

The Motives & Consequences of the Sixties Counterculture & Beyond

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with Bob Dobbs & Paul Krassner

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Gerry Fialka: Welcome to Contemporary Communications Conference, the subject is the motives and consequences of the '60s counterculture.

On the phone we have Bob Dobbs, who published the newsletter *The Perfect Pitch* and the book *Phatic Communion* with Bob Dobbs. Also joining us is Paul Krassner who is the publisher of *The Realist* and whose current book is *Ravings of an Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counterculture*. Robert Anton Wilson said in his book *Coincidance*: "Everybody in the counterculture owes a great debt to Paul Krassner." Paul, could you begin by discussing the motives of the counterculture?

Paul Krassner: Well, generally speaking, the motives were idealistic, communal, futuristic, philosophical and putting the concepts of freedom into action, whether it was experimenting with drugs or dressing in gaudy fashions, or trying to get through life without a job. It was essentially experimental.

Gerry: Bob, what do you think the motives of the counterculture were?

Bob Dobbs: I'll put it on the level of Aristotelian Causality. Traditionally,

Aristotle laid out four causes which were used in traditional exegesis of the Book of scripture and the Book of Nature. Since a lot of the counterculture for people was a retrieval of the Medieval environment, let me just tentatively lay out the four causes. The first cause is formal causality, which is the literal level in traditional exegesis. I would say the formal cause which would be the motivating factor or the factor that would create the motive in people as responders, the formal cause would be the satellite environment, which would include and subsume TV, radio and the beginning of automation and computers. The material causality, which would be the allegorical level, not the literal level, would be the need for television to have content and to have a dialectic in that content. The efficient causality, the third level, which is usually called the moral or tropological level, would be people like Paul Krassner and Allen Dulles, or whoever ran the MKULTRA. Human beings themselves would be the efficient causality. The final causality is the eschatological level which would be me. So those four causes are the level I approach it at. The effects of that are what we have today, which is Paul Krassner talking to me via Gerry Fialka's conference.

Paul: But did you put me and Allen Dulles in the same category?

Bob: Yes, within efficient causality, as the dialectic. I think that they were your opposition when you attempted to have freedom. I think that opposition, that dialectic, is necessary to be content for television which is the second level of causality, the material causality. The real cause, the most comprehensive cause, was the fact that the satellite went around the environment in 1957 with Sputnik, turning the planet into a global theater which motivated all individuals in all cultures and all institutions themselves to become actors and to confront everyone in a dramatic context. Now, I don't know how familiar you are with my kind of talk; that may be a little complex but I'm just laying out that complexity and then we can work through it, through your responses.

Paul: Well, I have not read your book, and you probably have not read mine.

Bob: Oh, I've just read your Ravings.

Paul: But I've been reading through transcripts of some of your dialogues and it does get a bit abstract, but I'll hang in there.

Bob: Well, the abstraction is an attempt to put a perspective on things.

Paul: You'll be interested in this perspective: during the last presidential campaign, Jerry Brown was speaking to a journalism class in a college and none of the students had heard of Marshall McLuhan.

Bob: That's right, and William Irwin Thompson once told me he was a guest lecturer at the University of Hawaii in 1985 in the Department of Communications and in that Department, none of the students in his course had heard of Marshall McLuhan.

Paul: Some of those same students think that Abbie Hoffman is the congresswoman from upstate, and I've gotten some of Paul Kantner's groupies. (laughter)

Bob: Okay now, you see, this is the second level, this is the content of TV. The content of television causes this Finnegans Wake kind of confusion, especially since we might live 100 to 200 years every 12 months in the information overload that people experience. That confusion about the past would be natural for people born or very young in this period. That's why any movement is going to get filtered through the software environment, and that movement's intentions are not going to last very long. Do you know what I mean?

Paul: Oh yeah, because I've gotten that response to my book where people's image of the '60s is a bunch of hippies sitting in a circle smoking pot and/or a bunch of hippies or anti-war activists getting beat on the head by cops, and that was in a sense all they knew about the '60s.

Bob: Right, and when you read your own book with the whole involvement with Mae Brussell, there was a whole drama going on there, it was really very serious. I mean maybe John Lennon was in trouble from '72 on because people like Strom Thurmond didn't like him talking to you and Mae Brussell.

The drama of that is totally forgotten about.

Paul: That's the only part of John Lennon's files that the FBI won't release, around that time of '72.

Bob: That's right, it shows the drama by people. What you were doing against the Nixon White House was so small compared to the overall effect of the media swirl that you and the White House were operating in, that's the main point that any future movements will have to think about because none of the movements of the Sixties have gone beyond being presented now as some kind of cartoon phase or in a cartoon style. But what's interesting, I think, is that every generation under this TV/satellite environment, as long as we have it, will feel the need to act out what was acted out by the beatniks, the hippies and the yippies, and I think Terence McKenna and his sense of archaic revival happening now, will happen in ten years again because that's the effect on young people, on Americans, of that mixed corporate-media/TV/satellite environment. It's inevitable that it will have that effect. You see what I'm saying? So it's recycled within the generations, but for whatever reason the media is using it for, which is based on polls and collective consensus. They will not deal with the retrieval and the replay by generations - I mean what's talked about in the media now is Whitewater and Rush Limbaugh and whatever else - that will be the content definition.

Paul: If the movie would be titled "Counterculture II", I think with that bursting out now, a lot of the people covering it in the media were part of "Counterculture I" so it might get a different treatment than it did in the '60s.

Bob: Yes, partly the baby boomers are a bit surprised that it has been retrieved and they're fascinated by the retrieval?

Paul: I think so, they have less of an old guard stance than the reporters did in the '60s.

Bob: Right, and also the technological environment I call electric autonomy - VCR's, personal computers and that whole environment, is more amenable for kids to have a sense of individuality and imagination today and to actually

do it, at least on a software information level, compared to the mass-media environment we had in the '60s. So it's a better environment for it, so I would say that's part of the retrieval factor, too. But I know in the '70s and '80s, we met kids, American kids, that studied the '60s, they talked about it and felt sympathetic to it, and yet the imposing image of Reaganism and Pope John Paul II and all that was going on in the early '80s, which felt like we were on the edge of a nuclear war, the weight of that made kids respond in a certain way when acting out their desires and motives. But the environment makes it better technologically. So, it's thanks to the engineers who have created the revival of the counterculture on one level.

Paul: Gerry was just telling me about the Tribulation 99 video which is in book form and video form and is going to reach a lot of young people whose MTV attention span does not make them avid readers.

Bob: I think that within 10 years we might be able to predict, and Rush Limbaugh has been talking about this, that 12-13 year olds might react to the decentralized freedoms that people have with media today for their own personal expression, we may have a very conservative or even a Victorian sensibility come back with the younger generation just by nature of human stubbornness. They have to assert an identity against the prevalent one, so the counterculture may be retrieved for a while, but then it might flip and become regarded as the establishment and rebelled against.

Paul: Well, think of this, just a couple of nights ago there was a sitcom called Hearts of Fire which had Rush Limbaugh as the romantic figure playing himself, and this program was produced by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, written by her, and her husband was the director - Harry Thomason, and these are the people who are Clinton's best friends. What significance does this have?

