line is a measurement of environmental impact by the company. The third, and most recent bottom line, is a measure of social impact of the company.

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Guevara did years ago. We need to act now. We need to act responsibly. And we need to get it right the first time. Having said that let's start addressing the agenda.'

There was a less than enthusiastic clap from a couple of pairs of hands. As inspiring as Sebastian could be on certain occasions he was now slipping back into monologue. The very thing not needed at this moment. Virginia looked concerned.

Unexpectedly Mack took the floor. Things had to move faster. People were beginning to fidget. 'We have all had a chance to look at the name OWL; we have all had a chance to look at the very draft logo for OWL; we have all looked at the draft mission statement and the vision that was put to us in the letter of invitation and the agenda.

'In my capacity as a political lobbyist and commentator and because I trust the judgement of all the people around this table I would like to put up a motion to accept the name One World League utilising the acronym OWL as the name of this new political entity. I make a side note that One World League does not necessarily mean a political party although I think we are drafting a constitution which might mean so ... and also let's accept the vision and mission statements as drafted'.

Sebastian was somewhat relieved. 'Does anybody second that motion?' Eleanor immediately seconded it. Others were ready to second if necessary.

'Well, as a responsible Chairman I would like us to at least read through the vision and mission before we finally accept that motion and the seconding as being a unanimous vote. In fact could I please read the mission aloud with everybody following on their copy?' Everybody nodded in tacit agreement. Sebastian read and everybody in the group nodded. He continued.

'The vision of OWL is to create a political party or entity that provides the appropriate participatory platform, through exploitation of information technology, allowing the maximum

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number of Australians of voting ages in the twenty-first century to be able to responsibly guide their representatives in government in their areas of concern to enable stable, compassionate, and fair government to all.

‘A second vision is to expand OWL into any other country that would so allow its creation under its sovereign laws.’

Again there was a general nodding of heads in the group. Sebastian waited. ‘All those in favour?’

There was a unanimous ‘Aye’.

A fleeting moment of elation swept over Sebastian. Things seemed to be moving so smoothly. The infrastructure for the party or at least for the commencement of a party was in place. But of course now came the serious business of working on policies. Here were to be discussed policies that could stretch anywhere from local government authority levels through to Australian state government or Australian federal government levels right through to international levels of government. There could, he thought in one feverish moment, be implications for such august groups (or not so august) as the United Nations, G20 and ...

Once again there was a burst of energy from Mack’s end of the table. ‘I have a final motion. I move that we stop talking about a political entity. A coalescence of like-minded parties or government support groups or NGO’s or anything else of that ilk. We need to make a decision now. Because if we don’t we are going to find it absolutely impossible to formulate policy. A two part solution again. Part one; I move that we only talk about the formation of a new political party, not entity. The second part of the motion is that we aim at the House of Review or the Upper House and that should be done at the Federal level and thus making it the Senate and thus we are looking at Senate seats.’ He hesitated for a moment. ‘Well I guess that’s really a three part motion.’

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Sebastian knew he was on a roll. ‘All those in favour say “Aye”’.

Absolutely no discussion. All hands went up. And the magic word ‘Aye’ resonated around the room.

Sebastian thought, how quickly consensus can be achieved, given the right combination of personalities and intellects. If they are all gathered together at a session superimposed with the right and tight agenda. There is no allowance for a talkfest of undifferentiated bullshit to occur.

Motions were quickly and articulately stated and subsequently seconded. Believe it or not the gallant group were able, in less than half an hour, to swoop through more than three hours of their originally planned agenda. Progress was looking good for the fledgling OWL.

‘And now Mack,’ Sebastian said, ‘let us please address the policies. I think this is the sticky part. If consensus can prevail here we really have achieved something. But please remember what consensus is. It is not unanimity; although preferred, if we can achieve it. But consensus is good enough. For those who don’t know, consensus is when a clear majority of people do agree on a particular notion and those who disagree say “Oh well, it is not what I wanted, but at least I can live with it”. Having said all that, and after such a brief period of time, yet with such intensity, why don’t we take a well earned break and then start the policy, dare I say, battle.’

There was a sigh from everybody. The tension had been building although everything had been flowing so well. There was not even a nod or grunt of agreement to Sebastian’s suggestion. Everybody just rose from the boardroom table and headed for the espresso coffee machine. Sebastian felt a wave of relief come over him. The first battle was fought. A new and exciting battlefield was being drawn. Policies were everything.

To further discuss how this group achieved agreement on a whole series of policies would be pointless. Because of their

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own charter their policies could only ever be conceived as draft policies. The whole premise of their new political party was to be one that was participatory, through the medium of the Internet for their members to draft, redraft and constantly redraft until policies were so well crafted to be highly credible. Then they were to be voted on by legitimate members of OWL and then go to the public for endorsement, preferably as a plebiscite.

The headlines that appeared in the press over a brief period of time after that historic meeting at Caves House confirmed the expectations and assumptions that this was an idea, a concept, indeed a party that could achieve, extremely rapidly, great success, in a world that craved stability, transparency and fairness. Observe! ... Look into the future ... This can be done in the blink of an eyelid ... by a narrator ... Read on ...”

THE AUSTRALIAN

OWL (One World League) Flies

OWL gained its first seat in government as a result of last week’s election. New OWL Senator Mack Vellon in NSW said ‘This vindicates our faith in the public’s aggregated wisdom and creativity. We’re not partisan, we are driven by a public participatory approach to policy formulation. We now have the technology to bring a new golden age of democracy to all.’

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

OWL About Peace

... one of their spokesmen said OWL advocates having a Minister for Peace. Most countries now have a Minister for Defence, not a Minister for War. So defence is essentially a euphemism for war. How many countries have a Minister for Peace asks OWL?

A Minister for Defence, a Department of Defence, implies there *is* an enemy. But, we don't want to be regarded as being a peacenik party either.

OWL has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a highly reputable international peace group to support that organisation's efforts in creating peace industries.

Another OWL spokesman said 'we can now demonstrate the economic and multiplier effects of peace industries. We can finally relegate the supposed economic advantages promoted by the industrial military complex to the rubbish bin. This is where it belongs in a civilised global society.'

TIME

Voting Online the OWL Way

Mack Vellon, Senator and OWL spokesman, has said, 'Once we have got voting online, and we are nearly there, we can start talking about online plebiscites for important issues, especially at the Senate level. We really are the twenty-first century party.'

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Our alliance with technology has to be highlighted. We are a party of collaborative decision making. Technology allows us the opportunity to create this new voting mechanism. We are taking democracy to its next evolutionary step, bringing ordinary people in, as real-time decision makers in policy; not just at election time.'

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

Fledgling OWL Finds New Nest

This is no Cuckoo! OWL, as the One World League gained its first seat in an overseas government.

Tonight in New Zealand, with 90% of votes counted, OWL took the seat of Puckanoe and gained entry into Parliament for the first time. This has been a local record for a first time party.

THE AUSTRALIAN

OWL Takes 'Green' in a New Direction

'On the notion of carbon credits we need something that is out of the box. Pollution does exist. And what causes pollution? Human beings. Pollution in dense societies has existed for thousands of years. So, excessive global population is one of the root causes of global pollution. So giving credits to those countries which have the potential to seriously pollute, when they demonstrate significant population reduction.'

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So said Mack Vellon of OWL, he continued 'Next week OWL is outlining its green formula for densely populated but highly polluting developing countries. This formula is the most equitable approach to pollution control in the twenty-first century. It's net positive effects on climate change will go unchallenged.'

Chapter 17

The Magic of OWL and Denial

Several years after its birth at Caves House OWL had established itself as a credible political force. The press loved this new political player. OWL symbolised everything Australia wanted and was lacking at federal and state level politics, both in the conservative and labour camps. People saw common sense prevailing over political cant. The public had found a new hero and as such OWL got massive publicity. OWL had magically transformed the political aspects of life that was, until now, best considered mundane and at its worst litigious, expensive, hypocritical and divisive flim flam.

OWL now had a bunch of highly reputable people in upper house seats in every state in Australia. The press on many occasions had said that ‘this is our party.

Electronic plebiscites define them as the only political party that operates in a twenty-first century context.’

National magazines and journals like *Time* reported on OWL’s intentions which had already started to resonate with the public in many different countries. OWL had now gained independent seats and worked with the governing party in New Zealand.

This triumphant ride was not without its glitches. But OWL easily overcame the obstacles thrown at it. The media and the press thought OWL representatives would be fair game and would fall quickly to their onslaught of intensive personal investigations. That is where the press faltered. The candidates (while they were still candidates) had been superbly picked. In the main there was a nice balance of those over 50 years of age who were well educated and worldly. Then there were the

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younger set through the 30 to 40 year old bracket. Equally, although younger, they were educated; and in reality quite robust as well as being affable, seemingly a characteristic lost on older politicians.

Even with the most intensive of interrogations by the media, all of the candidates stood firm and united. They had been carefully trained in how to respond to intrusion into their personal lives. They had been exquisitely introduced to theatrical tactics and an understanding of the history of politics. This was all done to turn the press around. The press had hoped to trip up OWL as the 'flavour of the month' story. They failed.

How long this love affair would last no one knew. Certainly OWL was picking up momentum as its word spread throughout Australia. But OWL was fast becoming 'the love child' of the international press. Probes on the OWL candidates just had not worked.

There was one concern. One that was completely internal to OWL. Sebastian himself. Despite secrecy, and as rare as they were, his psychotic-like outbursts were a serious threat to Sebastian's leadership. What compounded the issue was that Virginia was increasingly being seen as a real contender for the throne. However she apparently acquiesced to the nomination of Vice President of the OWL party early on. Neither she nor Sebastian had sought election for any parliamentary seats.

However they were the power behind the throne! They concentrated on running, refining, and even making exquisite the 'OWL' product. Both were masters of public relations, marketing and merchandising to reinforce the rock star mission of the party. T-shirts and other paraphernalia had been launched on the market very successfully and quite profitably for the party itself. Similarly they had negotiated the OWL brand on a variety of products like men and women's suits and

toiletries and even some high profile food products. The OWL brand was highlighted when a real moment of serendipity occurred and Virginia was asked to go on MasterChef in a cameo role. She did this exceedingly well. She had the opportunity to show off some of her favourite secret recipes. She even exhorted some young entrepreneurial chefs to use the OWL brand. It was even suggested to develop an OWL restaurant chain. Whatever the debate, OWL had become a publicity machine.

Anyway, the purported power struggle between Sebastian and Virginia was quickly resolved when Sebastian appointed her as 2IC and she had sworn her allegiance. It opened a path for succession in the event of any catastrophe occurring. And of course it provided stability for a young party.

The next problem area to be overcome – and one that arose very early on – was the perception that OWL has been set up as a gerontocracy. It was generally considered, especially through the social media that this ‘soft and easy’ party represented the ambitions of an older group who were looking for some jollies towards the end of their lives.

However Sebastian quashed this predictable rumour mongering by appointing a young CEO to handle all of OWL’s international operations which were now growing at a phenomenal rate. This was done very successfully by advertising for the position through the OWL website¹²³. The recruit was a young, dynamic, female who brought more gender balance into the formula.

It was always considered the main opponents to the success of OWL were the two mainstream political parties, at least in Australia. But then there were the vested interest

¹²³ The recruit advertisement can be found on the OWL website if you are interested. Go to www.owlvoter.com

groups. This was another serious consideration. It was apparent there could be higher order operatives involved in trying to block some of the success of OWL. The party refrained from making any public mention of the 'elites'. It decided this was the appropriate approach even though there was a lot of evidence as to who those people would be. It would be later revelations that demonstrated just how significant the elites were in person and the huge amount of power they were able to wield. They had to be at least unmasked and if possible crushed.

Much of the success of OWL can be traced back to its exploitation of information technology in which a high level of participation was gained by all those interested voters, particularly the young. For this reason the Chief Information Officer who was recruited, was also a young woman. She was brought in on the back of Gina Rinehart's¹²⁴ Roy Hill project being completed. So the CIO was not a clueless geek; but someone who had been immersed in high-level commercial and financial dealings. This was a definite plus.

As was always intended, OWL was based on creating cells of highly enthusiastic people who would not only accept policies formed to date, but would be actively involved in setting new policies. It worked on the same principle as terrorist cells except in this instance rather than having terrorist cells that were 'malignant' and attracted male sociopaths and psychopaths; these cells would attract those who lived for effective governance. Virginia's words resonated especially well with younger voters when she said in one of her

¹²⁴ Based in Perth, Gina Rinehart is an ambitious entrepreneurial woman who took the lead in her late father's iron ore prospecting company. She became the richest woman in Australia, and one of the richest in the world with her \$10billion Roy Hill mining company.

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interviews ‘We should never be asking which party is best for government? We should be asking what is the best government strategy. What are the policies that drive this government? We shouldn’t ask *who* developed the policy. No, the question should be *what, how and when?* Be a member of a party if you really feel the need. But vote for best policy whichever party that policy comes from.’

The attraction to OWL was also to those who wanted to have a peaceful existence. This represented more than 90% of people on the globe who are essentially good and fair-minded citizens. They were the same people who wanted to respond to a call to arms and to get things happening even at a global level for the benefit of humanity.

The fact that the image of OWL had magnified so quickly became a talking point for all. That was all that really interested the media; ultimately. Veracity was never a strong point for those paid to sensationalise. There were a huge number of radio panel interviews, television interviews, debates in the press and so on; all closely linked to the strong brand and the logo of OWL. Then there was Virginia’s celebrity status; something Sebastian had not achieved. She was frequently asked to appear on TV and was often featured in women’s fashion magazines. There were elements of the Jackie Kennedy, first lady image here, and even the more recent profile of Michelle Obama.

Finally there was the *OWL* (that is One World League) book and eBook. This was an educative and didactic document deliberately launched at the forming of the OWL party. When forming the political party 500 signatures were needed to be garnered very quickly. One of the ways considered possible was through publishing a popular book on the OWL website. It was aimed at all age groups but especially generation X and generation Y. This was achieved by using YouTube (sometimes called the Justin Bieber formula). A person with

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virtually no visibility could reach international stardom by the effective promulgation of ideas and thoughts, relevant or not to social justice, and so on through the social media.

One of the underlying principles of OWL was to expand the middle class. It wasn't so much about finding and killing the elites for democracy to prevail. OWL realised in any social order there were going to be some people who have greater access to resources than others. This necessarily meant that some people were going to be wealthier than others. Yet OWL was not looking at a communist state. Private property ownership was allowed. When it looked likely society was heading towards a feudal system with extremely rich people totally exploiting those that are clearly defined as poor, the situation would lend itself to revolution. It should be noted that many revolutionaries, Che Guevara and Osama Bin Laden and many others came from wealthy families and/or are wealthy in their own right.

What was being posited by OWL was that a soft revolution was definitely needed with strong support from the middle class.

And then there was the famous television interview with Sebastian. It drew a huge audience of viewers. It was a milestone in the rapid expansion of OWL, in Australia, in particular. But it also helped increase overseas awareness of OWL's existence.

There were several extracts from the interview that went viral on the social media.

Interviewer: Some people call OWL the infamous nice party; why is this?

Sebastian: We are collaborative, not competitive. We don't bag opponents just for the sake of it, like the opposition always appears to be doing with the government. A good policy, no

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matter where it comes from, we'll run with it. I think there is something nice about that.

Interviewer: Do you think the nice title goes a bit deeper than that?

Sebastian: We, at OWL, work under the impression that when you do nice things to individuals you feel nice. The instant self-gratification-at-all-cost thing has never been taken on board by any of our members. That definitely applies to our members who are seated in government and those who aspire to gain a seat in government. We believe by doing good deeds; making good decisions based on formulating good policy, we will have a tsunami-like effect to all ages spreading in all directions on all thinking people. It helps our reputation of being the party of integrity, decency and fairness.

Interviewer: It is hard to be good or nice about everything. Let's start with refugees?

Sebastian: The world, not just Australia, has a huge problem here. You are right it is hard to be nice in certain circumstances. But the solution to boat people and various other forms of illegal entry of any refugee from and to any country has to be addressed in a completely different way to the way which it is currently being addressed. There are some 30-50 million displaced people in the world in any one year. It is just not sustainable for countries to be able to maintain inputs of these people without corrupting their own values. Multi-racialism is a great thing. It adds to creativity within a society. However the root for the reasons people escape their own countries has to be the issue that is addressed. A big ask. Yes!.

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You are going to ask me how OWL could possibly achieve or assist in achieving this. Well keep your eyes open. I certainly can't elaborate now but we have policies that will address this. And they will be revealed. You know, there is a lot of cant involved in politics too. Especially when countries are saying 'don't involve yourself in the affairs of other sovereign states'. We have had many examples of totally intolerable behaviour within so-called sovereign states which just isn't palatable to any human being. In those cases we should intervene.

Interviewer: OWL sometimes comes across as the party for climate change sceptics.

Sebastian: Well we are not climate change sceptics. We accept the fact that climate change is occurring. Climate is a very dynamic thing and is constantly changing. There have been ice ages. There have been massive volcanoes. There have been tsunamis. These are all aspects of the dynamic planet earth. I don't think we fully understand the complexity of climate change at this stage. Pollution in whatever form can be devastating to any community and also to those that had nothing to do with the formation of the pollution in the first place. The boundaries around certain sovereign states don't determine who is at fault. The victims of pollution can be blameless. The one thing I can say on behalf of the party is that pollution does need to be remediated. It does need to be stopped. And that is very possible. This brings me onto another issue. The planet earth would be able to absorb all of the effects of industrialisation if it wasn't being carried out on such a massive scale. It is on such a massive scale because there are so

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many people. So let's get back to basic logic here. If the population of the world was very significantly lower, and we were able to maintain our high technology, pollution wouldn't be a problem.

Interviewer: Oh, that is interesting. So it's not about global warming per se, or even pollution. It's about global overpopulation. So what size of global population are you talking about? What's the optimal non-polluting number?

Sebastian: Around about a billion people on the planet would be sustainable and should provide for a high quality of life for all those billion people if the advantages of technology were maintained and resources were mined in a responsible way.

Interviewer: That brings us to a very awkward question; how do you reduce the world population to a billion?

Sebastian: Well, a sustainable population of around a billion is a target. There are different ways of doing this. People stop breeding which means birth control which means there needs to be a shake-up in certain conservative religious areas and other unenlightened personal values.

It could be a devastating world event, natural or man-made which of course could be a nuclear war; which many people think is imminent. And there are some people who actively see it is as a way of getting the planet back on course in terms of population.

Interviewer: What. Through nuclear war? Are you advocating world war, because that's what it would be.

Sebastian: No not me or OWL. But there is

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ample evidence. One only has to look in the right places. The information is all there. Let me give you a clue. Some of the most prominent people in the most prominent of families, including royal families are promoting this idea.

Interviewer: That's creepy. I don't know if I believe you. However, this brings me to my last question. And this is a controversial question. Are you the party that starts with paranoia? That stands for 'conspiracy theory'.

Sebastian: OWL is not the party of paranoia. But we are the party that believes human beings innately live in a state of denial. Simply stated all of us live in denial of our own mortality. But it goes further than that. Because we are trained to think in a 'denial way' when certain unbelievable facts are presented to us; and we have a desire which is not to believe in those facts, we invoke the 'conspiracy theory'.

Interviewer: Can you prove this?

Sebastian: The well-known conspiracies include the JFK assassination. But let me take a very simple, historical, example.

The sinking of the Lusitania in WWI. England needed the USA to join the war effort. The fact of the matter is that the Germans had warned the US they would sink the Lusitania. They had prepaid an advertisement to appear in the American Press (at the time owned by JP Morgan). The US government decided not to place the advert warning civilian passengers not to board the Lusitania. The conspiracy was that America was sending armaments to the UK illegally on a supposed civilian cruiser. The Lusitania was sunk by the Germans and they

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made the claim it had been carrying armaments. The Germans, in their view, legally carried out an act of war. The USA and UK both denied it. They said it wasn't carrying arms.

*However, and it is well documented, if you would like to read the book *The Creature from Jekyll Island*. In recent times, with more advanced technology submersibles were able to reach the *Lusitania* and low and behold what did they find. They found a stack of armaments. Here is a specific example of a conspiracy that is proven to be true. But, so much time has passed, no one really cares now. If you are saying the OWL party is a party of conspiracy, we respond by saying we are the party of truth.*

Interviewer: One last question. What are the main conspiracies that need to be confronted at present?

*Sebastian: Well, specifically put, the masses need to be aware that there are families who have been around for hundreds of years who are extraordinarily wealthy. And believe me they were in on the *Lusitania* conspiracy. They are the ones conspiring to bring about one world government, and to do it as quickly as possible.*

And that takes us back to a contrived global war, probably nuclear. When the decision is finally made, they will rule the rest of the world as a basically feudalistic state.

OWL's role will be to reveal who the conspirators are. And yes, we at OWL accept the notion of world governance as a way to gain world peace over whatever period of time is needed. Not just a quick fix like a nuclear purge. No, OWL will do this on a collaborative,

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democratic way not through, as we have found, an orchestrated, diabolical way that leads to nuclear destruction.

Interviewer: Well, thank you for that Sebastian. I'm not sure too many people will like the idea of a conspiracy by the elites. Perhaps it is just too hard to fathom. But let's just leave it there. And good luck to your party. Demonstrate this conspiracy of world government through rapid depopulation and that you can fix it before it's too late, you will probably have a lot more friends in the future ... Maybe! Thank you and good night.

Sebastian: Well, thank you.

Sebastian felt somewhat relieved when the interview was over. He was confident he had covered a lot of areas of interest to the voting public. But time would tell!

Complacency is dangerous, after all we are talking about fallible humans; no matter how noble their intentions.

Chapter 18

In the Wilderness of his Prejudice

I have been quiet, almost secretive for a long time it seems. You know the calm before the storm. Now I must act. I can change *my* mind. But Sebastian's destiny is immutable; it is written unchangeable in his, or is it my, universe? His plot is inviolate. But wait! Now I feel his character is flawed. Like Lord Byron he is a flawed angel. *He* is softening, *I* am hardening. He wants a global government solution to evolve slowly and democratically. I want an immediate pragmatic solution to an urgent global problem, that is overpopulation.

Believe me, I blow life into characters. I totally manipulate their universes. I can kill them if I wish. I can remove them and their existence from the universes I have created. I can kaleidoscope them in time; inverting, reversing, contracting, elongating ... and yet.

For the moment things should be joyous for our band of soft revolutionaries. They have successfully launched their party and have won seats for the Senate in each state of Australia. Indeed success has possibly come too easily; too quickly. But OWL has filled a gaping hole in popular politics. They have become the public's favoured child against the government and opposition. One Senator in each state.

And Sebastian, he is the undisputed leader. The president of the OWL party. But he has not sought public endorsement.

But wait for a moment, is Sebastian finding it too easy?

I say Sebastian should not walk into this euphoric situation with any sense of self-gratification. No, he has to suffer for his past indiscretions. What about the malfeasance of his past? There is guilt galore he tries to subjugate. On most

occasions he is successful. To his merry band he is the inspiration and the party leader. There are a few differences of opinion. But let me tell you this. For an entire week after the first election and the crowning success that came from that, Sebastian disappeared from the face of the earth. We call this the dark days of his prejudice. It is worth knowing this about Sebastian, when all appears so easy. You see, as a human, and like most politicians, he does have fundamental flaws.

I will use one of my more familiar techniques to take Sebastian to new dimensions. Drunkenness. Sebastian is haunted by the ghosts of his past. He took it upon himself to anonymously fly to Adelaide. No Virginia, and especially in Adelaide, no Eleanor. And then Christ-like, lost in the wilderness, he had to confront his demons. In this case the demons were the ordinary, but politically cynical folk of Adelaide. He stumbled from pub to pub. At first he thought he was in the grip of some sort of cathartic vision. He rented a cheap room in a less than salubrious guesthouse in one of the back streets of North Adelaide. Yes, he thought he could keep his anonymity. It was unlikely he would run into anybody he knew because he hadn't lived in Adelaide for decades. For the most part he was correct in this assumption. He wasn't even sure why he had done this to himself.

The initial feeling created was one of a need to escape from the clamour of success. All the hard work spent over the months on the campaign trail coaching his candidates and exhorting the founding members of OWL. On this occasion he had simply disappeared. Much like Agatha Christie's dramatic and mysterious stage exit so long ago.

Sebastian had generously plied himself with free alcohol at the Qantas club and then on the flight to Adelaide. He checked into his North Adelaide room. He walked by a loud and lively pub called the Queen's Arms. It was only a few hundred metres from where he was staying. The evening at the

pub started reasonably well. He was a loquacious sort of chap. So starting up a conversation in a bar was an easy thing. He had no intention, at least initially, of revealing his identity as the leader of OWL. It probably wouldn't have meant much in Adelaide anyway. This city is full of healthy scepticism. Any uttering from anybody that would imply any form of status would be rejected, ridiculed or just plain ignored.

And things went downhill very rapidly from this point on.

Sebastian was coasting in that angelic and generous state before more serious drinking leads to more serious remarks about the more serious aspects of serious life. He ambled up to the bar and stood next to a short, stubby fellow who was looking at the flat screen television on the wall. Prince Harry, or whoever he was, one of the Queen's mob was doing something charitable and nice. Sebastian couldn't quite work out what it was. His mind was becoming a little foggy.

'I hate the monarchy. I hate their past, I hate their present and I hate the aristocratic privilege they are borne into.'

The guy next to him looked around and up. 'That's a bit tough mate', he said. 'They are not all bad sorts. That bloke on TV seems to do a good job.'

'That might be the case. But it's that privilege that makes his job easy. If I had my way I would do to all the monarchies in the world what happened in Russia.'

'What, you mean kill the lot? That's a bit rich,' his newfound friend said.

'That's exactly what I mean. They always have a tendency to rebound if they are not eradicated. That's what happened back in the eighteenth century in Europe. The monarchies were attacked for their lavish lifestyles and their bleeding off the lower classes. Yes, lots of heads were cut off. But even when their empires were dumped they managed to regroup and come back again. Another one hundred and fifty or so years and they have re-established themselves with all

the privileges. We have got to get rid of the lot.'

Sebastian was aware he was being provocative. Here were the prejudice and violent thoughts he had been repressing for so long in his attempt to make OWL a thinking persons' party; and a party of peace.

He rambled on.

'I hate rich actors and entertainers too. What gives anyone the right to make so much money when all actors are really doing is trying to be somebody else.

'Admittedly someone who has a good singing voice should be paid well for it. But that shouldn't give them celebrity status to the point they can then start mucking around in politics.'

Sebastian was on his bandwagon now. 'Those actors and singers and all those other celebrities just wouldn't be where they are if it wasn't for engineers.

