

Copy Girl and the Pigeons of Paraguay

... or, "Bob Dylan's 35769'th Dream"

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June 14, 2007

A dream I had last night, while sleeping on United Airlines flight 860, returning home to Washington Dulles airport from a business/pleasure trip to Belo Horizonte, Brazil....

Normally on red-eye flights I get stuck in the middle seat sandwiched between extremely obese people. On the flight from the US to Brazil a week before, I'd been stuck between two fat old guys from upstate New York, who were part of a group en route to Paraguay to go pigeon-hunting. Apparently (so they said, eyes lit up with enthusiasm) in Paraguay one can kill upwards of 500 pigeons per day, on a regular basis, whereas in the US it's rare to find one or two 200-300 pigeon days per season. And furthermore (so they told me) they would be doing the people of Paraguay a service, by leaving the pigeon meat on the ground for them to pick up, take home, cook and eat. But they did not fit in their narrow little airplane seats and parts of each of them spilled over the armrest into my middle seat between them, which I did not like. I got very little sleep on that flight to Brazil; after my laptop battery gave out I spent most of the night reading some stories by Alice Munro (awed as usual by her vision into the human mind), and then trying and failing to invent some new mathematics about the topology of proof space (which I partially succeeded to invent a few days, but that's a whole other story).

But anyway: on the flight back to the US from Brazil last night, fortune grinned on me and I got a WHOLE THREE-SEAT ROW to myself. The plane had a layout where each row consisted of two seats by the window, an aisle, three seats in the middle, another aisle, and two seats by the other window ... and I got the three seats in the middle to myself! None of the three were my assigned seats – I was originally seated next to a pleasant old Brazilian lady -- but just before the plane's doors were closed in preparation for takeoff, I noticed that the row across from me was EMPTY, and moved over to it before anyone else got the idea. (On a flight full of Americans this would have been more difficult to achieve, but, this plane was mainly occupied with Brazilians; and over the course of numerous US-Brazil flights, I've noticed that, for whatever reason, Brazilians are much less likely than Americans to rove the plane in search of superior seating accommodations. They tend to take what's been allotted to them.)

So I was lying there stretched across my three seats – afraid to get up and go to the bathroom and pee for fear some other ambitious American might notice and

steal the seats from me ... an offense that would be a pain-in-the-ass to argue against, as none of them were really my ticketed seats anyway (though of course, the hypothetical row-of-seats-thief would have no way of knowing that – *unless* they had watched me move seats as the flight got started...). It wasn't exactly comfortable – I'm far longer than the 3 seats and my knees kept cramping up – but it was an order of magnitude less painful than trying to sleep sitting up in an airplane seat ... and apparently it was nice enough for me to sink into a long and deep dream.....

First I was at home, though it wasn't my real house. It was even messier and dirtier than my real house, jam-packed with furniture and dirt like an apartment I once had in Brooklyn back in the mid-1980's. My dad was there and was uncharacteristically uncomplaining about the state of the place. My three kids were there too, snacking on food in the kitchen, and we caught some weird small mammal – a bit like a ferret, but chubbier, and with a way cuter face sort of like a bunny (what's a ferret/bunny hybrid called, a "funny"?? ... a "bunnet"??) – and put it in the basement. But keeping it trapped in the basement didn't work out because the basement door was so poorly made: it seemed to have been sawed off diagonally and irregularly about 1-2 feet from the bottom. So the animal had no problem escaping, at which point (my two younger kids) Zade and Zeb started chasing it through the house, squealing and yelping as it ran upstairs and weaved among the junk all over the floor and the disorganized furniture (which was not nicely pushed up against the walls but sitting all over the room and in some cases piled up in pyramids and other structures ... as I said, like that Brooklyn apartment I once had...). My dad and I inspected the door with a view toward repairing it, and we noticed that not only was the door non-rectangular and irregular and failing to match the frame, but the frame itself had a bottom board that was about 4 inches above the floor (yes, I know doorframes don't usually have bottom boards, but this one did). So we gave up on fixing it and decided to sweep the floor instead, which we did with two separate brooms, and it was much like sweeping a field of dirt outdoors; you just kept sweeping and sweeping and the total mass of stuff on the floor decreased by maybe .01% each time. (Apparently my unconscious was not looking forward to coming home and having to clean the house, which I left in a mess before departing for Brazil. One of the things for which I envy my Brazilian colleagues is the low price of housekeepers in their country. Of course all my Brazilian colleagues are in the elite class of Brazil ... but for them, housekeeping is something the maid does, which is a situation that appeals to me considerably. I've given up hoping for some patron of AI and the Singularity to hire me a housekeeper; my hope now is to liberate myself from such chores via Novamente LLC making a lot of money!)