Bob: That's on the level of the second causality, the material causality, where the dialectic is symbiotic, it's the yin-yang situation. The Clinton myth needs the Rush Limbaugh mythic stage so that TV swallows both of them so that they can be presented on TV. Both polarities are in the medium that created

Clinton, that's the Thomason gang, and are also creating something for Rush Limbaugh to argue against because he's always talking about slick Willie as a product of those two people. That's the allegorical level, the allegory is what I'm talking about, the dialectic that feeds on each other.

Paul: Well then, if that dialectic is always necessary, how will the drug wars evolve?

Bob: They won't stop.

Paul: Oh.

Bob: It will continue. The funny thing is that many people on talk shows and so forth realize the drug wars of the '80s didn't accomplish their goal, and many people of the '70s know it didn't do it then. So why does it have to keep going? Because when you have an electronic environment that threatens everybody's tribal and personal identity, then people feel a mandate to impose their group values on the rest of society. Now, television can get ratings on the battlefield of the dialectic of these group mandates, so that always will be necessary for content. So you've got to keep the drug war going for TV or information reasons, which is a form of intimidation once you impose that problem or conflict on viewers of TV. That dialectic, that conflict will be forever needed by TV so that's why it can't be legalized or completely wiped out. So the only way to change that situation is to turn off the TV environment completely, which is a pretty impossible thing to do, but that would change the context. As long as we have the TV context, that war will continue. The police need statistics and convictions and every cop has to go out and deliver a certain number of tickets to look like they're in action.

Paul: So in the face of all this, does this mean that you're generally optimistic or pessimistic?

Bob: Well, I don't have a personal point of view, I'm basically an apocalyptic. I figure it's apocalyptic for every attitude, no attitude can have a very long life span and no value can have a long life span no matter what side you're on, and no group can and no individual can survive media hypnotism - like what

Hillary Clinton is going through now. So we're all in an apocalyptic situation which you can't be optimistic or pessimistic about - we're right in it, we're in a situation that's quite devastating to everybody. I know from people who are in the counterculture, like Dennis Hopper, they rose up in the '60s and early '70s and then they went through a personal apocalypse - you know, they went into drugs or they got in trouble or ended up in some kind of pain. You hear a lot in People Magazine about the pain people had at a certain point in their lives after they were famous. They may be brought back and recycled, but that pain is an inevitable apocalypse that will come to every person that is involved in the media culture we're in.

Paul: Well, speaking of being brought back and recycled, how do you feel on a larger level about the theory of reincarnation?

Bob: How do I feel about the theory itself?

Paul: Uh huh.

Bob: I think that we have such an information overload that people lose their memories. Therefore, everything has a sense of déjà vu and the popularity of the reincarnation idea and oriental thinking is inevitable in American culture. I think that will become a general trend - that people will believe in reincarnation because they are actually experiencing it through the media overload. Edmund Carpenter talks about this in his book, *Oh What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me*, which was based on talking to many kids when he taught in California in the late '60s. They often would go to Japan or different places and felt they had been there before, but they hadn't realized that they'd seen those places in movies in the '40s and '50s.

Paul: Uh huh, I remember that book had one of my favorite examples - it was a woman wheeling a baby carriage and some stranger passes by and says: "Oh what a beautiful baby!", and the mother says, "Oh you should see his picture!".

Bob: Right, that's a famous McLuhan-Carpenter story.

Paul: What I'm wondering, Bob, is I remember reading somewhere about you

being involved in channeling and...

Bob: Oh, that's the bio by Connie Dobbs - she said that I started the channeling, the New Age movement, in the '70s in California, and that is true, but I personally don't channel myself. She's referring to my predicting that channeling would surface in the '80s as a popular phenomenon because I had given the causes, which are the computer environment. If you look at my charts on the second album, I maintain that the computer environment subsumes the universe which is not only this physical dimension but other dimensions as well, putting them into a crisis so the astral plane starts plunging into our dimension to try to maintain it's mythic stage or sense of stability. So, many people become prone to channeling these other dimensions. I think that's due to the computer, and the electric environment in general, blitzing us, and which has led to the extreme of people like Hans Moravec saying that when they get to advanced stages of virtual reality, they will be able to download your soul or your mind and keep that going and maybe rebuild some limbs for you. That would be the extreme of that.

Paul: You know, after I finished the autobiography, in order to avoid the postpartum blues, I started work on a novel and one of the characters in it does past-life therapy through hypnotic age regression. So I interviewed a past-life therapist and I said: "How do you know that what these people say they remember under hypnosis is an absolute truth or just something that they are making up from a combination of images and experiences?", and he said, "It doesn't make any difference, it works". Which is everything they say from Scientology to the Catholic Church - it works. Do you think there is a kind of expansion of process of false memory that extends to a whole culture?

Bob: Yeah, I think that people do have many lives. I have my personal experience of it so I believe that we reincarnate, but I don't think that the people who were put through this past-life regression therapy actually retrieve their particular lives all the time, they retrieve cultural expectations or cultural effects of today. The main desire of this mixed corporate-media/satellite environment is that everybody wants an audience and they'll take any audience, so the birth of new age therapies, which involved a lot of people who are not certified by regular medical schools offering certain therapeutic

services from different schools of thought, past-life regression being one of them, is meeting a need felt by people to have an audience. So the therapist is an audience for the person's strains and stresses of being discarnate and not having a body in the electric environment. I think it works temporarily because people want to have that catharsis almost as a metaphor for the apocalypse that we are going through anyway. They want to act it out on some sort of anthropomorphic level of noble or cathartic experience that they understand from previous cultures or previous references, and they act that out for the therapist. They feel relieved by it, the catharsis does that, but within six months this electric environment has bombarded them and created so much confusion that they need a new sense of having an audience, they have a new stress going on in themselves and so they look for a new explanation. You look over the last fifteen years, you have all these different causes from hypoglycemia to incest being temporary panaceas or anaesthetics for people in this discarnate situation. So I agree that the past-life therapy works temporarily but not in the long run.

Paul: Well listen, could you lend me \$3,000 and I'll pay you back in your next lifetime?

Bob: Ha, ha, ha, but I don't deal in money, that's the advantage of being on the Secret Council of Ten, I don't have any cash to lend. You know, the old joke about Rockefeller - that he has no change in his pocket. Well, that's actually true, I don't have any money. I've never had any money for 20 years.

Paul: Well, how did you pay your butler?

Bob: I never had to.

Paul: Oh, he didn't deal in money either.

Bob: No, when you live on the level that I live on, you sort of have a diplomatic immunity.

Paul: Where's the manual?

Bob: Ha, ha, ha. Phatic Communion is the beginning, that book is the first chapter of the upcoming manual of Lockdown BobRule. However, what do you think of the idea that if it works, people want to bypass the bureaucratic regulations like the FDA? There's many people who think that they can cure AIDS and have proof within their immediate experience with several people.

Paul: In the issue of The Realist that's now at the printer, there's an article about people who drink their own urine. A friend and I went to a meeting of a support group of some of these people.

Bob: Is this a joke?