'Mechanical engineers. Electrical engineers. Sound engineers. Engineers developed all the technology that has enabled these people to amass so much wealth through exploiting global markets. Even if they weren't formally trained engineers, they are still engineers. And what have they got.'

The other person seemed to take notice. 'Nothing I guess. They don't even get royalties for their inventions as far as I know.'

'No, I don't think they do. But just think about it. The reason for the massive wealth and the massive exposure of celebrities (and you can include the monarchies in this) is because of the reach of the media. That media has given them global revenue. It should be the engineers who get the money. Not them. They are just using the electronic marvels that have been developed for their own benefit. But with no real recognition to those people who made it possible ... and I hate animal cruelty.'

His newfound friend lifted the glass of beer and took a long draft and looked straight at Sebastian. 'You hate a lot of things.'

'The fact of the matter is I do. I hate any form of animal cruelty with a real passion. I prefer to see human beings die rather than animals. Animals need our protection. Human beings can look after themselves.'

'But what about children?' said his friend.

'What about them?' said Sebastian. 'They are looked after so much by their parents they're spoilt stupid. Even when they are well past the age where they need to be looked after. I hate spoilt kids as well.'

That initial aura of alcohol, the part that relaxes, was rapidly disappearing. Sebastian was getting more agitated. 'While I am at it, I hate religion as well.'

'Ah, I am with you there, my friend,' said his short and stubby associate. 'More wars and more killings have been done in the name of some sort of God than you can poke a stick at. I think you are onto something there.'

'You know', said Sebastian. 'Drinking is illuminating'. He said this as he gulped down another glass of cold white wine. There was nothing mannerly about his drinking, at this stage. 'God gave us the one, and only one organ that regenerates when we drink too much. Here's to the almighty liver, the proof that God exists even if religion is crap!'

'Wow, you are right into it mate,' the other said.

'Too right!' Sebastian was feeling an exalted righteousness at this point. 'Human civilisation is perpetuated by drunkenness. Who in their right mind could live with a clear conscience with the insanity that goes on around us? Murder, rape, torture, poverty, greed – and all that stuff, unless they are drunk!'

And that was the beginning of the end. Well, for at least a week or so Sebastian's consciousness and for that matter, his

conscience, deteriorated very rapidly.

Two more glasses of wine and he was incoherent. One could only describe what he was on as some sort of an evangelical bender. His stumbling from pub to pub was forced upon him because one or two hours in any one location was about as long as he could sustain any sort of relationship with bar patrons. Or with someone serving alcohol. He was articulate and clever enough to create a façade of sobriety. He was well dressed. His speech had that slight private boys' school accent so reminiscent of, and important to, Adelaide. And he was able to be lavish in his buying of other people's drinks. That momentarily sustained his intercourse with others.

Let me also tell you he ate very little. Sebastian himself would have no real knowledge of consuming any food for the next few days. He slept a lot. In fact his nights were a series of long and broken visions. And as his inventor, I who have total control over him, entered to taunt him with half buried revelations of his past. I will share some of those with you. But only some of the taunting was by me. Some was by the bizarre legion of people he comically entertained, insulted, berated and on a couple of occasions fought with.

In the sanctity of one more pub, he fumbled with words in his mind, on topics only half conceived. But his eloquence protected him as he clearly enunciated what others would consider gibberish. Those around him weren't impressed.

'There must have been a time without people. Somebody said there was an explosion of life and suddenly everything; yes everything occurred. Probably still without people. How much better was the planet then? It was self-indulgent, primitive, selfish man who arose ultimately. Man's self-awareness slaughtered that dream. Perhaps that's what God was talking about through those people who wrote about Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden.'

Sebastian was totally ignored by the woman he had sat

next to at the bar at the Kentish Hotel. He had gravitated to the Kentish because forty or more years ago he had hung out there as a student. Anybody who observed him now would have seen that little had changed. His drunken ramblings appeared, to those outside of his brain, as non-sequiturs. But to Sebastian there was always some sort of link, even a compelling logic.

He looked the woman next to him up and down.

‘I am a very poor excuse for a seducer. I am a sad seducer. Obviously I have had the urge to propagate the species. I am even now madly in love. Hmm, make that lust, with a virgin. She is still a fucking virgin and she is thirty-five. Talk about Maslow’s hierarchy. The urge to drink, eat and mate. The urge for shelter. And then of course we start talking that crap about the urge to find self-esteem and self-actualisation. What does all that shit mean?’

The woman next to him still ignored him. ‘My life’s been a hierarchy. I’ve got the food, I have the water, I’ve got the shelter; I’ve even had the sex. The self-actualisation I got a few weeks ago when my party became triumphant.’

At this point she did stare at him. ‘What party?’ she murmured. ‘Hoot, hoot, hoot, hoot,’ said Sebastian.

She looked away again. She was convinced he was completely insane.

‘Maybe one day OWL will become ritualised as the foundation of logic for social improvement.’

He enunciated it so clearly that several people turned around and looked at him. Perhaps he was a demented professor from the University of Adelaide. That was only a few hundred metres away. And what about Eleanor? He had given up drinking beer a couple of hours ago and was entering his second bottle of wine with great gusto. ‘Ah, sweet young Eleanor of some forty years ago. Here in this pub. If only she had become my Queen. But then I hate aristocracy. I would have had to kill her and probably myself.’

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‘Finish that glass of wine and go.’

‘That was no courteous request,’ said Sebastian in response to the barman’s demand. ‘That was more a stentorian dinosaur bellow aimed at humiliating me, you ...’

Sebastian grabbed a schooner glass that still had beer froth hanging off its side.

Then poured the three quarters of what remained in his wine bottle into the huge beer glass and sculled the lot. He threw a pile of money on the counter. Much more than his drinks were worth and stumbled out of the door.

He already knew he was heading for The British. Another university pub of his past.

‘Just wait and see,’ he mumbled to himself as he zigzagged up Melbourne Street. ‘Where OWL pervades so will I. We will become a nuclear power. Australia will be the new world democracy, free but socially responsible. OWL will expand and expand and expand so that it is in every country including the old Soviet Union and even China and India. But they had better not find out about me. OWL needs a new leader. Not much choice at this stage though.’

Sebastian felt a shiver electrocute his spine. ‘I have done some bad things in the past.’

And this is where things started to unravel for Sebastian.

‘Maybe Virginia will have to take the lead. Maybe they will catch up with me. Maybe she will be the Virgin Queen of politics. This has a good ring to it ... ! There is bound to be an assassination sooner or later in the United States. Maybe OWL will gain power there too. Maybe it will become the new world order. Maybe I will be murdered too.’ His delusions and ramblings were now becoming noticeable. People walking down the street gave him a wide berth.

By the time he reached the British he was able to feign sobriety. He entered the front door. He was disorientated. The bar had been renovated. Things were not where they used to

be. In the three days he had been rambling from one pub to the other, this was the first time he had lurched into the British. He hadn't recognised anybody from his old student days and he didn't find that surprising. He was not sure he would be able to identify people he had known well, such is the damage that time can do. He was at that point where he could still mobilise himself and articulate seemingly intelligible words. But his conscious link to what he was vomiting verbally was long gone.

Somebody was sitting in a forlorn corner. He was bundled up in a woollen army great coat. It had been dyed dark blue. Sebastian sat next to the bundled figure. No response. He ordered a glass of Sauvignon Blanc and the bartender obliged.

The bundle murmured something. Sebastian couldn't catch it. 'What did you say, mate?'

The bundle murmured something a bit louder this time. But it was still incoherent. Sebastian tried one more time. 'I can't hear you. Speak up.'

The bundle said crisply and coldly, just loud enough for Sebastian to hear clearly this time. 'You killed your wife.'

Sebastian was at that point where alcohol was clearly affecting his rationality. Without thinking he blurted out. 'I have killed lots of people, one way or another, directly or indirectly.'

The bundle slammed his beer down on the table splashing it over himself; some of the froth slopping onto Sebastian. He stood up and turned to Sebastian. His face hovering only inches from Sebastian's. 'You dickless cunt. You can't even fuck the woman you lust after!' He then stormed out. Sebastian was horrified. He recognised the face. The hair was still curly and thick, but white not black. His features were distinctive enough for him to recognise him as the 'mad painter'. He had known him when he was younger. He had been in and out of institutions and on one occasion had set fire to the Torrens

River by pouring gallons of petrol off the university footbridge and throwing a lighted, petrol-soaked sugar bag in after it. The visual effect at the time was far more dramatic than the damage that was done. Although he probably killed quite a few ducks. He hadn't seen the madman for decades. He wouldn't have even known Sebastian had ever been married. How did he know?

And was he talking about Virginia?

And so my reign of terror began. I tortured him. Sebastian had never accepted he had killed his wife. The inquest had found him faultless. *He* even believed he was innocent. But now he had to confront the truth; the reality. It is all very well to repress certain horrible things in life like being abused in childhood. But no, this blatant, oblivious, disregard for accepting his guilt had to stop.

Sebastian you are a murderer. You will never sleep properly again. You are not the *nice* guy of your political persona. Ha!

Sebastian ran out of the pub and stumbled all the way back to his rented room. He occasionally took Temaze tablets to help him sleep. Tonight he took a handful. But they were not a strong narcotic and didn't have the power to do much more than give him the first couple of hours of deep and unconscious sleep.

But with midnight, with the witching hour, the realisation hit him. In one awful moment there was a flash. He remembered his wife had slipped. He had held her and then let go and watched her plummet to her death. A perfect murder. Such was his guilt, denial and remorse he had hidden for years.

I am a murderer. I am a fake. How can I be the leader of a new political party which should storm the world? I must repent. He shivered at the sheer intensity of the horror that was squirting through his body. It was like the blood in his entire circulatory system had turned to acid. It was eating him alive

from inside ... But then again, many successful leaders throughout history have killed with immunity. Why not me?

And Virginia isn't really that smart. She couldn't take over my role in a million years. Or could she? Maybe she is that smart. Oh shit! His brain fumbled with his thoughts. He struggled to make incoherence, coherent.

I killed my daughter and granddaughter too. I was the one who forced them to go to Disneyland. I didn't even sit next to them. It was too inconvenient for me. I should have been killed by that dumb prick of a terrorist's blast as well. How can I possibly contribute anything to this planet apart from more tragedy? I hate religion. I hate monarchies. I hate celebrities. I am wondering if there is anything I don't hate, including myself.

On the fourth morning Sebastian continued his downward slide. He had made himself unwelcome in virtually every pub in North Adelaide. But by eleven in the morning he was able to find a new bar. One of those trendy places with a lot of money spent on interior design. A cocktail bar. But, ostensibly, he fitted in well. He had showered. He was neatly dressed. His beard was well groomed. He had even had a haircut. A cheap one at an ethnic looking place that he was sure laundered drug money. The price of the haircut was so low and there were no customers there.

Sebastian hadn't found anybody this early in the morning to sit next to. He was reflecting on something either Virginia or Floyd had said about him. He was something like a toxic waste dump that had been camouflaged or remediated with lush green grass and trees on top of it. But if you dug down, that toxic substance would come pouring out. Right now that's how he felt. He had started the morning reasonably well. Complimenting himself on his lack of prejudice by going in and having his haircut at the ethnic hairdressers. He was sure they were Islamic. But the more he thought about it the more

he realised he was probably a racist. He hated religion. But was there another component to this hatred. Perhaps it was combined with racism. He certainly found the Islamic faith a complete sham hiding behind the Koran to unleash abominable acts upon innocent people. And the same ideas on the subjugation of women. Sheer brutality and cruelty to animals. No. He didn't like a lot of Middle Eastern people at all. Then what about the Chinese. Actually he was pretty sure he did like the Chinese. He liked their work ethic. But he didn't like it when they made those horrific noises clearing their throats and spitting in the streets. He was not sure they could be trusted either. And there were so many of them. But by and large he had always had pretty good experiences with the Chinese. Perhaps they would escape his prejudice. At least for the moment.

He looked up from his early morning beer. The cleansing ale, he called it. He looked at the barman who was groomed to perfection. Everything was excruciatingly well coordinated. Skin tone, obviously cosmetically touched up; hairstyle and colour. The light tight fitting mauve shirt. He was gay.

And therein lay another problem. Another prejudice. He smiled at the bartender who returned the smile with a wink. Sebastian knew he had a feminine side. He considered all civilised men had a feminine side; anima, psychologists call it.

The alcohol from last night was still coursing through his veins. The trauma of being a murderer was still lingering despite the sleep.

'Are you gay?' Sebastian asked with as much eloquence as he could.

'What's it to you?' the barman replied and then hesitated. Perhaps he picked up on the feminine side of Sebastian. 'The fact of the matter is yes I am. So what.'

After three days of gross intemperance Sebastian was having moments of clarity. 'I am just curious. I've got nothing

against gays.’ Sebastian gave one of his winning smiles. ‘In fact I would go so far as to say the reason for the enormous increase of gay relationships is a natural consequence of overpopulation. I think it was about fifty years ago there was an American psychologist who tried an experiment with rats. He put them into increasing population densities to see what would happen in severely overpopulated societies. The rats were able to obtain social stability of numbers by homosexual activity between the males and cannibalism.’

Dark looks came over the bartender’s face. His eyes became a slit. ‘Are you saying the gay population behaves like rats?’

‘No, no, no,’ protested Sebastian. ‘Only that an increase in animal-like social behaviour in humans is probably more a result of natural causes rather than genetic propensity or, dare I say it, sexual fashion.’

Sebastian was certainly aware he was entering very dangerous territory. He continued anyway.

‘Not sure I can quite understand why gay male couples would want to adopt and father, as well as I guess, mother, children. Unless this is a noble side of human civilisation in a moment of crisis. Too many children are already the result of propagation. Gay couples adopt them. They don’t have their own children so to speak. It has some sort of stabilising effect on the world population. Mind if I have another Sauvignon Blanc please?’

‘I think you’ve had enough. You must have started early this morning somewhere else, or you are carrying over the alcohol from last night.’

‘I will just finish off by saying two women actually getting married, and then having children by artificial insemination doesn’t help the world population system and seems a little perverted to me.’

‘I am not a woman, I wouldn’t know,’ he said icily. But

he poured another Sauvignon Blanc for Sebastian.

Sebastian finished his glass of wine quietly and didn't talk again to the barman.

He didn't feel as though he was prejudiced against homosexuals.

That's when I intervened. Sebastian was in the perfect state for the power of suggestion to take over. I can corrupt him absolutely. Now I see he is weakening. I can introduce myself as temptation. I knew my words would resonate throughout Sebastian's brain. I waited until he was sitting on a park bench near the Adelaide Cathedral. The effect of early morning chilled white wine was taking its hold.

'Sebastian, you want to be a party leader. You want your party, cell like, like a benign tumour to grow over all the countries of the world. OWL can do that. Accept what I say and I can give you all you want. It would be easy for me to find you highly influential people. People who will join you. That would take on board this whole homosexual issue. They would take it back to where you think it should be.

Practised in private. No gay rights. No gay marriages.

Furthermore, I can stack your party with powerful people who will create just the right amount of conflict between religions so they destroy each other. No religions on the planet. Just a healthy pragmatism.

Even more. I can forgive you for all your sins. No-one need ever hear about what really happened in the Blue Mountains or Disneyland. It was just an accident, wasn't it? But I can go further. I can stop this idolisation of celebrities and great wealth and prove it's a plot planted by key people in societies. And they will all support OWL. OWL will become a supreme party. It will grow like a malignancy that will be benign. It will give the world what it needs. Through me, through you, through OWL. We can demonstrate progress. You don't like cruelty to animals. I can make everybody a

vegetarian, very simply. The right people in the right places. With the appropriate rewards. All of this I can help you accomplish through the veil of democracy. Or at least it will appear so for a hundred years or more until it is too late.

I can give you all of this in one party, at one great point in time.

But who are you? Sebastian looked at the Cathedral tower and noticed it shimmering in the midday sun. 'Who are you, what are you? God? Satan? My psychotic double? My doppelganger?'

And Sebastian clearly heard the words. 'No and yes.'

'I am not God, I am not Satan. But your doppelganger, psychotic double; well, yes I am you. We will be having more meetings like this. But at the moment I must bid you farewell. You are about to be arrested.'

Sebastian had been slumped almost supine on the park bench. He was roughly grasped by the right shoulder and heavily shaken. 'What the hell do you think you are doing here?'

Sebastian looked up to a haze of face, police uniform and police cap and stuttered, 'I, I was just having a bit of a nap. I am just tired.'

'What? Its Thursday lunchtime? Hardly. I think you're pissed. In Adelaide we have something against drunkenness in public places even if you are not an Abo. If you get my drift.'

Relying upon his verbal mastery and quickness of mind, despite his inebriation, he sat up quickly.

'Look I have been through a few family traumas. I did have a few drinks last night. I am just tired. I did have a nap. I am ready to move on.'

'You do that. I will be watching where you walk and how you walk.'

Sebastian got up and headed back towards his room in North Adelaide. He had no intention of going directly there but

his steady steps and his determined pace must have convinced the policeman he wouldn't pose a public menace.

Night four and early morning five in this psychotic state. Nearly a week of Temaze and alcohol was seriously warping Sebastian's mind. He was having extended flashbacks to a time when he was never a soldier. But the fact he had never fought in battle didn't soften the intensity of his visions.

On the afternoon of the fifth day he decided that was enough. Damn the temptation. He wasn't Christ. He walked towards North Terrace and took the Glenelg tram. By dusk there was hardly anyone on the beach. But it wasn't a cold evening. He spent the entire night alone sitting on the beach. A cloudless night. He stripped to his briefs as soon as it was dawn and plunged into the water. He spent the sixth day moving from coffee shop to coffee shop enjoying fruit juices and water. He also dined on a few healthy looking pastries. The ones that had some sort of fruit content. By the end of the sixth night his mind was clear. He was aware he had to head back to Sydney to let people know he was still alive. To let them know there were certain things that had to happen to the party. Certain things that he had to do to sustain OWL and its governance for the Australian nation and beyond. Clear democratic evolution and soft social revolution. It had to happen. He was only dimly aware that there was a malevolent force at large. Something just outside his consciousness and nothing to do with the elites.

He got back to Sydney on the last flight from Adelaide. Completely refreshed on the seventh morning he called all the foundation members of OWL. Virginia was first. She did not answer. No one else answered. He was met with a barrage of message bank imperatives to leave a note. 'We must meet,' he said simply. 'I will call back with a time and place.' He tried Virginia again. This time successfully. 'Hi, this is Sebastian,' he intended a much longer conversation. 'I—!

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‘You prick,’ she screamed. ‘Where have you been? Eleanor has just been murdered.’

Book 2

OWL Flies

Chapter 19

Murder by God

‘Eleanor. Eleanor murdered.’ Sebastian was shattered by Virginia’s catastrophic revelation.

Ah ... But it is so easy for a narrator to kill people. He just writes them out of existence. The mess left is for mere mortals to make whatever inferences they like. So sooner or later OWL and its enlightened protagonists are going to discover some of the cruel realities of life. Realities that threaten and could even destroy my great creation. Mortality can be a malleable thing, especially when you own it. Like time, as you will see, mortality can be distorted, expanded, and even disappeared.

And that brings us to Eleanor and Virginia. Just a few days and pages ago I was playing with Sebastian’s conscience, fooling around with his sanity and sobriety and questioning what he was ‘brewing’ up in Adelaide. Of course this creates another fault line in Sebastian’s leadership of OWL and perhaps a growing opportunity for Virginia. Virginia and Eleanor were free to follow up on the promise they had made to their OWL compatriots. Virginia was immersed in what she called the Google, digital or sometimes word conspiracy and had Eleanor join her on a trip to Washington.

They were in high spirits. The stuff of naiveté, as an invisible world looked on. Ha. But dark days are ahead!

I had them take the Cathay flight from Sydney to New York. Their intention, so they thought, was to stay in New York for a couple of days and then travel on down to Washington to visit the Library of Congress. They were sitting together in business class on the long haul from Hong Kong to New York. Neither Virginia nor Eleanor had run for seats in

government. It was easy to find apparatchiks in each state who relished the idea of serving OWL as a Senator. Nearly a month ago Eleanor and Virginia really became the apparatchiks. The unquestioning servants of OWL. But so engrossed were they in unravelling Virginia's conspiracy, the ordinary stuff of politics and good governance was far away, emotionally as well as geographically (or was it?). Yes, according to them, the dumbing down of society through the manipulation of truth, by digitalising ostensibly all texts known to man; and by the ownership of every utterance on Twitter,¹²⁵ was a critical issue.

Frustratingly Eleanor and Virginia couldn't quite work out who was the owner of whatever intelligence was gathered. Was it the Library itself? Was it the CIA? Was it the FBI? Was it the NSA? Or, more sinisterly, was it a private organisation owned by the elites?

On another and seemingly unrelated matter, Sebastian had said at some time, 'Overpopulation is just an acceptance of humanity's ultimate demise. But overpopulation begat pollution, which begat climate change and so on.' He has missed the point.

I say overpopulation is the direct result of poor global governance, no more, no less. Based on Sebastian's infrequent yet dangerous psychotic episodes, I am no longer sure he deserves to lead OWL especially if he is misguided in his beliefs. A conflict is developing in my mind. Sebastian's approach, so it seems, is too soft despite his personal foibles. He will linger on the overpopulation problem and try snail-like democratic evolution to bring about world governance. Then

¹²⁵ There is a detailed article where Twitter announced on April 2010 that it had donated its entire archive of tweets to the Library of Congress. Refer to <http://radar.oreilly.com/2011/06/library-of-congress-twitter-archive.html>

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he will address overpopulation. But what if he, and therefore OWL, are too late.

Perhaps sometime in the future Virginia should take the lead; and head in the direction I wish. You should have guessed by now what my view is, *despite* my earlier views. Now let me introduce you to a serious subplot that has been brewing for some time and is an important component of this story, given it is true.

From: H.E
Subject: Long life
To: G.G

More of my longevity funding on way.
Please organise an appropriate
hospital visit for replacements.
Getting tired. Good considering I am
in my late nineties. Wish me a long,
longer and longest life to get all
the good deeds done.

From: H.E
Subject: Long life
To: G.G

Thanks for replacement. All went
well. Feeling very fit. Update on
OWL. How far have they got?

From: G.G
Subject: OWL
To: H.E

Appears a visit imminent from OWL to
Library of Congress. Will advise as

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situation unfolds. Is under control for now.

From: G.G
Subject: WOW
To: H.E

Somebody is onto us. Already had serious enquiries re WOW at Library of Congress. This is too soon. This will blow conspiracy prematurely. What next?

From: H.E
Subject: WOW
To: G.G

Who is involved?

From: G.G
Subject: WOW
To: H.E.

Enquiries are from Australia. From this new OWL group. Somebody called Virginia and also an Eleanor.

From: G.G
Subject: OWL
To: H.E

OWL members in Library of Congress now. Will be very untimely. Very uncomfortable. Far too early.

OWL: ONE WORLD LEAGUE

From: H.E
Subject: OWL
To: G.G

This is getting too close. Terminate inquisitors immediately. Use psycho cloak to divert attention.

From: G.G
Subject: OWL
To: H.E

Termination backfired. One too few. Others involved. Situation unravelling fast. OWL is a clear and present danger. Trail leading to St Deiniol's and another target. Word is out. What next?

From: H.E
Subject: OWL
To: G.G

Eliminate other. Make OWL extinct. Wherever. However. But quickly. Your call.

‘Serving OWL certainly has its benefits’, said Virginia as she sipped a glass of sweet, cold champagne. A slight feeling of chilled guilt, using party funds. They were heading from New York to Washington.

‘Here’s to the hunt,’ quipped Eleanor as she lifted her glass in a toast and clinked the side of Virginia’s champagne flute.

‘I can hardly wait to get into the Library. A mass of stuff. Millions of volumes.

And you know all bureaucrats are the same. All like the Nazis. They can't help themselves. They have to document everything. And they have to find repositories for their documents somewhere. I suspect everything we are looking for is in the Library. All you have to know is where to look. I wonder how we access every twitter that has been uttered since, was it, 2006? When twitter made its debut.

Evidently they are all recorded somewhere.'

'But it's a frightening, almost depressing thought,' offered Virginia. 'Sifting through hundreds of millions, possibly billions of inane utterances from all around the world. Paranoid agencies looking for key words and then seriously thinking about storing the lot for posterity in whatever form it comes. What we are looking for is not just a needle in a haystack. It's a molecule in the needle, in all the haystacks on the planet. This is going to be one monumental task and we are going to need a lot of luck.' Virginia and Eleanor fell silent for a few minutes. Both were deep in thought. Then Virginia continued.

'As confusing as it sounds, what we need is real evidence of some sort of conspiracy to pervert what should be universally available as truths and the turning of these truths into falsehoods. And that these falsehoods are then leveraged against the ordinary person to give the elite some sort of advantage. Just like the sinking of the Lusitania. Remember! They said there were no munitions on board. They said it was a conspiracy when in fact it *was* true. Then fifty years later it ends up being proven the conspiracy was in fact true. But it's so many years later no one cares anymore.'

Eleanor reflected for a few seconds. 'But that could apply to just about any aspect of life. Wikileaks focused primarily on military intelligence. They revealed information which should be freely available anyway. But that will probably end up getting Assange shot. And then there is fiscal intelligence. You

know that murky stuff only the global bankers of the world know about so they can manipulate markets. Let me read you something from a Time Magazine article.’

Eleanor picked up a magazine and started reading ‘The cash¹²⁶ that banks are obligated to hold to offset risks – are pathetic. Despite all the post-crisis, backslapping in Washington about how banks have become safer, our system as a whole has not. Banks can fund 97% of their own investments with debt. No company outside the financial sector would dream of conducting daily business with that much risk ... we have got to get rid of this idea that banking is special and that it should be treated differently than any other industry.’ Eleanor continued, ‘there is much more in this rather insightful article but I think you get the point –’

Virginia interrupted, ‘But *that’s* the point. The one unifying feature in the information must exist somewhere. The notion of digitising every utterance, every word works both ways. If your twitterers, journalists, authors and so on leave their trail of paranoia, the bureaucrats, or whoever, obviously have to leave trails as well. I think we just need a focus. For the moment we have a few weeks in the Library and that should put us onto something. We don’t have to do parliamentary reports anymore. Let’s just get out there and see what we can find out.’

I wanted them to earn their discoveries the hard way. Life in the Library is far from exciting. There is none of the drama of a Sherlock Holmes buried in sleuthing. None of the CSI forensics’ startling revelations. None of the nail biting intensity of *Mission Impossible*. Just the arduous journey through the stacks and through the computer cataloguing. One could hardly

¹²⁶ Foroohar, Rana (2014), *Mad as Hell, All Over Again*, Time Magazine, 13th October, p 42

call it even momentary excitement when an actual tome worth investigating was located. It would have been a real treat to have been able to spend the night pouring over it. That was not possible. Even as officials in an elected democratic party, they were not able to remove the books from the Library. They had to read them then and there. So I boxed them into the boredom of endless, fruitless research; until I gave them a reprieve.

