

ENTERTAINMENT

There's no business like show business. A major song from the Musical Comedy, 'Annie Get Your Gun' by Irving Berlin

It seems that the analysis of character is the highest human entertainment. And literature does it, unlike gossip, without mentioning real names. Isaac Bashevis Singer

I am only a public entertainer who has understood his time. Pablo Picasso

I would sooner read a timetable or a catalogue than nothing at all. They are much more entertaining than half the novels that are written. William Somerset Maugham

I am a writer. We are all writers. However, I feel that a true writer either attempts to earn his or her keep or actually does. I am one such. Actually, I was a journalist. There appears to be two types of journalists: the straightforward reporter whose job is to ascertain the facts behind a topic of interest and report them without any embellishments. To this end the reporter has to engage in some investigative work and should double check his/her findings. The second is the editorialist whose responsibility is to express a learned opinion about matters of significance and importance.

I was an example of the former. My beat was space. I spent most of my journalistic career exploring the void, attempting to find interesting phenomena, especially planets with amazing eco-systems and life forms. I have an interesting tale to tell but I must precede it with a necessary preamble.

I have already stated that we are all writers and as such, communicators. Thus we are also artists. The final link in this chain is that we attempt to be 'entertainers'. When we communicate we hope that our audience, be they one or many, somehow is engrossed by what we aver. However, if the truth be told, most, indeed the preponderance of us, are very poor at any of our attempts to entertain. For better or worse, the successful ones can practically be counted by a finite number. A small list might contain personages such as Buddha, Moses, Socrates, Aristotle, Jesus, Galileo, Darwin, Newton, Einstein, Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Shakespeare, Moliere, Zola, Marx, Smith, Herzl, Picasso, Van Gogh, Tolstoy, Gershwin, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Hitler, Lenin and others. The most critical and characteristic trait they share is their ability to communicate. If they could not, would anyone ever have heard of any of them?

As previously stated, I was a journalist of long standing. I was rather successful. I suppose this was because I was a member of a small cadre of 'space reporters'. I spent most of my time roaming through the void, seeking phenomena of major interest, usually of strange planets with bizarre life forms and corresponding eco-systems. There was no dearth of such. However there was one that bears mention because I never submitted an article about it, something I had

never done before. In fact, I felt that reporting about this could lead to very contentious outcomes with me being called all sorts of very unpleasant epithets and possibly resulting in my arrest and persecution on the grounds of immorality. I decided then to resign my position as a journalist and become an author. I had long yearned to write a novel in which I could surreptitiously include some of the things I had learnt from this very strange place.

I have no recollection of how I arrived there, the length of time I spent there, where it was, and when I departed from that place. I call it a place simply because it did not resemble any site I was familiar with. It might have been a holographic mirage. How I got back home also remains a mystery. One moment I was there and the next I was here.

What I do remember is being in a very weird and wonderful place and encountering strange life forms. At least, I think they were life forms. They resembled humanity. I suspect that this was for my benefit. Communication with them was unlike any I had ever come across. They did not use any language that I am familiar with, indeed, they did not use language at all. Yet, I understood them completely. They comprehended every question I had and answered them without any reservations except for ones dealing with their origins and reasons for being. Somehow they explained that while they knew the answers, the limitations of my mind and the language it uses made it impossible to respond in any meaningful manner. They were able to read my mind but I certainly could not reciprocate unless I was allowed to.

In response to a query about how they entertained themselves, I experienced aesthetic sensations of beauty, visually, acoustically, poetically, theatrically, etc. They covered the gamut of human experience. There is no way I can describe my emotional responses to them. Every time I think of them I am overcome with idyllic emotions that bring tears to my eyes and touch my soul.

A few more points about them need telling. First, I am not sure whether they number more than one or are the sum of their parts that is a unity. Second, they seem to have an unlimited amount of knowledge about everything. However I am not sure what I mean by the term 'everything'. Third, they are a very caring entity. They entrenched in me rules that would govern our behaviour and allow us to live in a beautiful and constructive harmony while maintaining our differences of language and culture. Finally, and most important, they appear to be able to create something from nothing. I cannot help but wonder whether I am nothing more than one of their creations. Also, did they create existence? I am left in a quandary about how to recount my experiences.. Can anyone believe my tale and take it seriously?

I have just finished writing my novel. I decided to include in it just about everything I could dredge up about the human condition. I hoped it would become a best seller since I used up all my capital assets to have it published. I was broke. In an attempt to make it highly successful, I deliberately made sure that it contained violence, sex and all its so called perversions, science fiction as well as science, fantasy, love, hatred, greed, ambition, the whole range of criminal activities including patricide-fratricide-matricide-genocide, barbaric torture, charity, deeds of great quality, great oratory and human giants in terms of their words and deeds. To tempt the

reader, I am including the following opening to my text. I hope that my novel will be a winner. I am in desperate need of funds. I am not only flat broke but in a great deal of debt.

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the Earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

And God said, ``Let there be light: and there was light.``

Epilogue:

If the preceding seems like an infomercial, that is what it was meant to be.

Jack Basuk

2010-12-27