Paul: No, there was one man who had AIDS and said he cured himself by drinking his own urine. I think the most important discovery of my seeking that I've learned is that whatever people do, works. I have a Donald Duck with eight arms and I prayed to that for a long time and it works. Whatever people do, it works for them. Sometimes they become New Age junkies and go to workshop after workshop and see guru after guru, but whatever they do works for them. There's a book you might be interested in called The Guru Papers: The Masks of Authoritarian Powers by Joel Kramer and Diana Alstead which is a terrific intellectual analysis of the methods that the people in the position of authority use and how others kowtow to those manipulative ways.

Bob: Yeah, I think that in the electric environment that we have today, there will be much demobilizing of a standard consciousness, so people will be in basic terms, hallucinating, creating their own realities, making their own sense. I think that's what's been happening for twenty years and I think that the counterculture was the beginning of that. That is what happens to people privately. The problem is that language is the thing we all share and I think each technological environment is an extension of language. We don't know how to connect our private awareness to the public awareness, and the public awareness is expressed through language and the media environment that we use. We've got to learn to talk about the media environment when we're on it - it's like a code language so that you're not talking from a personal point of view or what works for you. The FDA is responsible for this industrial

heritage of pharmaceutical companies that employ millions of people and dump the antibiotics on us, and that is now being revealed to not be that effective. That environmental heritage that we've made, that language, that technology has to be related to the new situation where people, under the electric environment and being discarnate and having no sense of one body, want to make up their own sense of what their body is, and that incorporates all kinds of therapies. Therefore, there's a very hypersubjective situation where people can cure themselves through their own particular perceived methods. But how do we relate that private awareness disassembling, or private awareness schizophrenia, or hypersubjectivity, whatever you want to call the fact that our private awareness is allowing us to contain multitudes, to the media environments, which is our collective crowd dynamic that goes on in general in the evolution of mankind, that we all share?

Paul: But even that is changing with the information superhighway with five hundred channels where everything gets more and more specialized. You know, there will be a channel for people who build model airplanes out of their toenails. So that shared reality that you're talking about is becoming coleslaw.

Bob: Yeah, that's the interesting thing - the idea that the collective imposes patterns on you has been changing as we come into the mosaic image of television and computers and the privatization of electric reality, which we're into now. And this means that, the crowd dynamic itself is a hallucinating idiot or a fragmented idiot. So there's where we might get the Victorian sensibility retrieved because we're going to want to impose a collective dictatorial image on people through the media we have because the electric crowd, the electric language, the electric media we live in, is fragmenting itself. See, there's the paradox we've got. So many kids will respond to Terence McKenna and go for that ideology, or Robert Anton Wilson, or Wired, or Mondo 2000 magazine, because, ideologically, people will feel their experience will resonate with that. The problem is that they are responding to the technological, fragmented environment and they are taking advantage of it, but they don't know that the crowd dynamic, they call it in postmodern studies "the other", "the other" will need to impose a balance on that. Maybe this is what Rush Limbaugh is, he's not now, he's the future. It's

the retrieval of very old American values. People will want to feel there's something outside of themselves. That's the dilemma we get with technology, it makes people feel they're being fragmented.

Paul: Does that mean that feminazis will drink orange juice or not?

Bob: Yes, it does - they will or not!

Paul: Ha, ha, ha. I put quotes around that "feminazis", it's a Rush Limbaugh term. I would never use it.

Bob: To break that point down, feminazis will never drink orange juice because they have to maintain that mythic stage that they think orange juice is made up of Rush now, and Rush will never give in to them, so that dialectic will go on for a long time. But they say that Rush Limbaugh's appearance on Hearts of Desire for the first time in several years got a higher rating than Murphy Brown's show.

Paul: Well, you and I both watched it, and I never saw that show before so I don't know what that proves except that people are curious for new contexts.

Bob: Well, there's a dynamic there, there's a conspiracy to make Rush seem so popular that that's a mandate and maybe he should run for president, even though he won't. It's like the Republican party's last gasp is to get this popularity of a Rush Limbaugh image out there for the '96 election. There's also the factor that the people themselves are under this feeling that the information superhighway will inundate us with useless variety and fragmentation. They feel the need to introduce a stability to this fragmenting order so they support Rush Limbaugh, and that's registered by the pollsters. So you've got two factors going there, the conspiracy and the bottom-up need, which are inevitable as long as you have a new technological environment coming along. So you can predict, this is what McLuhan did, what's going to be popular in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s based on the technological dynamics. Maybe you can't predict who's going to be Rush Limbaugh but you know that kind of situation will happen. I call him a homeopathic retrieval. I know personally the NSA uses McLuhan and uses this

information to modulate what I call tetrad management. They foresee these effects and they include them, they use McLuhan's book *Laws of Media*. The counterculture, the left, the Bob Fass Network, whatever you want to call it, they should be studying *Laws of Media* because it's used on them. I'm not saying they should learn McLuhan and become orthodox McLuhanites, I'm saying the opposition is using McLuhan's material to orchestrate society.

Paul: As best they can. Besides turning the TV off, do you have any other kinds of subversive directions that people can take?

Bob: Not that I present in public. I only present that one theme in public because as I say on the album that was made from my radio show, we frustrate the need for the mass media to have diverse content by having everybody say, no matter what question is polled them, "turn off the TV" as a blanket answer to every situation. Therefore, Dan Rather will always have to broadcast the idea that every night, whatever problem - Bosnia, gun control, Rush Limbaugh, Paul Krassner, whatever the question is, the highest polls say the answer is to turn off the TV, so they'd have to talk about themselves constantly. I think that we're so decentralized from the old mass media (CBS, ABC, NBC) that people will not feel threatened by pretending they're zombies and just spouting this cult notion of "turn off the TV". They can just go about their own business and do whatever they want to do - it's so decentralized. So I just project this public mandate - "turn off the TV", that's all I'll say in public, no matter what question comes up.

Paul: There's a piece in the new issue of *Whole Earth Review*, taking an example of a town that did shut off TV and saying you can shut off TV in your own town. So you know, the idea is spreading, but as you always say: how do you know it's happening unless we turn on the news?

Bob: Yes, and the other thing is, that's another effect of the image of the information superhighway. I think people are feeling so freed up from the mass-media imposition that happened in the '50s, '60s, and '70s, thanks to their own VCRs and answering machines - all these things that give them autonomy from the fact Ed Sullivan used to be on at 8:00 or 9:00 pm and you had to watch it then. So you're freed up from that.

Paul: You know, I was talking to some college students about whether they were going to watch Conan O'Brien and they said: "Well to tell you the truth, at that time we used to watch David Letterman and we got used to being tired at the end of Letterman, so now that Letterman is on an hour earlier we go to bed after he's off".

