Imagine a future in which cows are extinct. Imagine your children can only see them in books. Imagine you could have done something to save them. Don’t wait until it is too late.

Act now and protect our planet.
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You never said anything nice about me...

You never said anything nice about anything...

Or anybody...

At least we are still talking only... ABOUT ME!!!
Every time we are referring to ‘ego’ why are we all ready to throw an anathema? Every time we talk about egos why does our mind automatically go to super egos, twisted personas and personalities? Of course, Hitler, Stalin and Mao had a super-ego, but then so did Churchill, Roosevelt and de Gaulle, otherwise how could they survive the responsibilities laid upon them?

The people who have the self-confidence to explore, expose and exhibit their self and their talents in any part of life, in art, politics or science, must have a strong ego otherwise they would be lost in the crowd and with them all their creations would be lost as well.

You don’t need to go far, look at Barack Obama, the man’s ego is shining from miles away and there is nothing wrong with this, after all, he’s expecting to carry the hopes, not only of a nation, but of the whole world.

If Obama didn’t have a strong ego he would never manage to be where he is. Of course and that is what makes the big difference, his ego is accompanied by talent and intelligence, something missing from another contemporary the current President of the United States, George W. Bush, who is just …ego and the rest is an empty cell!

The usual suspects have joined Asa and me in a thematic issue for the Ovi magazine with the very difficult title, ‘me’! However easy it looks when you first think about it, the theme actually becomes increasingly difficult when you try to do it. But we did it and here we are with our 21st thematic issue.

Asa gave his best …I presume to create a factional – I love using words like that in places like this – layout and it did make his life hell to find a way around …me!

Thank you all for the hard work and the ideas you shared, a big welcome to new contributors and a big thank you to our readers whose increasing numbers never stop amazing us.

Thanos Kalamidas
Three words to ruin a man’s EGO:
“Is it in?”

Dear Editor,

“ME a name I call myself....” Ovi is the ME of free speech, of ideas and Voices sought and listened to from around the world.

Ovi is the honest practice of seeking, tweaking and obliquing various points of view in an open cyber space forum, with the willingness, knowledge and stamina needed to hear and endure opinions hot, lukewarm and cold; affable, mildly agreeable and hostile.

In putting into ACTION these belief based disciplines, YOU, and others like YOU, continue and help to fortify the ideas and principles of FREEDOM and how, when, where and why FREEDOM is important and blesses every ME, EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE.

Respectfully,
Leah Sellers
GEORGETOWN, TEXAS

THANK YOU LEAH FOR THOSE MOTIVATIONAL WORDS. WE ARE SORELY TEMPTED TO WRITE THAT THERE IS NO ‘I’ IN ‘TEAM’ BUT LUCKILY WE ARE BEYOND CLIQUES. ASA & THANOS
"When you read God's Word, you must constantly be saying to yourself, 'It is talking to me, and about me.'"
- Soren Kierkegaard

"I don't mind what the opposition say of me so long as they don't tell the truth about me."
- Mark Twain

"Actually, I... this may sound a little West Texan to you, but I like it. When I'm talking about... when he's talking about myself, all of us are talking about me."
- George W. Bush

"Psychoanalysis. Almost went three times - almost. Then I decided what was peculiar about me was probably what made me successful. I've seen some very talented actors go into analysis and really lose it."
- Bette Davis

"Even if I set out to make a film about a fillet of sole, it would be about me."
- Federico Fellini

"I don't care what you say about me. Just be sure to spell my name wrong."
- Barbra Streisand

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- Federico Fellini

"I don't care what you say about me. Just be sure to spell my name wrong."
- Barbra Streisand

A psychiatrist asked her multiple personality patient, "So, do you feel like you're cured?" He replied, "Absolutely. We've never felt better."
I, Me, Self-Forgetfulness, Dehumanization

By Emanuel L. Paparella
Josiah Royce made a distinction between the individual self-conscious I, and the social me who can only become self-reflective within a community. The ancient Greeks warned us that the unexamined life is not worth living; that man needs to ask the question what does it mean to be human and only after adequately answering that question will he be able to devise a theory of “the good life.”

