

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/1

Huxley Innis

The Innis Report: On the Couch

The three of us sat there on the couch, ready. We were just waiting patiently: Nash Hartley, Joseph Bozeman, and me. Acclaimed throughout the land, Nash and Joseph were considered by some, and contested by others, to be public intellectuals of the loftiest order ... and me? Well, I lost all my lofty labels long ago ...

We had been discussing religion after watching a fascinating and educationally ego-shattering documentary on said subject and it's ... ahem ... *effects* on society, culture, and the individual.

Nash was a Catholic; Joseph was a Jew; and me ... See, I was really into the Sun but I wasn't a Mithraist; moreover, I have--for years, feverishly followed the twisted tenants of Zen Buddhism, but I'm not a Buddhist ... ?

What I was however—what we all were wasn't what we expected to be, necessarily. We weren't really ready to go where we intended or had been inspired to go when the dream of exploring certain shores, wide with the sands of skepticism, time, and unknown neuronal landscapes was laid bare before our bewildered eyes.

But now, here we were, on the couch. Ready, willing, and waiting for the open road. No one was fucking around. This was serious.

We are all drawn into this, from time before time, before it's too late. But now, here we are. We are here now—nowhere else, but on this couch watching news on the tube, the weather out the window and wondering in semi-fearful anticipation when that Mother, Nature would kick in.

Nash just got divorced and feels angry, confused, lost and alone. But presently he feels like he is strapped into the seat of an 850,000 horsepower solid-fueled rocket *rumbling* and *shaking* and ready to explode UP *very* fast, with visions of Christmas in his cranium after finding out his pregnant wife cheated on him not twice but thrice, maybe more. And it was she who had insisted he make love to Margo whom they'd met at a jazz club downtown when they were all *very* drunk, but he refused. He was right to refuse. He didn't like Margo. She was too tall to even dance with.

Joseph was acting selfish. He wanted the experience all to himself and was clearly willing to abandon his friends and responsibilities in possessed pursuit of his own fierce indulgence.

I was simply waiting patiently for lift off.

"What TIME is IT?" asked Nash. He was nervous. Last night he hitchhiked across the country and most of the moon and he'd never done that before. But here, now, he was about to pick up a hitchhiker the likes of which he would never know in this life or the last ... but most certainly the next.

"What does IT matter?" quizzed Joseph.

"Fuck you," I countered. "Are you going to start in with *that* ... right now?"

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"If he'd been more responsible— I'm talking about *you* here ... HELLO!! I *said* I'm talking about ... *you*."

"I want to know what it's *ALL* about," Nash mumbled and attempted, but failed most inadequately I must say, to push himself up from the couch that had consumed him for close to an hour now.

"Just settle the fuck down Blunt," I commanded calmly with a palm in his way, referring to him by an old familiar and reassuring nickname he knew like a 108 year old would most likely know the depth and width of a life lived and all the lessons learned before the boat leaves for the loneliness that Nash would never know: not knowing when the impact occurred and organs flew like flesh-enmeshed flares, but not fireworks because there was no beauty in these visions, only bones.

But we *were* still here—right here, right now—on the couch.

And that was when Gaia hit us hard—and *very* fast, like an adamantite sickle between the eyes, before any of us had time to know we weren't there anymore, on the couch. She had dealt with us. And I was ... looking at the wall to my left, staring very intently at the flowered, mixed-leaf wallpaper pattern. The flowers were Chrysanthemums—*extremely* large white and yellow Chrysanthemums ... and getting larger. Or was I getting closer? In any event, whether I was getting closer or they were growing larger, their smell had suddenly become strongly intoxicating, as though a giant petal had just been tossed over my head like a net. My olfactory senses overwhelmed, this *odd* experience was becoming ... how can I explain *this*? Well, more *real*--more *here* and *now* than say ... you sitting right where you are right now reading this report. Then I was suddenly shot into the center of one of the Chrysanthemums at such a speed that I barely had time to see and feel myself being bottlenecked through the middle and birthing out through the other side.

