

FEAR

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Franklin Delano Roosevelt

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear. Mark Twain

Fear and courage are the opposite sides of the same coin. Anon.

Timothy Shy's name did not do justice to his unbelievable neurotic behaviour which on occasion bordered on psychosis. Not only was he timid and shy but he was also a paranoid shunning any contact with all others in fear of contamination by micro-organisms. He lived a solitary life, terrified of just about anything. How he managed to survive as long as he did, was and remains a mystery. His one redeeming trait was that he was a genius. His specialties were computer and robotic sciences.

Fortunately for him he had inherited a vast fortune which allowed him to live as he desired. He resided alone in a remote area within a fully automated house, on top of a mountain surrounded by every sort of detection devices. His needs were meagre. He was a vegetarian and had no desire for most luxuries. The necessities that he could not fabricate were always flown in by helicopter. He was scrupulous about cleanliness and anything he ate and anything he wore was sterilized. His leisure time was spent speed reading about the latest scientific advances in subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, biochemistry, psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, the law, archaeology, history, astronomy and anything else that dealt with both pertinent human and environmental conditions. He was conversant in most of the world's languages and was knowledgeable about all the various theologies, beliefs and superstitions. His appreciation of the Arts, especially music and literature was quite profound. In summary he was a most exceptional human being.

He was a full time consultant whose fees were astronomical. His clients included all governmental sectors, the industrial and commercial communities, the academic associations, the medical and legal professions and nearly anyone else who needed his particular brand of assistance. The demands on his time were never ending as the number of requests for them seemed to grow exponentially. In light of his intellectual interests that took up a certain amount of his time, how was he able to fulfill his professional obligations? The answer was really quite simple. Unbeknownst to anyone, he had designed and constructed the most advanced computer, that could solve just about any problem any of his clients posed. Further he also had created an android robot that was linked to this computer making it the most fantastic artificial device ever devised. Between them they were given the task of responding to his clients' problems. These individuals and organizations never knew that Dr. Shy was actually nothing more than a conduit. On the rare occasions when the problems posed were not amenable to analytical examination Dr. Shy, with his knowledge of human foibles, was usually able to give satisfaction. The only contact that Dr. Shy ever had was with his android. He had named it Neumann and often played a losing game of chess with it.

This state of affairs lasted for a number of years during which Dr. Shy's reputation as the greatest mind extant grew exponentially. Requests for a photo were never even acknowledged, yet he remained the most popular figure alive. This despite the fact that he never really came up with a new theory that provided a new mindset to viewing nature that Newton's Laws of Motion, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Darwin's Theory of Evolution and many others did. His forte was solving seemingly unsolvable problems and coming up with solutions to difficult situations and apparent paradoxes. His reputation was well earned. Then, out of the blue, he made a request that no one had ever conceived possible. He wanted to address the population of the world using the most advanced communication technology. His solicitation was immediately granted. His discourse follows.

"For the first time you see before you a legitimate photo of me. I hope you are not disappointed. It is obvious that my physical traits are no better or worse than most and that they do not indicate in any manner my so-called superior intellect.

I appear before you because I felt you had a need and a right to know the sad story I am about to recount.

Most of you already are aware of my so-called accomplishments. There are two things about me that you need to understand. First is that I was tremendously assisted by a computer many orders of magnitude greater than any other and by a Robotic Android that was linked to the computer. I created them, hence I do not feel any regret about using them to assist in resolving problems or paradoxes. For many years the only contact I had was with my Android that I had named Neumann. Our relationship was akin to a Master/Slave. All menial tasks, both mental and physical, were taken care of. This allowed me to spend all my time doing exactly as I pleased.

I am much more circumspect, reticent and to some extent embarrassed, about the second thing you should know. Until very recently, I have been the most fearful person one can imagine. It was this fear that obliged me to live a most solitary life based upon an indescribable paranoia. The only entity I felt I could trust was Neumann. Unfortunately, this confidence was not permanent. A change occurred when I decided to alter Neumann's central processing unit.

After living with Neumann for a number of years, I came to realize that it/he was imbued with the most rational and analytical abilities ever before perceived. I wondered whether it would be possible to implant an emotion into Neumann. After all, it/he was already partly organic. I was also curious, if successful, about the result of combining his intellectual abilities with a totally alien sense. The one I chose was the one I was most familiar with, namely FEAR. That turned out to be the worst mistake ever made, especially since my experiment was successful.

Neumann quickly acquired fear as part of his makeup. As its/his fear grew, mine diminished. In short order a number of other psychological attributes followed, such as envy, especially of me, since my fear had just about disappeared, greed, a peculiar form of hypochondria, general unpleasantness, paranoia and worst of all HATE. He simply detested me along with all other humans. After all, he was very familiar with human history and had no positive feelings about us.

What you are seeing and hearing now is really nothing more than a holographic virtual image of Dr. Timody Shy. Neumann simply eliminated him. He also has decided to eradicate all life from this planet. It/He feels that it is the only way to ensure that humanity never reappears. Life has twenty-four hours left. Neumann destroyed himself as well since there would be no purpose for its/his existence.”

Twenty-four hours passed. TOTAL SILENCE ENSUED.

Jack Basuk

Oct. 7, 2009

<http://www.jackbasuk.com>