But there is a more profound concept of the self. St. Augustine puts the riddle of the self this way: What is so much thine as thyself and what is so little thine as thyself? What Augustine is pointing out is this: underlying the question “Who am I” is a further question: “Is my I really mine?” Ultimately this is the question of freedom asking “How much in control am I of the self?”

Those are questions acutely felt by perceptive modern men who feel themselves “thrown into existence” in a world largely devoid of meaning, condemned to play certain roles within certain social structures oriented toward consumerism, production, success and material affluence. Question that Thoreau already attempted to address way back in 1847 with his reflections on Walden Pond. Closer to us Jacques Ellul explores extensively the modern phenomenon of value-free technological “efficient ordering” which pervades all aspects of modern life since Descartes (see his The Betrayal of the West).

Previous to Ellul, Marx had already identified this form of alienation in the individual’s role as object of exploitation. But this alienation transcends the mere economic sphere of one’s humanity and occurs in all types of societies. In fact, the greater the organization of a society, i.e., the interdependence of all its social phenomena and the determinism of its processes, the greater seems to be the alienation, anonymity and servitude of its individuals to processes and forces that hamper their creativity and identity. Indeed, this is the question of freedom.

We live in two worlds which hardly understand and communicate with each other: the humanistic world and the scientific world. Those who live in the latter are quick to point out that technology has provided us with the means to subdue the earth and free the destitute and oppressed masses from brutalizing labor. That is however only partly true given that millions of people in the third world as I write this remain oppressed and exploited. Those people usually fail to observe how in the 20th century, after World War I, the very concept of Utopia present even in Marxist ideology practically disappeared. In the 19th century, when belief in the so called “inevitable” progress of science was prevalent, utopia was felt to be the very goal of history.

Utopia meant a world without oppression and injustice, without hunger and class conflicts. Marx certainly envisioned it as the culmination of man’s history, after a few inevitable dialectic class conflicts that is. This vision is no longer with us. As Einstein pointed out in the 20th century, we are now mainly preoccupied with the means of the goal of utopia. In the process of perfecting those means, the goal, i.e., utopia itself, is lost sight of. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of education where means have long ago swallowed up goals and “educrats” have firmly established themselves as the well-paid managers of

Concern for man and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors. Never forget this in the midst of your diagrams and equations.

--Albert Einstein
those means. It is no secret that bureaucracy now absorbs 60% or more of the money earmarked for education in the Western World.

At this sorry stage of depersonalization, the pressing question is about our very humanity. Are we still capable of acting humanely? Is the self still home? If it is not, that may explain why so many individuals do not know what to do with their leisure. They simply do not know what to do with their selves. Pascal for one provides the answer as to why so much of modern recreation assumes a mode of centrifugal dissipation rather than one of centripetal concentration. In his famous *Penseé* he points out that the cause of our unhappiness can be identified in the fact that we cannot simply sit still in a room for more than a few minutes. Or as Dante illustrates it in his *Commedia*, to be alone is a terrifying experience if no self is encountered. It is in the loss of the self that much modern existential angst can be located. Once I have lost my self, I may knock at the door of my own home and find that nobody lives there any longer. To say it with Dante, “so bitter it is that death is little more.” At that point I may become unable to pursue the question of my own humanity.

Dante for one needed Virgil’s guide to overcome the three beasts that obstructed the beginning of his journey into the self. And here we return to the theme of freedom and determinism. Contrary to what Freudianism may hold, humans are not mere bundles of impulses independent of time and place. Society is perfectly capable of adapting and molding these impulses and even perverting them in order to fit them into its principles of reality. All that needs to be done is to make people believe that their wants are their needs and that to be deprived of those wants is be victimized. Politicians seem to be very good at this sort of game. As Jackson Lears has aptly written in his *No Place of Grace*: “…A therapeutic world view…has become part of the continuing pattern of evasive banality in modern culture. Celebrating spurious harmony, the therapeutic outlook has further undermined personal moral responsibility and promoted ethics of self-fulfillment well attuned to the consumer ethos of 20th century capitalism.”

Our incessant talk shows are mere symptoms of that kind of cancer eating at our Western civilization. When the disease has become pervasive, people begin to sincerely believe that to be human and to have self-esteem is to own a care equipped with a telephone with which to order pizza on the way home. Some have even installed make-believe phone with which to confer more self-esteem and self-importance on themselves. To drive while talking on the phone give others the impression that momentous decisions are being executed.