After a short while my dad and I got tired of sweeping the floor together, and I got in the car and drove to a party, which was in a large house owned by a hippy friend (not a real-life friend: the friend in the dream seemed to be a kind of vague amalgam of various people I've known and read about). At this point one of those peculiar discontinuities typical of dreams occurred: No longer had I arrived

at the party from my messy house with my dad and kids in it; rather, now I had arrived at the party from a room at the Quality Inn where I was staying with my wife Izabela. Why she had stayed at the hotel rather than come to the party wasn't completely clear; but I have the vague inkling she was worn out and wanted to stay there and sleep (and dream her own weird dreams!).

In the course of the next part of the dream, the house where the party was held periodically morphed into a hotel and then back to a house again -- until at some point it was a hotel that had a special segment used as a house by my hippy friend and his wife; and a basement used by them as well. People were distributed around the hotel lobby and various other rooms, talking and laughing amongst each other and drinking too much alcohol. A lot of them seemed to be alumni of Simon's Rock Early College, where I got my BA degree in the early 1980's (there was a Simon's Rock reunion a few weeks ago, which I did not attend; apparently this was my unconscious's attempt at a reconstruction!). I started to envy my wife back at the Quality Inn sleeping, because listening to drunken people gets boring fast (I stopped drinking alcohol in 2001 ... I never drank all that frequently before then, but on one occasion in October 2001 I drank way, way too much and caused my digestive system great havoc and decided just to give up the poisonous stuff altogether ... in the period since then I have often been in the position of being the only sober person in a crowd of intoxicated people, which has given me an excellent advantage to observe the incredible stupidifying effect that alcohol has upon human thought and conversation, along with its general elevation of peoples' levels of enthusiasm and affection....) ... and more importantly, because I was getting a splitting, pounding, slicing sort of headache. What a headache! Owwww!!! (In real life, I believe, my head was shoving up against the armrest at one of the ends of the three-seat row, getting jammed between the armrest and the seat and causing some real discomfort.)

I went to the host of the party -- the hippy-friend's wife, who was also a sort-of hippy -- and asked if she had some headache medicine. This woman was a wonderful construction -- I wish I could depict her now but I don't have the patience ... she was something like a combination of two women I know in real life, the futurist journalist Amara Angelica and the futurist activist Natasha Vita-More. However, this woman in the dream wasn't particularly a futurist; she just had the optimism, glow and articulacy of these two futurists about her ... to a rough approximation, she had more of Amara's mind and more of Natasha's emotions; and anyway, she led me into the basement of the hotel which was part of the part of the hotel privately occupied by herself and her husband, and she said "What would you like for the headache? Would you like some mushrooms?"

Now this was nice! There were shelves and shelves of mushrooms in this cluttered but well-lit and non-musty basement room. It had the feeling of a mad scientist's laboratory, devoted to the design and cultivation of novel mushroom species. Some of the mushrooms were just sitting out on wooden shelves and tables, others were in labeled bins, others were in neat piles on metal shelves

with labels in front of the piles. A dozen or so people from the party had followed me down to the basement with the hippy wife; including Gareth Price, a guy with whom I attended Simon's Rock back in the 1980's. I've seen Gareth at least once in the intervening years, and in this dream he was in a sort of trans-temporal form: his mid-1980's head plunked on top of his 2000-era body. Anyway Gareth was following close behind me excitedly surveying the mushrooms, looking around in his hyperactively charming way for something amusing to say or do.

"He often recommends mushrooms for headaches," noted the woman, referring to her absent husband, my hippy friend.