Then Eleanor stumbled upon something. Jerry R Ehman and the WOW signal.

She raised her arm and waved at Virginia who was at the other end of a reading table. Virginia didn't see her. Eleanor pulled out her digital dictaphone and mumbled quietly into it. She was in pursuit of something very important. She waved her hand a few more times but Virginia clearly was into her own diversion. Eleanor continued mumbling. A few people raised their heads and looked at her. She ignored them. Her mumbling was well below the threshold of Library intolerance. She gave up waving to Virginia. She kept up her staccato of dictation for another half an hour. Then hunger set in.

They left for lunch at the cafeteria. 'I finally got the focus. The WOW signal!' Eleanor exclaimed.

'The WOW signal,' repeated Virginia. 'That sounds like something from Sebastian's blackballed advertising agencies ... They are a *word* conspiracy in their own insignificant right.'

'No, no, no,' said Eleanor. 'The WOW¹²⁷ signal was a strong radio signal detected by a guy called Jerry Ehman back

¹²⁷ The detailed analysis of the interpretation of the signals, the location of the signals, time variations, occurrence of the signal and so forth can be found in Wikipedia amongst copious other sources.

Please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wow!_signal

in 1977. It was summertime, at the Ohio State University, where he was working on the SETI project at the Big Ear radio telescope in the search for signs of extra-terrestrial intelligence,' she paused. 'Haven't you heard of SETI?'

'Of course I have,' replied Virginia, 'the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. It has been going on for years but there's nothing, absolutely nothing to report.'

'Not true,' replied Eleanor. 'The signal this Ehman fellow picked up. They said it was impossible to attribute to natural phenomena within our solar system or anything that emanated from Earth. An investigation was done by the military. Was it an artefact, some sort of earthly electronic communication through radio, TV and so on that caused this signal? No, this WOW thing was more than that.'

'It was the digital printout of the communications from this that was of incredible significance. Ehman wrote down 'WOW' next to the printout. What's really important is that the Big Ear telescope fixed and used the rotation of the Earth to scan the sky. Given the Earth's rotation and the width of the Big Ear's observation, the 'window' the telescope could observe at any point would last just seventy-two seconds. What's important here is if they monitored an extra-terrestrial signal it would be expected to register for exactly seventy-two seconds. This one did. And there should be a gradual peaking for the first thirty-six seconds until it reaches the regional centre of the Big Ear's observation window and then it will gradually decrease. And this is exactly what happened with the WOW signal. Seventy-two seconds in duration. Shape and intensity of the graph, all those things, all point to a possible extra-terrestrial origin. There is documentation on it all over the place.'

'Now here's the thing. Ehman unsuccessfully looked for a recurrence of the signal using Big Ear for months after the detection. A guy called Robert Gray looked for the same thing

using another large radio telescope around 1988. No result. In 1995 ... let me have a look at my notes. Yes in 1995 nil results come out of another project called the Project Argus search using new signal detection software. It's all a bit weird though. A thing called inter-stellar scintillation, something like atmospheric star twinkling, could have been a possible explanation. But that was ruled out. Then Ehman stated his doubts. Some years ago he thought maybe it was an Earth sourced signal that simply got reflected off a piece of space debris. But he later changed that explanation too, based on further evidence he got.

‘But he ended up saying some years ago (and he is still alive) he wanted to resist drawing vast conclusions from half vast data. Now Virginia, I don't want to get paranoid here. But I think there is a cover up. What I would like you to do is check and see whether the military or any other authority, could somehow or other interfere or black out signals such as this so that other astronomers trying to verify what he found wouldn't find anything. Including Ehman himself revisiting the same sites.

There is something murky about this.’

Virginia was impressed. ‘Okay Eleanor that gives us something to work on at this stage. I will start doing that tomorrow. It is getting a little late now. What are you going to do about it?’

Eleanor wielded her dictaphone in her right hand and deftly rotated her pen with her left hand. She wasn't even left handed. She did this with all the enthusiasm of a football cheerleader, playing on a very small scale. ‘I am going to focus on Twitter. I am going to see what can be picked up, if I can access it, anything on Ehman and the WOW signal that's come through the unofficial channels. The places that people might not have thought of censoring. Just too much data to censor. Let's see what comes of that.’

Let me pause; that is stop and reverse time back to Sebastian's fateful telephone call to Virginia. She had blurted out Eleanor's murder and also the discovery of the WOW factor. Sebastian wasn't interested in WOW at the time.

'... We couldn't contact you Sebastian. You had disappeared. Eleanor and I fooled around for a couple of days at the Library. Well I thought we were fooling around.

'Eleanor was a lot more intense than I was. She was going through masses and masses of Twitter material. She somehow got permission from the Library of Congress.¹²⁸ They were reluctant to give it, I must say. Then she realised the Twitters or Tweets I think they're called were going to be thirty or more years after the event she was following up. That is, the WOW factor actually occurred thirty years before it was recognised. I kept working on the technology of blocking radio signals like she asked me. Haven't got very far.'

Sebastian interrupted. 'But murdered. Why the hell would someone murder Eleanor? Murder me. Definitely. You; possibly. Some of our Senators; probably, eventually. But Eleanor, Eleanor effectively was just a researcher helping you out on your, what you call it, *word* or digital conspiracy; or Google conspiracy wasn't it?'

'No more Google. I am over that. Google is just a small

¹²⁸ More about this later. However there is an article on this accessibility to what is known as 'known researchers' in this reference. http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/tweets-archived-in-library-of-congress-will-only-be-accessible-by-known-researchers_b9892 One has to be a recognised researcher, evidentially with the highest credentials to access actual tweets which were supposedly being recorded for public access and the public good; albeit at some unspecified time in the future.

aspect of the whole mess.’ Virginia was obviously tired. She sighed.

‘Anyway, there could be a connection; you forget she has publicly decreed her dislike of anything Middle Eastern, especially Islam.

‘Sebastian I feel bad enough about it already. Anybody being murdered is just plain wrong. It is tragic. For Eleanor helping me out, it is terrible. Worse than terrible. Let me tell you what happened. One night they found her slumped over her books. Don’t even know what time they close up, even if they *do* close. It was a night guard, or somebody. They thought she had fallen asleep. Then they thought it was a heart attack. Until they got her to the hospital. I don’t think they have done a proper post mortem. Or maybe even the post mortem results are part of a bigger cover up. But they did notice a slight bruise on her neck; on her jugular vein. And what looked like to be a pin-prick in the centre of it. That’s when things started to get serious.’

‘This is an assassination,’ exclaimed Sebastian. ‘Well, it’s like an assassination.

‘She was not an elected member. But she is one of the founding members of the party. What the fuck is going on?’

‘Sebastian, let me finish. You’re the one who disappeared. Don’t get angry now. Let’s not get into all the details. It only happened a few days ago. She was poisoned. It was murder. There is no internal CCTV camera coverage. The cameras were either not focusing on her or there was no real coverage in the area she was in, or records disappeared. Anyway she is dead. I feel like a shit. I am still in Washington but I am about to leave.’

Sebastian hesitated. ‘Where do we go from here?’

‘It is pretty obvious,’ said Virginia. ‘It might be all too hard with the American authorities but we have to do something. Clearly she was on to something, perhaps the

authorities know what it was or is. And don't want it to go any further. I am not getting a lot of cooperation from them. It's all no motive, no suspects, no evidence. Total bullshit. They are now saying they are looking at the possibility of it being the work of a serial killer who stalks single women at night in libraries. It is such crap. Sebastian she did have something. She was working on something. Need to find out what that was. Sooner rather than later.'

'Intuition is always important to me,' said Sebastian. 'And especially yours, Virginia. The psychic component I believe we always underestimate. What do *you* think is going on?'

'What do I think? I know she was onto something. But I don't know exactly what.'

'I suspect there is much more to this WOW thing. I do think there has been a suppression of the facts. I suspect what Eleanor suspected, that somehow or other, repeat observations of the WOW factor, of the signal, were suppressed. If that is the case we need to find out what was being suppressed, why it was being suppressed and obviously who was suppressing it. I have to say this. Eleanor was my friend as well, not just a colleague, she might well have got our foot into the door of that word conspiracy I have been pushing for so long.'

'When Eleanor was taken to the hospital I moved her things out of her room into mine. She was just next door. And her dictaphone was with her things. She hadn't taken it to the Library that evening. Her room had been disturbed. If it *was* a serial killer he wouldn't be interested in dictaphones. I am not sure they would have known that she recorded her notes. Anyway not many people use dictaphones these days.'

'I do', interrupted Sebastian. 'A great asset for fading memories especially for those of us approaching dementia.'

'Well anyway,' continued Virginia. 'All I know is the dictaphone is safe.'

'However I tracked down the night watchman, or

whatever they call him, the security guy, and asked if there were any notes near Eleanor when she was found. He had said there was nothing. Only her handbag, which had been taken with her personal belongings when she was taken to the hospital. That is interesting. There were no notes. I know she would have been taking notes if she had not taken the dictaphone. Sometimes she put down headings as notes and dictated thoughts on the headings later on when she had more time. Let me follow that up as much as I can at this end. Sebastian all I can ask you to do at your end is just to clear your head and get on a plane out of Adelaide and back to Sydney. Then get me as much help from the Australian embassy as you can.'

Virginia hung up.

Chapter 20

The WOW Factor

Rob Moller¹²⁹ still wore his black chronograph marine-style, watch face inside his wrist. Nearing seventy he was still fit, charismatic, and kept his unofficial staff off-balance with his deadpan remarks that may or may not have been jokes. He had resigned formally as Director of the FBI some time ago. But as a consultant he still received the red-letter briefing book headquarters despatched to him regularly. The title on the cover was still simply ‘Director’ above the words ‘top secret: contains code word material’. He has had more than his share of monitoring al-Quaeda, cyber intruders and home grown sociopaths intent upon bombing something or somebody. Bomb plots were his speciality. He now served as an unofficial consultant to the FBI. He had overseen the growth of the FBI with its new significant global presence. He was proud of his decade long role as the head of the FBI and the fact he had pushed out the old guard and driven out the ninety year old FBI field agent paradigm. Then came September 11. To his critics the FBI was irreparably broken and ill-equipped in gathering intelligence and disinclined to share it in any way. But he made bold promises, delivered them and transmuted the FBI into a highly effective agency before his retirement. And, of course, he excelled at his work and was a resource far too

¹²⁹ There is a very strong likeness to a very similar person with a very similar name, probably all coincidence, in a very specific article in Time magazine 2012. Reader, it is worth seeking this out to get a feeling of veracity.

important to be lost to national security.

And now he was knocking on the door of some obscure Australian who represented some obscure political party. Her friend had been murdered though. And there was some connection to satellite communication and national security. Those at the top had asked him to intervene personally. He gave a light rap on Virginia's door as a polite bellboy might.

Virginia was busy transcribing Eleanor's material into word format. She had on headphones and operated the transcriber with her foot. This expedited matters. She hated the process but just couldn't rely on the Dragon voice-to-print software which was so unreliable. Every word had the potential for precious intent. She couldn't underestimate Eleanor's dictation. She thought she heard a light knock on the door. She closed the lid of the laptop and covered the transcriber with an Isadora Duncan scarf she had bought on a whim.

She unlatched the door, kept the security chain in place and opened up a few inches. 'Aah, Miss Virginia Hoo. I am Rob Moller, ex-director of the FBI. I would like to ask you a few questions about your friend Eleanor.' He flashed his ID which seemed valid enough to Virginia's quick eye. She let him in. She saw the silver haired, dark eye browed, impeccably dressed, slim built agent. He looked terribly professional. Virginia felt very comfortable.

'Eleanor might have stumbled upon something of importance to national security.

We wondered if you knew anything about it?'

Virginia was quick to answer. 'We were working on the WOW factor but I hardly think that is of national security. Yes, Eleanor had an interest in it. But it is in the public domain. Do you know what I'm talking about?'

Moller nodded. 'Yes in fact I do. I—'

Virginia interrupted. 'I don't think there is anything that

she would have wanted to hide. What's going to happen? Who would murder her for that reason?'

'Probably a psychopath,' he replied. 'There are plenty of deranged people in Washington. Did she keep any notes or records? They might be of some help. It might help identify who would murder her for that reason. And you're right. WOW is a hoax as far as I know. I don't think there is a connection.'

Virginia looked at him intently. 'No, not to my knowledge. I think it was more idle curiosity in this whole thing rather than academic concern to her, even though she was working as a researcher with me. My prime interest here at the Library of Congress is to see just how far digitisation of authors' works has gone and whether one organisation will ultimately have copies of everything in the written form transcribed into a digital form. Not much danger to national security.'

'No, certainly not, Virginia. 'But,' he said as he sighed, 'just have to tie up a few loose ends. Are you saying nothing at all, no notes, no books out of the Library, that sort of thing?'

'Well, you can't take books out of the Library of Congress anyway, not unless you are a Congressman. I am certainly not that. I am sorry I can't help you any further. But that's the way it is.'

The meeting was over as quickly as it had started. 'Thank you Virginia. Perhaps we'll see each other again some time.' He shook her hand and turned, opening the door himself and leaving. More questions than answers hung in the air.

Virginia didn't like the way things were progressing. Why on earth would the FBI be involved? There had been no press coverage at all, so far. But she fully intended there would be. She was beginning to smell a cover-up. And there wasn't any way at all she was going to let bureaucrats from some piss-ant government agency diminish the importance of her friend and

colleague. On second thoughts she didn't trust this Moller guy. She looked around the small lounge area of her suite.

She visually tracked the movements Moller had made. Perhaps she had watched too many conspiracy movies. Maybe he had planted something. He had hovered a few times over some of the notes she had left on the desk and on a chair. This happened a few times when he thought she wasn't looking.

This refurbished apartment was an easy place to live in. Eleanor and she had deliberately selected the Capitol Hill suites. It was advertised as a business-family friendly hotel in the Capitol Hill neighbourhood. She liked its proximity to the Library of Congress. Only a brief two block walk. It was also near the Supreme Court and the Capitol itself, which they had intended to visit, some time. The suite was a little dated and was formerly an apartment block. However, the one bedroom suites had a small kitchen and a very large desk with great chairs. Working in this room made the researching easy. The mission had always been to seek out the Library of Congress in which to do the research. But, the irony was, this hotel suited them so well. The lobby also had a dedicated library with a fireplace and leather seating that gave it a warm ambience. She looked across the cherrywood furnishing. Everything seemed to be in place.

Virginia sat back at the desk. She looked at the notes she had started writing. She had continued looking at the feasibility of suppressing radio waves or radio signals especially of the SETI type. Wikipedia tended to suggest it would be relatively easy. She found an article indicating a thirty dollar, cheap plastic box could block signals from GPS satellites. Ample evidence suggested truck drivers who didn't want an electronic spy in their cabs could use these low-tech devices.

She even found evidence to a more startling affair. Sometime ago the Santiago air traffic controllers found their

system for tracking incoming planes was malfunctioning. At a nearby naval medical centre emergency pagers used for summoning doctors stopped working. Traffic management systems used for guiding boats in the harbour failed. People who tried to use their cell phones had no signals. Bank customers who tried to withdraw cash from local ATMs were refused. The problem persisted for several hours. Eventually it was revealed naval ships in the harbour had been conducting a training exercise when communications were lost.

Navy technicians had jammed radio signals. They also blocked radio signals from GPS satellites across a huge part of the city.

From this evidence Virginia had very quickly come to the conclusion radio jamming or radio interference would not be a technically difficult thing to do. So, blocking signals, supposedly very weak signals, from an inter-stellar or intergalactic radio source should also be easy. She didn't think it was necessary to delve any deeper into the technical aspects of this. Evidence would support the fact that the WOW signal did exist. And for whatever reasons an agency, somebody, or some organisation had decided to make sure it wasn't picked up again.

Then there was the matter of Eleanor's accessing Twitter records. One thing Virginia had found in Eleanor's room was some notes on Twitter. Not that important. But it seemed that a certain Bill Lefurgy¹³⁰ was the Digital Initiatives program manager at the Library of Congress. He had spoken, on the

¹³⁰ Lefurgy is quoted in this article.

<http://thenextweb.com/twitter/2011/12/07/library-of-congress-says-twitter-archive-will-build-unique-record-of-our-time/>. Lefurgy statements on digital initiatives can be found verbatim in the above reference.

record, to the Federal News Radio, about the agreement with Twitter giving the Library access to every public tweet. The archive of tweets was available to Lefurgy's team for research. Virginia noticed from Eleanor's notes the number of tweets to be archived had grown from fifty million a day when it first started to an average of one hundred and forty million tweets per day. She also noticed that Lefurgy claimed this initiative was not 'sinister' but aimed to document the life and times of 'today' through this 'hugely popular micro blogging service'. Ha! Archiving a hundred million tweets a day and no ulterior motive. Not likely!

Furthermore, another note Virginia found indicated the Congress Library wasn't the only US institution monitoring individual tweets. The US government evidently has its own digital team. Five million tweets a day are scoured through social networks to build up a report for the President. Virginia saw some obvious blogs that Eleanor had noted. 'Every single tweet that had been turned over to the US government; is the end soon? (December 11 2011 7.24am)'; 'January 19 2012 7.14am is an important step as the public record of all tweets will be archived in the Library of Congress until the revolution burns it'. The 'revolution burns' was underlined. Virginia noted another blog (this was a quotation) 'access to the Twitter archive will be restricted to 'known researchers', who will need to go through the Library of Congress approval process to gain access to the data'. Written in red under that, in Eleanor's handwriting, was 'the average citizen won't be able to casually look up what their first tweet was. At least for the foreseeable future'.

But Virginia knew that Eleanor had access to the tweets. But she didn't know how. At this point it wasn't really relevant. Clearly she had accessed them and she confirmed this on the dictaphone.

Virginia was keen to get back to transcribing what was

left on the dictaphone.

She put on the headphones, hit the transcribe pedal and started listening in earnest again.

‘Memo to Virginia. I have just had the *oh shit* moment. Just in case, for some reason I don’t get this to you personally, listen to this. There *is* a cover up. I was browsing through the tweets of 2009 and I stumbled upon some gobblygook. It was a terribly simple code but it was still a fluke I figured it out. A couple of twitterers were doing their tweets in what looked like blank verse poetry. I won’t go into too much detail. Any spy would have cracked it straight away. But then again when I think about it, it was too facile. Like somebody wanted the message to look like code, but wanted the code broken fairly easily. But because it was on Twitter nobody had picked it up. Maybe it was deliberately hidden to be found, sooner or later. It just looked like so much, well, gossip. To cut a long story short; and believe me it could be a very, very long story, the WOW signal was coming from the Sagittarius constellation. So the star it actually came from, or a nearby planet to that star, could be anything from seven to thirty-three light years away. That means the signal that Ehman picked up could be the same age. Because radio waves travel at the speed of light.

But here is the *oh shit* bit. Even with the fame he had, Ehman wasn’t the first person to pick it up. Somehow or other the noise was picked up by some unknown or unnamed person, thirty years before. That was around 1947. (Interestingly around about the same time as Roswell I think – but I don’t think there is any connection).

And the signal has always been the same. A repeat of four lines was as close as I could get to a translation.

The first line: Any liveable planet’s maximum population of technologically advanced beings is five hundred million.

The second line: Preserve resources. Yours are failing; as ours did.

The third line: Advance your technology rapidly; especially bio mechanics.

Fourth line: A special enlightened group must prevail; over all your species ... quickly, before it's too late. Jesus Virginia it sounds like a command. A call to action. Really *is* scary stuff.'

The dictaphone stopped and hissed. Virginia hit the transcriber pedal again.

More hissing, no more transcription.

She threw down her headphones and then called Sebastian. She was lucky. He picked up immediately.

'Shit', she said. 'Eleanor was onto something. Here's the guts of a message she picked up, maybe even decoded. But *that* even sounds unlikely. All a bit weird.'

Virginia then, almost verbatim, repeated the four line ending to Eleanor's dictation.

'Sebastian, I am getting out of here *now*. There *is* a cover up. I knew it. Eleanor could prove it. Cover ups in the US are dangerous. Kennedy. Martin Luther King. Not Virginia Hoo –'

Sebastian interrupted. 'What the hell are you talking about Virginia? I don't want you –'

'Don't say ... *stay here with Eleanor*. I am getting out right now. I am leaving some of my clothing and a suitcase. I am even leaving some hand written notes Eleanor had put together. That won't mean anything to anybody else. I am just taking my briefcase, transcriber and dictaphone which they don't seem to know about. I am on the next flight out of here. As far as they are concerned I am still in the hotel. I will pay the hotel bill when I get back to Australia. And don't interrupt Sebastian. I am deadly serious about this. I knew it. I just damn well knew it.'

Sebastian didn't respond immediately. He waited for more from Virginia. She quietened down.

'Virginia you do what's best. A good idea to leave

everything there. It will look as though you just went out for a meal. Call Qantas in about half an hour. I am about to send you an urgent email saying you must come back to Australia. We've just had a crisis. Download and print my email when you receive it. You might need it at the airport.'

If there was such a feeling as 'prescience', Sebastian felt it now. There was something formulaic about the so called alien's message. Too clear. Too precise. Something didn't gel. The logic was clear. Sustainability, in a word, for the planet. But how? That was the troubling bit. The fourth line was too open ended. It smacked of world government. But there was no 'how'.

A few frenetic hours later at JFK airport Virginia boarded a Qantas flight. A quotation rolled through her mind. She wasn't even sure she had it right. She thought it was Winston Churchill. 'Is this the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?'

Virginia settled into her plush business class seat on the Boeing 747B. She was a senior party official now and this was one of the perks, regardless of the media's relentless hunt for the travel scandals of politicians. She had a flashback to the film *Argo*. It was about six US diplomats who very narrowly escaped incarceration, torture and quite conceivably death when they eluded, frenetically, the search for them by Iranian authorities. This was at the time of the historic and explosive Iranian hostage crisis. Strange how prophetic this had become. Almost normal behaviour now, whether real life adventures or fictional accounts. She strapped herself in and applied herself to the discipline of attentively listening to the cabin crew take-off instructions. Although she had heard it all hundreds of times before, she considered it courteous to feign attentiveness. The flashbacks to *Argo* didn't help. The movie was thrilling, even though she knew in advance there was going to be a successful outcome. She had sat on the edge of her seat hoping

the team of diplomats, inching their way through the airport, step by step and onto the plane, would actually make it; even though pursued by Iranian fanatics. But even then, until the plane was in the sky, it wasn't over. And, right now, *she* was still on the ground; completely vulnerable and frangible. She felt extremely nervous. For all she knew the FBI could be closing in around her.

Virginia looked around at the half full cabin. Two middle-aged women to the right were chatting away creating a calming effect. Dowdy dressers, unthreateningly pleasant faced, they oozed mature contentment and stability.

Virginia didn't like the seat she had in the middle of business class. She preferred a window or aisle seat on the side. There was no choice on this particular occasion. Everything had happened rapidly. Until she was off the ground she couldn't relax.

Two young male Middle Eastern types to her immediate left didn't help. They were in their late twenties or early thirties. She had never considered herself to be racist, but global events were unfolding fast. She was being pushed or forced into a position of compromise. Her egalitarian attitudes and values were being diluted. A soldier had been murdered in broad daylight in London by two disaffected, black, English born Nigerians who had supposedly held both European and Nigerian passports. They had butchered the soldier; a husband, son, a twenty-five year old, just doing his job; the murders, all done in the name of Allah. And a similar thing had occurred in France again two days later. Also in uniform, a victim had been stabbed in the neck. Evidently by an Algerian or an Algerian immigrant; presumably now also carrying a European passport.

All this in the same week that a Pakistan aeroplane was forced to land. Two Pakistanis were arrested. They had committed some sort of 'criminal act'. No-one would say

‘political’. The situation was too volatile. The manipulation of the *word* yet again. More and more conspiracies, she thought. She tried hard not to be racist.

Her eyes again flicked to the left; just long enough to worry more about the Middle Eastern pair’s intent. It was hard to ignore the instinct of xenophobia. She could not ignore thoughts pushing up from her subconscious. Ban them all; or at least ban their abhorrent customs. If you live in the west, dress as the west. Act as the west. Otherwise go home. When in Rome do as the Romans. And then she felt guilty. Perhaps these two on the left, heavily and darkly stubbled, actually worked for the United Nations, perhaps doing saintly humanitarian work. But she doubted it. So easy to be critical in an unstable world. A small series of judgements based on a little information at the time; but reinforced by massive outpourings from the press. Virginia was only half starting to understand the conspiracies created by the press barons. There is definitely a conspiracy to manipulate the *word*. And her mission was to uncover what that was all about.

The plane climbed forward ever so gently into the air. So silently. Ever so graciously. And at that moment her apprehension drained away. A glass of champagne to celebrate the escape from Washington. The crusade (no, where did that come from – crusade – too many nasty connotations). Now, what *was* behind Eleanor’s murder? To meet up with Sebastian and see where things go from here ...

Sebastian was waiting patiently at the South Terminal, arrival gate B, at Sydney’s international airport. He scoured the crowds for Virginia. She should be one of the first to get through immigration and he knew she would be travelling business class. Reminding himself, perhaps a little too frugally, if she was in first class she would have been upgraded there at no cost because of her frequent travel!

Tight fitting jeans; slightly heeled sandals accentuating the length of her already sensually long legs; tight fitting t-shirt under a bomber jacket; breasts pushing up and out for liberation. He hoped they heaved in anticipation (of some sort). He quite miserably flashed back to when she used to wear that tight fitting chauffeur's uniform. This was an indulgence he had been able to get away with for a few years until OWL had become so successful. Life was moving in a much quieter lane now. Much more 'politically correct'; a term he abhorred. Hmm, we should make political correctness, politically incorrect, he thought.

As she walked down the ramp she slowed and looked directly at him. Sebastian moved forward, grasping the trolley she was wheeling with the one small suitcase she had managed in her rush to grab from the room in Washington. He wheeled the trolley, at the same time holding her hand, straight to the taxi rank. Nothing was said for the first few minutes.

In the back of the taxi it was Virginia who was the first to speak in a hushed tone. 'Sebastian we have to get on top of this. Work out what the hell is going on and why Eleanor was murdered. I don't want to lose any time over this.'

Sebastian took a deep breath. 'I don't want to dent your enthusiasm but you've got twenty-four hours in Sydney to refresh and then you are back on a flight tomorrow afternoon to London. I think I'd better go with you. Your security is my highest priority.'