The gorilla with a telephone in his paw is of course merely funny. A much less amusing and sinister aspect of this pressure to adjust and conform are the propagandistic and ideological apparatuses that have distinguished the 20th century People caught in those monstrosities can hardly be imagined as being endowed with a shred of autonomy or as striving after what Jung called “individuation.” In those types of societies, man has not only dehumanized himself but he is unable to cure himself. An outside force seems to be needed. It can only come from the few individuals in whom the image of authentic humanity is still kept alive and who have the courage to free that image by condemning and altering corrupting social structures. Solzhenitsyn jumps to mind.

In the 60s we had in America a counterculture movement largely sponsored by college students and theorized by Herbert Marcuse in his book *Eros and Civilization*. He thought, as some misguided intellectuals still do, that a new humanity was on the horizon, ushered in by new technological developments which would keep oppressive work at a minimum while raising leisure and freedom to the maximum. The aggressive instincts identified by Freud as aroused by social repression, would simply wither away. So would Judeo-Christian morality, another vestige of social repression. This new man, reminiscent of Nietzsche’s overman would be characterized by the fact that he would not have to merit life; he would simply enjoy it. Whatever aggressive instincts might be left in him would be sublimated through sports and the building of civilized communities that respected nature.

Here we should pause to note that of the many hippy communes established in the 60s, few survived and those which did had some kind of religious foundation. In any case, this was perhaps the last naïve attempt at utopia on the part of modern technocratic man. It never came to pass. What did come to pass is best explained by Allan Bloom in his controversial
The Closing of the American Mind where he provides an analysis of this “new man.” Far from being tolerant and simply enjoying life in Utopia, the “new man” has by now entrenched himself in the University’s chambers of power (the same chambers at whose gates he was protesting in the 60s) and from there he now imposes “political correctness” on academia. All done, mind you, in the name of civilizing tolerance and equality.

What in reality is at work is a sort of Nietzschean nihilism and relativism. As indeed Nietzsche correctly foresaw in the 19th century, once God is dead, one is left with little more than “the will to power,” or a reduction of persons to functions of emergent social conditions. Within such a community, neither God (be he the one of the Judeo-Christian tradition or Plato’s) nor man (as conceived by the Renaissance) is any longer the measure of all things. The measure is constituted almost exclusively by material and economic structures.

In song and in dance this man will end up bragging of the fact that he is a “material man,” turning vices into virtues on his TV shows where everybody washed one’s dirty linens in public, where every opinion is as good as any other, where triviality and banality reign supreme and truth is prostituted to expediency and freedom is mistaken for license. This new humanity is constituted by economic structures conceived as a sort of demiurge fashioning it. But this demiurge named “market” far from being a panacea can easily become an instrument of repression and dehumanization when not tempered by justice.

Few people, either with the capitalististic or the socialist camp, bother to seriously ask the question How can we humanize these economic structures that leave so many people at the margins of prosperity? Even Nobel winners in economics and science do not seem to be able to formulate the question, never mind answering it.

What seems to be desperately needed is an independent picture of humanity; i.e., an awareness of being a self. Without that picture even the need for a journey is not perceivable. As Kierkegaard best rendered it, man then remains in the despair of self-forgetfulness, in the “sickness unto death” of the well adjusted individual identifying with the values of his society, blissfully unaware that he has been reduced to a consuming automaton.

When man cannot conceive of his own destiny any longer and begins to talk of soul as mere mind, and then of mind as mere “software,” then indeed the sickness may be terminal. For when the I is lost, one cannot even grieve over its loss. And Kierkegaard is not talking here of a mere psychological phenomenon. Rather he is talking about an existential despair, the angst of which a Thoreau or a Heidegger speak. This is a sort of sickness that is hardly noticeable in the workaday world where the afflicted are engage in all sorts of productive activities geared to repress the anxiety, while remaining lost “in a dark wood” with not even the faintest desire to seek “the right way.” This is the life of quite desperation.