Bob: Okay, so do you see the factors here? To finish that point, people are so decentralized from the imposition of the mass media as we understood it in the past, that they feel they can turn it off and it doesn't affect them any more. But they don't realize the economic basis of the fact that you need a standardized Word-Making-the-Market coming out of Dan Rather or the White House, the standard position, the collective consensus. As long as we have a money environment, money needs a gold standard. But all it can get is a "gold standard" of information - thus, the news needs to be standardized. Then you've got young kids who are not as literate and fragmented by literacy as they were in the 19th century, kids who engage in literacy as only one medium among many. Therefore, they have a bias toward sharing an environment in a tribal way - they will stick to David Letterman because that's a kind of group identity for people in their late teens and early 20s. That factor happens to people especially in an acoustic environment that TV sets up. So, there are all these factors that influence us that nobody takes into consideration in the public dialogue. Now, I don't say that Dan Rather should bring this up, because it's like you just said - if we turned off TV we wouldn't know what the news was. We have this Catch-22 situation where the information environment is us and is necessary; that's the paradox.

Paul: Okay, if you were predicting what was happening in each decade, what would you predict about sex in the '90s?

Bob: Well, you break it down by demographics on the planet, right? So I think you make certain predictions for teens, predictions for babyboomers, for Arabs, for Europeans, for Chinese. But you mean, basically, and most people think in these terms, the American environment, right?

Paul: I guess it's inseparable now, with the NAFTA agreement. Didn't we

ship them one of our lone nuts?

Bob: Ha, ha, ha. Yeah, the American environment is becoming the world environment. I explain that as a nostalgia for kinetic space. The satellite/TV environment is tactile space. But kinetic space is American - that is the movie, the car, the environment from the end of the previous century into the '30s of America. That movie/radio/car environment is what everybody sort of wants as a little packaged spaceship-castle to live in around the whole world. They call it the triumph of capitalism. Assuming the American environment is what everyone is going into - I know we'll have many different trends but it's what the pollstergeists think their major market is and what their interests are that determine which trends will be imposed on us and will be defined as the trend of the '90s - and assuming we have an aging population who will be the majority of consumers so the mainstream media will have to deal with them, and because they have been discarnate most of their lives, they will have a basic disgust with the body while their kids wallow in the body via Terence McKenna. There will be a general disgust and Victorian preference for a purification of bodily fluids--a basic feeling that other things are sexy, not just sex. So I predict that channeling, all the New Age things, also rediscovering books, rediscovering movies, rediscovering cars - all these things will become sexy to people and as they age they'll project their erotic fantasy lives into objects, but not into the body. People will say it's because of age and AIDS but I think if we didn't have AIDS, we'd still have that effect on an aging generation. One of the cliches of African-American culture is that they have a very free sexual life when they are young but when the African-American people get into their 40s and 50s they get very religious and get very emotionally involved in their religion and they produce great music out of that. That pattern of the tribal culture, historically, of the African-American may be what's going to happen to the general American population - the babyboomers as they age. You know what I mean? They become very religious, they become very emotionally involved in other things and actually have a puritan attitude for themselves in relation to sex, but they'll be flexible toward kids. Most tribal societies have flexible elders and rigid youth, and rigid youth are very rigid about getting laid - they want it and they'll demand it and they'll get it, and the tribal elders allow that. So the majority of Americans will go for a flexible-elder attitude - which could be

what Clinton represents, he's a liberal in a position of authority and the conservative image of Reagan-Bush does not match the increasing tribalisation of American culture.

Paul: But he could still keep it rigid.

Bob: Well, if he's rigid, he's like the reformed adulterer. We don't know on the public level what his personal life is, but the image is that he did some fooling around before and now Hillary is this mother-wife situation. She's the container of spiritual values, almost like the matriarchy of tribal societies. He maintains that reformed, repentant image for his peer group but he's flexible for young people. You see what I'm saying?

Paul: But there's another media aspect of it, which is the weekly tabloids. It's only in the tabloids where you read that Hillary Rodham Clinton has banned Barbara Streisand from the White House, with the implication of that.

Bob: I'd say the tabloids are a diversified market, they communicate to the general puritan strain in American culture, what Norman Mailer called the "American fascination with virtue". To play off that, the Puritan is fascinated with the sins of others. So the tabloids are niche-marketing probably for young people who like to read them because it enhances their sexual explorations with a drama and for also those that get older, in their 30's and 40's, and have not arrived at that stage I talked about where they get older and religious, but they are still fascinated because they are working and want to find out if anyone is having more fun than them. So there's a real nostalgia for human envy, human desire, that's played out in the tabloids. That's why they'll never go away - because a certain phase of a person's growth is attracted and fascinated by that kind of information.

Paul: You mentioned Mae Brussell before, had you ever met her?

Bob: Yes, I knew Mae for a long time.

Paul: For people who don't know, Mae was a conspiracy researcher.

Bob: I think she was the greatest conspiracy researcher.

Paul: I think so. There's a certain competitiveness among conspiracy researchers just like in any other field and they often call each other agents. They bring paranoia to a fine art along with their findings, but you can't do that kind of research without being affected by it. Mark Lane just did an introduction to a book that said the holocaust didn't exist.

Bob: It was reported to Mae occasionally that whenever the anniversary of the Kennedy assassination came up, like in 1983 - the twentieth anniversary, on any talk show that Mark Lane would get on, if Mae Brussell's name came up, he would say she was crazy, he'd always put Mae down. So Mae was always suspicious of Mark Lane, but that wasn't what she said about him publicly, but he said it about her.

Paul: She had a certain breathless quality about her and she had so much data to spew out that people could come away with that impression. I remember what Seymour Hersh at the Washington Post told me when I sent him her material. He said: "She's crazy but she's right!".

Bob: Was this in the early '80s?

Paul: This would have been '72.

Bob: Oh, the first Watergate period. Yeah, she talked to Hersh all through those years on into the '80s. Penny Lernoux's book, *In Banks We Trust* and other books like that - Mae was onto that first. The thing about Mae was that she wasn't always right about the details but she could pick up the pattern, and the pattern would be 80% correct about whatever news was happening - she was always on top of it.

Paul: But I bet she couldn't have predicted there would be Charlie Manson T-shirts.

Bob: You know, I sent her some McLuhan literature because *Take Today: The Executive as Dropout* came out in '72 and McLuhan had told me it was about the sort of secret-society, conspiratorial nature of power - that's what

they addressed in that book. They weren't as linear as Mae, but they brought in the effects of the technological environments on conspiratorial power. So, it was a whole new way of looking at it. I sent that stuff to Mae, and she said she couldn't understand it, and I think that was because Mae couldn't take the time to do it. She was smart enough if she took the time to do it, but she was obsessive in what she did. But it served a role. She had a role which many people try to find in the global theater - "what's my role?", "what can I do that I can be appreciated for in media coverage?" She wasn't covered extensively, but she was known, thanks to you, and occasionally you would write articles about her like in *Oui* magazine. So, she knew she was a public figure and she had a role, and she had to stick to that public point of view and that way of researching pattern-recognition about power. Just like in my role, I emphasize media ecology or turning off TV, and that's my public stance in relation to all the other stances, but it's not what I'm privately obsessed about personally. That was the great thing about Mae, she worked hard at it but she had such an exciting life on her own, involved with her family and friends and new lovers or whatever, so that she could keep going and be happy privately. However, in your book, the chapter on Mae presents her as a problem for you as a cult, or it kind of diminishes Mae. Taking into consideration the information swirl that was going on in the late '60s and early '70s, it was hard for anybody not to create a cult effect if they had some dynamic pattern-recognition. Can you respond to that statement, Paul?