Virginia was very tired, but she was listening intently. She replied, 'I really appreciate that Sebastian.'

'Anyway,' Sebastian continued. 'There have been some extraordinary developments while you have been in transit. Just to give you a bit of a heads up, we picked up on some interesting intelligence especially with the help of Richard and his financial contacts; and of course Randall who knows everybody.'

‘Your stuff in Washington is really exciting, and dangerous. We are not even sure if our stuff is related. But there is a guy living in the countryside a couple of hours out of London to the west. In fact it is actually north-east Wales. Hmmm; that’s still west of London. Anyway he has this rambling manor which is set up as a huge library. Evidently the library¹³¹ was put together by Gladstone. You know the guy who was in Parliament for sixty years or more and Prime Minister four times.

‘Still, I can’t see any reason why this guy would convert a great manor, and a library, to let people stay there as an out-of the way bed and breakfast. I don’t know whether he inherited this. Maybe he is an ancestor of Gladstone. What the library consists of and so on. I just don’t know.

‘Yes’, Virginia added. ‘It all sounds very interesting. But what have I got to do with it?’

‘Ah’, said Sebastian, ‘there is some interesting speculation and gossip. He, like you, evidently doesn’t trust libraries like the Library of Congress; like that library in London and a few others in major cities of the world that evidently are fire proofed, nuclear bomb proofed, all in the name of preserving human civilisation for posterity. This is done in case some major calamity or disaster or catastrophe occurs; or even more sinisterly has already been plotted.

‘He doesn’t trust people who tamper with original copies of books in a way I believe you already suspect people might attempt to do. Or might have already done. He wants his own set of originals. He wants purity of those originals and he has even made claims that there have been attempts to substitute some of his original editions of his books with authentic looking, but edited copies. People, none of whom have been

¹³¹ Google St Deiniol’s for more details

caught yet, smuggle in copies and take the originals. This obsessiveness needs investigation. It seems to substantiate some of the things you have suspected for a long time. Perhaps it's behind some of the real reasons Google wants to digitise every book on the planet.

'Okay. You've got me,' said Virginia with a yawn.

'Anyway,' continued Sebastian, 'in the light of Eleanor's murder we are going to find out what the hell is going on. And there is much more. But not now. I am taking you immediately to the airport Sofitel where you are going to shower, eat and sleep. No time for you to go home. And yes I'm going with you to England. OWL is driving itself right now. Everybody is doing a spectacular job and we are not critical to the party's success. No more danger ... to you. At least not without me being there.'

Chapter 21

St Deiniol's and Gladstone's Library

At 3.15pm the following day Sebastian and Virginia were seated together in an A380. It was business class. Sauvignon blanc for him. She was sipping a champagne.

Virginia looked at Sebastian. ‘Well, you got us on the A380 but it is not Qantas. It’s Emirates. We are stopping in Dubai. Haven’t been there since the new terminal was constructed. It should be interesting ... When we arrive in London, where do we go?’

Sebastian paused. He looked at the rapidly darkening sky outside. ‘We are taking the fast train to Chester. Then I believe we are being picked up and taken to this library place. I told you it is an old country manor. He has a huge private and very old library with over 250,000 books. Very unusual. We have to drive for another half an hour or so from Chester, over the river Dee. Should be English village cutesy. Low ceilinged pubs. Ducks on the devilishly narrow roads. Crunching gravel driveways. All that sort of stuff. Anyway I have booked us in as B&B guests at this manor. I have forgotten the name for the moment. But as far as anybody there is concerned, especially the host, we are just Australian tourists who uncharacteristically, read a lot.’

‘Ok, who is the host?’ Virginia queried.

‘Some Lord or Duke. He is supposedly sympathetic to OWL. He was actually introduced to me by Randall; not Richard. You know, Richard just does the financial thing, albeit very well. But Randall has contacts everywhere through his international peace brigade. Evidently, Randall, at one of his global meetings, told him about you and the Library of

Congress. He now knows of your WOW discoveries. While you were asleep at the hotel I made a couple of overseas calls.

‘Anyway, he is the one who invited you to meet him, not me. But I thought I had better tag along to make sure you were okay. He has got a name. All he said was ‘Peter’. And all will be explained when he picks us up at the Chester station, so he said.’

Sebastian turned to Virginia. ‘You look exhausted, have a nap. You need it.’

Virginia hit the recline button and slipped backwards a few inches into oblivion.

She let out a gentle sigh and closed her eyes. It was all catching up with her.

Of course, Sebastian believed he had to get himself involved in the plot. But I can tell you he is going to become an obstacle. He was manageable when he was delusional and completely self-engrossed. Now he is, well, dangerous. He is starting to reach out. Starting to understand there are forces beyond his ken. Intuitively he feels this, but he can’t interpret the signs. This is dangerous to me of course. How can I have one of my beings, one of my characters, starting to think for themselves. Let’s see where his Don Quixote quest will take him.

Sebastian could see Virginia was deep asleep. But her sleep was disturbed. Even though she was on the flat bed luxury of business class, she was tossing and turning. Short gasps and grunts and untranslatable murmurs.

Virginia was fighting her lucid dream. She wanted to wake up desperately. She knew she was asleep. The Ku Klux Klan was forming a militia. No longer an American secret society of Protestant racist whites. They were coming out. After the attacks by Islamic extremists on innocent Americans they had decided to start a war of their own. They had formed themselves into terror groups too. Their plot was to bomb

Mecca at the height of the Hajj ... And then she woke up.

Sebastian was shaking her arm. 'You were mumbling "Mecca, Mecca" and we are circling Dubai. I thought I had better wake you. Not the right thing to be mumbling; well not here. Not on this plane.

'You've missed breakfast but you crashed for ten hours and you probably needed it. We only have an hour or so in Dubai so there won't be much time to freshen up in the lounge and board again. And incidentally I read up on this library manor. I didn't have time before. Everything has happened so quickly. It is called St Deiniol's Library. Probably we should have gone to Manchester instead of Heathrow airport. But it doesn't matter. It is also known as Gladstone's Library. The Library is situated along one wing and so far it has amassed over a quarter of a million books. The actual Library component itself, remember the manor is also bed and breakfast, is a chamber about the size of a chapel all panelled in wood and a tiny spiral staircase twisting to a first floor gallery. One of the things I read¹³² says it looks like 'Hollywood's idea of an ancient library and yet it is a humble, working building with an authentic aroma of polished leather and a slightly damp whiff of old tomes.'

'Anything more on our glorious sponsor?' asked Virginia. She had many misgivings about secret sponsors, libraries, titles of any sort and especially the English dynasty. It was getting worse from her perspective.

'Well, he comes from a long line of dukes. Somehow he is related to the ownership of St Deiniol's although that doesn't make too much sense because I thought it was all kicked off by Gladstone. But I don't think that's the issue. Let's meet up

¹³² Barkham, Patrick, Saturday, 1st August 2009, *Tome Out*, The Guardian

with this Peter and see what happens from there.

‘Oh, and some interesting trivia. Evidently when Gladstone was pulling the library together he was in his eighties. He would actually cart the books a mile or so from his house several times a day, for weeks, maybe months, in a wheelbarrow.’

I tumbled the two into a sleep of innocence between Dubai and London. Sebastian was remarkably sober; although I would have liked the challenge of playing with his inebriated soul again, giving him phantasms to fight, given his paranoid fevers.

Whatever, I was going to leave Virginia alone. I was sure I could do all the damage that needed to be done.

Of course there was the train trip to Chester. A train trip in England can be an idyllic affair. Rushing through the English countryside at one hundred and ten miles per hour. It gives the real semblance of speed. Stationary things close to the tracks flash by in an instant. Just a slow unrolling of villages on undulating hills with the occasional patchwork of forest. Very occasional. They’ve been deforesting England for hundreds; no make it thousands of years.

Then for fun, I placed Sebastian and Virginia in the first class carriage. This was quite deserted apart from another couple, a long and convenient distance away. I left Virginia in peace by giving her another couple of hours of collapsed mental state due to her ridiculous travelling; Washington to Sydney, Sydney to Dubai, Dubai to London and straight onto rail travel right across England.

On a whim I invaded Sebastian’s mind, yet again.

Sebastian stood up, reached to the table behind him and collected some beer coasters. He flicked them over to the blank side and started doodling. He drew a triangle. On each tip he wrote a word. ‘Intelligence’ at the apex, ‘creativity’ on the left tip and ‘access’ on the right tip. Next to the word ‘access’ he

wrote 'opportunity'. He scribbled those words out and then on another drew a second triangle, this time just placing an 'I', 'C' and 'A' on each tip of the triangle.

He drew another triangle, a larger one that enclosed the second smaller one. This triangle was slightly rotated. This time on the apex he wrote 'timing'. On one tip 'knowledge' and on another 'technology'.

He doodled and doodled. He tried to represent the triangles three-dimensionally. He felt the surge of adrenalin mixed with alcohol stimulating his brain and pumping his blood. His heartbeat was quicker than usual. Somewhere in his subconscious there was a certain acceleration, a certain stimulation that came from just the right amount of alcohol. He was convinced of the biochemistry of the right moment. The balance between creative insobriety and being completely drunk was a fine one, but one that was worthy of attainment. One that, for a short period, gave brilliant insight, the epiphanies that he loved so much. He was becoming more and more convinced that his beer coaster triangles were representative of some great universal truth.

He curled up the corner of one soggy beer coaster pondering the cosmological implications of his wondrous discovery.

He noticed in the adjacent carriage and heading rapidly to the door two waiters, one male, one female. The male was young with extremely short black hair, almost shaven, with an earring in his left ear. He was thin to the point of being emaciated. His clothing hung on him like a limp wet spinnaker on a becalmed yacht in a downpour. The woman with him was about the same age but with a sensuous body. A sliver of waist and ample breasts amplified her voluptuous curves.

He waited for the whoosh. The door opened and in they walked. Strong northern accents drifted through the airlock with them. Sebastian didn't pay much attention to their

mutterings. Their accents were indecipherable anyway. Most of the time.

‘Oooh what a lovely tan,’ shrieked the female. ‘From Australia, are we then, love?’ she said.

‘Yes, but this isn't a tan, I just haven't had a wash in a long time.’

‘Ooh, he has a sense of humour. What a darling!’ she nudged the stolid fellow next to her.

‘Do you watch *Neighbours*, then love?’ she asked querulously.

‘I'm not really into soapies,’ Sebastian said. ‘I gave them up a long time ago.’ ‘Ooh, then you don't know what's happening in the next episode, do you? All the other Australians we meet can tell us months in advance what's going to happen to our favourite actors. We then spend hours down at the local pub telling our friends and getting free beers. Come on, love, don't you really watch it?’

‘No, definitely not.’

The two stopped chattering and looked behind them and then awkwardly at each other. They could see something through the glass door in the next compartment that Sebastian couldn't.

‘Ooh, my God, here comes Hitler again,’ said the woman. ‘He's a real prat.’ ‘What's a prat?’ Sebastian asked.

‘Well,’ the thin one offered, ‘it's hard to describe, but when you've met him you'll know exactly. He has no sense of humour. No consideration. No understanding. No life. That's what he needs, a life.’ He offered this as though he had stumbled on a great psychological discovery.

‘Everybody can be humoured,’ Sebastian offered, ‘it's just a matter of sensitivity and style.’

The duo stumbled forward as the train decelerated. ‘We'll leave you with the little darling,’ she said.

Sebastian, clearly affected by the wine and lager he had

consumed in quite copious amounts, prepared himself mentally. He was the master of bonhomie. When he was warm with the camaraderie induced by a good Cabernet Sauvignon, others would melt.

‘Your ticket, please.’ The request was deadpan, made by a tall, gangly, almost consumptive-looking figure. He had a short black moustache with a clear parting that tapered downwards at the ends, creating a perpetual grimace.

He looked directly at Sebastian with lashless reptilian eyes.

‘My ticket. My ticket. Of course, my ticket,’ Sebastian fumbled in his right suit pocket and then his right trouser pocket. Then his left suit pocket and his left trouser pocket. He rose; half levitated and grasped the window for support (avoiding Virginia who was comatose). He squeezed himself into the aisle and unsuccessfully searched in his back trouser pockets. He then pulled his leather briefcase across the table and started rummaging through that.

‘Had a little bit to drink, have we, Sir?’ said the ticket inspector.

‘No, not really, I’ve had a lot to drink.’ He felt proud of his prodigious consumption. ‘Would you like a sip? There’s just a little of the crusty stuff left on the bottom of the bottle. A good Australian red.’

‘We’re from the southern parts, are we, Sir?’
Condescending little shit, thought Sebastian. Still no ticket.
‘You don’t seem to have a ticket, Sir.’

‘Well, it was here, I had it in my hand,’ said Sebastian. He wondered if his words sounded as clear in the ear of the receiver as they did in the mind of the creator.

Perhaps there was a slur but surely it was not detectable.
‘Ah well, just have a drink, will you, while I look.’

‘No, of course I can’t drink, Sir, it is against the rules. The rules are very important, Sir. You must have a ticket otherwise

I will have to charge you, plus a fine.'

'I know where it is now,' said Sebastian.

'Where was that, Sir?'

Sebastian's mind raced. He didn't like the man, he didn't like the situation. Too belittling for one who had just made a serious cosmological discovery. Despite his conviction that wine, the elixir of angels, is a tranquilliser, his aggression level rose. Just as he was about to unleash a torrent of abuse he stumbled upon his ticket.

He looked at a papier-mache sludge on the table. The ticket was part of the sludge. He carefully prised it from the table so as not to disassemble it and passed it gingerly to the inspector who looked ready to kill.

'There we are – ticket intact.'

Without a word the inspector threw the remains of the ticket on the table and walked out. As he whooshed through the exit, in whooshed the voluptuous one.

As the train slowed on entry into Chester station, Sebastian looked up at her and said, 'You're right, he's a prat.'

Passengers started to pour through the far end of the carriage.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. They filed past Sebastian with the determination of psychopathic lemmings. Then through the forward door. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. All in a rush to gain one or two lengths of carriage to beat the masses to the exit gate. (Ha-ha), the train terminated here.

A very intelligent race, Sebastian thought to himself. He settled back in his chair and watched the lemmings traipse after each other. He lifted the Cabernet Sauvignon bottle once more, hoping he could twist and wring it to squeeze out some extra drops. Nothing.

He remembered the tell-tale stains that must be creating a scarlet horn on his top lip. He grabbed a serviette and rubbed his mouth furiously.

Sebastian was now armed with incorrigible faith in his own intellectual ability and profound insight into universal laws brought about by his alcoholic awareness. He was dangerous too, he thought to himself, because of his incredible attraction to others. Not because of his looks. Of course not, although those were passable, but because of his great ability to establish rapport with anybody, even these stiff English.

Gathering his things (forgetting Virginia) he headed, on unsteady legs, to the end door. Whoosh. He struggled to the front of the train. Whoosh three more times. He stepped down onto the concourse at the tail end of the crowd.

And I left him. Sebastian came back into *this* reality.

Then he remembered Virginia. She was still asleep huddled in one corner snoring away with her head against the window. He rushed back on board, sprinted through the now empty carriages and ran to the seat and shook her awake. They had to meet Peter.

‘How are we to recognise Peter?’ asked Virginia, still a little groggy from the train and air travel. But obviously not as groggy as Sebastian who had managed to drink himself into another dimension, completely unobserved by Virginia.

‘He said to look for someone who just looks, well, typically British. Dressed in a Harris Tweed jacket, cravat (what an awful mixture), corduroy trousers and brown suede shoes. Clean faced, slightly balding. White (not grey) pushed back hair, dampened with something indescribable. That was the description I was given. I can’t imagine there will be any more than a hundred thousand people who look like that. I did email a photo of yourself and myself. It shouldn’t be too difficult.’

As soon as they passed through the exit gate through the ticket collection, they heard their names called.

‘Sebastian. Virginia’. There wasn’t much of a waiting crowd at all. And there he stood replete with jacket (even with

leather elbow pads), corduroy trousers, suede shoes, a cravat and of course white pushed back hair with a balding front. Yes, his hair had slipped backwards over time; but not with the tell-tale Adelaide bohemian 1960s hippie type ponytail.

‘Welcome to Chester. More importantly. Welcome, shortly, to the Gladstone Library. Or St Deiniol’s as it used to be called.’

They all shook hands. Very English-like. No European kisses on each cheek.

They headed towards a black cab. ‘Oh, are we getting a taxi to St Deiniol’s?’ asked Sebastian.

‘It isn’t very far at all; it should only be fifteen or twenty minutes drive. Driving by taxi here is not very expensive. Cheaper than bringing a private car. You probably expected a Jag or Roller. Sit back, relax and let me shortly introduce you to the famous, well, maybe not so famous, Gladstone Library.’

Settling into the back of the taxi Sebastian asked. ‘Well is it Lord Peter or Sir Peter?’

A studious look swept across the newfound colleague’s face. ‘Call me Peter. My background is irrelevant. There is a long line of dukes in my family with a special reference to Gladstone’s Library or St Deiniol’s Library as it was known up to 2010. You seem to know that bit anyway. I will give you more information later on.

‘Actually at the Library itself. I will show you around.

‘Regarding myself. Yes, I do come from, or at least, have links with the aristocracy. But as you will soon find out I have a lot of reasons to regret those links. And they have reasons to regret me also having those links. You are Australian. I am English. You’re an anti-monarchist I believe. So am I. But that is a far more dangerous position for me in the UK than it is for you in Australia. But again more about that later. A lot more.’

Peter turned directly to Virginia who was sitting in the backseat with him.

Sebastian had taken the dickie seat in the back of the cab. 'I heard about your WOW factor. Good thing, those satellite phones. I heard about it from Sebastian while you were asleep on your flight. Some important links there. You and your colleague, I believe her name was Eleanor, have done some good research. But evidently there has been a catastrophic finale. I believe Eleanor has been murdered.'

'Yes,' responded Virginia. Just the one word answer. It emphasised the catastrophe of the murder of someone close.

'And what really *was* the WOW factor, although I do have an inkling of it?'

Virginia hesitated and then said, 'The WOW factor, in itself, is just a recognition by many that we did have direct communication some years ago with an extra-terrestrial intelligence that inhabits a planet, presumably similar to ours, some thirty or forty light years away.

'But the WOW factor for us was an interpretation that Eleanor made of a message picked up by radio telescopes. In essence the translated version of the radio message was a warning that we are probably more than ten times over a liveable planet's maximum population; that our devouring of resources is not sustainable (evidently like the originators of this message); our technology is advancing exponentially and we should be exploiting that technology; an elite group should own that technology and prevail over all our species to save the world.

'Sounds a bit science-fictiony doesn't it? Anyway we read that as a formula for some sort of elite world government. The translations are a bit loose with fairly obvious hidden agenda; well maybe not so hidden! Also there are some who believe that WOW is *not* an extra-terrestrial comment at all. It is a terrestrial comment. It is a set up.'

Sebastian interrupted, 'Also *I* don't believe it is an extra-terrestrial comment. But then again, nobody would waste their

time on this as a practical joke. Somehow it is just too trite. Too clear. It is a deception planted deep. It is there to be discovered.

‘But it must be linked to something else. Probably something much more sinister. I am confused by the whole thing.’

Peter sighed, ‘Please, wait a while. Wait until we have dinner together tonight, in private. I might be able to throw some light on this whole thing. Virginia *you* are right. There *are* conspiracies afoot. But there are *other* conspiracies like you have never imagined. The extent and number of them is ludicrous. Some of the material your political party, your OWL, has put forward is fascinating. You talk of multiple, never-ending conspiracies being created and perpetuated by the press to inure people *against* conspiracy. Sounds crazy, yes? Certain conspiracies *are* real. By presenting a lot of facts *as* conspiracies, the public will dismiss those facts as rubbish; dismiss them when in fact they are true. And there is always a reason!’

‘That’s exactly what we have been thinking for a long time,’ exclaimed Sebastian.

The taxi went quiet. After a short trip from Chester Station they arrived at the grand grounds of St Deiniol’s Library. They stopped short of the main entrance in what seemed to Sebastian and Virginia to be an archetypal English country manor. There was a well-manicured lawn at the front of the main entrance. Ostensibly the building appeared to be a two storey construction; conceivably with lofts or high ceilings on the top floor. All very exciting. Perhaps even mysterious.

‘Come. Let us look around,’ said Peter.

They walked through the building. Virginia paid special attention to the sumptuous Victorian drawing room. It had a huge log fire, squeaky wooden floors, leather armchairs, shelves and shelves of homey, popular books; but also a few

things that bothered Virginia. There seemed to be a well-stated religious side to St Deiniol's. However if there was a strong faith side apparent to other guests or to the institution itself, none of it felt repressive. Virginia noted that St Deiniol's seemed as liberal as it was Christian. On Peter's encouragement she was led to believe the whole notion of the Library and the bed and breakfast was committed to the Gladstonian ideals of human rights and inclusiveness and dialogue between faiths.

But she noted with some discomfort what appeared to be a new Islamic studies reading room, encouraging dialogue between Islam and Christianity. The many Gladstonian portraits staring down from every wall gave a sternness to the place that did not connect with the promise of human rights and inclusiveness. A ripple of anxiety, a tense few seconds, perhaps a harbinger, perhaps tiredness combined with the unfamiliarity of the place. This permeated the sombreness of the atmosphere.

For dinner, Peter invited them to the communal canteen. Not quite the meal they had expected. Tasty, with lots of salads, soup and healthy fare, such as vegetarian lasagne and fish pie. Brain food, Bertie Wooster would have said. The communal room did enable them a quiet corner where they were able to carry out secret conversations. Sebastian and Virginia stayed for a long, long time, listening with ever increasing awe at what Peter had to say. All against the dancing light and now flickering flames from the fireplace.

Chapter 22

Conspiracies Half Explained

I know all about conspiracies. I conspire. I have thought about them and written about them many times. Take the following. It is a brief discussion between a daughter and Rupert, her father. This takes place far into the future in a dimension not yet envisioned. However, it might enlighten the reader as to why there *is* a word conspiracy.

‘The ultimate in virtual reality,’ she had said, ‘was the book. The written word. It leaves all other forms of communication for dead. With the written word the mind takes control of the experience, it is as real as the mind can make it. Why, father,’ she had almost pleaded, ‘don’t you promote the book as a great way forward? Why don’t you re-establish its might? Even man in his final days still prized the book as the greatest medium of expression and transmission of knowledge, thought and ideas ... especially fiction.’

As usual Rupert had exploited literature as a form of mental manipulation of the masses. He had gone on to argue that to introduce AARDVARK¹³³ to another species, he would

¹³³ *Greenwars*, Sydney, Abbott Bentley. pages 164, 165 AARDVARK is the acronym for Accelerated Animal Reasoning, Decision-making, Voicing And Reflective Kinetics. It gives selected animals the power to speak. This section highlights the whole notion of ‘word’; and the power of the written and specific word. The characters referred to, Rupert, etc are drawn from this satirical scene in the *Greenwars* novel. You might wish to read it.

write as though it was already happening so that people would believe it was fiction. ‘This was done by the humans, you know. We never did get to the bottom of it but it seems that alien cultures from other planets *really* were here on earth. So it’s been said that the government, to cover this reality, conspired with film-makers and other fiction creators to write many science fiction stories that were realistic. But then, knowing the nature of the masses, those simple souls would automatically believe the stories were fiction.’

In a similar way Rupert would leave out the fact that AARDVARK was almost inevitably going to occur in the short-term future. ‘So,’ Rupert explained, ‘we had engineered with others so that fiction would become fact. In reality all that was happening was that fiction was being used as a device to lift people’s awareness so that when the facts occurred in their real lives, they would absorb and accept, as unpalatable as it may be, that reality. In other words, unacceptable reality would become familiar to them. They would have internalised it as part of their life, when it really did occur.’

Forgive me, I have digressed. Perhaps too much this time. Even so much the same could be said of other famous conspiracies. Take the assassination of John Kennedy. I have mentioned this before; but not in detail. The facts surrounding the assassination have been discussed extensively by many authors. You will know these to be real, if you have read the right books. Read this, *Final Judgement*¹³⁴. It was written by Michael Collins Piper. It was banned in America. These startling revelations pull together the CIA (the Vietnam War – opposed by John Kennedy); Mossad (at the time it represented

¹³⁴ Piper, Michael Collins. 2005, *Final Judgement: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy*, Sixth Edition, America Free Press, Washington (previously cited)

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the nuclear ambitions of Israel which John Kennedy also opposed); and the Myer Lansky link (he was the Head of Organised Crime in the US and Europe extending back to WW2 and his services in the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in England and Italy). One author says ‘the alliance of forces against John Kennedy was so intense there was really no way Kennedy could have completed his first term in the White House.’ Jack Ruby, the killer of Lee Harvey Oswald, was not just a Mafia member. His real name was Jack Rubenstein and he had strong Israeli connections. It is important to note that Piper says ‘the media was content to churn up every theory (conspiracy) imaginable up to a point. Except one, that Israel was behind the assassination. This is just one of the important conspiracies crafted as fact not fiction this time to ‘throw people off the scent’; to totally confuse them. And why did the media leave out the Israeli connections?

Take our situation right now; this conspiracy is the turning point. It is the one conspiracy that can be proved immediately. It is the harbinger of many other conspiracies that lead, as you will find out, to an inescapable conclusion.

But is it to be world government through a slow democratic process that Sebastian seems to be moving towards? He wants to create and evolve a revolutionary, soft political system, which could take millennia. Or could we bring about the same result through a rapid, dramatic, conclusive intervention that simultaneously eradicates overpopulation, the scourge of the planet. And this doesn’t take millennia. And it’s more in line with *my* thinking now. Maybe I will abandon OWL. Will you follow me if I do? Or follow Sebastian? It’s your call!

Back in Australia, Richard with his financially astute mind and Randall with his global peace associates had secured some

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critical information on behalf of OWL. They had been turning over document after document, following the Rothschild's family and its wealth, to its inception.

Then Richard and Randall found one short incriminating document.

Richard was perspiring profusely although his cavernous office was air conditioned down to fifteen degrees.

Randall looked up. 'A simple email to Sebastian will do. He knows what the Rothschild Formula is. We have discussed it many times before. But this *is* intriguing. No. More than that. It is straight out scary. This document is the shortest vision and mission statement I have ever seen. We need to scan and email this immediately with our explanation.' He glanced again at the piece of paper with the few lines on it.

Top Secret

Corporation: [REDACTED]

Our vision: To maximise our return on government sponsored military projects.

Our mission: Simply to support the Rothschild Formula.

'Does he need a copy of the Rothschild Formula?'

Richard replied, 'I'm not sure if he actually knows the formula but he certainly is very aware of it. 'It doesn't hurt. It is only five short paragraphs. Let's put it in.'