Tragically, in that self-forgetfulness and imperceptible loss of identity, modern man becomes less than primitive man; he becomes, in fact, less than a beast, a monstrosity. Elie Wiezel is right in affirming that the proper ethical implications of mankind’s Nazi past have hardly been drawn. For we remain unwilling to question our humanity and thus relive the terror of such a past. It is easier by far to lay flowers on the tomb of the Third Reich’s Unknown Soldier in an inauthentic gesture of reconciliation.

But reconciliation requires remembrance, acceptance, the asking of forgiveness, the granting of forgiveness, repentance, reparation. When these are missing reconciliation becomes a mockery. It becomes self-forgetfulness. As Dante and Vico have been trying to teach us for centuries now, to be human is to be forced to ask about one’s self, to be compelled by the image toward which is thrust and which emerges at the intersection of essence and existence, at the point of ethical tension between what is and what ought to be.
I AM...

WHO I WANT

AND I WANT...

TO BE!

IF NOT...

...I DON'T WANT!

AND THEN...
I AM

...WHO I AM!

AND WHOEVER I WILL BE!

BECAUSE...

THAT'S ME!!!
The classic riposte to Descartes who boldly claimed he existed because of his thought was a tale wherein he entered a bar and ordered a martini. When the bartender asked if he wanted an olive in it Descartes waved his hand and muttered “I think not.” Whereupon he promptly vanished leaving behind not even a puff of smoke. Nevertheless, without Descartes’ thoughts he surely would not exist today.

But this problem persists in each of us at each moment of our existence throughout our lives. There is much we do not know about ourselves and many of us never find out. Some of these things are obvious to others and many are exceedingly subtle.

Kurt Vonnegut, for one, was very disturbed that he had never seen his asshole, a simple ignorance which possesses most of us. It’s a sure bet that many individuals who pontificate over life, fate, the nature of the universe, etc. are equally uninformed. Being practical, he solved the problem with an arrangement of mirrors and triumphantly displayed, in “Breakfast of Champions”, a rough sketch of his accomplishment. It was rather abstract and, like many other abstract pieces of art, was somewhat ambiguous. Not even one of his closest acquaintances would have recognized him from that. Aside from other things it could have been a Christmas star or an asterisk (pun accepted) or a moon crater or the winking eye of God. But I accept his designation.

Some years back an internist suspected some evil was working its way into my gut so he inflicted a gastroscope on my oesophagus and while I was undergoing continuous gagging (I have no future as a sword swallower) let me peek at the view to distract me. No evil was discovered but I now know that my digestive system at either end or in the middle has nowhere the sensational possibility of even one of Janet Jackson’s nipples. So my self identity obviously lies elsewhere.

It is common for most people to identify with their names. This is usually a gift of our parents and very frequently conjured up on a whim so it rarely has much solid significance. Nevertheless, for most of us, it acquires such total attachment to our conceived essences that many people spend their lives scribbling it in the most surprising places in the conviction that we are thoroughly represented in the world. During WWII some character named Kilroy and thousands of accomplices scratched his name on all sorts of surfaces throughout the world but nevertheless his anonymity remains pretty much absolute.

It is customary in many modern situations for people to rename themselves. Hitler and Stalin and Marilyn Monroe and Cary Grant did so and I doubt that they will be remembered under any other name. “Superman” in...
Finnish is Terasmies which means ‘man of steel’ but pronounced in English is almost sounds like ‘tear-ass man’ and he certainly does move around quickly. Most of the women of the world routinely rename themselves when they get married. My original family name had a peculiar arrangement of letters that were frequently misspelled which never bothered most of us but my brother objected.

The rest of the family never took the name as anything but trivial and to make my brother happy chose a simple one easily spelled. Initially I never thought twice about it but the change occurred when I had gotten used to the old name at the age of twenty and it struck me, after the change, just how insignificant a name really is. I suddenly had to confront myself as an anonymous two legged mammal and I first found the experience rather unsettling. On the other hand it was liberating. Many of those things that a human being accepts as an integral part of his/her being suddenly became highlighted as external baggage that can be carried or put aside.

Like any horse, rabbit, lobster or hummingbird I suddenly became a mobile lump of protein with a very individual existence and a limited lifespan (if I was lucky) of something in the area of a mere century. Whether or not my new name or my old name is recorded somewhere that more or less random accumulation of letters will convey nothing at all of this strange individual animal which seems to be me.