Most of the mushrooms were species I didn't recognize either by name or appearance; but I couldn't help noting the bin of *Psilocybe Cubensis*, and then nearby a pile of mushrooms on a shelf with a label clearly indicating psychedelic effects. Unfortunately I can't remember what the label said (I'm surprised I remember as much of this dream as I do!), but the mushrooms looked much like *Tampanensis* (small, knotty clumps of ragged stuff without any stems) except for the fact that they were brightly colored, mostly blue with some reds and purples, and some glowing speckles almost as if they'd been mixed in with Pop Rocks (do they still make that candy?) or pieces of phosphorescent quartz. (On the trip to Brazil, from which I was returning, along with a bunch of work in Novamente's Brazil office I spent a long weekend backpacking with my wife in the mountains near Belo Horizonte, a place that's full of (among other nice sights) beautiful crystalline rocks – Belo Horizonte being the largest city in the province of Minas Gerais, which means "General Mines" in Portuguese. ***A warning to the reader though: the wilderness of Minas Gerais is full of ticks with a very annoying property.*** Once they get on your body, they don't bite you just once ... they bite you, then detach and move to another location and bite you again. Each tick may leave dozens of bites on your body. I am told there is a medicine that will get rid of them, but no one has given it to me, nor told me its name. As I write, these ticks still crawl over my body, biting and biting again. Perhaps my best hope is to become a more friendly person and shake a lot of other peoples' hands. Perhaps during a handshake one of the ticks will leap off my hand onto the hand of the other person and plague them instead. And during another handshake I'll lose another one... etc. I know that's kind of sociopathic, but what else can I do? As I associate with a lot of futurists, transhumanists and Singularitarians, it's possible that this recent Brazilian backpacking trip will cause the entire radical-futurist community to get infected with these creatures. Which will presumably hasten the Singularity, as it will make all of us more and more eager to finally shed these legacy human forms!).

Back to the dream: I asked my friend's wife about the *Tampanensis*-like mushrooms and she said I should be careful, they give one hell of a bang. She seemed rather disapproving, but she had roused my curiosity. The party wasn't boring anymore, and I didn't give a shit about the headache. While poking the

weird colored shrooms exploratorily, I knocked some on the floor, and had to bend down and get them from the floor behind the shelves and cabinets holding up the mushrooms. What I picked up from the floor (lying in a pile of dirt) was a clump of three nodules stuck together, all blue and lumpy and ugly and glowy. As soon as I got back up on my feet, I put them in my mouth before anyone could argue with me, and they popped all around my mouth like Pop Rocks, but without the sugary flavor.

I realized that, if these poppy things really had a powerful effect, I'd soon be too out-of-it to drive back to the Quality Inn, so I decided to find someone who would offer to drive me home a little later if I wasn't able to do so myself. First I asked Gareth Price, but he just gave me the runaround: he didn't say he WOULDN'T, but he wouldn't commit to saying he WOULD either, and after a minute or two I got tired of the conversation. I'd already chewed up the mushrooms and they were having some initial, unspecific effects: just making me feel weird, disconnected from the world.

In the other room I found my old college roommate Bob Crichton, who was wearing the T-shirt he used to wear at Simon's Rock: "Here Comes Trouble!" it said. But Bob wasn't causing any trouble at all, he was smily and friendly ... Bob said he would drive me back to my hotel later if I wanted him to; but he pointed out that I'd need to tell him how to get there. I took out my trusty MacBook Pro and looked up the address online, and it looked peculiar: the street number was 6, and the street name and the town name were identical and not very name-like ... they were both the same two-word phrase ... but I've forgotten what the phrase was ... I think one of the words may have been "Anne." So I told good old Bouncin' Bob I'd find a Google Map giving directions. He wandered off somewhere and I went into the other room – the hotel lobby – and sat down in a chair and tried to bring up Google Maps on my laptop, but it was too much – I couldn't do it – managing the windows and the mouse and the Net connection was way too difficult ... my mind was full of overwhelming colors and amazing quasi-classical-music orchestrations played by far more instruments and musicians than could fit on this or any planet. The colored shards kept shifting, diving in and out of this universe from their native one – and I had the very clear impression I was experiencing a glorious, musically-synchronized interaction with the creatures from another world -- a world I've often visited in my dreams, and which I wrote about in a dream-essay called [Colors](http://goertzel.org/Colors.pdf) (see <http://goertzel.org/Colors.pdf>).

I stayed in that place a long time – that freaky section of the multiverse, all full of music and colors, which weren't just coming from outside myself but also from within myself ... the different patterns and thoughts and fears and habits and wonders and ideas from my mind surged up, took a true and honest form hovering in front of me, concealing nothing and fabricating nothing, just being their own patterned selves with their colors and movement and light-flashes-turned-to-sound-turned-to-light ... there was nothing at all but high-dimensional

colored forms, zooming around each other to music, each one in turn taking the foreground and the background and many other kinds of grounds I don't even have words to describe ... nor patience to make up the vocabulary ...