Paul: Your point is well taken because I left a certain ambiguity in that chapter. What I wanted to point out was that someone as brilliant and dedicated as Mae could still get to a point where she was not openminded. The specific example I use was because she saw everything through the filter of conspiracy. She was convinced that Robert De Niro and Robin Williams were part of a conspiracy to kill John Belushi because they had snorted cocaine with him the previous night. I tried to explain to her that that wasn't so, and then I mentioned after she died that there had been a sting operation planned by the Los Angeles Police Dept. against DeNiro and Robin Williams and John Belushi. This was police chief Darryl Gates' personal project and he was more saddened by John Belushi's death than others because he missed a great photo opportunity.

Bob: Is that on the public record, is that a rumour or a fact?

Paul: I mentioned it in the caption under Mae's photo in the book. What was interesting to me in the point I was trying to make is, as incredible a researcher that she was, she could go wrong, and it is cult-like never to challenge anybody who happens to be in that guru-like position. But the irony is somebody read that caption and when they saw this sting operation planned, they said: "Aha, Mae was right!"

Bob: She wasn't completely right but there was something going on there.

Paul: What I was saying, Mae did nothing to me, what I was talking about was my own falling into that cult-like thinking where you forget to differentiate between coincidence and conspiracy.

Bob: Yeah, so she would agree that you projected that on her. Do you agree?

Paul: Well, there are people who think that Mae was murdered, just as they think Abbie Hoffman was murdered. There was a time when I would have automatically thought that but I try to deal with incidents issue by issue.

Bob: I know personally that Mae was greatly satisfied in '82 by what came out from John Loftus - the whole Belarus Secret stuff and the Nazi stuff. From '82 to '83, all that P2 stuff and the Vatican stuff, her general drift which she spelled out in her first article in the Realist, was confirmed - the Nazi connection, and it became sort of a mainstream topic. So she felt satisfied that that part of her work, which was a big part, was confirmed.

Paul: Absolutely, but there was also the side of her...

Bob: I wanted to follow up with - by '85 and '86 she was very tired and she was tired of beating, in a sense, a dead horse - that most people did not want to understand what Mae had learned, what she had predicted and what had been confirmed. So she wanted to withdraw from that public role. Because of the Challenger going down and that strawberry-genetic stuff going on in her area, she was forced in '86 to continue being Mae Brussell although she was

tired and wanted to take a break and read some other things, and that I think weakened her health which I think led to her cancer. So the story about Mae, the way she was still in '86 on the radio pumping away, had other factors that unfortunately led to her death. I don't think she was murdered.

Paul: No, no, neither do I, nor do I think that Abbie Hoffman was murdered, but there are people who want to believe that for reasons of their own perspective.

Bob: Yeah, I think that was what was so great about knowing Mae privately was that she was a Gemini, so she could be kind of schizoid, but the private part of herself was aware of all these situations and she herself did not want to be a cult. But the effect of her information on someone just getting involved in it inevitably created a certain awe and hypnotism, and it's also hard on the mind.

Paul: But there were points where there was a crossover between her public and personal life, because my daughter was good friends with her daughter and she would warn me - she said they're going to kidnap your daughter. She was capable of instilling that kind of paranoia. When I was going to become roommates with Stewart Brand, she said: "He's a government pig, don't do it", and in a sense I defied my guru and became roommates with him. I asked her if I was in physical danger and she said: "No, he'll just try to psyche you out." So she did have that level of thinking, but as you said she did have her own personal and private passions just as you're telling people to shut off TV is your public personae, but I'd be curious about what your own private passions or obsessions are.

Bob: Well, we can go into that. The thing about Mae is that it reminds me of what McLuhan said when he was criticized for saying: "The medium is the message". Critics would complain that is only a half-truth and he would say: "For most people, a half-truth is a lot of truth!". I think that applies to Mae Brussell - it was a three-quarters truth. She didn't have who actually organized Lee Harvey Oswald to do what he did, but she had the general pattern, so it was like a three-quarters truth and that's a lot of truth for people. Then, in doing a show, and wanting to interest people and intrigue and stimulate people, she had to come up with patterns. I think she did get

exaggerated with Stewart Brand, but she told me personally that she did not like the fact that there was a patriarchal situation in journalism in the '70s and that they were biased against her because she was a woman. All these people, including the counterculture, did not learn what she had to say in detail - they wouldn't really study it. So she had a resentment against Leary and these people in the counterculture because she thought they distracted people from her information. Now, that's a megalomaniacal attitude, but she, in retrospect, had so much good information that she should have been listened to a little more.

Paul: But, you know, it was like she had been gathering facts in the vineyard and then she'd give people the orange concentrate, and it was information overload for people. They were not prepared for that.

Bob: That's the irony of a person who becomes excellent at some discipline or some situation - how do you, if it's in your nature to become really good at something, hand that on to someone else who doesn't have the same drive, without wrecking them? That's like the problem with teaching. I remember the Rip-off Press put out this Moebius Strip of conspiracy, it was done by Paul Mavrides and Jay Kinney, and one of the factors of conspiring against you was your child's brain. You've got to teach the next generation what you're interested in, what you're good at, and you've got to impose that on a group of people and how their talents will be projected into that situation. How do you pass on any knowledge? That's what I find is a paradox, that Mae had this incredible stuff that by circumstance she was inclined to learn and become a genius at - how do you pass that on to anyone else, if you acknowledge that everybody has their own reality and they have their own interests and their own obsessions, and how can they even begin to take the time to study it like Mae? So, she's left hanging like Einstein or McLuhan or any genius, they're left hanging in the wind.

Paul: But people screen themselves in, people who are interested in that, get through that screen that stops others.

Bob: But they cannot see what Mae sees with her expertise, so they might muddle it. She always complained about "Brussell sprouts", how they presented it. She even complained about you at different times.

Paul: I'm sure she did.

Bob: So, she was communicating to people who were interested, but they never got it the way she did or had the time to do the work, so it was almost like her information was obsolete - it could not be passed on. That is what I think is a big problem in communication.

Paul: Well, sometimes people understood what she was saying and it made them feel helpless: "You mean, it's that bad?".

Bob: Right, and if they brought it up in conversation, they didn't have the background, they didn't have the material at their fingertips and so they looked foolish. They knew Mae knew it, but how could they translate it since they didn't have all the background. I guess it's the solipsistic notion that we all have the contents in our own head, now how do we pour those contents into someone else's head?

Paul: Well, that's the challenge of communication. As a stand-up comedian, I find that's the challenge to communicate to an audience of diverse backgrounds, and at the moment that they laugh at something, I say for that moment they're united. So that's the challenge of any kind of communication.

Bob: And maybe Mae did not understand that enough - that people could sort of hallucinate on her stuff and take another direction. She was almost a literalist, she wanted them to get exactly what she saw, and maybe that's where she was a little too forceful.

Paul: And then I became like that, and I compared myself to the Ancient Mariner, slogging my filthy albatross in their faces.

Bob: Yeah, I quote from the Ancient Mariner at the beginning of my book, you can look at that. The Ancient Mariner is a fantastic metaphor.