I say “seems to be me” because chopping off bits here and there still leaves me behind. Donating blood or having a haircut or cutting my fingernails still leaves “me” firmly intact. More radical butchery such as detaching arms and legs and an appendix removal still leaves behind the essential “me” but most probably spiced with rather strong emotions. With me, as with most humans, as opposed to chickens who occasionally can make out headless, decapitation does something final. So the essential “me” seems to inhabit the head and specifically, the brain.

For a while anatomists suspected that the essential self was deeply involved with the pineal gland but subsequent more sophisticated procedures with modern brain scans leaves the impression that the self is rather widely distributed throughout the entire structure of the brain.

Since sight, with me as with most humans, contributes hugely to the sense of existence I have the sense that I exist between my eyes and about three or four centimeters behind my forehead. It would seem to me that a person born blind might place themselves somewhere else in their body but I have no information on that. Perhaps dogs exist close to their noses.

But there is now no doubt that the self is one of the minor functions of the brain although not to the self itself who would not consider the important nervous functions of sneezing, coughing, digesting and farting more vital than itself. Nevertheless, Oliver Sacks who devotes himself to the strange effects of defective central nervous systems has clearly demonstrated that the seemingly stable “self” is subject to immense modification by nervous system problems as illustrated in his book “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat”.

Although I, and no doubt many other men, have often harbored strange misconceptions about their wives, the hat business seems rather unique. And it follows that we also have been subject to misconceptions about ourselves. The ancient adage “know thyself” is a fairly impossible directive since, not only are there an almost infinite number of aspects to each individual but they keep changing from moment to moment so the act of knowing changes the target, somewhat like a psychological equivalent to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. So the problem is like that of a lepidopterist who mistakes a puff of smoke for a butterfly and attempts to pin it to a cardboard.

Who am I? Damfino.
Cátia Cóias (29) is a Lisbon-based artist and photographer. She attended the Fine Arts course, London Metropolitan University, and the Photography course at the Hackney College, London, as well as the Photography course at Ar.Co Lisbon (Center for Art and Visual Communication). She has a degree in Visual and Technological Communication.

Cátia was the founder of the fanzine theredrollerball, she is a member of MEF, Movement of Photographic Expression, and maintains the blog http://ladonabionica.blogspot.com.
To the Fishes... *
(Allusion to Father Antonio Vieira’s literary work Sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fishes)

May God Forgive Me #2
I finally finished Sophie’s Choice, err I mean, Sophie’s World!” I exclaimed to Thanos, after four weeks of steady progress through its 480-pages. Thanos smiled and asked, “So, did it make you want to explore philosophy further?” I mulled over his question for a few seconds, washing it over my palette like a fine wine, and replied, “No.” From his startled expression, I guessed that he hadn’t expected that answer.

Sofies verden was written by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder fifteen years ago as a book that makes philosophy accessible to a wide audience, but was primarily aimed at teenagers. Today, it has been translated into fifty-three languages, over thirty million copies have been printed, including three million copies sold in Germany alone, and the Finns call it Sofian maailma: romaani filosofian historiasta.

Naturally, I stuck to the English translation by Paulette Møller, who did a fantastic job capturing Gaarder’s turn of phrase, the philosophical analyses and the bizarre events that happen to Sophie and, later, Hilde. Once again, I have to comment upon the incredible skill of a translator because the overseas’ success of a book falls heavily upon their shoulders and they can never receive enough recognition for their job.

The reason for my negative answer to Thanos’ question does not mean that I disliked the book. In fact, it gave such a comprehensive overview of philosophy that I was left battered emotionally and exhausted mentally. Gaarder starts from Mythology, moves onto the Greek philosophers of Democritus, Socrates and Plato, and then hits the Renaissance, Baroque, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke and Hume.

The pace refuses to relent, as the reader is introduced to Berkeley, the Enlightenment, Kant, Romanticism, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Darwin and Freud, which are all names
and periods that are all familiar to us all. However, chapter after chapter you are forced to analyse your own surroundings and ask those famous questions, such as ‘Who are we?’ and ‘Why are we here?’, plus tackle the statements, ‘To be, or not to be’ and ‘I think, therefore I am.’