1. War is the ultimate discipline of any government. If it can successfully meet the challenge of war it will survive. If it cannot, it will perish.

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2. A government will expand its debt to involve itself in war or the threat of war. The greater the threat, the greater the war, the greater the need for debt.
3. To involve a country in war ... it is necessary for it to have enemies. If the enemy does not exist it will be necessary to create one by financing the rise of a hostile regime.
4. The ultimate obstacle is a government which declines to finance its wars through debt. This seldom happens. When it does it is necessary to encourage internal political opposition, insurrection or revolution.
5. No nation can remain militarily stronger than its adversaries for that could lead to peace and a reduction of debt. To accomplish this balance of power it may be necessary to finance both sides of conflicts.

Randall continued. ‘This is top-secret shit, you know that. Private companies. No obligation. No need for transparency. And they are silly enough to put out a vision and mission statement that falls through the cracks. I only found it on the Internet because of the work of one of our top young hackers. Nobody else would be privy to it. It clearly goes to demonstrate that world peace is an impossibility, the way things are now –’

‘Yeah’, Richard butted in. ‘And guess what. Reveal this to the public and what will they say? Just another conspiracy. They have been fed *Mission Impossible*, Dan Brown, and other conspiracy facilitators for years. No one would believe a word of it.’

Randall moved on, ‘I am sure all this stuff is linked. I can see the cycle has started. Griffin demonstrated this in his Jekyll

island book.¹³⁵ It is all there for everybody to see. More than twenty editions. But as usual the book got canned, by leading authorities at least. They just said it was, guess what, conspiracy theory.’

‘I had another look through Griffins’ book.’ Richard said. ‘*This* is really scary.

‘It’s Rothschild formula part two. Ironically I do think we have to link this somewhere. He talks about a think tank study released in 1966. Yes, 1966. This is more than half a century ago. The book talks about the point where war technically would be impossible. The report explores *other* ways of controlling populations. The finding was that a new enemy was required. What came out of it, that was convincing to the think tank, was that an environmental pollution model worked.

‘Manifestations of pollution like smog, water pollution, and so on, based partly on facts and therefore credible, showed scenarios could be created that were just as horrible as atomic warfare. He suggests the followers of the current environmental movement are preoccupied with visions of planetary ‘doom’ through pollution. But the oligarchical leaders have an entirely different agenda. It is world government, leveraging off the Rothschild’s approach.’

Randall added, ‘You can see how hard it is to get my peace movement across to people. A movement based on positive economic outcomes, based on the fact that there are peace industries that create positive multipliers, unlike arms deals.

‘We always said that OWL would be the party that represents truth, transparency and collaborative decision

¹³⁵ Griffin, Edward G. 2009. *The Creature from Jekyll Island: A Second Look at the Federal Reserve*, American Media, West Lake Village California – already referred to.

making policy. My problem is I don't think the powers give a shit as to whether their conspiracies will be unravelled or not. They have stitched it up. This is where the press barons come into it. It *has* to be them promulgating the notion that certain factual situations are conspiracies. And it is all to do with the power of the word and that's why Eleanor has been, well, assassinated. That's why Virginia did have a point.

'I hope Sebastian is as shit scared as we are with the implications of all this. Just imagine extraordinarily powerful and wealthy families who can effectively own a nuclear submarine. They own nuclear armaments. They own nuclear bombs. They build and sell them for God's sake, like some people manufacture and sell lawnmowers. All these people and all these contracts are supposed to be accountable to the government. But how can that be, when the government changes every few years? And these private companies owned by the wealthy elite have been in existence for decades, even centuries. Remember there is no requirement for transparency. How can this be when pork barrelling is rife?'

Richard exclaimed, 'What can OWL do apart from raise the consciousness of the masses? To do that we need to go through the media. But if the media is part of the machine that keeps the masses in ignorance we will have no hope. Perhaps the only, very only, channel that will help us is *social* media, before that gets owned too by the wealthy elite. We already know from Eleanor, and what she found at the Library of Congress, even their twitter announcements are monitored, probably by the CIA which is as corrupt as all hell anyway.'

Simultaneously, somewhere else in Australia, Mack and Floyd were struggling with a policy. Unknown to them their struggle was insightful into a particularly dark world. Forces were at play that they knew nothing about.

Mack was good at political flim flam. So too the political

profundities. He had been working with Floyd trying to get to grips with a draft policy for OWL in the health area.

Mack poked Floyd. 'We have been through all this before a hundred times. What is happening now? We have an enormous amount of people who are on pensions.

This is the result of the baby boomers. They are all so bloody healthy. Why can't we raise the retirement age from say sixty-five to seventy or even further. Everybody is talking about it. But there is no incentive to do this from the boomers point of view. Insurance companies increase premiums for total and permanent disability and even for death after the age of sixty-five to such an extent it becomes ludicrously expensive. Get the insurance companies to play ball. Get them to accept that everybody is healthier and reflect that in their actuarial figures.

'But there are much more sinister aspects to all of this. Have a look at some of the leading figures in the world and their life expectancy. Look at the royal families; well our so-called Royal Family in particular. Look too at some of our media barons who live to extraordinarily ripe ages. They are active and fully cognisant the whole time. If you looked at invisible investments into medical research and extensions to longevity in a real sense, not just increases in *average* life expectancy, there are some conclusions which are hard to avoid. The elite is definitely living a lot longer and staying active the whole way through. Therein lays a good topic for investigation by OWL.

'Identify who the elites are. Assume because of their money and contacts they have access to the best medical research on the planet. Look at their level of health and their ages. Compare that to the masses. I have a sneaking suspicion of what the significant statistical outcomes will be.'

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From: H.E

Subject: Comment on cyborgs

To: G.G

Yes I know what a cyborg is.
Extending human capability through
biomechanics. We have been doing it
for decades. Knee replacements, hip
replacements, insulin pumps,
pacemakers and so on. I've had the
lot, and more.

I expect further exponential
development in that area to my
deserved, privileged benefit ASAP.
And of course with your help.

We can truly say we have transcended
the animal kingdom when we do not
enter consciousness and the cosmos by
dropping out of a uterus. Until then,
those who do are still truly animals.

Even in my generation, in my caste,
we will become homo-supra-sapiens,
very shortly.

Human evolution in action. This
reminds me, I have a meeting at the
clinic next week. Do your usual.

Chapter 23

Death in a Library Again

Peter stood in front of the huge fireplace. Sebastian looked at Virginia with a vibrant warmth that exceeded that of the room's inferno. He was just finishing the last few mouthfuls of his main course. He had a particular type of relationship with her now. The initial years with her were of unrequited lust. Increased compassion towards her had been forged after the last few years as a colleague and fellow adventurer, creating a bond stronger than that of a mere joining of loins; which unfortunately had never happened. Just a familiarity perhaps. No there was more to it than that!

Peter had initially chatted amicably about the library. He then emphasised his lack of confidence in the established and special libraries that presumably were holding books in trust for human civilisation. The Google attempt, which at least was visible, in digitising every book on the planet, was unnerving to him. He was clearly troubled that the notion of human thought and indeed culture was being lost to those he said who 'owned the word'. He wasn't specific. It was then he directed his gaze to Virginia and dropped his bombshell.

They were sipping away at a rich and blood warming tawny port. Although only three of them were dining, Peter still clinked his dessertspoon against his half drained coffee cup. For Sebastian and Virginia this meant some serious discussion.

'Have you heard of the Bilderberg Group, the Bilderberg Club or the Bilderberg conference?'

'Can't say I have,' said Sebastian.

'Nor I,' chimed in Virginia.

‘It started in Holland in 1954¹³⁶ with an original conference of some fifty or so people at a hotel called The Bilderberg. Ostensibly it was a conference at which leaders of European countries and the United States were brought together to try and address what appeared at the time, to be growing anti-Americanism in Western Europe. It has now turned into an annual, unofficial, invitation only conference that attracts nearly 120 to 150 people of influence, from Western Europe and North America. It is closed to the public.

‘Herein lies one of the problems. Some would argue the Bilderberg Group is a meeting ground for the elites, for top executives from the worlds’ leading multi-national corporations and top national political figures. They meet to consider immediate and long-term problems facing the West. Historically the attendee list has been weighted towards bankers, politicians and directors of very large businesses.

‘There is a lot of secrecy. So anything I say is to be taken with a grain of salt. Not because I am fabricating it. But because it is hard to get accurate information on the club. From its inception, the club, that is elites in the West, have come together because they believed the United Nations was no longer controlled by western powers.

‘The meeting venues involved are inaccessible for any other guest for the full period of the conferences. Private security staff as well as local police authorities and secret service representatives keep everything in check. Journalists attempting to cover news of the conference have been subjected to reprisals, particularly from the local police.

¹³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilderberg_Group. 09/02/12. Don’t be too churlish about using Wikipedia as a starting point. Even if academia holds it in disdain. This book is to make you quickly aware, not to become an academic. Heaven forbid!

‘Now let me guide you through the conspiracy theories. The reason, according to one of the group for secrecy, is for meetings to provide an opportunity for participants to speak and debate candidly, to find out what major figures really think about global matters without the risk of off-the-cuff comments becoming fodder for controversy for the media. Those on the left accuse the Bilderberg Group of a conspiracy to impose capitalist domination. Those on the right have accused the group of conspiring to impose a world government through a planned economy. The conspirators, or perhaps we might call them the realists, suggest the Bilderberg meetings are a corporate, globalist scheme composed of powerful elites moving the planet towards an oligarchy and a new world order. That seems the same, for both left and the right, as far as I am concerned. Interesting to note that one of the Bilderberg Group founders, and for thirty years a Steering Committee member said, and I will read this to you, “To say we were striving for a one world government is exaggerated, but not wholly unfair. Those of us in Bilderberg thought we couldn’t go on forever fighting one another for nothing and killing people and rendering millions homeless. So we thought that a single community throughout the world would be a good thing”. One chap, a certain James McConnachie, suggested the conspiracy theorists have a point. Occasionally you have to give credit to conspiracy theorists who raise issues that the mainstream press ignores.

‘What’s important is that only months ago, one example from a supposed mole in the Bilderbergs, revealed how powerful the group can be.

‘Evidently these Bilderberg elites¹³⁷ were concerned that the American Congress would turn against what was considered the illegal and immoral invasion under the humanitarian cover by NATO and the UN, against North African dictator, Gadaffi. Accurate predictions were made that were going to denounce President Obama’s war on Libya as being unconstitutional; but of course it still went ahead. They suggested that at that time the elites were pushing for a wider war and incalculable suffering in the Middle East.

‘There seems to be links between these extraordinarily wealthy elites, like the Rothschilds who also, incidentally, financed the Prussian War, the Crimean War, British attempts

¹³⁷ The most recent, and a very important concern, apparently something supported by the Bilderbergs, are two bills introduced to the Senate (in the USA) endangering a free and open Internet, S.773: Cyber Security Act 2009 and S.778. (read <http://www.infowars.com/breaking-secret-bilderberg-agenda-leaked-by-mole/print/> 12/02/12) Various other acts have also tried using such things as copyright infringement as a smoke screen to take down web domains and institute rolling censorship on the Internet. There was one journalist, reporting on the Bilderbergs, who said these globalists are not opposed to the Internet when it is a corporatised money making instrument. But they are opposed to an open, free and unregulated Internet where alternative media opposed to the globalistic ambitions are allowed to thrive. Just take the example of Putin’s government (read Shuster, Simon (2014), *Plotting Putin’s Downfall*, Time Magazine, 13th October, p 41). The day before Khodorkofsky launched Open Russia, via an online video conference with his supporters, the Kremlin announced a plan to cut Russia off from the Internet in case of an online threat.

to seize the Suez Canal from the French, the Mexican War and the Civil War in the US. Startling stuff when you start to think about it.'

'Imagine if the public read about this,' Virginia suggested, 'and didn't think it was another conspiracy.'

'Yes, and here is the thing. The Bilderbergs manipulate their minions, who are our elected representatives and appointed government officials,' continued Peter. 'The ploy now is to get people to see that the Internet will ultimately be used as a terrorist weapon of mass destruction and therefore needs to be tightly regulated for our safety, *of course*. In addition there are the financial manipulations. Let me read you an article from the secret Bilderberg agenda.' Peter drew a sheath of crumpled paper from the inside top pocket of his jacket. 'I am quoting one anonymous source who said "the plan is to take down national sovereignty, impose drastic austerity measures, hold fire sales on national assets, consolidate wealth and power, and use an endless crisis to usher in world government, a one world currency and a sprawling high tech police state". Think of Greece. Does it sound familiar? And this was said three or so years ago.'

'Now Sebastian, now Virginia, I believe this is pretty scary stuff and it goes back to something you said, Virginia. At some stage the greatest weapon for those who do something in secret is to encourage a plethora of conspiracy theories, the more the better. The more conspiracies, the easier it is to hide the real intent of any organisation. There is no doubt in my mind that there is a world elite. It is extremely powerful and extremely wealthy *and* most importantly invisible. I am not so worried about the press barons because they too are minions. They, the oligarchs, use the press to keep on maintaining all the dramas we mortals in life see as mere shadowy conspiracies rather than actual fact. And they get knighthoods and lordships for their loyalty. The risks we have with this I

am sure we have discussed before. Ultimately conspiracy becomes fact. But by the time it does the world is in a state of acquiescence with respect to that conspiracy.

‘But here comes the really big bit of news. So far what I have told you is just the entrée.

‘I have already said I am an anti-monarchist. And that can be extremely dangerous in this country. Why am I an anti-monarchist? And this relates back to your particular country. And perhaps it relates to the creation of OWL. There are things afoot here that are really scary. And please remember that our monarchs are well versed in murder and intrigue. They have been doing it for centuries. And still do. Don’t forget Diana. Remember hers was an “unlawful killing”. And not the result of paparazzi entanglement as claimed. They weren’t even present at the accident scene.’

Peter paused for dramatic effect. Virginia and Sebastian looked at each other. They *were* intrigued and both had raised eyebrows.

‘I have given you both a copy of a paper *The Inter-Alpha Group*.¹³⁸ You might want to read it to see the extent to which these conspiracies go. Politics is a tool for the powerful and elite financiers who run the world.’

Virginia interrupted, ‘I have only just read; and I can’t remember where, I should have noted it. Only 62 people on this planet control or actually own fifty percent of the world’s wealth. That *is* scary. That number of 62 includes a significant number of royalty, I am sure.’

Sebastian added, ‘I’ve read some different figures in *Time*. That was quite recent. But it points in the same direction. The 85 richest people in the world had the same

¹³⁸ http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2010/3736inter-alpha_genocide.html, 2/02/2012

amount of wealth as the bottom 50 percent of the global population. It's a bit sick isn't it?'

Peter waited for the interruptions to stop and continued, 'But there is one important point here that I want to bring to your attention. This one has got me into a lot of trouble. It has been well documented how the Royal Family created the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) which in turn began the drive for the Green party, which in itself is a manifestation of the previously mentioned 1966 prediction by Griffin that the whole green movement, pollution and over-population, as being the key driver in world government. So in 1964 the Duke of Edinburgh, that is Prince Phillip, created the ACF as a subsidiary of the World Wildlife Foundation¹³⁹ which has already been mentioned. It was in the same year as the Queen's Christmas broadcast which left no doubt Phillips' green crusade was a Royal Family affair and which ranked 'over-population' as a first on her list of the world's major problems (and that is probably true). All these things were interlinked.'

'Jeez', Sebastian interrupted again, 'Wouldn't the Greens want to cover that up!'

¹³⁹ The Bilderberg Group was first set up by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. I did read he had been a card carrying Nazi and a member of Hitler's SS. This is the interesting bit. The same guy also founded, with the UK's Prince Phillip (also suspected of being a Nazi, or Nazi sympathiser in his youth), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (read Author unknown, *The British Crown Created Green Facism*, News Citizen, Vol 6, October/November 2011) in conjunction with some others who had been part of the Wildlife Conservation Special Committee in 1945. More about this later. This conspiracy stuff goes on forever, and ever and ever.

Peter held up his hand and continued. ‘But it goes even further. In 2012 a certain Craig Isherwood and others went to press. He said the British Empire has been planning, throughout the post World War II era the destruction of the world’s fiscal economy. This would in turn plunge the world’s population to one billion or fewer people – with the intention of securing permanent rule over the planet. I am not too sure precisely what this means. But it sounds like a resurgence of a feudal society. I am sure he is also talking about thermo nuclear war.

‘There is evidence to suggest many of the western nations, in particular the US, are looking at first strike capabilities with covert British support. This *would*, have the effect of reducing world population to what evidently Prince Phillip would consider a reasonable level of sustainability. Perhaps he is right. But I am sure there are better ways of fixing the world pollution problem and achieving global population sustainability rather than knocking out five or six billion people with a quick thermo-nuclear war.’

Dazed, Virginia and Sebastian looked at each other. They were speechless.

Peter went on. ‘Look it’s time now for some sleep. If you get a chance in the morning flick through those notes I have given you. It is engaging, if not scary stuff. But it is also well documented. Anybody can access it. It is just a matter of Googling the key words. That’s probably one of the reasons these imperial powers, these oligarchs, these elites, want to have control over the Internet.’

There was a long pause. ‘Okay guys. Thanks for listening. It is time to turn in now. I will see you for breakfast; a late breakfast indeed. You have travelled a long way. You need your rest. Let’s meet around nine here for, what I hope, is a hearty breakfast. Good night all.’

Peter swept out of the room leaving Sebastian and

Virginia alone.

‘I have got a nice bottle of Australian Cabernet Merlot in my room,’ said Virginia as they walked back to their rooms. Fortunately they had been able to secure contiguous rooms. ‘I brought it all the way from Australia. Just especially for you.’

Sebastian was surprised. ‘Where will we drink it?’ ‘My room of course.’

‘Time for a shower?’ he asked. ‘I was getting uncomfortably hot at dinner. That blazing fire really generated some heat.’

‘Go for it. I will do the same,’ responded Virginia

Sebastian was in his room. There was a strange, almost uneasy feeling of anticipation. He had never been invited to Virginia’s room before. He had always invited himself under some sort of pretext. His libido was fully charged. As he undressed for the shower he remembered his flaccid fifties. Something foreboding was going to happen tonight. If anything *could* happen tonight. He desperately wanted it to. He would need rigidity. He rummaged through his shower bag. He found what he was seeking. He pulled a plastic capsule from the bag and split it in half. Here was his salvation. The big dose 20mcg2 Caverject Impulse Injection. He prised out a pink capped needle and attached it to a syringe barrel. He twisted the plunger handle until it read 1.5 milligrams. A white powdery substance appeared in the cylinder. It quickly dissolved. He held his penis in his left hand. He slowly pushed the needle in until it was up to the hilt. He pushed down the plunger. Then he stepped into the shower and lathered himself vigorously. Instant erection.

It is important for an assassin to choose the right weapon. Something lethal. Something that will penetrate tissue. The hunched figure rummaged through his briefcase sitting on the passenger seat of his car. He had parked on the gravel driveway about fifty metres or so from St Deiniol’s entrance.

He was hidden in the darkness and held a small torch in his mouth. He found the kebab skewer. He lightly touched the sharp end and smiled to himself. He got out of his car, nonchalantly.

Crunching the gravel beneath his feet intensified his excitement.

He liked Pierre Cardin suits, not handcrafted Italian Tombolini's – too ostentatious. He travelled business class or first; but never first on an A380 – too luxurious. He liked a crisp Sauvignon Blanc, not a Dom Perignon. He liked soufflés – not flambéed crepe suzettes – too in your face. No, his disguise of nonchalance would never work in a world of luxury, even though his frequent hundred thousand dollar assignments meant he could afford it.

He knew the main entrance would be open. There was little to no security at St Deiniol's. It was the centre of education; civilisation with a touch of relaxed innocence.

Sebastian was only lightly dressed in his dressing gown, a t-shirt and loose fitting silk shorts. He could feel a tumescence growing beneath the silk. He tapped lightly on Virginia's door and she opened it. Her black negligee magnified her curvaceousness to a point of sensual absurdity. She had a glass of red wine in her hand. As Sebastian moved into the room she walked to the side of the room and picked up another glass of red wine. She offered it to Sebastian with an alluring 'take off your dressing gown.'

Sebastian was confused. Nevertheless he took off his dressing gown and sat next to her on the bed; a glass of red wine in hand. As did she. She whispered, 'My God how many more conspiracies can the universe take? What an evening.'

Both glasses of red wine were put on the table at the side of the bed. They lay back on the bed, Virginia sliding the negligee over her head at the same time.

The assassin moved noiselessly. Checking each room as

he went. There were only twenty or so to check. He knew the room number he wanted. A brass number thirteen on a wooden panelled door was the answer (Thirteen. How ironic, he thought). He tapped slightly on the door. No answer. He turned the door handle. It turned easily and the door opened silently. Such an idiotic lack of security here. He stepped into the darkness and switched on his torch. Peter was lying on his back snoring, completely oblivious. The assassin sat on the bed and placed both his hands around Peter's neck and started the inevitable throttling. Peter's eyes flicked open with a momentary consciousness. There was that brief one-second-eternity that his frenzied brain tried to interpret. The assassin muttered, 'Conspiracy. What conspiracy? Which conspiracy? You die.' Peter lost consciousness. The assassin then put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the skewer. With one swift movement he drove it into Peter's left ear. There was a crack, like a spoon breaking the ice-like toffee on top of a crème brulee. He drove it until the skewer handle was all that could be seen. There was a death twitch from Peter. He withdrew it, wiped the blood onto the toilet paper he had brought with him. He moved to the ensuite toilet and flushed the paper away. The skewer went back into his pocket and silently he left the room. He nonchalantly walked back to his vehicle, gravel crunching again, and drove into the night.

Virginia was miraculous. There was no massage tonight. Neither uttered a word. He was able to plunge into a pool of fantasy he had longed for, for so many years. Both Virginia's legs reached one giant orgasmic twitch. Sebastian was silently elated. He was graciously thankful for such a momentous occasion. And Virginia whispered.

'Oh, what have we got ourselves into?'

Was that guilt from a loveless but torrid union.

'What comes next?' Virginia whispered. They both ignored the sound of an incoming email on Virginia's iPhone.

Sebastian replied emphatically. ‘Love. And more love.’

He knew Virginia well. He didn’t stay. He kissed her on both breasts and her forehead and quietly left the room. As he did so, he whispered to her. ‘Tomorrow I think is going to be a very strange day.’ Virginia seemed not to be listening.

Sebastian was confused, as he walked to his room.

Crimson blood flowed from the lifeless body of Peter and spread out onto the pillow, then dripped down to the sheet.

Conspiracies are facts presented initially as fiction, depending on the significance of the illusion. The more important, and no doubt scurrilous the matter, the greater the illusion. Then time acts to transmute fiction into fact, slowly and imperceptibly. This conveys shadowy conspiracy into known reality. Remove the lies about a truth and it becomes truth incontrovertible (when the time is right of course). Then another plot, amongst many, unknown to the masses, is strengthened and despair within humanity is deepened.

Sebastian’s head was hurting. It was all too complex. All too hard.

Chapter 24

Hi Tech, Low Tech

At first only an infinitesimal tinge of guilt touched his conscience. Sebastian lay on the bed looking through the window at the orange striations across the morning sky. He remembered his mother's mantra. 'Red sky at night shepherd's delight. Red sky in the morning shepherd's warning.'

Then to poison his slumber a thunderous banging on his bedroom door. 'Open up, open up, it's the police.'

Dressed in shorts only, Sebastian stumbled to the door. Totally confused.

Instantaneous thoughts. A moment of extreme panic. Police, police, St Deiniol's, doesn't make sense. He pulled the door open.

'We need you to come immediately.' A burly middle-aged man in a suit bellowed. He was with two other uniformed police.

'What the hell for? I am only half dressed. At least wait until I put my dressing gown on.'

'Now. Dressing gown. Yes. But now.'

He tried to warn Virginia, punching her bedroom door as he passed. He was marched down past room thirteen. The door was wide open. There were three uniformed policemen standing in the corridor. He was briskly moved along but for a split second could see Peter lying on the bed. A trail of blood from his right ear had left a coagulated trickle over his pillow and onto the floor.

'What the fuck has happened?' was all Sebastian could gasp.

'That's what we were going to ask you. We know from

the people in the restaurant last night that you were the last person with him, you and a woman, I believe.'

'Yes, Virginia. So what? What the hell is going on?'

'Well, you just saw didn't you? He has been murdered.'

Sebastian's mind flashed back to the Library of Congress. To Eleanor's death. This wasn't a mere coincidence. Panic-stricken, Sebastian was lost for words. He looked back in amazement at the door of room thirteen which had now been closed.

The endless, inane, interrogatory police questioning began. Once he had regained his wits Sebastian offered, possibly too flippantly 'this is an assassination.'

'An assassination over what?' questioned one of the uniformed policeman.

Sebastian had no idea what rank his inquisitor was. He avoided the police as much as he possibly could in real life. 'Well, it was hardly a crime of passion.'

'How do you know?' was the quick retort.

More and more inane questioning. And finally they got onto Virginia. 'Where is she?' One demanded.

'In her room, obviously,' Sebastian replied, somewhat sarcastically. They headed down the corridor, this time with just two policemen.

They were in her room for quite a long time. She basically repeated everything he had said. No motive. No opportunity. And so on and so on. They were in the clear.

No mention of conspiracies. Just libraries, books and the uniqueness of St Deiniol's.

The police left the room. Sebastian and Virginia were alone.

'Look at this.' Virginia clicked on the laptop and directed Sebastian's attention towards the screen and looked at Peter's obvious last message of his life.

OWL: ONE WORLD LEAGUE

From: Peter
Subject: WOW!
To: Virginia

Hi Virginia (and Sebastian),

Forgot to tell you what I think about WOW. I'm convinced the message is contrived. Yes, here on earth. That's fact.

But let's get the extra-terrestrial conspiracy into play. Let's go along with them. Same formula. But this time in reverse. This time the conspiracy will be seen as fact, up front, faster than usual. Then we will show it is actually fiction. At least the extra-terrestrial bit. Not the depopulation bit.

Get the message out. Depopulate or perish. So say the aliens ... Then reveal what I said about the Royal Family. And their Green leagues. Prince Phillip's legacy? Perhaps. If we believe what we read. This will drive a stake into the hearts of the elites. It's all to do with words, Virginia. You've got it right. I'll tell you more at breakfast.

Regards, Peter

Sebastian had a weird look on his face. His expression seemed to morph into a grimace with exhilaration. 'We really *are* onto something. This whole thing about the word is really compelling,' he said.

'I have been thinking about this for some time. I know what to do. We keep on telling everybody how OWL is going

to use, and has been using, very successfully, social media. We always said we would do this. *Now* we can start truly exploiting it. And oh, you're going on YouTube.'