Paul: I've never even seen an albatross. I just have to take his word for it.

Bob: The famous line from the Ancient Mariner that I use is: "We were the first to break into that silent sea". Mae saw the horror just like Kurtz in Apocalypse Now, but how can you pass it on to anybody else, do they have the yoga, the strength of mind to look at it? So she was stuck in a situation of not being able to communicate the intensity of horror that she saw. So, she had broken into that silent sea, and I think that slips in to people becoming public figures as role-playing exaggerators of their point. They kind of feel it's futile to try to get it across anyway, so why not just try to beat them over the head with it?

Paul: Or retire totally.

Bob: Which she wanted to do in the middle '80s. That's a little-known fact.

Paul: I think that this is true of a lot of visionaries. I think that's true of Neal Cassady. It was expected of him to hold court and therefore he held court and then it became an interactive process when he responded to what he thought was expected of him, and because he did it, it was expected of him.

Bob: And you're saying he wanted to retire, so that's when he walked down the tracks?

Paul: Well, not necessarily, but sometimes you become the persona that you've been putting out, so that even if you resent holding court, it's almost like an addiction.

Bob: Did you have that problem ever?

Paul: Um, I found it hard to say no. If I got invited to speak somewhere, I felt like I was defying fate if I didn't.

Bob: Yeah, so you'd be Paul Krassner.

Paul: Yeah, Yeah.

Bob: You've brought back The Realist, don't you feel that you're retrieving

Paul Krassner now?

Paul: But I'm doing it more on my own terms now. So if I get invited to speak someplace, I might turn it down and I may accept another one. The only reason I have my name on it is because it's a symbol. Originally I wasn't going to call it *The Realist*, and then I thought that it already has a reputation and I should take advantage of that fact. Ken Kesey said that he thought of his image and his energy as two different entities, his energy is what he did and his image is what other people thought he did.

Bob: Right, so I would say that there has been a realization by now by the babyboomers. Let's say that the idea of projecting your image over the mass media was a one-way situation in the '50s and '60s. People are less keen on doing that and are accepting what you just said about yourself - you're more autonomous in terms of your public image, you don't have a great desire to project it because the decentralized electric media now make people see that it is very hard to impose any one pattern on a situation, and actually it's very hard to even build an image.

Paul: Well, you know, I faced that paradox when I went on my book tour because you want to reach as many people as possible, so the publicist for Simon & Schuster was told by the producers at the Arsenio Hall show and the Jay Leno show that Jay loves Paul's work and Arsenio loves Paul's work, but our pipeline is so clogged up with celebrities that we don't have time for anybody that has something to say. I did end up on the Conan O'Brien show at 1:25 am right after the bruised fruit fight.

Bob: But you probably would have been more angry about that in 1970 than now, because you're not interested, and the technology does not make you feel fascinated in projecting your image over all of America now. You're willing to be a fragmented enterprise.

Paul: Well, I turned myself into a commodity in order to let the people know the book exists. There was an experience I had which put it all in perspective. I was supposed to do a reading in downtown New York right after the Conan O'Brien show was taped, so NBC provided a limousine to take me there, and

when I came out of the building there was a small crowd gathered around because they saw a limo outside NBC, they figured it must be a celebrity. So this woman came up to me and said: "Do you mind if I have my picture taken with you?", so I said "Okay" and this guy with a camera posed us and we put our arms around each other because a camera gives you permission to put your arm around a stranger, and this guy is taking our picture. Another man is walking by, he sees me and this woman having our picture taken in front of a limo by NBC, he figures there must be a celebrity there so he asks the woman for her autograph! (laughs) And I'm being taken away in a limo and I see she's signing it! (laughing all around) So that put the whole image thing in perspective. But that's because I've experienced a lot and I know that it has nothing to do with me, whereas there's like seventeen talk shows now where they get two thousand calls a week from people who want to be on, who want to have their public exorcism.

Bob: That's a useful phrase, "public exorcism".

Paul: Yeah, I think it's taken the place of confession.

Bob: Okay, I think the change has happened since 1977 because there's no change after that, everything's disappeared.

Paul: Why 1977?

Bob: You can look at my chart, but that's a whole other topic. Jean Baudrillard writes about this when he asks: "What do we do now the orgy is over?". Well, there was an orgy of public archetypes in the '60s and '70s and then they exhausted themselves. I think that those who had intelligence and energy were attracted and involved in that. But I think that many people who were born in the '60s and '70s, who are now in their 20's or early 30's, this public exorcism is a natural progression. Someone would have to be about 40 until they understood the effects of all the different media environments we live in. So the younger people still believe there's an environment out there to match with, to communicate with on a mass level, so they want to get on the media. Then there are those who were older and were not that intelligent or media savvy, they still feel the need to be part of this revolution of

expression, from their point of view of the '50s, '60s, and '70s, and they want to get on now. They think if they discover some little piece of information or some pattern, not knowing that information is obsolete, pattern-recognition is obsolete and everything's disappeared, they still believe in their blooming world and they want to get on. So that's why you have this endless supply of suckers to get on to do their public exorcism.

Paul: So before 1977, as Andy Warhol said, everybody wanted their fifteen minutes of fame. After 1977 everybody wants to be person of the week on ABC news. I think that's the difference, fifteen minutes isn't enough, they want world-wide recognition.

Bob: Yeah, you see, that could be the effect of the mixed-corporate media/global satellite situations that affected the beatniks and the hippies and yippies in a more subliminal way. It's now a figure, it's a cliché that you have access to the whole world. CNN has the image of you, the satellite, flying around the planet, in their logo at the beginning of their news shows. The young kids, if they grow up today knowing they can project themselves over the whole planet, they also do it with a sense of irony. I think Kurt Cobain is that - he may have killed himself over this whole thing about being miserable and it may have been a put-on by him.

Paul: Well, that's the ultimate put-on then.

Bob: Right. The discarnate state makes suicide the last narcissistic act of the ego, because people are pretty well convinced that we live in other dimensions of reincarnation, so they say: "I'll just do this lifetime as an artform". However, right now, "media ecology" is a feeling among people of wanting to shut off the media - the young people starve for that. Kurt Cobain objected to the media fame, the projection of himself all over the planet. But there are still people who want to play with it, who want to do it - it's not as important now to do it or really believe in it, you just do it as a game with a sense of irony. That's one thing about the slacker generation - they have a great sense of media irony. Do you know what I mean?

Paul: Yeah, and that's why they appreciate David Letterman.

Bob: And The Realist. I think they understand and respond to that ironic part of the counterculture that you are revitalizing with The Realist. That attitude will be acceptable on a broader level by kids than it would have been in the '60s. Because of that media sense of irony, I like this quote from Finnegans Wake, p.169: "Putting truth and untruth together a shot may be made at what this hybrid actually was like to look at". That's what it's like to reflect our media world today - you put truth and untruth together, that's The Realist.

Paul: I think the media have sort of become the fourth branch of government.

Bob: They are the government. They're what I mean by that phrase in my video: "the word makes the market". The information runs the situation and the information is centralized and it is based on polls, paradoxically, based on what people are afraid of and what they need, so it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. The audience rules, but it's transmitted through the medium of news.