Gaarder’s book covers so much of western philosophy that I wasn’t sure my brain could cope with many more revelations. I think I am one of the ones who prefer to nestle in the fur of the white rabbit, as opposed to philosophers who “are always trying to climb up the fine hairs of the fur in order to stare right into the magician’s eyes.” The white rabbit motif is a recurrent theme throughout Sophie’s Choice, damn, Sophie’s World, so you had better like those furry beasts.

One aspect of the book which I noticed was the way that Gaarder approaches Religion. He doesn’t dismiss the idea of a God, nor does he proclaim a higher deity in charge of our fate. Well, he sort of does to Sophie and Hilde, but to reveal anything more would spoil the story. Anyway, the way he deals with religion can be summarised in one of his story’s paragraphs:

A Russian astronaut and a Russian brain surgeon were once discussing religion. The brain surgeon was a Christian but the astronaut was not. The astronaut said, “I’ve been out in space many times but I’ve never seen God or angels.” And the brain surgeon said, “And I’ve operated on many clever brains but I’ve never seen a single thought.”

The plot of Sophie’s World follows a 15-year-old called Sophie Amundsen (Sophie, from the Greek ‘Sophia’, meaning ‘wisdom’). When she receives two anonymous messages in her mailbox (Who are you? Where does the world come from?), a postcard addressed to ‘Hilde Møller Knag, c/o Sophie Amundsen’, and a handwritten course in philosophy, her life changes forever. The course is taught by a fifty-year-old philosopher called Alberto Knox, but it could also be Hilde’s father Major Albert Knag…nothing is certain as the story progresses.

Sophie’s World will open your mind to philosophy and teach the basics that everybody should know. It may trigger an urge to explore philosophy further or it may frighten you to consider the scope of your own life, but, whatever you take from it, the book will get you to start questioning everything!
My earthbound self makes
Wild love and toast for tea.

My thoughtful self
Works with concepts of other worlds.

The self of my soul
Explores dark, melodious caverns.

My creative self
Weaves intricate pictures with words.

All these precious selves
Make up the me that is me.  Brenda Brown

It is widely believed that humanity is coming to the end of an historical cycle and is entering into a new age with the start of the new millennium — a passage from the Piscean Period to the Age of Aquarius. The Piscean Period, which inaugurated the Christian era, (symbolized by the two fish sign used by the early Christians) is fading into the Aquarian Age symbolized by the bearer of water.

Each age has a dominant image of the nature of the person related to the spirit of the age. Thus, the central image of the Piscean Period has been that of the person — a term which comes from the mask worn by actors in Greek and Roman drama. The idea of the person was developed by Greek and Roman Stoics. The mask and the person behind the mask was a symbol of the duality of the body/soul, of the body/mind, of male and female; of ethno-centered identity: we/they, Greek/Barbarian.

The duality of the concept of the person was an advance in individualization from the earlier Ages of Aries and Taurus, of which the ram and the bull are symbols — animals which were significant in these earlier ages. The pre-Piscean model was that of tribal consciousness with an impersonal sense of undifferentiated identity with nature. The person and his mask is a step toward the worth of the individual, but a mask can be dropped in a period of danger so that there can again be identity with the tribe — village.

The shift from one age to another is subtle. There will be no world-wide fireworks saying “You are now entering into the Age of Aquarius.” Piscean images of the nature of the person will not suddenly be replaced, and body/mind terminology is likely to continue for some time.

However, the outlines of what I call the Aquarian Self are already visible. Much has been analysed in a difficult but important book by C.G. Jung Aion. Much of the book is devoted to Jung’s analysis of the Piscean structures, structures that he uses himself with his introvert/extrovert, anima/animus typology. However, he sets out at the end some of the elements of what he calls The Self. I would use the term Aquarian Self to mark the distance which exists with some of the ways that the term Self has been used in the past.

The Aquarian Self, symbolized by the pouring of water — or by the image of a river formed from a multitude of streams — is a synthesis of intuition, cognition, emotion and action. Synthesis will be the keynote of the Aquarian Age as sharp duality was the keynote of the Piscean Period.

The Aquarian Self will be seen as the integration of body, soul and spirit. C.G. Jung and Roberto Assagioli, the father of psychosynthesis, are forerunners, followed by more recent schools of humanistic and transpersonal psychology in which Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are important figures.