And then, there I was ... standing but not standing ... *floating*? Yes, floating. My eyes could see all around but when I went to look at my body, my legs, my arms, my hands ... none of them were there. Somehow I realized they were no longer required. But one thing was seriously clear--I suddenly possessed an extremely acute *awareness* on *this* side of those giant white and yellow petals and green leaves; surrounded by twisted vines as thick as Anacondas that crept and twined up into forever and wound around and down into time immemorial ... there was sunlight above and below ... and I *knew everything* about *everything* at once, could hear Antonin Dvorak's New World Symphony No. 9 in E Minor playing somewhere in Seattle; saw three Sisters of Mercy standing together in a park, on the soft green grass, in their bare feet, under the protective foliage of a large oak tree, discussing death and dreams; felt the calloused hands of all of history's heroes, and looked long into the sorrowful eyes of this ancient earth.

Nash and Joseph didn't know it, but I could see inside their minds. Joseph was staring at a very large picture on the wall in front of him. It was a picture of the three of us sitting here on the couch and within that picture was a picture on the wall of the three of us sitting here on the couch. This same picture diminished infinitely, until it was no longer visible. But Joseph didn't see an infinitely diminishing picture in front of him. Instead,

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he saw 18,000 worlds—all inhabited by beatific, hyperintelligent beings that he would later describe as brilliant *beyond* description, thought, or even the naïve and limited metaphysical understanding of all of this world's sorry religious institutions ... combined.

Nash wasn't looking at anything, but he was listening. So engrossed in the sound of song he was, that the sounds suddenly became strange spinning entities of brightness bouncing joyfully up and down in front of him. The entities themselves, Nash would later recount, were quite literally, indescribable alien *beings* of unbelievable detail, manifesting very bright colors—some of which he had never in his life seen before, and depending on the sound, whether it was low pitch or high, the spinning entity would change shape, size, and texture which made Nash realize that nothing that appears to the mind or the eyes should be considered anything other than an illusional truth. Sounds springing into life giving him gifts made from ... *what?* He could never know, never comprehend their vast resources. But they wanted Nash to have these gifts of great beauty and fantastic intricacy. Most of all however, they wanted Nash to pay attention—to *shut the fuck up for once and pay attention*. Very close attention, to the finest details they were about to disclose to him that had everything to do with where his mind had just been for the past ten minutes.

WHHOOSH!!

And then Nash was back, on the couch. The sounds he heard moments ago were coming from the stereo: “ ... *Thrown like a star in my vast sleep
I opened my eyes to take a peek*

*To find that I was by the sea
Gazing with tranquility”*

Donovan's Hurdy Gurdy Man had brought him back.

Nash later noted that Joseph, while staring out the window at the world, was mumbling the words “*Olam Haba*” over and over again just before finding himself, sitting right where he had been ten minutes earlier, on the couch.

I was moving deeper— Wait! Was it I? Or was it my mind that was moving deeper through the glossy green leaves and endless vines— full of wonder and deeper into the wall in fact. Then I began to smell something familiar, but so very far away it seemed, across oceans. It was of coconuts; a slightly sweet and pungently spicy old world aroma was wafting between the vines, under and over leaves into my nostrils causing me to turn and run? But I *was* running, with no legs, back to where I was. I ran towards the massive Chrysanthemum petals; approaching too fast, but somehow stopping just in time, I found myself teetering precariously on the edge, looking out from my little hole in the wall, into the sunlit room from beneath a yellow petal that I pulled gently aside so as to afford myself a better view. Looking down, I could see myself sitting there, on the couch. I felt as though I was standing at the edge of a cave in the side of a flat, vertical mountain and four thousand feet down was the floor. A fine breeze from somewhere off to my right shifted my hair here and there. Then ...

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WHOOOSH!!

I was sitting on the couch, looking out the window.

I heard my name. It was my girlfriend. She was calling me, calling all of us. Dinner was ready. She had cooked up a big pot of curry. We ate curry and rice that night. Afterwards, we welcomed the peaceful warmth and dim lights (as we in turn had been so welcomed by the odd entities we encountered during the profound experiences we had all just felt) and passed one particularly strong question around the room until the Sun started surfacing the next morning: What *was* this trip to mean?