'What do you mean *I* am going on YouTube?' asked Virginia.

'Look at the camera on your laptop. We can record and transmit from here. And I am going to go right back to basics. I am starting to get really pissed off with the mounting conspiracies. Everybody's misunderstanding or lack of understanding or lack of interest in them. And my frustrations. We are going to go back to basics.

'Back to primary school teaching. We are going to use flashcards.'

Sebastian looked at Virginia and said, 'Try scripting this for me, Virginia and we will get it out today; here at St Deiniol's.' He started to dictate spontaneously.

'One of OWL's key players is going to ask all supporters to start doing some work to really help us. Please just look at the words about to be presented to you. Then *you* start the Google process. You start the exploration. And you start feeding the information back to us at OWL. We will aggregate your intelligence through the wonders of social media as we always promised to do. Here is the first flashcard.'

'Have you got that Virginia? That's what I want you to say on screen, with your beautiful, photogenic face and mellifluous voice. How's that for a loaded request ... '

There was an uneasy but tranquil nod of acquiescence from Virginia.

'I will start writing down the flashcards.' Sebastian moved to the desk at the side of the room and picked some of the St Deiniol's notepad material. It was only a half a dozen pages. 'Just enough,' he said, 'just enough. Six key elements or prompts.'

'The first one is "WOW factor". The second is

“Rothschild Formula”. He was scribbling them down. Here is the third, “the Bilderbergs”. ‘Here’s the fourth, “Inter-Alpha Group”. Now five and six. “George Soros”. And the last one. “Get Up”.

‘Actually write down “GetUp!” I think that is right,’

‘Let’s get these onto some actual pieces of cardboard and use thick marker pens to write them out. Let’s do it this morning. This is a library. I am sure we can borrow these meagre requirements. If this simple trick doesn’t put the cat amongst the pigeons nothing will.

‘These conspiracies are getting so convoluted, even we, who are dedicated to openness and transparency, can’t keep pace. Let’s get the world to work for us. Back to Surowiecki.¹⁴⁰ Remember he proved the many are smarter than the few. That’s why democracy really works. Yes. The last bastion of democracy is social media.

‘Let’s get it to work not only for us but for the population at large ... And do it before they take away the Internet.’

Virginia looked dumbfounded. Sebastian worked so rapidly when he was on a roll. It was as though he had completely forgotten Peter’s lifeless body and a platoon of police only metres away.

‘So what you want me to do is to stand there and hold up primary school flashcards to inspire the world,’ she said. ‘And what the hell is GetUp?’

‘GetUp! could well be another interconnected and dangerous group. All part of the global conspiracy or

¹⁴⁰ Surowiecki, is previously referenced. If you have forgotten he is the author of *The Wisdom of Crowds* and extolled the virtues of the aggregated intelligence emanating from groups of people working on problems, rather than individual experts. If you haven’t read some of his work, do it now!

conspiracies ... On the way over here, believe it or not, in a Qantas in-flight magazine,¹⁴¹ I read about this guy Madden and another one called Heimans being the co-founders of this global activist group. They say they are not partisan and will help society have a voice.'

Virginia interrupted. 'That bit sounds like what we are trying to do.'

'Yes, but then again if you do believe what you read there is some interesting stuff that has come out of other sources about GetUp!.'

'It claims it is non-partisan but in another article¹⁴² I have read the original board members include the then, Australian Unions Workers secretary, and now, Prime Minister, Bill Shorten. The article mentions some other people. But by far the largest donor to Get Up in 2010 with a donation of \$1.2 million was the CFMEU. A very powerful union in Australia. I am not saying its members are not well meaning people. But the trouble is the group, that is the GetUp! organisation, utilises the funding it gets to push a particular agenda that we already know, or think, is a bit weird. In 2008, Canadian Minister John Baird labelled this activist group. "A shadowy foreign organisation tied to billionaire George Soros." I have read some stuff that comes out of an interview from a Steve Croft and the research he did on Soros and it's not pretty.

'Basically he is saying Soros was born 'Schwartz'; and with a different first name too. He was wandering around with Adolf Eichmann, still only in his early teens, confiscating

¹⁴¹ June 2012, Qantas Vol, 135 (the airline's inflight magazine). A real article on real people. Check it out.

¹⁴²http://voiceofthepeoplelobbygroup.com/2011/may/getup_organisation_exposed.htm 2/02/2012

property from the Jews in Hungary. Evidently in a television interview he in fact said that when he went out and helped confiscate property from fellow Jews, friends and neighbours, he enjoyed it. He had no feeling of guilt; only feelings of power. To cut a long story short he ended up in the US in the mid to late fifties.

‘He had his first billion in his thirties by shorting the British pound with leveraged billions in financial debt and became the man who broke the Bank of England. Look, the story of Soros goes on and on with the leaders of many countries seeing him as a world scourge. He helped engineer coups in Slovakia, Croatia, Georgia and Yugoslavia. It smacks of the Rothschild Formula.

‘Let’s get the general population to find out all about Soros. Let them do the Googling rather than me talking to you about it. But to summarise what the interviewer said “Soros was a planetary parasite. The world financial crisis was stimulating to him”. Actually on the bottom of that flashcard just also write ‘SorosWatch.com’. That should get some action.’

‘Sebastian, with someone dead next door, that’s just too much information. Let’s get down to the basics. I am happy to help you with the YouTube stuff. It’s practising what we say OWL preaches. But let’s take it one step at a time. One flashcard at a time. Wait for feedback. See what happens.’

Sebastian pondered, his thoughts interrupted by the pounding of feet in the corridor. ‘Perhaps you are right. A little caution. But with the promise of more to come. You know. The next card to educate you, the public, on what really happens in the world of the elites, the oligarchs.’

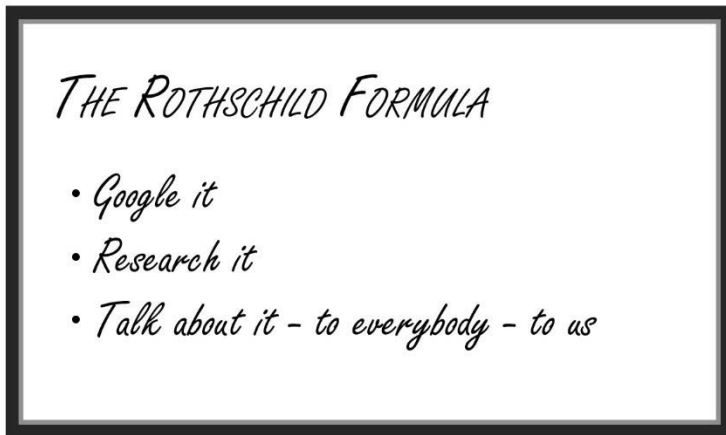
Virginia looked concerned. ‘I am happy with that. But we need to reflect on what’s happened to Peter. Clearly there is a link to Eleanor’s death. I am the only person to have been in both places at the time of the deaths; as far as I know. It makes

me nervous.'

Sebastian was quick to reply. 'I think somehow St Deiniol's is safe for the moment. Only a psychopath or a murderous Agatha Christie fan would strike twice in the same manor. But then, excuse the pun; I think our assassin is driven by some other force, somebody or something we are not privy to. Yet.'

The first YouTube presentation went out with an even better entreaty added to Sebastian's scripted words. Virginia added. 'Your first clue to a world conspiracy that could bring you, your family and your friends to an abrupt and grisly end through no fault of yours. Simply because those who you trusted or tried to trust betrayed you.'

And she changed the order of the flashcards. WOW was to be the second card now. She felt strongly about this and Sebastian relented. She held the first flashcard up.



She held it up for a full ten seconds and said. 'And more devastating flashcards are coming soon. Tweet OWL and let us know what you find and what you think.'

The intent now, only one flashcard at a time, was to stay at St Deiniol's until the second flashcard, the WOW

presentation, was completed. That was expected within a week. But two things happened. The police asked them to stay for a minimum of three days as they continued their investigations. At no time did Virginia or Sebastian mention anything about Washington, WOW, or the last email from Peter.

There was a massive response to the first flashcard; but even this was swamped by the release of the second flashcard. 'The WOW factor'. But something else had magnified the response. Eleanor had leaked to someone, somewhere, her translation of the WOW message. The link between the Rothschild Formula and WOW, between war, wealth, population control and the elite had escaped nobody. Sebastian and Virginia decided to hold fire on the third flashcard until matters had settled down.

You are finding this hard to believe? Well, a little low tech mixed with appropriate high tech can be a volatile concoction. You see, with a world addicted to social media, especially the young, news travels fast. Especially news that smacks of global conspiracy. If it doesn't take more than a few hours for facile, but entertaining videos of dogs dancing to reach hundreds of millions of people globally, why wouldn't something like this go really viral ... and it will!

'I am glad none of this is linked to St Deiniol's. Only to OWL. It's like a safe haven here. Nobody knows our intent or our personal location.' Sebastian was standing in front of the fireplace, a glass of wine characteristically in one hand.

'Only the murderer,' chimed in Virginia. 'Only the murderer. Maybe he is a psychopath!' She was trying unsuccessfully to relax in a deep leather seat. 'It's hard to work out what to put on the third card. The responses have been so explosive to the first two cards.'

‘And it’s still exploding,’ added Sebastian.

The room was deserted. All other guests at St Deiniol’s had been locals, or at least not travellers on passports. They were allowed to leave, even if reluctantly. So Sebastian and Virginia were alone. And very much together for another three days.

They had a certain anonymity here, and with it a sense of safety. There was, even at this calamitous time, an opportunity to pause and reflect; to see where OWL was really going.

Chapter 25

Money Mayhem

Historically there have been many conspiracies. If we look carefully, we find many are interconnected. There is usually a theme. But how people read the theme rather depends upon them. One theme standing out at this stage is the notion of overpopulation. The other is world government. Without doubt *they* are interconnected. Whether one is more important than the other is debatable. Money is a dominant factor in either case. News from Australia just makes the whole situation that much more complex. Let us try to get a grip on the situation.

The email received that evening broke the not so magical, St Deiniol's 'spell'. It was from Australia.

From: Richard
Subject: New financial disasters
To: Sebastian and Virginia

Seen your flashcards. Great key words. Great responses to OWL. But to complicate matters before you go any further here are some more key words.

I will elaborate later. Have a think about these. 'Dodd-Frank Bill', 'Glass-Steagall Separation' (Even I remember those two!). But now add 'Bail-In' and 'Bank for International Settlements', and for Australia at least add 'BIS-APRA'

Richard

Virginia passed the email to Sebastian.

He gave it a cursory glance. 'I need to call Richard; I need to call him now.'

He picked up his cell phone and it went straight through. Richard picked up at his end; obviously realising it was Sebastian. Technology removes all disguises.

'Hi Sebastian. You got my email?'

'Yes, of course.'

'I think I know what you are on about, but I am a little reluctant about drilling down too deeply into financial areas. There is a limit to how many times I can run up flashcards. Six cards are pushing the supporters' span of attention. More flashcards will start to dilute the effectiveness of the approach. We're trying to distil understanding from a miasma of contrived confusion. More flashcards will take the public backwards to further confusion. Then they will switch off.'

There was a pause from Richard's end.

'I hear what you are saying Sebastian; but this is really serious. You know about the Dodd-Frank Bill and the Glass-Steagall Separation. It was only last week I was emailing you the sins of those on Wall Street in the eighties and how nothing seems to have changed in terms of financial shenanigans.'

Sebastian was constantly thinking of the Dodd-Frank Bill. It was introduced around 1999. He didn't know whether it was countenanced by Bill Clinton or George Bush. It felt more like a George Bush initiative; but he feared it was Bill Clinton, and he liked the guy. But anyway that was where Wall Street demonstrated yet again its ability to interfere. The Glass-Steagall Separation was an attempt in 1933 by Franklin Roosevelt to split the commercial banks from Wall Street speculation. That protected the ordinary punter. It protected the US banking system. But the Glass-Steagall was repealed. It opened up again that whole thing where institutions involved

in investment banking and irresponsible speculation could mix it with their normal commercial banking practices. Not a good thing.

‘Richard. What’s your point?’ he said.

‘Sebastian *that* is the whole point. Right here in Australia, the bastion of democracy, the Financial Review has just written an article on what’s called the ‘Bail-in’ plan. We have discussed all this before in detail. The whole point of a bail-in means the major banks can’t go broke. They seize all the deposits put in by depositors. According to *The Australian Financial Review* if Australia’s big four lenders were to ever be in serious trouble and look like they were going to be wound up, they would be safe because of this bail-in.

Sebastian was silent.

Richard continued, ‘You know what happened in Spain when depositors lost seventy-five to ninety percent of their savings. What I am saying Sebastian is we really have to reinstate the Glass-Steagall Separation. Okay, maybe we don’t need flashcards about the BIS, and so on. But we *do* need Glass-Steagall. Fortunately there are forces afoot in Australia to urge Parliament and especially the members of the House of Representatives to re-impose the Glass-Steagall Separation of banks¹⁴³.

‘We should support that effort.’

Sebastian was staring at Virginia. He was shaking his head. ‘You’ve known about this rip off by banks for a long time. Mack was right into it. But it’s really hard to do anything about it. Maybe it’s the right time *now* to raise it. Raise it with the public and let them in on the scam.’

‘Conspiracy on conspiracy on conspiracy. Christ, it was

¹⁴³ Citizens Electoral Council of Australia, *Kill the BIS-APRA bank ‘bail in’ plan before it kills you!* 5th June 2013

Lynden LaRouche¹⁴⁴ who kept on warning that the global economy was on a course of catastrophe. He said the global financial system was a playground for investment banks, a veritable giant global casino. And guess who really owns the casino? The oligarchs; the elites; they own the game.’

Virginia looked up. ‘God, no wonder nobody can follow this stuff unless they are at extreme heights of this financial conspiracy. I don’t know how related this is to the Rothschilds and the Rothschild Formula. But there has to be a link somewhere.’

She was looking intently at Sebastian. She could see he was starting to connect the dots. The points on the flashcards made sense. But to come out in public and link the connections would just be seen by everybody as yet another conspiracy. As Sebastian has said. Conspiracy on conspiracy on conspiracy.

Sebastian was now holding his head with both hands. ‘Richard I will tell you what I will do. One more flashcard. And it’s going to be Glass-Steagall. I will put in a couple of footnotes. “Frank-Dodd; LaRouche.” But that’s it. No more.

¹⁴⁴ LaRouche launched a campaign against derivatives decades ago. It was interesting that on the back of that the Frank-Dodd Bill still came through. It goes back to the Inter-Alpha Group. LaRouche was all for the Glass-Steagall approach. It was LaRouche who said the purpose of any of these bail outs, on a massive scale, on a global scale was to bankrupt the United States and every other nation which runs its own bail out. He said the Inter-Alpha project wanted to turn the global financial system into a giant casino. The speculative arms of the commercial banks. The hedge funds. All of this is so they can gamble with their own and everybody else’s money. (Read http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2010/3736inter-alpha_genocide.html)

We've got to give people an opportunity to research as quickly as they can; while they can, in pulling all this stuff together. I have immense faith in the public. In the same way as Surowiecki did. This truly will be the wisdom of the crowds. And Google does help; especially with Wikipedia. But I keep on warning. The Internet will be taken over soon if drastic global action at grass roots level doesn't start *now*.'

Virginia had sat silently. She wanted to be heard, 'Let YouTube do the work. There are hundreds of millions of people around the globe, particularly the young out there who have the energy and scepticism to *want* to know what the hell is really happening. They are smart enough to put it together to make sense of what they think the hell is going on. Then they can come back to OWL with what *they* think are the best solutions.

'OWL's objective was always to raise, as fast as possible, the public's awareness on critical issues and to have them contribute their views. I believe the flashcard approach is going to do that. But we have to have faith. We are going to have to be prepared to wait. To read the results. To listen. To discuss online, before we make *any* inferences of our own. We are getting to the point of super saturation with conspiracies.'

Richard chimed in. 'I am happy with one more flashcard. And it needs to be done very quickly. Things are starting to boil here in Australia. And I sometimes see Australia as being the litmus test of what's happening in the real Western world at least. We can assume that the Middle East and other countries are decades if not centuries behind in terms of their awareness of what is really happening to the world through the manipulation of finances. But Sebastian, my friend, OWL can't wait *too* long. You know, to put the dots together.'

'Don't worry too much about that, Richard. I have already put the dots together. It is just a matter of letting *other* people do it. You know if they participate in the process, they will

own it and they will be committed to the successful outcomes of whatever it is that OWL does. We've got to give them the opportunity, not only on their behalf, but on behalf of OWL to do their own thing.

‘Richard, trust me.’

‘Of course I do, Sebastian. At this point let's say goodbye. I will see you in a few days' time.’ The phone went dead.

Sebastian turned to Virginia. ‘The global political conspiracy doesn't hold sway with me. By themselves politicians don't last long enough to actually do anything of any significance. I can also see the power of globally manipulated finance in itself is not sufficient. The press barons have a lot of influence and a lot of money and can influence many politicians. And that's a unique combination. But again, by themselves, that is not sufficient to explain the world situation.’

Sebastian was interrupted by a squeal on Virginia's laptop that indicated another email.

Virginia glanced at it and looked up at Sebastian. ‘This is old news now. This one is from Mack and Floyd. They reckon they have just uncovered yet another conspiracy. Well maybe not conspiracy, but enough to get people thinking. I think it is something that needs to get out to the press fairly quickly. But no more flash cards. Here have a look at this.’

She turned the laptop to face Sebastian and he started to read.

From: Mack and Floyd
Subject: Political exposure
To: Virginia and Sebastian

We wish you were here. We have just been doing more research.

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Uncovered some incredible stuff. Because we are both now getting paranoid about electronic information transfer we are not going to mention which President; but a recent President of the United States has just released a bombshell. He maintains *all* elections are a farce. Theatre. Bread and circuses for the masses. Every three or four years people have something to think about. Give the false impression that they are actually able to vote and make a difference to the way the world, or at least the government that is relevant to them, can be influenced by their vote. What's coming out now is what we've always known.

This guy goes on to say that he was promised tens to hundreds of millions of dollars if he kept his mouth shut. And how did they launder that money? They just put him on speaking circuits at ridiculously high fees. Nobody else was the wiser. The only thing he wasn't allowed to talk about on the circuits was that elections are a farce. In fact quite the contrary. He was able to talk up the whole notion of democracy by representation; voting for good people. (I think by that he means famous footballers, actors and other celebrities).

We believe this is a great opportunity for OWL. Over to you.
Mack and Floyd

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Virginia could see Sebastian was digesting the email. 'You're right. It's old news.

'By now masses of people know about this stuff. You can fool some of the people some of the time. No more diversions. What we have got to do is get back to WOW and the flashcards. Putting together a credible conspiracy that makes so much sense in itself, that it becomes fact in a very short period of time. Accepting the fact the conspiracy isn't a conspiracy anyway; it is the fact. OWL needs to be in control of this. Do you get it? WOW will be revealed by OWL as a hoax, a hoax by the elites, who want WOW to be discovered and to be treated as real. We will pull their bluff. We will show who is *really* behind WOW. Royalty. The oligarchs. The elites, who want world domination and a devastatingly quick depopulation of the planet to preserve resources for their exploitation, amongst other things, with, apparently, extra-terrestrial support.'

Virginia normally exuded self-confidence and acquiescence but this time she was fidgeting as she spoke. She was extremely tense. 'WOW, Glass-Steagall, Rothschild formula and so on and so on. Where the hell are we going re OWL? This is all too much. We are all at somebodies' mercy, aren't we? And if so, who? Can we really help through OWL?'

They looked at each other.

Virginia took back the laptop and quickly typed in.

From: Virginia
Subject: Political bombshell
To: Mack and Floyd

Thanks. You've seen our flashcards. I think there is enough material out there now to get the thinking-world, if we actually do have a democracy, starting to pull stuff together. We

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will be back in Australia shortly and we have to get everybody together to link the conspiracies to OWL's ability to unravel them and to come up with real alternatives.

Virginia and Sebastian

Virginia looked once more at Sebastian. She packed up the laptop. He looked at her and said. 'We need to get back to Australia quickly. I know they said 3 or 4 days was needed for us to hang around. But I think the murder enquiry here has probably gone as far as it can without any further need for our input. They won't object. I still haven't worked out the link between Washington and St Deiniol's. Even if there is one. We will need to regroup as OWL and work out what the next step is.

'Mayhem. That's what we have; global mayhem. Not a global financial crisis or a global political crisis or a global warming crisis. Just sheer global mayhem. OWL's mantra should be global world survival not some parochial overworked issue like paid parental leave.'

Virginia shot across one of her rare grimaces. Fairly based parental paid-for-leave was a cause she supported.

But Sebastian was in a world of his own. A throw-away line was to no effect.

World government, he thought. Yes. If achieved democratically. Even if over a long period of time and it is committed to *peaceful* world depopulation and global resource sustainability; and a fair distribution of the world's innate wealth. But, as always, there is a right and wrong way; a good and evil; a moral and amoral way of doing things.

He felt as though some invisible force was tugging at his conscience. Rapid depopulation; through force; world governance in its most practical form. The ruling class and the ruled. No!

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He felt the chaos of cognitive dissonance. That merciless tug that tears a compassionate, selfless soul and an individual's pragmatic, selfish universe apart.

Chapter 26

Connecting the Dots Before Denial Prevails

I say the function of human short term (and long-term) memory is to obliterate obvious discrepancies between espoused virtues and the actual innate base nature of human beings. We see the dire manifestations every day of nefarious, dysfunctional human existence. The blatant realisations are there. The pragmatism of politics such as the elected government in a Christian (ha ha) democracy conspiring with criminal, murderous organisations (the CIA¹⁴⁵ conspiring with the Mafia in the Bay of Pigs).

And how these things backfire. Like Mossad, the Mafia and once again the CIA combining in the assassination of John Kennedy.

Conspiracies are all around us. We have been immersed in conspiracies from time immemorial. From Christ's resurrection and even before. It is as human as life itself. Ahh the integrity of the human race is such an illusion. We are all part of the Great Mess we call humanity. When a part of 'our body', that is human society, dies, tragically, we should all feel

¹⁴⁵ Piper, Michael Collins (2005), *Final Judgement: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy*, Sixth Edition, Washington, America Free Press, already referenced and discussed. In particular, the Mafia was linked to Mossad through Jack Ruby (Lee Harvey Oswald's assassin), who was really Jewish and Lansky, the Mafia head; also Jewish (who was a significant figure in the World War II Allied espionage effort).

that loss. But we don't. We justify. We ignore. We rationalise. We don't empathise. We even celebrate.

My universe, your universe, Sebastian's and his team's universes will be in turmoil. This is just the starting point!

Death, like birth is inevitable, especially if you are the person concerned. All a decent person really can do in life is to be courageous in the face of death. Which brings us to the topic of rapidly diminishing the world's population and more importantly governing the world before and after this noble feat.

Australian politics might well be the microcosm for world politics. But Australian politics is Lilliputian. Now, and not as before, I believe the *real* issue is overpopulation after all. Everything is subordinate to that. World government at the appropriate level comes quickly after that problem is solved. Problems of pollution, diminishing resources and climate change all come after that.

Because Australian politics, like other politics is theatrical, politicians don't have the sense to address the really big issues. No. Issues being addressed today are trivial in relation to the overriding one of overpopulation. To solve overpopulation through effective government has proven so far to be impossible. That only leaves the radical solutions. Or so I believe. Maybe the elites are right!

The press will have its way. Puppeteers will have their way. Be divisive. Force public attention on to famous inebriated sportsmen. On to film stars who fornicate. On to he who is born into royalty. And when the time is right they will reveal, they being the oligarchs, the real issue of overpopulation and how they will save the world. And they even have testimonials from advanced alien civilisations, like WOW. Ha! Look out world!

Is the solution a one family one child policy? Not likely! Or do we give the world a plague or a nuclear war? The latter

is much quicker. Even Dan Brown¹⁴⁶ has commented on this. His book *Inferno* has as its base plot a ‘plague’, a genetically engineered highly transmittable disease that culls a third of the world’s population for ever. Brown, even in fiction, is being unrealistically compassionate. Is a third enough? Who governs after this event? Then how do we maintain the rich tapestry of human civilisation which has evolved throughout thousands of years? Or do we even wish to do that? Perhaps it is better to ignore, remove, or sublimate past human calamities?

Or under one world hegemony could we keep ‘zoos’ of various cultures to maintain human civilisation’s various historical themes? That is, isolated, fenced off cultures with their language, traditions, mores and so on preserved, becoming like theme parks for the super elite to visit as they please.

Was it Lynden LaRouche¹⁴⁷ who said that the British Empire wants the United States to obliterate Russia, China and India? (that gets rid of the overpopulation problem very quickly). The British Empire was based on the Roman Empire and there are still those who think that way, especially royalty. A world order, maybe even real stability would be given back to the British and the super-financiers who would underwrite such a cataclysmic episode. Hmm, I like that!

But is there another game. One played by Hitler. Demonise a religion or culture; or better still kill both in one blow. Have a hero of democracy emerge victorious. He, (more likely than a compassionate she), who declares war on Islam, this time. A timely reminder to all the fair minded people just how evil this scourge is. Our press will make sure of that. The

¹⁴⁶ Brown, Dan (2013), *Inferno*, Bantam Press, New York.

¹⁴⁷ http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2010/3736inter-alpha_genocide.html

hero of course is a puppet of the oligarchs. We, the infidel, unleash our own intifada, formally. We, the infidel would lose a lot; but we would, without doubt, wipe out this perceived travesty of human justice, human rights, and particularly women's rights. In this case we will align the United States, Russia, China and maybe India; the reverse to what LaRouche is suggesting. Maybe not as fair as Dan Brown's plague, but quicker. And probably more appealing to humanity's innate xenophobia. Oh, and think about this! Maybe Islam's elite is in it too. Just to keep the masses thinking, while they're being massively culled.

Should we just let the game play out? Let the oligarchs have their way. Let them save the world whatever way they like. Let there be a new age. A new order.

Probably a feudalistic one that could last a thousand or ten thousand years or more. Perhaps I am now leaning that way. Although that is definitely not the OWL way, the way I originally intended.

Maybe there's more to it ... Probably not!

Should we go back to the 'word'? Perhaps there's even more power there than we have ever considered. Possibly the elites don't have exclusive rights to the 'word'; well not yet! Perhaps we can seduce the masses globally with the 'word' in written form or film, especially through social media. I know that Virginia is thinking this way so let her be, for the moment. And there is Sebastian to contend with. Has he lost his pragmatism to compassion, possibly a function of his ageing?