Paul: But here's how cynical it gets, uh because...

Bob: It is cynical, it's really cynical, that's the point.

Paul: So even the producers of the David Letterman Show, if they find an action movie like Die Hard on earlier that evening on that channel, they're more likely to book an Evander Holyfield than a Mary Tyler Moore, to get that carryover of audience for numbers.

Bob: Yeah, and with the electric speed you can do that, you can organize your resources really fast. The main point about the information environment is that we have to realize that the audience feeds on itself and that TV is like the sun - it's always going to come up. Once a society starts to use electric media, it's like nature, it will want to be used 24 hours a day, there will always be something that has to be on the electric environment. People turn it on not really for what is on the media, but to experience that electric discarnate space which is TV itself - that vibrating, resonating dimension you feel is communicating and resonating with everybody else that's watching it. So that is a psychotic, obsessive need we have once we have the TV environment. So therefore, we have to have content on at all times, and

therefore, everything becomes content. That's Warhol's prediction, and every artifact gets exhausted because by the middle '70s everything is played out. Then you've got to do it with a sense of irony or detachment and keep the content going, but then you say: "this is ridiculous - keeping the content going", and that's what Letterman played up. So the hidden ground is the need for TV to keep itself going with content.

Paul: But it's not just TV though, it's computer bulletin boards, faxes. Steve Allen said that satire is tragedy plus time. But everything has accelerated so much now that the time sequence is on the cusp, it's almost been erased. There used to be a space differential so that people would make jokes easier about the Chernobyl disaster than they did about the Challenger disaster because that was closer to home, whereas by the time the Waco incident occurred, they were doing jokes about it on faxes and by radio shock jocks even while it was occurring.

Bob: See, people have exhausted the longlasting content. All the images of movements, causes, or whatever, have run their course and been exhausted - what McLuhan called the rise and fall of cliches. One can say this is part of what has disappeared after 1977, we're replaying it and we're also imploding the fact that we've exhausted everything - all the Phil Donahue talk shows. So tomorrow we're going to turn on the news and we're going to want something on there and everybody is looking more and more for that new thing that they can use because they've used everything else. So we're imploding, that's the reverse effect of this decentralized electric media - that we're going more and more to a centralized need for a new image and we're all going to use the same image. Do you know what I mean?

Paul: Oh yeah, my friend Scoop Nisker, who was the news director of a radio station in San Francisco, invented the phrase: "If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own".

Bob: Well, by the '70s the media relied on that. In fact the Sixties counterculture was a content - they needed a content different from the '50s, and while the kids were making their own identity crisis, the media made it a news item. Then by the '70s, everybody knew this formula and everybody

was using it. That comes back to your point that everybody feels that what they made should be broadcast, and they are all applying to get on the talk shows.

Paul: Well, how would they know it exists otherwise? That's the electronic version of Bishop Berkeley's conundrum of: if a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody there to hear it... Now, if an event happens and the camera isn't there to record it, has it really happened?

Bob: Yeah, this was commonplace at the McLuhan Center in the '70s. It was known that the rioters, or whatever, in Northern Ireland would wait till the cameras were set up before they did their thing. Even Hugh Kenner has mentioned this in his literary criticism, the fact that by the '70s - TV, and the event as content, conspired together to do it with the best possibility. I'm talking about how people want to get on the media. Now, how do you mean that people don't know it's there? I didn't get what you were saying.

Paul: Isn't it a nice role reversal for you not to understand what somebody else is saying?

Bob: Oh no, I need that to keep the thing going. I now pretend I'm in the audience.

Paul: Well, there's a shared pretense. If you look at a TV show that's being broadcast and the camera pans over the audience, the members of the audience pretend the camera isn't on them, that they're really watching the stage. Maybe a kid will break through that and stare back, a kid or a crazy person will stare back at the camera and stick out his tongue or something. So there's this shared pretense.

Bob: How does this relate to the Berkeley point?

Paul: Oh, that people... let's say in anti-war demonstrations, part of the success of it was measured by the media coverage of it.

Bob: Right, coverage is reality. Now that's what you mean: that if it's not covered, then it's not real?

Paul: Well, it's a goal if it's not a reality. Watch CSPAN, you'll see senators

talking, and they'll look around the room, but CSPAN will show you there's nobody in the room.

Bob: That's right, ha, ha, ha! Now, the thing is, you're right. This is the point: that coverage is real. This is where media are languages, and not just TV, but books and newspapers and all the way back to speech - they all were real, we'll call it the "second nature", it's human-made nature as opposed to original Creator-made nature. It's what we made, it's a man-made situation and includes all the senses of man and woman. It becomes real, really real, and this is a linguistic problem. Then, since electric media are real to us, therefore all actions have to be translated into electric media - that is what made the whole world into a global theater. Especially with the satellite/TV environment - that has made every one of us desire an audience. Now, this point relates back to a lot of the themes I was making: the need for an audience as an actor is implemented or imbedded in us by the technological situation of the language we live in, which is the electric environment. So all of these answers can be explained by the TV situation, and by the computer and the satellite.

Paul: At the Chicago Democratic convention of '68 when the yippies and other protesters were there, that's when the phrase: "The whole world is watching", was invented. We were saying out loud what other people's secret desires were.

Bob: That's right, my chart explains why that happened in '68, why that was the beginning of moving into the end of everything by '77. But yeah, that is an archetypal situation - the whole world is watching. You see, what the yippies did, they did the opposite of Mort Sahl: Mort Sahl brought politics into the nightclub, but the yippies brought the nightclub into politics.

Paul: The funny thing is, that's the same phrase Mort Sahl used to put down Dick Gregory, when Mort Sahl said about himself that he brought politics into the theater and that Dick Gregory was bringing the theater into politics.

Bob: Right, and he could have been more accurate by saying Gregory brought the nightclub into politics. But see, all situations were merging in the

satellite environment which had been there for ten years, since '57. So that was Abbie Hoffman's first book - how to use the media, or what he thought the media was. As well as bringing the nightclub into politics, he also was aware of bringing it into the global theater. So, the yippies were more theatrical than the hippies in a conscious sense. So that is why that phrase came out of the Chicago event, because that was the hidden dynamic of the yippies movement - they felt the whole world was watching via media. They realized media was a real force we had to deal with.

Paul: Exactly, now there's only a little time left and I know that Gerry had one area he wanted us to get into.

Gerry: Thanks. "Is there hope for the future?", a young reviewer wrote about Paul's book. Also, "I didn't know politics could be so much fun. Where do I sign up?" Now, what constructive counsel do you guys suggest for the youth of today? Kurt Cobain quoted Neil Young in his suicide note: "It's better to burn out than to fade away". But Jean Cocteau saw the creative spirit as the highest form of the spirit of contradiction. Cocteau declared his intention to obliterate the modern "do as you wish", the false freedom that is taught to American children, which deprives young people, heroes and artists of their essential motivation - disobedience...