In addition to these forms of Western psychology, there is a growing interest in techniques and ideas drawn from Indian philosophy, with its emphasis on yoga, tantra, and the energy centers of the body (the chakras and the kundalini). The Tibetan forms of Buddhism, the Japanese school of Zen, and Taoism with its integration of feminine and masculine energy are all streams coming into the synthesis.

We are just at the start of a profound transformation of our understanding of ME.
“I am Me. In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me. Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I alone chose it -- I own everything about me: my body, my feelings, my mouth, my voice, all my actions, whether they be to others or myself. I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears. I own my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes. Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me. By so doing, I can love me and be friendly with all my parts. I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects that I do not know -- but as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I can courageously and hopefully look for solutions to the puzzles and ways to find out more about me. However I look and sound, whatever I say and do, and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is authentically me. If later some parts of how I looked, sounded, thought, and felt turn out to be unfitting, I can discard that which is unfitting, keep the rest, and invent something new for that which I discarded. I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do. I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me, and therefore, I can engineer me. I am me, and I am Okay.”

- Virginia Satir
My Ovi bio describes me as “An almost-30 Englishman who resides in Helsinki with his pregnant Finnish wife and young daughter. Hates tea, banana and panpipes, enjoys a guilty obsession with DVDs and his sense of humour has caused him many problems.” There’s nothing more satisfying than encapsulating your entire life in 36-words clumsily typed early one morning and then occasionally updating it in the areas demanding attention.

If you ever want to fill a half-hour then browse through the other bio entries on our Ovi team page and discover snippets of information generously shared by our contributors. When a new contributor joins Ovi I always ask them to send a photo and a 30-word bio, and it one of my secret joys reading others’ attempts at summing up their life and achievements in this tight word limit.

Will they be witty? Will they be mini-CVs? Will they be abstract? Will they actually send one? How do they want to portray themselves and how honest will they be? The Ovi bio, like the CV, is the opportunity to focus attention on our achievements, our strengths, the facets of our personalities we actually like and want to share with the world. We don’t really want a ‘warts ‘n all’ bio crammed full of shocking personal revelations that would make Courtney Love blush.
However, we all have those dark secrets. We all have personal thoughts, actions and memories that we would rather forget, but they relentlessly stick to our sub-conscious like chewing gum in hair. We have all had thoughts that scare us, thoughts that come out of the cranial ether and bring further feelings of guilt, mortification, shock or disbelief, like imagining some horrific medieval torture for somebody who pushed in front of you at the store.

Let me reassure you that it was the first idea that came to mind, whether it is lodged in my sub-conscious is up to you to decide, but I will try to keep my own dark side out of the article or you will never return to the pages of Ovi ever again. Intriguing, huh! Since I am no psychologist, I’ll listen to the voices in my head that whisper in tongues that the way we deal with these thoughts is what separates us from the Charles Mansons of the world. Whether the voices are true or not, I believe we all need the dark side to appreciate the light.

There’s no better feeling than ignoring the impulse to inflict torture on that queue-jumping SOB in the supermarket, it certainly makes you feel moral and saves a hell of a lot of planning, kidnapping and extreme law-breaking. However, there are times that even I come dangerously close to a personal breaking point - don’t worry, there are safeguards in place. My own frightening alter-ego surfaces when I am simultaneously hungry, hot and tired, which I imagine is the same for most people.

When this triple combo strikes you can be overwhelmed, all morality evaporates from your body and you basically become a bastard. While under the influence of this monster I have been uncharacteristically nasty to loved ones, spat words of hatred at strangers and generally indulged in behaviour unbecoming of a gentleman. I can only describe the sensation as an out of body experience where you can see and hear everything you are doing, but have no control over your vindictive actions.

I don’t know whether my wife keeps an Asa Emergency Pack in her handbag, consisting of a chocolate bar, handheld fan and an energy drink, to break out at the first symptoms, but it sounds like a good idea. I am certainly strange in many aspects of my life, but if you think I am going to share them all to the voyeurs among you then think again. For now, I will offer a revised 30-word bio:

An almost-30 emotionally unbalanced, psychotically unstable, physically unnerving, sexually inadequate, professionally erratic, financially insecure, athletically stunted, romantically detached, parentally poor and domestically challenged Englishman surviving in Helsinki with his family.