He says, he can see the dots and how they connect. All he has to do is work out how to exploit this revelation. Well that's hardly a revelation; plenty of people realise it but don't or can't articulate it. Too scared; too anal; too comfortable, materially and philosophically.

Maybe he doesn't see the immediate solution as depopulation, *then* onto world governance. Maybe he sees a

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considered approach to a democratically thought out world governance as being the right approach. *Then* start on population control. Oh, how silly. I think that's going to take far too long!

The original founders of OWL, (Eleanor excepted), were gathered in the OWL House. This was the boardroom of the OWL organisation. The twenty-seventh floor of a not-too-prestigious, but reasonably pleasant office complex in George Street at the Central Station end of Sydney's CBD.

'It is just too easy to split the world broadly into three classes.' Sebastian said as he quickly scribbled on the whiteboard with a triangle with upper, middle and lower classes. He then erased that with a flourish and replaced the triangle with.



Then he added in red felt pen, to the right, a brief description of each class. Next to The Oligarchs; 'real rulers of the world – they call the shots. They are entrenched dynasties.'

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Then next to The Mortgageors he put a 'wide band of comfort and wealth; never truly realising their debt to the oligarchs'. Next to The Serfs; he wrote 'never get past paying taxes of some form; they are the dispossessed forever, of any material wealth.' He then quickly erased his scribble.

'So, try this.' He then drew a larger triangle which looked like this, with three sections, each divided into two subsections.



There were a few nods from the cabinet.

'But even this is facile.' He stood back and looked at the whiteboard. Again, with a flourish, and to the right of the triangle he scribbled the following. Next to The Oligarchs he wrote 'the almighty powerful dynasties – many generations and in many instances many centuries old. They are the ones who are ultimately driving the notion of one world government. They transcend religion, culture and politics.' For The Parvenus he wrote, 'Recently rich billionaires, owners of the 'word'; but directed either consciously or unconsciously, by the oligarchs or as we sometimes call them, the elite.'

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Next to The Deluded, ‘Here are your politicians, senior public officials, financially successful entrepreneurs and successful celebrities.’

Next to The Old Drones he wrote, ‘This is the group drugged on unfettered consumerism and the illusion of individualism driven primarily by social media.’

On the third and final level. He wrote next to The New Drones, ‘These are also drugged on unrealisable dreams of material wealth; they are plugged permanently into their cell phone.’

And then of course there are The Dispensables. ‘These are the truly poor. They live a subsistence existence close to death. Very few people, apart from the usual religious orders, or the NFPs, give a stuff about them.’

‘Not terribly sophisticated.’ He stood back and eyed his artwork.

‘What do you think?’ He turned around and faced the six faces of apparently, genuinely interested critics.

‘Any taxonomy will work if it is generic enough,’ said Mack. ‘And does it really matter?’

Sebastian paused, ‘Well, yes it does if you are going to use it to describe some of the most powerful conspiracies that have been created in human existence. OWL needs to unleash a soft revolution of realisation. A realisation that all is not well if this world is to survive, with humans living harmoniously, in a sustainable way, for a long time.’

He looked at Virginia. ‘We have pretty well concluded WOW was, or is, a very earthly concoction to force fear into the human race from another angle; one that transcends mere mortal concerns or at least gives that appearance. We, Virginia and I, are convinced that WOW *had* to be discovered and spread through Internet frenzy. So we, that is OWL, are going to use WOW to get people to realise there are forces out there, yet to be named, that are allowing the Internet, YouTube,

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Facebook and the rest of social media, to exist until they have installed sufficient paranoia into the masses to then unleash through financial manipulation and through political machinations the devastating formula *they* think is the right one.'

Richard interjected. 'This is where YouTube comes into it. Putting up key words on OWL's Facebook teased people around the world to find out for themselves just how perverse some of the conspiracies are associated with these key words. Dodd- Frank, the Glass-Steagall Separation. The Inter-Alpha Group. How many people knew anything about these issues in the beginning? Zero. I bet! Did they realise how rich the Internet information sources are for people to be able to investigate on their own behalf and where it all leads? I doubt it.'

Sebastian interrupted. 'Flashcards. Low technology to create a digital revolution.

'Low tech through high tech. We have a very limited opportunity. The Internet window will close very rapidly when it all gets out. See, it amplifies the most powerful promoter of any cause, the word of mouth.'

Virginia had been quiet all along.

'If the trivial antics of juveniles can create mega celebrities through YouTube, don't you think we can achieve something similar by proposing profound and universal questions of global survival. Help the masses, if they are not living in complete denial, to check on all the verifiable facts. Sebastian what has been the response so far to the flashcards or the key words you have released?'

'Uh', Sebastian looked a little distracted. Virginia wasn't sure why. He rummaged through papers in front of him and added. 'I should have told you this earlier. The responses have been phenomenal. We are finding it hard to trawl through the millions of responses we have had. And even that's with the

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help of hundreds of young techies who are committed to OWL. These techies are giving their time and expertise freely. Just what we had hoped for. But the trends are definitely there. The masses *are* aware there are multiple financial conspiracies to manipulate the world's wealth. The masses *are* becoming aware the whole notion of politics disguised as democracy or anything else similar is a charade. The masses *are* becoming aware that there are controlling factors, an uber-class that is pulling the strings of all the puppets. And the masses *are* aware there is some terrible final agenda of the elites. But, evidentially they can't quite agree as to what this ghastly finale will be.

‘And you know I think the masses *are* transcending the ‘denial’ stage. Yes they have got their iPhones, they’ve got the giant TV screens, they’ve got the new model cars and so on and so on. Perhaps the seductive diversionary toys have run out of power. The elites have underestimated the masses. Or at least let’s hope so.’

‘I can go along I guess with one world government’, Virginia added. ‘So long as it is handled properly. Any idiot knows we started as tribes then evolved into communities and then to nation states. There are probably a few more steps in there I’ve missed out, but the final step is to put into place a world government that brings to order the financial manipulations and massive wealth of a few individuals. And a sensible approach to unfettered population growth.’

‘Mack, what do you think? You are our IT guru. Link the dots.’

Mack looked up pensively from the boardroom table. He had also been quietly reflecting for a long time. ‘A guy called Grossman described YouTube as *the beast with a billion*

eyes.¹⁴⁸ Every minute that passes in real time sixty million videos are uploaded to YouTube. That means more videos are uploaded to the YouTube every month than has been broadcasted by the US's three biggest TV networks over the past sixty years. It gets the equivalent of four billion pages a day which adds up to a trillion plus a year. Why is it allowed? Because the oligarchs are making a shitload of money out of it. But they will trade that off against banning YouTube and the Internet and everything else related to it if the social media compromises *their* ultimate plan.

‘Now with the right technical input we can exploit YouTube much more. Let’s just say in the next month we could have a legion of political supporters, more than could be done in a century a few years ago. That’s OWL’s challenge.’

‘I haven’t said very much,’ said Randall. ‘You’re right. We can pull off a political coup, on a global basis, with our infant party, leveraging it the best way we can.’

‘Let’s get the guts of the information coming in from the flashcards. Let’s take the responses and start framing up some plebiscites, wherever we think they will work. Get people involved now!’

‘Okay,’ said Sebastian commanding attention. ‘What are the plebiscite questions?’

Richard interjected, ‘We all realise that the Bilderberg group, with its international royal families and other elite connections, control the whole world through money. So, I think we should be pushing OWL as a legitimate political force in every country on the planet.’

Virginia interrupted, ‘We could forget the political party formation internationally; at least for a while and focus on the

¹⁴⁸ Grossman, Lev, April 2nd 2012 *The Beast with a Billion Eyes*, Time Magazine, pp 35-39

numbers. If we could create a really interesting chat app, like Zuckerberg's Facebook and get everybody on-board, when we hit the billion member mark we could start the *global* political party, simultaneously with a billion committed backers. Still following the OWL philosophy of course. Just like we said we would. Like the malignant growth of terrorist cells of an ISIS. Only with us being *nice* about it.'

Randall continued, 'From the responses I've seen, the paranoia we have created around the Rothschild Formula flashcard has done more for the peace movement initiatives than anything else ever tried in human history. We have been receiving a lot of requests that absolutely rejects the Rothschild formula. Let's have a think about that too.'

Sebastian, remembering he had thought of the Zuckerberg approach back in Cambodia, took the floor again. 'But that's the whole point. Look, using the flashcards, many people picked up on a couple of things that might be of interest to you. There *are* others out there who realise how they, the elites, are going to leverage their main strategy. And that's to reward the next level down. Back to my original triangle, reward a global bureaucracy of mediocrity by giving them a big reward. A really big reward. The ultimate reward. And that reward would be a proven and dramatically lengthened longevity. We know, or at least suspect, this process has already started. That longevity of course is paid for through the taxes that this global bureaucracy has responsibility for collecting. This will deflect attention from the oligarchs.

'Then to manage a one world serfdom, the reward to the serfs will be a comfortable life of servitude. Not longevity! They will be given, unlimited social media to make them feel as though they have power. They get to walk around with a mobile phone plugged into their ears, to hear, say, play anything they want; within reason of course. And this gives us our chance. But unless we mobilise now, and we have the

means to do this, well, there won't be another chance.'

Virginia added 'But what we do is going to threaten the oligarchs. It is going to threaten them because we are getting everybody on the planet with Internet access to join the dots and achieve a level of self-realisation. They can guess that a carefully controlled global nuclear war is ultimately going to be to the benefit of those oligarchs who produce the armaments. Through mass destruction and mass depopulation they can rebuild again an even more powerful military machine that probably won't ever need to be used.'

Virginia tapped her pen on the table impatiently. 'I hate to say this, but, you know, ultimately multiple nation states currently controlled through multiple political parties can't work. Not sustainably. We *have* to acquiesce to a one world government. So long as it is done on a fair basis.'

Mack was holding an open book in his hands. 'I don't know if you guys have read *The Revolution will be Digitised?*¹⁴⁹ Probably what's most important and very

¹⁴⁹ The book is subtitled *Dispatches From the Information War*. Brooke is the Author, who evidently knew Assange. In her book she quotes somebody who wanted to lay the foundation for all aspects of free speech. This was all because she realised in the digital age information is borderless and that countries need a holistic approach to freedom of expression to protect against well funded vested interest. She talks about Assange and how she liked him originally but then figured he was a bit too egotistical towards the end of their, if we can call it, friendship although she did quote him as saying that 'fear exists largely in the imagination ... It is what powerful people prey on ... It is simply impossible to police the world's citizens so what they rely on is fear. And that's what WOW was supposed to be about. Creating fear. (Best to read Brooke, Heather. 2011 *The Revolution will be Digitised: Dispatches*

relevant to what we are talking about is what Brooke says and I will read it to you, “the interactive Internet is providing the mechanism for the world’s first truly global people’s rising and democratic revolution”.

‘This is pretty important stuff and we need to be on top of it. She goes on to say what Assange has said. “The whole notion of a security threat is for those who have vested interests; this whole thing is about control by fear”. Let me read you one last thing. Towards the end of her book she says “we can create the first global democracy ... We can have hundreds of millions of people who can join a worldwide conversation and can come together in infinite permutations to check power wherever it concentrates. The greatest achievement is not producing technology but using it to redefine the boundaries of what is possible”’.

Floyd had been quiet for some time. ‘This *is really* important stuff and we are obliged to help. We have the responsibility because we have the insight. We have the obligation to ensure that OWL allows these ideas that people around us already have, to flourish. OWL needs to use the very technology we are talking about to ensure it *all* happens.

‘Let’s keep punching out those flashcards. Let’s start collating the responses we get. Let’s start magnifying the effects of that by articulating some policies for OWL we have been talking about for years now. Let’s use Facebook, YouTube and anything else we’ve got as quickly as possible before we freak out the oligarchs.

‘And of course,’ continued Floyd. ‘Let’s paint faces on the oligarchs. The elites of the world. There are terrific guys out there, as wealthy as all hell. But they are still subordinate

from the Information War, William Heinemann, London (already referenced)

to the oligarchs. The oligarchs have used the inspiration of those like Bill Gates and all the subsequent social media gurus' extrapolations to their own end. They didn't invent Internet or anything else. They just exploit other people's innovations. We must move fast. Yes. We need to act like terrorist cells, calling our Internet subscribers to action. Get OWL up and moving in every country we can. Before it is all too late.'

'Yes', chimed in Virginia, 'Let's create a pandemic of goodness and common-sense. An instrument against a feudal world run by overlords. Because that what it is looking like, more and more.'

'And oh, one last thing,' said Floyd. 'Let's start with something real, pre-emptive, already articulated, and from Australia. Have a look at this for a leveller of financial intimidation. One quick way to get favourable support from everybody except the elites.' Floyd passed out a copy of something he thought was very important. Even if it is was conceived by another party.

CITIZENS ELECTORAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2014

An effective budget solution: tax speculation 0.1%

*"Unbalanced minds cannot balance budgets!" —
Lyndon LaRouche*

The solution to the national budget deficit that actually helps people, instead of killing them, is a tax on the damaging financial speculation that drains the wealth out of the real economy.

A 0.1% tax on financial speculation is a tiny little tax, only \$1 on every \$1,000 of transaction,

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compared to the “great big” taxes such as, say, the GST (\$100 on every \$1,000).

BUT ... it will raise a massive amount of money: *\$135 billion* in one year—enough to cover the \$123 billion of deficits that Hockey is projecting over the next four years!

This is because the scale of financial speculation that it will tax is mind-boggling.

Australia’s annual gross domestic product is \$1.4 trillion; by contrast, the Australian Financial Markets Association (AFMA) annual report reveals that for the year 2012-13 total turnover of all financial markets was more than \$135 trillion!

Virtually none of this \$135 trillion turnover had anything to do with the real economy: government bonds, which the government issues to borrow money, accounted for \$1.7 trillion of it; turnover in shares on the stock market was \$1.15 trillion; and foreign exchange on the import and export of goods and services was \$620 billion.

The balance of over \$130 trillion was in all manner of speculation in derivatives—futures, options and swaps—and speculation in foreign exchange (only 1.4% of foreign exchange trade relates to import/export).

Win-Win

The 0.1 per cent speculation tax is a win-win: not only will it raise more than enough tax revenue, it will kill the speculation it is taxing.

A tax of \$1 on every \$1000 will not be a burden on genuine investors in stocks and bonds and genuine foreign exchange transactions.

It will, however, destroy the “business model” of the financial speculators, who rapidly buy and sell and buy and sell on massive

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volumes in order to skim profits from driving down prices for producers and driving up costs to consumers. It will end this unproductive, predatory and parasitical paper-shuffling that is draining the life out of the real economy.

Consequently, it will be a short-term source of tax revenue, but the real economy—farming and manufacturing production, skilled trades, etc.—will, freed from this burden, be able to prosper, which will expand the normal tax base.

That this 0.1% speculation tax will solve the current budget deficit is a bonus; its intention is to protect the real economy from financial predators, like the CEC's other policies of a Glass-Steagall separation of retail from investment banks, and national banking.

To fight for these solutions, join the CEC.

Sebastian noted with a sigh, 'This is exactly the sort of thing, at a pragmatic level, we need. It doesn't affect those of lower income; raises a huge amount of public revenue in an astonishingly short period of time; and helps stop avaricious speculation. Apart from ego, why haven't the major parties picked up on this long ago?'

'Well done Floyd! Yes, this isn't from OWL. But it's a policy we should unreservedly support. Yes, we *will* support it, collaboratively.

Virginia was still tapping her pen, but less frenetically and less obviously. She knew she had previously advocated running with any good policy; no matter *whose* idea it was. Good policy transcended partisan politics. But she felt a gnawing anxiety. These faceless elites were not going to sit idly by. Over the long years, probably centuries, no doubt they had grown tentacles that wrapped around the world sucking out every bit of critical information. Why would they let OWL

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intervene? She was becoming seriously concerned about their naivety in this whole affair. After all there had been two murders at least. Virginia was very self-aware of her intuitive, almost psychic grasp of situations that just didn't sit right. Her sense of foreboding was only slightly assuaged by Floyd's policy flourish and Sebastian's encouraging words. Something just wasn't right!

It would have been impossible for anybody in OWL House to notice the tiny electronic bug cleverly shaped and looking like a real bug. It was hidden behind a photomural of a majestic mountain scene, hanging on the wall close to the boardroom table. Their freaking out of the elites would be much sooner than they thought.

Chapter 27

And Then There Was Chaos

This is my world. This is my dimension. I can create tranquillity. But then again I can create chaos. Quite simply, at this stage, chaos is more fun. The elites are a self-serving curse on this planet. Or are they? They wield phenomenal power. But, pragmatically, for the sake of the planet, a quick global nuclear war with predefined outcomes might be the answer. This could be a better option than the long drawn out, collaborative approach of the OWL party. Gaining global governance through social evolution. I don't know how he has done it, but Sebastian has become the hero of collaboration. Yet I am the narrator. Now, after reflection, I would prefer the pragmatic route, as horrific as it might appear. So, Sebastian needs to be silenced.

The assassin sat quietly. He shaved twice daily, never wishing to have a five o'clock shadow. In the wrong circumstances this might stigmatise him as a shady terrorist type. He shaved to accentuate the angularity of his face. Clean cuts to his sideboards, to the back, and the sides of his hairline. He stroked the smooth skin on his face slowly. He looked at the massive figure in front of him. He knew enough about literature to know this was an Orson Wells, replete with a hat and cloak-like jacket draped over his shoulders. To some he was known as the Gentle Giant, to others just as G.G.

'I want these OWL fuckers dead. All six of them.' There was a pause, a long pause, punctuated by sinister clouds puffed from a Davidoff cigar. 'No ... leave that Sebastian shit and his concubine bitch alone, for now. I have something a little more interesting planned for them.'

He looked at the assassin across the table. He roared. ‘We have a mandate from on high. Kill a few now; kill a few billion later. I want those four other original OWLs dead now. I don’t care how. I don’t want to be confronted with a hundred-headed hydra sometime in the future. All because of OWL, the social media and because we hesitated.’

The assassin was still stroking his smooth, stubble free face. He knew from an email the first targets were to be Floyd and Mack. They shared an apartment together. These days they were inseparable. Both were in town. Kill one, get one free. The plan was already incubating.

‘Won’t it be rather obvious? Eleanor is gone. Then there’s that wanker in England. He wasn’t even one of the original members of OWL. But was still connected to them. Now you want four more of them killed. That pretty well wipes out the OWL species. Apart from the few million followers they seem to have.

‘Aren’t you really worried we will draw undue attention to ourselves?’

The Orson Wells figure stood up. His cloak like jacket pulled close to his chest. ‘No I’m not worried in the least. Our masters serve a much higher cause. And it is your job to make sure the finger never points in our direction. Worried?’

‘I’m not worried. Not worried at all. I’ve got my ways.’

The assassin was already plotting. He had managed to slip into the apartment used by Floyd and Mack. He knew they had a gas stove. They would dine together. They always did. Their stove was one of the older ones where he could flick on the gas without lighting it. He could fill the entire apartment with gas. Then they would go up with one almighty bang. But there had to be an ignition. That wasn’t a problem.

He had already resolved this. He would detach a light bulb connected to the light switch by the entrance doorway. He would drill a small and neat hole into the bayonet socket. He

would take a hypodermic syringe and slowly fill the bulb with high-octane petrol. He would place the bulb back very carefully. Once that switch was switched on the bulb would explode and so would the apartment and most of the adjoining apartments on that floor. It was all a matter of technique and timing. He had done it so many times before in so many locations around the world.

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Owl Founders Incinerated

An horrific explosion devastated the third floor of an apartment block in North Sydney last night killing two. Evidently it was the result of a gas explosion possibly from an accidental leak. The two killed are Floyd Shepherd and Mack Vellon, founding member of the OWL.

OWL has successfully spread itself as a leading democratic political movement, not only in the States and Federal government of Australia, but also to fledgling parties in countries around the world.

What makes this explosion suspicious is that another founding member of OWL, Eleanor Regent, died under suspicious circumstances in the Library of Congress in Washington one month ago.

He dwelled on the headlines as he settled down with his double shot cappuccino in one of those coffee and cake shops found on the ground floor of many of the high-rise buildings of Sydney. It was excellent coffee. Only the best for those on such important missions.

Sydney has some of the best coffee in the world.

Admittedly it's imported from Colombia and other exotic locations. But the baristas here really know how to make it. His eyes lingered again over the headlines. His thoughts wandered. He was completely relaxed with his psychopathy. As always suspected, there is evidence that even a psychopath can empathise. He liked animals, especially camels. He didn't know why he liked camels. He just did. But he liked to kill humans too. The ultimate hunt! The clients didn't care about his modus operandi. They just paid small fortunes for results. He could be as dramatic and creative as he liked. Draw attention if he wanted to. But not to himself, obviously.

He picked up the paper and reread the headlines again. He was proud of his handiwork.

One day and another murder later the assassin was again sitting in his immaculately pressed shirt and suit. No ties. This was fashionable. He was invisible. Looking so much like the suits around him. Stopping for a coffee before moving to the office. He was looking at the headlines and drinking another cappuccino. He had a heavy gold plated pen in one hand, and was circling the headlines.

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Founder's Car Bombed

The frequency of the deaths of the OWL founders now hints of assassination. Last night, Randall Paxton, a highly successful and wealthy entrepreneur and philanthropist, world renowned for his approach to what he called peace industries, disintegrated as his Porche blew into fragments. Many cars in the car park and the apartments above were seriously damaged in the explosion.

On this occasion there was no doubt the

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killing was deliberately orchestrated. What is happening to OWL? He was a man of peace but he had plenty of enemies. Enemies in the armament industries which he was so opposed to.

Speculation is rife about who might have planted the car bomb.

The assassin smiled as he brought the coffee cup to his thin lips. Many would consider him dapper. He could be forgiven for his slightly effeminate mannerisms. The little finger. Unbent. Slightly raised above the rest of his fingers. Not clasping the cup. This wasn't an affectation. It was a result of a stabbing gone wrong. His little finger had slipped to the blade. The tendon was severed. Not worth the surgery to fix it. He was lost in thought as he doodled around the headlines.

One last target. How? How? How? He was a financial man. Probably the most dangerous to the mission. Their mission. One world government, for one manageable and sustainable planet. He ordered a friand. He knew how the pieces fitted together. There are only five, maybe six key pieces in a chess game. The rook, the knight, the bishop, the queen and of course the pawn. Maybe the king. But he usually stays in the background like a king should. So with a finite universe of sixty-four squares, with only five major drivers, and only two teams, there is an infinite number of plots, subplots and so on. But what is far more complex and exquisite is the human condition. The assassin would always stay at least two moves ahead. No-one ever knows him. He is an enigma, operating in an invisible dimension, playing a diabolical game. And now for the last move. Now for the last kill. Checkmate!

Richard's fundamental weakness was his fondness for sleeping over in his office. To say his office was palatial was an understatement. His sleepovers were even more frequent now

with his OWL commitments. It was so easy for the assassin. He knew where Richard worked. He studied his office, the adjoining offices, the stairways, the elevators and the movements of the office workers for several days. He went up, quietly, to the main entrance to Richard's office. No-one was there apart from Richard. It was Richard himself who answered the door. He knocked again. A respectful, quiet, but continuous knock. 'Mr Cunningham,' he said as the door opened.

'Yes, who's that?' responded Richard.

'Oh, no-one of any real importance. I did meet up with friends of yours at St Deiniol's where that poor fellow Peter was murdered.' He spoke this in a softly, well-articulated, manner that charmed Richard.

'What's your name?'

'Ah well, just call me Tony. My reason for being at St Deiniol's was for a brief stay. I am a bibliophile. I just love books. Particularly old books. I have a certain fascination for linguistics and the way words can be used.'

'Ah, come in Tony. A nightcap perhaps. Call me Dick. Most of my friends do. Please come in. Take a seat. It is time for a night cap.' Richard was already moving towards his ornate bar, a wooden piece that looked as though it had come from a teak house in Thailand.

'Scotch, wine, Coke, or another soft drink, or even water.'
'A red wine would be great.'

'Ah, just as well I have a great Merlot. Coonawarra region of course! Best soil in the world for a red wine. Better than anything in France. The terra rosa they call it. Two metres of clay. Just the right amount of precipitation. The right amount of sunlight. Makes for a perfect red.' Richard unscrewed the new bottle of wine. He had no time for cork anymore. 'The right hermetic seal the Australian screw top can provide.' He muttered this to himself.

They were both relaxed. Or at least Richard was. And the conversations rolled on with the uninvited visitor. He certainly knew about literature. They talked their way through two bottles of Merlot. Richard moved to the bar and onto the third bottle he was about to pour.

‘No, no. Sit down. Relax. Let me pour.’

Richard sat down. In fact he sprawled over one of the two couches placed around, what he called his drink table. This was away from his enormous personal desk and also away from his more formal, interview desk. Relaxation time. His newfound friend moved behind him.

Richard heard the clink of the bottle. Or what he thought. Then a searing pain. So short. And then blackness, a metal skewer was thrust into his ear. Death was instantaneous. The assassin wiped the blood off the skewer with a paper towel he had removed from the ornate dispenser on the bar top. He had already used the bathroom, so he flushed the paper towel down the toilet. He took a brief look at Richard who was slumped to one side on the lounge, blood oozing from his ear.

For the assassin there was no rush whatsoever. He moved slowly across the spacious office floor and let himself out of the door. No security cameras. Ha! He had checked on that before. He slipped into the elevator. As he descended to the ground floor he pulled from his pocket a folded low soft hat with a crown creased in the middle. It unfolded magically with no indication of creasing. He put the Fedora on. It matched his suit perfectly. He looked at himself in the elevator mirror and considered ‘dapper’ was the right word. He stepped out onto the ground floor. There was nobody there and he punched the green exit button. It was dark outside. He slipped into the darkness.

In the same coffee shop, next morning, he was sipping his double shot cappuccino. The assassin looked at the headlines

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and smiled. Given the need for global depopulation, what's a few more deaths? It's the big picture that needs fixing and if that involves casualties, then so be it. All revolutions are bloody ...

Chapter 28

OWL on the Brink of Extinction

Four murders in quick succession should unnerve anybody. Especially if the victims are all members of the same political coterie. Sebastian was feeling a palpable fear. Something quite alien to him. He had swanned through what he considered the trivialities of life. No, fear was a new emotion for him. He didn't like it! But then again the challenges *I* will create are to test him like he has never been tested before.

Sebastian and Virginia queued at the first class check in. His voice was trembling. He spoke quietly.

'We are being hunted. Eleanor. Mack. Floyd. Randall and Richard. What the fuck is going on? They are trying to make our species extinct. In fact whoever is behind this presumably took out that English dude, Peter, as well.' Sebastian paused. 'Whatever happens; it is too late. We are the only founders left.' He paused. 'Think about how unstable the globe is. The whole of the Middle East could ignite right now. And there *will* be a nuclear exchange. Exactly what those Bilderbergs wanted.'