Bob: I think that's just a big sack of cliches that have no relevance, especially since you had to say it in English, which is a cliché medium. Now, for talking in the media, I would tell kids that creativity is obsolete, and then I would tell them that when something's obsolete, it works. In other words, it can be used, it's no longer the real hidden dynamic on your consciousness. The hidden environment is always invisible. So, by saying creativity is obsolete, I mean that it's not the real constituent factor in your consciousness. The media needs content, so they need creativity. They want more words, poetry, music, baseball, whatever - all kinds of anthropomorphic expression, they need that, especially for the information superhighway. So, if you want to be an anti-environment to a situation where creativity is obsolete and therefore will be the content and endlessly plumbed for titillation, then how do you do an anti-environment to that? I would say to study my strategy of Bob's Media Ecology whenever you have to interact with general media - be

a zombie. But you are free to study whatever you want on your own and be creative personally, but don't think that creativity is going to create a change. Creativity keeps the windmills of Satan going.

Paul: Well, I think that creativity is change by its very nature.

Bob: Change is our daily reality.

Paul: Yeah, my wife gets shocked by things she sees on TV, and I say: "What do you expect, to be stagnant?".

Bob: That's another way of saying the media needs new content. Because the media want to be kept on and people want to live in that discarnate cyberspace of TV. They want to be part of it every day. So every form of human expression will be used and exploited and expressed. So, you can play a game where each one of us is both figure and ground. You can put out a book and revitalize The Realist and know that some of it is just to make some money out of it. But at the same time you can also ignore the effects of that and have a different public stance when you are required to talk about public issues. Every one of us in this planet is in a yin-yang situation - we're creating our own disease as well as curing it.

Paul: Well, I guess creativity isn't obsolete then.

Bob: That's right, obsolescence means it can be used and doesn't rock the boat. It's accepted, it becomes a guaranteed environment. The hidden environment is what's really motivating everybody, and creating a lot of obsession or neurosis, and the stress of life is always caused by the new invisible environment. Therefore, an antidote or an anaesthetic to that is the past environments, but to use them as props. So, all human creativity is now provided as the content, but the mixed corporate-media create the stress on people, and they're trying to find out how that stress is affecting them. They'll never be able to find out how that stress is affecting them. But all they have to do is understand what I'm talking about.

Paul: Well, there are New Age resources like Esalen where executives go, but

it's an elitist kind of thing because they can afford to go there, and so what it means is that they can go fire an employee but put their hand on his shoulder as they fire him.

Bob: With sympathy or empathy. See, any form of awareness, from visionary to individualistic genius, even stupidity, all forms of awareness are obsolete - they can be used as content. So Esalen didn't know, Micheal Murphy didn't know, that they would become a big deal and then they would become obsolesced and then would be retrieved, and therefore, they sort of have their meaning within that situation - however they exploit it or whatever they want to do.

Paul: But they realize that now what they are trying to say is: what do we do after "process"?

Bob: Right, that's an apt word - "process" is what is affecting all of us, that's the hidden ground, and they just reflected the need, subconsciously, for psychology to adapt to the new electric environment in the '60s and '70s, the electric environment being processual. So they came up with concepts of "process". Now that concept is obsolete because they've exhausted it, people are no longer using it, but they are stuck in an environment that is process incarnate. So, they've got a problem. I really think on a public level, my explanations get people out of that metaphorical problem.

Paul: And yet you're still hopeless.

Bob: Right, I'm a lost cause.

Paul: But you're having fun.

Bob: That's right, and that's ironic.

Paul: I guess that would be my advice to young people - have fun, which is obviously superfluous advice. If they have to hear it from me, then they're in a pretty sad state.

Bob: First of all, I tell them they're in an apocalyptic situation.

Paul: In case they don't know it.

Bob: They know it, but they don't know how it got to this situation. If they read my memo to Prince Charles in the CD booklet, they can understand how it got here, and it also spells out very good sources like Mae Brussell, Marshall McLuhan, Finnegans Wake, Lyndon LaRouche, Frank Zappa, and other people, covering the whole spectrum. Because you are going to be saturated with TV by the time you are 18 or 19, you want to know what to do, you want to develop an identity. Study something that has taken the best of what has happened in the last 40 or 50 years. You study that and then you realize that the understanding you got from that is obsolete. Then that's the apocalypse - finding out that you don't exist. You have to deal with the fact you live in an almost Oriental oblivion, you live in a resonating void. Once you realize you are gone, you are invisible, in terms of expressing that relation to anybody else, you might then realize "I'm still here!", and then you start to realize you've survived. So, you've got to tell them they're dead, everything's disappeared, you've got to tell them how it happened, and then they'll go through the hallucination of that language and that insight, and then they'll realize, like in Zen, they're still here: "First there is a mountain. Then there is no mountain. Then there is a mountain". But we can't use Zen language anymore, we can't use any discipline's language anymore, we have to use the language we're in now, which no culture has ever dealt with. That's how I begin.

Paul: I think when the anthropologists dig us up, they'll think our credo was: stay tuned.

Bob: Ha, our credo?

Paul: Our belief system could be summed up in the phrase: stay tuned.

Bob: Do you mean that, you're saying that seriously?

Paul: In a certain sense, yes, if you study the media as you and I seem to do,

you realize they constantly try and program the audience with fear - either fear that their armpits will smell, or fear that they'll miss something if they turn it off.

Bob: Ha, ha, ha. Okay, that's because of the electric space. But you're right. If you remember the four levels of causality that I began with, if you look at that as a multi-levelled statement that has apocalypse and salvation within it, then that's a good logo. Because we're forced to "stay tuned" today, you have to develop a yoga of self-entertainment, you have to be able to live in the state of being constantly attuned to what's happening and you've got to learn what your relationship to that is. That means you have to stay tuned to other things.

Paul: Uh huh. Well, my wife runs Camnet which is a camcorder network without a host, without any explanations of what you are seeing, what you are about to see, and what you've just seen, taken not necessarily by professionals, but by amateurs, artists, and activists. As she has tried to get into the commercial scene without violating her workday, she's found they always say: "Oh, we've been looking for something innovative like this", and by the time it gets up to the hierarchy, the message is: "We want them innovative but not that innovative".

Bob: Right, what is up at the top of the hierarchy is not a human, it's mixed corporate-media and its' pollstergeists' rating sensibility. Now, media are an extension of us, they are us, but they are bureaucratized into a situation where you as an individual are a real problem if you are allowed to project over a situation that needs the cliches - the lowest common denominator.

Paul: But the people who run the Nielsen ratings, they never took into consideration the mute button, and so with all the money they pay for commercials, they're being muted. But I guess they're depending on the people who don't mute them, the people who watch the commercials when they watch the VCR.

Bob: I explain this on my second CD, how Big Brother is the pollstergeist which leads to the ratings. The ratings are a total fiction that are projected on

us, because there is nobody watching advertising any more, we're free from it, but it causes inflation - that stuff costs millions of dollars. So, money becomes inflated by the needs of advertising, but the oligarchs, the powers that be, need to provide content and they need to provide an anti-environment to all the changing programs. That anti-environment is advertising. Advertising provides itself as the ersatz gold standard - it is the hierarch at the top.

Paul: And in the process, since they can take advertising off as a business expense, other taxpayers pay for themselves to be brainwashed. So, it's a very self-fulfilling cycle.

Bob: So, the audience rules, and one cannot think that one represents that audience.