Then, moving my neck all of a sudden, I looked over to where the hotel registration counter was supposed to be and I realized I was hallucinating. A very fat and ugly woman, somewhere around my age (40), was standing in front of a computer and singing into a microphone. Soon she began to dance, in a free way, exhaustedly but with vital enthusiasm, like one might see at an outdoor music festival late in the afternoon when everyone present has had a few too many beers and too many hours in the sun. Her voice was surprisingly melodic, a kind of fusion of doo-wop and opera, and I was sure that she was really just some boring woman standing at the hotel counter checking in or carrying out some other bureaucratic operation ... but I was enjoying the hallucination tremendously. Soon she was joined by two of her friends, equally obese and ugly-looking by cultural standards, yet brutally beautiful in that moment due to the vibrancy with which they moved their bodies and the intentness and honesty on their faces.

They were singing a song called "Copy Girl", which they had made up – and it soon became clear that they were recording a music video, using some fancy system of webcams hooked up to the computer on the counter in front of them. My vision of them singing was interspersed with occasional views of them walking down the street while swinging their purses around, and carrying out other typically music-video-like activities (which I can't quite remember, alas). I can't remember the lyrics of the song but the basic gist of it was that they were not girls anymore -- they were too old and their time had passed -- but they could still exercise their interior girlishness by making up stories about girls ... and in particular by making up (and singing, and singing about singing) a story about a girl who liked to copy other girls, who in fact could copy other girls so exactly that no one could tell her apart from the other girls. In fact she copied them so exactly that she really *was* the other girls, in the same sense that all electrons are identical. (As Jean Baudrillard has pointed out repeatedly, a sufficiently accurate simulation can no longer be considered one.) I got the feeling they were recording the music video, there at the hotel counter, with the intention of marketing it to TV studio executives as the basis for a "Copy Girl" TV show.

They were so very, very ugly (one of them developed male pattern baldness, during the course of recording the video), and so enthusiastic, and so incredibly beautiful and convincing in their voices and the undulation of their bodies – the music was among the most complex and amazing and delightful I've ever heard, and I don't generally like vocal music ... but they got every little bit just right, like Mozart fused with Billie Holliday fused with the little green men from Roswell -- and as they were singing their sweet human hearts out, colored transhuman forms were emanating from them and from the space all around them, connecting their brains with mine and all the other brains in the room and the

brains of the multicolored creature-forms in the parallel alternate universe that the mushroom had put me in contact with.... And then, as one of the three ex-girls let out her final wail, slapping her hand against her mouth over and over to make her voice oscillate appropriately (vaguely like the mute of a trumpet), I realized the mushroom trip was ending. It was a brief and crazy bang indeed. Much shorter than a usual mushroom trip and I wouldn't need a ride home after all.

I tried to understand the vision as it faded, as my inner and outer space reverted to normal.... The main thing was that it was right here, right now. The alien beauty of the colored world – the multidimensional creatures I'd seen in previous dreams and visions – were in this trip, for the first time, right here in the human universe with me, penetrating through the minds and bodies of those very human (ex) girls. It was an eschatology of immanence, to balance the eschatology of transcendence that characterized my [Colors](#) dream, and my work on the AI and Singularity altogether. The other world was here right now. There weren't really any boundaries. The difference between this world now and the mind of God (yeah yeah there is no God, I know, insert your favorite metaphor in his place please) and the post-Singularity superminds was just a matter of perspective. Each one defined each other one, none had any meaning without the others, each was just a different perspective upon the multidimensional transconscious whole. Or was it? Fuck. There was never much use in interpreting a mushroom. But I felt solid and alive, with none of the post-insight depression I'd often had after psychedelic experiences in the past. I felt more one with my fellow humans than I had felt for quite a long time. Yes, I felt, we're limited – all of us – even those, like me, who spend most of our time pushing the limits of the human brain for deeper understanding – we're limited, but we're still all manifestations of the same underlying whole, the same glorious, finite but massive organism in umpteen-bumpteens-chumpteens dimensions that was constantly reflecting and re-re-...-re-generating itself in multicolored mirrorhouses ... and none of us could really grok the whole, only the whole could grok itself, if you could even describe what it did as grokking ... but it was too much cheesy pop philosophy, I couldn't take it any more, I was starting to feel nauseated ... and I really had to piss. I folded my laptop up, put it in my laptop bag and headed for the bathroom at the other side the hotel lobby. And then, I woke up on an airplane seat, with an intensive urge to pee ... and a rather funny dream in my mind, which (after I got back from the bathroom, relieved that no one had stolen my seat) I decided to type into my laptop before it vanished from my (human, all-too-humanly fallible) memory. (Pushing aside a bit of good old Jewish guilt that perhaps I should be using that period of time ... and that portion of laptop battery charge ... engaging in some more valuable activity...).