Virginia was looking extremely nervous. They had taken her car, a non-descript yellow soft top Volkswagen. The roof-top was up for security. They had rushed to the international airport as soon as they had heard of Richard's death.

'Sebastian,' she said. 'You and I should have been targeted long ago. Something is very strange about this.'

'Shhh ... you're right,' he replied, in a whisper. 'The Bilderberg mole who gave all that stuff to us has not done us any favours. It was always crazy to think the *whole* of the

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Bilderberg group would be behind any global movement. World devastation, global population depletion, nuclear war. It was always the case this was going to be a small Bilderberg caucus of the elites. The ones who gain from war. We should have seen it earlier. So should everybody else!’

Virginia looked around. Nobody appeared interested in their hushed voices.

‘The only redeeming feature in all this, Sebastian, is the fact that fledging OWL really *has* flown. From all the millions of responses we got from the Internet. From all those who have volunteered to open up OWL cells around the world. Even in some of those crazy dictatorial countries. Brave people. Knocking you and me off was not really going to do a lot. But I think we’ve got to do something to confront these, I can’t think of a better word, conspirators. Otherwise the elites are going to get exactly what they want.

‘Critical global resources will be quarantined by them. They will devastate the world. They will rebuild it and the civil engineers and various others under their control will make them even wealthier. Even if there is a huge mess to clean up, they will cash in on it. That can all happen after only a few hours of nuclear war.’ They stopped talking abruptly as the queue moved in lock-step as more passengers were cleared.

Sebastian whispered again, ‘I am sure the Bilderberg caucus is not even known to the other Bilderbergs. Let’s work backwards for a moment. The flashcards on YouTube worked magnificently. The plebiscites have worked. The electronic contribution to our policies from OWL members, all this has got the elites scared shitless, I bet. Remember the Bilderberg mole has found evidence of the longevity experiments for the elites. That’s important.’

Sebastian paused and waited for the queue to move forward again. ‘Virginia, you and I, are flying to London. You know why. Don’t you?’

‘Well, yes. You said to talk to some of the Bilderbergs. If we could find them. I’ve gone along with it because I trust your judgement. Most of the time!’ Virginia paused. ‘So, who *are* we meeting with?’

Sebastian whispered, ‘I want us to confront that special Bilderberg caucus. And who heads it. *That* member of the Royal Family. You know.’

‘Oh him. He’s so old.’ Virginia’s voice died away as the ticketing queue moved forward.

Sebastian continued, ‘Don’t be fooled by his age. The trail leads to him and his cronies. But this time there has been too many slip-ups. Too many clues. Only psychopaths who feel they are totally above the law would have left such a trail of clues. He has one, and only one ambition, based on hundreds of years of family privilege and secrecy. He has a huge amount of power and a huge number of contacts and a desperate need to see what they call ‘denouement’ before his death. Yes, we *are* going to see *him* tomorrow. And yes, he will die. One day. Despite all of his special support.’

After ticketing they moved to the Sydney’s Qantas First Class Lounge, past the iconic green wall, up the escalator and then Sebastian saw the newflash. It glared out at him from the giant television monitor used to highlight important global news to passengers like the birth of a child to a royal family member.

Wikileaks Finds Evidence of Pre-emptive Strike on the Middle East

An unholy alliance of Russia, China, India and the US has unofficially declared war on most of the sovereign states in the Middle East. The common threat it seems is Islam.

Sebastian didn't read on.

Finally the world has decided to do something. He grabbed the Australian and passed it to Virginia. 'And what the hell. We are heading for London via Dubai. Bad timing.'

They moved on towards the departure gate ready to board the A380.

I made calamity befall them, time and time again, over the next fourteen hours. It all started with unheard of warm champagne on take-off. In-flight chatter at the business class cocktail bar was tense. Was there to be a global showdown in the Middle East? Or was it a media beat-up? If drama was to arrive in the Middle East was it driven by sectarian differences? Or more probably as Sebastian assured everyone at the bar, because oil and other commodity prices were just too low. A devastating, even if brief, cataclysmic skirmish would push those prices sky high. He was about to launch into the Rothschild formula when the drinkers had to return to their seats. The critical conversations were soon forgotten.

Then came the unnerving and serious air turbulence. It lasted a long time, delaying dinner and more champagne. What was worse, Sebastian and Virginia's first meal choices weren't available. That was tolerable but annoying. (I really could make their life miserable).

To make matters worse, two of the toilets were inoperable. Frustrating queues grew; especially after dinner was served and the settings removed.

But the final test of tolerance, especially for Sebastian, was the announcement an hour before commencement of descent that the connecting flight to London was cancelled.

The unchallenged generosity of Emirates promised to accommodate all first and business class travellers connecting to London in 6 star airport hotel rooms. This didn't help matters. At least from Sebastian's perspective.

Ah; they had to go through customs, but would be offered an express facility. Most thought that reasonable. But not Sebastian. The low level passenger chatter rumbled around Sebastian. That just frustrated Sebastian more. In fact the combination of his frustration, the low air pressure and alcohol was making him quite agitated.

‘I bet this is all to do with that Wikileaks leak. If it’s true.’ He mumbled this to himself. Virginia didn’t notice.

As the A380 touched down in Dubai on route to London Sebastian grabbed Virginia’s hand. ‘There is something wrong. I can feel it. It is intuition. There is definitely something wrong.’

And of course there is something wrong. They are falling for my ultimate strategy. I am detecting resistance from my characters, particularly Sebastian. It would be hard to kill him off like the others. But I can make him disappear. World government is the only way to control the destiny of this crazy planet, if it is to survive. Pragmatically, it has to be done in a harsh way. Nuclear exchange. Rapid depopulation. And then good governance. Forever. And for Virginia. She can be my personal envoy in a changed world. She *will* listen to me!

Virginia and Sebastian made their way to the Emirates fast-track customs lane. Sebastian wasn’t sure why they were even picking up their personal luggage. His bag arrived quickly at the designated carousel. Funny, Sebastian thought, the few other business class travellers he recognised were still waiting. And so too was Virginia. Surely they could have skipped customs and just been given a freshen up kit. After all, the connecting flight to London was only a few hours away. But he was a platinum card holder. Such a privilege to get his bag first!

Sebastian was starting to relax a little. That was until two uniformed guards pulled Sebastian to one side. In perfect English the taller of the two said politely, in perfect English,

‘would you please step into this room.’

Sebastian knew there was no point in resisting. This was Dubai not Sydney.

It was a tiny cubicle of a room. With him and the two security guards it was a tight fit. Sebastian was carrying his small battered leather case he had just collected from the carousel. This was all he had as checked-in luggage.

‘Is this yours, Sir?’ asked the burly one, as he took Sebastian’s case.

‘Yes,’ replied Sebastian nervously. Obviously. He was worried about Virginia who had been left alone at the baggage carousel.

Before Sebastian could move the burly security man said again. ‘Did you pack it yourself, Sir?’

‘Yes, of course I did.’ ‘Did you lock it, Sir?’

‘Of course I did.’ said Sebastian, looking at his case in dismay. He could see one of the two locks on his bag was open. He hadn’t noticed this when he collected it. He had a feeling of sheer desperation.

‘Can you open it, please?’

Without speaking Sebastian moved towards his bag and noticed that it opened too easily. There was no need for the key. As he opened it he noticed his exquisitely packed clothes were rumpled. He had packed neatly, deliberately, to minimise ironing.

‘Could you please pull the clothing out, Sir?’ said the other of the two uniformed men.

‘Of course,’ replied Sebastian. As he did a clear white plastic bag with around half a kilogram of a white powdery substance fell from between his clothes onto the floor and spilt.

‘Would you please pick it up?’

Without thinking Sebastian nervously scrambled to pick it up, realising too late he had placed his fingerprints all over the plastic packaging. Virginia was alone.

Sebastian's mind raced. Cool logic, emotional control and his characteristic cavalier attitude disappeared.

'Is that some sort of powder for cosmetic use or for hygiene.'

That sounded sarcastic. Sebastian wasn't sure which of the two security men this question had come from. He wasn't interested. He was in a state of panic.

'Just one minute, Sir. Step back,' said the burly one. He took a knife from his pocket, scooped up some of the substance and walked out of the room. It was only a matter of minutes before he came back.

'Sir, you are in serious trouble. This is high grade heroin.'

'What do you mean heroin? That's bullshit! And that was a bit quick,' snapped Sebastian. 'The analysis I mean.'

The burly one responded slowly but clearly. 'Even Sydney airport has the technology now for onsite analysis. We've had it since this airport opened. We can detect anything in a matter of seconds.'

Sebastian was now becoming very alarmed. A man entered the room in a suit. He was half the size of the burly security man. He had a moustache which was perfectly groomed. He had an olive complexion that exuded power and influence in the Middle Eastern way. He wasted no time.

'If we don't kill you, you will be in jail forever.' He was looking directly at Sebastian. 'You can't smuggle drugs into this country. You are insane.'

Sebastian knew he was wasting his time denying it. Although he did. 'No, no, it is all a mistake. I don't even take drugs. I am not interested in selling or promoting drugs. I work for a clean cut, committed, democratic party.'

'Yes, I know all about that too. You're here forever, because of your fucking democratic OWL party.'

Sebastian was panicking. Just as I had planned.

Sebastian was half delirious. ‘To put it in the vernacular you use in Australia so eloquently, you are totally fucked. Nice word “fucked”. It sums up some situations very succinctly. Oh, I have travelled a lot too. Been to Sydney lots of times. Good contacts there. But I digress!’

The bigger security guard held him by the elbow and steered him towards another far more comfortable room followed by the well-dressed man. He was forcibly seated in a leather chair. The suited man sat in a similar lounge chair immediately opposite him.

‘Listen, your political party is finished. Did you read the headlines this morning? There is going to be devastation everywhere. You silly prick! Don’t you realise it is going to be *everywhere*, except selected places in the Middle East. Don’t you get it? Oh! The conflagration will spread globally, except to other selected *places*.

‘You’ve been to Dubai before. Look around you. How old is it? It was only decades ago this place was a fishing port and no more. Now have a look at what is around us. Built on sand. Australia might be new but not as new as Dubai. Australia has far more wealth. Far more natural wealth. Look how quickly we build the most modern buildings on the planet. But look how we harvest water. Look how we create islands. We could rebuild an entire planet in no time at all. And you think we are the enemy. You think we are uncivilised.’

‘Who *are* you?’ asked Sebastian.

‘You want to know my name? Ha! Just call me Abdulla Mohammed d’ettut As far as you are concerned I will hold you in suspended animation until I kill you. Look around you. This will be your home until your death. Oh! Incidentally the headlines are correct. There always was a conspiracy. In fact there were *multiple* conspiracies. Oh, and being one of those people; one of those you call the Bilderberg caucus. Those humble billionaires. It took several generations for the world to

descend into chaos. But this little island of civilisation here can not only survive but thrive into a very long future. I am proud to be a member of what you despise.

‘You know you are right. Cities will disappear. We will rebuild them. They will be decimated. No *more* than that. The word decimation comes from the Roman times where they killed one in ten as a matter of retribution. Much more than one in ten is going to die in our scenario. More like nine in ten. The world will be rebuilt and it will be rebuilt without the help of OWL. There won’t be any peaceful transition. Yep, we will use the process of nuclear cauterisation and it will be quick. It will sterilise areas. We will quarantine those areas for the years it takes to stop them glowing in the night.

‘See Sebastian, all life is unfair. Some are born strong; some weak. Some are born lazy; some are alert. Some are born into wealth; some starve. It’s pretty well all about luck.’

Sebastian suddenly realised somebody was orchestrating, choreographing and puppeteering his life which now appeared to him to be nothing more than a storyline. He had a sudden eerie insight. He was being created by a narrator who for whatever insane reasons, as the original OWL creator, had changed allegiances.

Or at least had changed his mind about how this story of the world, in this dimension, would end.

Sebastian dearly wanted to be collaborative through his OWL party. He wanted to solve the two global problems of peaceful world governance and overpopulation ... in that order. And surely the narrator wanted this too?

But ... *I, d’ettut*, now want none of this. I am opting for an eternal feudalism, through an elite, brought to a sustainable global governing position through nuclear war ... so let the real characters play it out. Sebastian is a foil.

‘And yes, you are right. There is a hidden elite of the lucky ones. But you are wrong. They are not Christians, Jews

or Islamic. They are beyond the manmade institutions of religion. They *are* black, white, and with many variations. What they have in common is wealth, power and history; not religion.

‘And to a certain extent the religions have failed. Not enough wars; too much humanitarian aid; and far, far too many people. Too many criminals. Too many refugees. So we are taking full control back. We will depopulate quickly and reintroduce the oligarchy, but not as a feudal system. But as an unassailable one world government. We will perpetuate the natural order of things.

‘Welcome Sebastian, to your hell. Welcome Sebastian. You have always wanted to know and now you have found out. It is a pity you won’t be able to give my kind regards to the other members of the Bilderberg caucus, who you planned to meet.

‘But that just isn’t going to happen. Mind you they might come and visit you like visiting someone in a zoo. Did you ever think of human zoos before? Hmm. Perhaps it was me? No; yes of course you did, you arrogant little shit!

‘As far as Virginia is concerned. Don’t worry. We have great plans for her. She will lead OWL. But not the way you intended. She can be as insightful and as compassionate as she likes. But once she understands truly what is happening. Once the ‘word’ is out she will be one of us.’

With this the moustached man abruptly departed, locked the door, and allowed Sebastian to stew in his hubris.

At his age, Sebastian considered death, particularly his own, far more frequently now than in his youth. It was only a minor consideration then. But now it was daily.

He mumbled this to himself as the inquisitor left the room. ‘The world is in such a mess. Such chaos. There is such political crap. Such greed ... if reincarnation could only be true. If only I could come back in a million years with my

memory intact. So I can make a comparison. A million years of human intellectual and moral evolution might just make it worthwhile being on this planet ... but right now I don't think so.'

In a bizarre show of superstitious behaviour Sebastian adjusted the collar and sleeves of his shirt. He was wearing sneakers. He unconsciously rubbed the top of each sneaker on the calf of each leg. This took him back to his school days when he had to have shiny black shoes; even if it meant smudges of black polish on the back of each leg of his school suit. Oh, he knew fear then. But he had forgotten.

Hmm he thought, if I had been truly successful then my death would be very depressing. If I had won or earned a hundred million dollars, then I wouldn't want to die. There would be too much to live for. But right now, in this awful situation, the thought of my demise, the end of life, is not so bad.

Chapter 29

Enlightenment, Your Revolution and More

I can be a narrator too.

Overpopulation, pollution and climate change have never been the cause; they have just been the symptoms of the wrong forms of government. With a new government that recognises the innate unfairness of human existence we have a chance for what is truly the best in democracy. A government that maybe even transcends existing democracy. Through benignly exploiting the Internet we have one chance in history to get it right. I thought at one stage d'ettut shared this objective.

We don't have to accept what should now be obvious, d'ettut's oligarchy, nuclear war and a continuation of a global feudal system, even if he lies and calls it something else. If world government is not fixed now, we will perpetuate failure not success in the human species, and be left with a horizonless future of servitude for the masses.

We have one chance left to bring human civilisation under one inspired democratic government, all starting with OWL. It will take time and passion. And a new leader.

So d'ettut thought he could write me out of history. Minimise me. Diminish me, as a woman, by tricking Sebastian. His chameleon self sees him as a member of the Middle Eastern based elite, immune to earthly culling. Bred of generations of superior intellect and wealth. The epitome of mankind. Ha!

He thought he could pervert the course of our story and the foundation for a new global political party. But there are powers that exist. Powers right now that can change dimensions and narrators in a story. It is called the 'word'.

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Wherever, however, whenever it is read. And not just his way!

He thinks I will just give in and let the elites take over world government in one fell swoop. Now he wants to globally depopulate, rapidly. By any means. 'We all have to die sometime,' he says. 'Our courage is displayed by how we manage our own death.' Easy words. 'Survivors will be thankful for stability.' So he promises. But stability at what cost? Slavery to a master race?

He thinks he can manipulate me in some bizarre, yet unknown way, to lead OWL to extinction.

What he didn't realise was I can manipulate a story too. I can also bring you, the reader, to another dimension. A new and different dimension. And he forgot one important thing in telling his distorted story.

Initially he had us put together the constitution, the application for OWL membership, the code of OWL, the website and those things that can make a political party real. In fact his manipulations throughout the story show that reality can be crafted from fiction in the first place. That was his premise. This was to have been the masterstroke in his duplicity.

But what he didn't think of, or remember to do, was to *actually* build the website which demonstrably does this. So I have. I have done it! Me. Virginia!

Reader, click on www.owlvoter.com, join our party and start the OWL revolution.

Access the website and start participating in policy formulation. Understand our policy guidelines and code of ethics. And of course your actual signature for the constitution will become very important. It will start the real OWL. We need five hundred of these as soon as possible. Let's start a world movement that is compassionate, meaningful and irresistible. Let's give life to OWL and save the world.

d'ettut is on a spiral; a downward spiral into a personal,

negative moral vortex.

We don't need to know any more about this. But *you* need to save the world. It is up to you the individual reader, to do the right thing. Don't let him write the wrong future!

Don't let d'ettut's prevarication prevail. Don't let Dante's *Divine Comedy* scare you (as prescient as it may be); or let Dan Brown's *Inferno* seduce you. It's going to be hard work. Democracy, in all its forms, always is. If we were able to talk to the Dead, we could ask those who have fought against the oligarchs and feudal society from time immemorial. They would tell us!

Oh, it will take the creation of another dimension to save Sebastian. I can insert myself into that dimension. Perhaps you will too. In the future, of course. In a world where OWL has prevailed. Where the elite are unmasked. Where equitable world governance is constructively being worked towards, and the global population is steadily decreasing. Of course, in this dimension it will be according to a compassionate and sensitive formula. All thanks to you ... you just don't know it yet!

I'll meet you again. OWL *will* prevail.

But, what comes next is not for the faint hearted. Only read on if you are a true 'warrior for democracy'.

OWL is ready now for assembly and waits for you.

Again, click on to www.owlvoter.com before it's too late. Let the revolution begin!

Chapter 30

Don't Look

THE AUSTRALIAN

Trillion Dollar Scam? Is OWL Leader Joining Global Elite?

Has the 'Virgin Who' (Virginia Hoo), Leader of OWL (One World League), the party that promised global harmony through her new style 'digital democracy', succumbed to greed?

It has been leaked an unnamed benefactor has developed a masterplan to place her at the head of a reported trillion dollar organisation.

The facts are scarce. Investigations reveal there is a plan to acquire a thousand tracts of land worldwide, of a thousand hectares each.

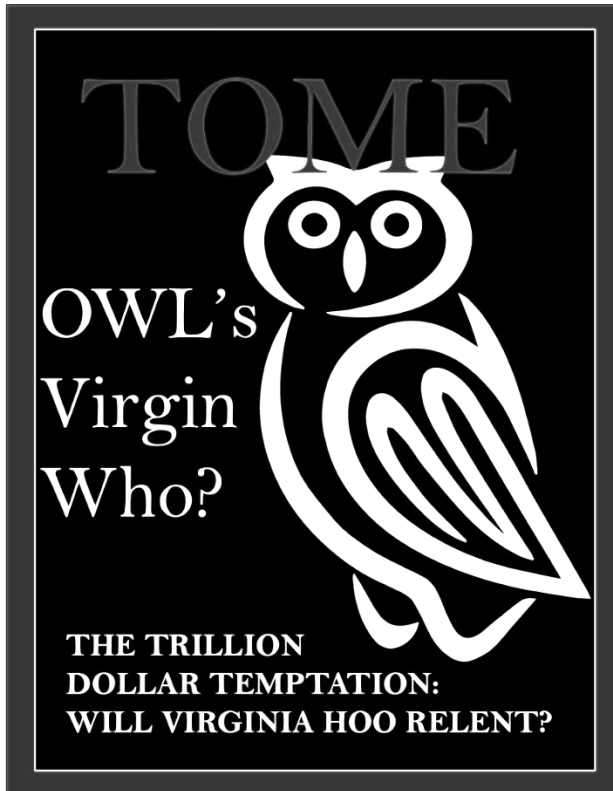
Reportedly the land acquisitions so far are in barren, but accessible places. The barren land is to be fertilised for a billion trees to be planted. The fertilisation process is unknown. But rumours are rife. The reasons for, or the types of trees are also unknown. Speculators know the carbon sequestering potential is huge. But the trillion dollar number doesn't stack up. We are still investigating.

Miss Hoo is reported to have been invited to the Infamous Bilderberg gathering this year. Other sources report she has also been asked by national governments to consult on their policies of political constraint on social media ventures; the very area to have gained her and her party

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world acclaim for developing 'digital democracy'. This, she promised, would be the vehicle moving the world towards a peaceful one world government concept.

Sebastian Spekter, a charismatic but some say psychotic founder of OWL disappeared mysteriously many months ago, presumably in Dubai en route to London.



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About d'ettut

d'ettut is an enigma and intends to stay that way. He has no vested political interests apart from his desire to help facilitate a movement which could bring about an equitable global society. He does not aspire to any particular role in such a movement nor does he wish to gain anything financially. His books are intended to assist in his quest to help the world gain social fairness.

His literary style varies. None of it is intended to be entertaining. It is confronting, didactic and enlightening (he hopes). He writes about social justice and targets youthful, very literate, Harry Potter-type readers who are now real-world savvy and like Harry are bursting to take on the establishment. His first four works are presented as novels and describe social despondency in all its manifestations.

Greenwars (1998), his first novel, essentially covers the fact that technology and its evolution can outstrip social evolution. Moral and ethical development of society is not able to keep pace with its own driving technology. This is all described in the form of an animal allegory; a kind of 21st century *Animal Farm*.

The second novel, *Pie Square* (2000), describes a different aspect of social evolution. In this situation it is the benign exploitation of youth through a highly sophisticated interactive electronic based fast food chain. Using this device young people are groomed for a more creative and constructive contribution to society.

In *Vampire Cities* (2000) the brashness, the harshness, of unfettered capitalism is the main theme.

Finally *Amber Reins Fall* (2006) looks in detail at an individual struggling in the 1960s and early 1970s to come to terms with contemporary society and the need for there to be a progressive evolution towards a moral betterment. The main protagonist invents the self-help concept.

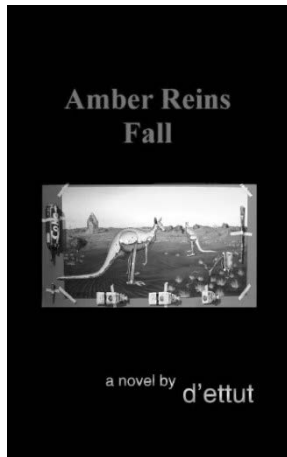
His fifth work, *OWL: One World League* (2017), is neither fiction nor fact. It is a literary work he calls fusion fiction which creates a 'sugar coated political treatise' condemning overpopulation, encouraging world government and issuing a clarion call to form a new global cyber democracy 'before it's too late'; 'before the elite snuff out social media'.

Fusion fiction he defines as literary 'bisociation', to borrow a term used by Koestler and Edward de Bono. It's a pairing of semi fictional plots with slabs of 'borrowed' and authentic text taken selectively from journals relevant to his thesis with no formal quotation or referencing. He says, 'Like Andy Warhol paintings of unacknowledged Campbell's soup cans, this is a collage of written down ideas, a creative plagiarism, to send a cerebral message.'

OWL is supplemented by the website owlvoter.com which dares readers to unite and light the fire of revolution for 21st century redemptive politics.

Also by d'ettut

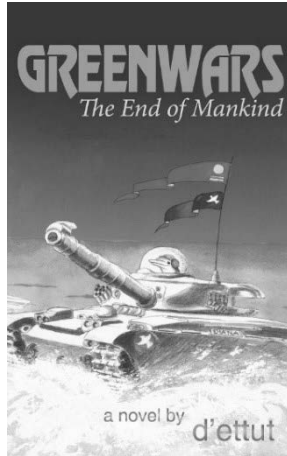
AMBER REINS FALL



This is a prequel to Pie Square and Greenwars. It is Adelaide in the 1960s and 70s. Adam Teforp stumbles through his adolescence, constantly confronted by his obsessive, grossly materialistic father. Early days as a confused hippie give way to outlandish yet astute entrepreneurship. The double suicide of his gay mentor and the gay mentor's lover leaves an indelible imprint that profoundly affects Adam's later life.

Adam becomes involved in a covert world of wealth and intrigue. Unknown to the public he stores nuclear waste in the barren desert of South Australian out-back ... for a price!

GREENWARS: THE END OF MANKIND



“The ultimate conspiracy – a virus released to cull the exploding world population. The ultimate in paranoia – talking animals taking over the world. Great fiction, terrifying prophecy.”

“A poignant comment on society and a rich reflection of our foibles.”

“Animal Farm for the new Millennium!”

PIE SQUARE



A satirical look at contemporary youth, corporate greed and the fast-food industry.

“A Sterne novel with a touch of Rabelais.”

“A benevolent Mein Kampf.”

“A poignant social comment through a parody of parables.”

“A pacifist, sexless romp through fast food to pie in the sky Utopia.”

“A quixotic picaresque.”

“Insane. A truly experimental novel not so much in the future but in a parallel universe. A universe similar to ours but where youth is taken seriously.”

VAMPIRE CITIES



What really happened at the Sydney Olympics?

Mystic, psychotic or dipsomaniac? Anderson has a life threatening disease and nothing to lose. Or has he? An artifact of extraordinary value has fallen into his hands. But he is being hunted around the world by the mysterious and powerful Vampire club. His 'visitations' give him insights into dimensions which, until now, have been hidden from the masses. Human society will never, ever be the same again. The final revelation comes at the Sydney Olympics.

OWL: PART 2 – COMING SOON



This is for the captains of industry; for the celebrities; for the kings and princesses; for all the rich and famous. Especially those who really believe they deserve what they've got.

It's for those born with a sea of oil beneath them; or a kingdom to rule; or a wealthy parent to help out.

But don't the masses sacrifice their mundane lives to create insatiable wealth and indolence for these "shining stars"?

So I introduce Virginia Hoo as the world's first trillionaire. I give her (and the reader) a simple formula for creating a trillion dollar empire...and power. It's up for grabs!

I also give her OWL to lead; to green the world; to purify toxic air; to end starvation and war.

But perhaps extraordinary wealth magnifies greed, accelerates corruption and facilitates destruction?

Or can an enlightened Virginia drive ordinary citizens around the world to achieve universal harmony?