Now, you must decide whether that was a witty, honest or terrifying bio…

I told you that you wouldn’t return to Ovi if you knew the truth about the Butcher Boy!
So I...me...me... mine... and I...I am...

...me...mine... I...and me...

...I...me...me... mine... and I...me...

Hmmm!

...me...mine...

We... WHAT?

You cannot stop talking about your damn ego...can you?
“Me”
By Jan Sand

I am an instrument erected
Mostly by myself.
Although I have much suspected
I am off the shelf
Of a bio-engineer
Who fumbled with his chemicals,
It becomes very clear
He must possess clever pals
If they could construct me.
I walk alone,
I talk alone,
I think you must agree
I am a most unique machine
That works completely free.
I write, I eat, I love, I run -
I have all sorts of active fun
But mostly what delights me most
Is not to be a gassy ghost.
It’s my solidity.
I, Cynic

By Thanos Kalamidas

When reading articles, essays and works on ego the only thing that comes out is that nearly everybody tries to convince you to suppress your ego, your 'I' and your 'me', plus it gets worse when it comes to religion when the suppression of the ego is the only way to salvation, so how can you understand the world that surrounds you if you don't understand your ego?

At the very same time it looks like the ego has landed on earth through televised reality shows and this is a very strong ego that forces the viewer into his small corner sometimes laughing most of the time being depressing. So what's with this 'I'? Since when has it become apocalyptic and why has boosting the ego become bad?

Actually I have no answer, only questions hoping that these are the right questions, apparently expecting no answers since I'm in good balance with my ego. You see I never force my ego. A few years ago I read a profile over how many times Hitler used the words 'me' and 'I', in a speech, and curiosity led me to check Churchill's speeches just to find out that he had used it equally as many times and just as often.

But then again in the beginning I mentioned the television egos that have overwhelmed our screens the last few years. I'm sorry to say but we should stop confusing self-confidence and ego with stupidity.

When I see somebody in his late-twenties coming on stage trying to prove that he's going to be the next Michael Jackson imitating a grotesque figure of contemporary pop art or a girl who thinks that Budapest is a South American country and Europe is an English province, it doesn't matter if their ego is boosting under their mini skirt I know that they are idiots and they major in stupidity; their ego is wasted. It is wasted because there are beautiful people who know where their ego is and they are exhibiting exactly that.

Damn, I nearly finished what I wanted to say and I haven't used the words '1', 'me', 'myself' or 'my' over 600 times.
How can I play hide & seek when 21 children die every minute?

Who'll play football with me when 21 friends die every minute?

If I close my eyes and count to a 100. 35 children are dead.
Victims by Bohdan Yuri

Keep the change, he motioned with his hand, then got out and stared at the space he’d occupied. Damn, he admitted to himself as the yellow taxi sped off to pick up another fare, there goes another story and its inherited victims.

ioioioioio by Thanos Kalamidas

“My dear mother and father,” Enter. He remembered when he used to write a letter, how many centuries was that before?

Pins & Needles by Andrew Farley

Even before I opened my eyes, I could the feel the warm midday sun splashed across my face. As the room came into focus and my eyes adjusted to the light, a familiar sense of disappointment washed over me.

War on Terror by Thanos K & Asa B

Every day we all fight a war against terror, but do not be mistaken into thinking that terror merely comes from terrorists. Oh no, you will find it in the most unlikely of places.
Beautiful People #3 by Thanos Kalamidas

The Extraordinary Beautiful People is Thanos Kalamidas’ graphic novel series and it is unlike anything you have ever seen before. Dark, surreal, stylish and thought provoking are just four adjectives that come to mind, but feel free to choose some of your own.

Just One Target by Thanos Kalamidas

“Please, please sit down. I will start in a minute when you are all quiet.”

Lonely & Herbert the Hare by Asa Butcher

Two short stories from the mind of Asa Butcher.

Missing by Mark Hayton

“Aaaaarrggghhh!!” a war cry, quickly followed by the thump of hand on plastic. The alarm clock silences. This is the Dawn of Man. I lift up my head open my bleary eyes and cough deeply.

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ΕΓΩ. Πόσο ισχυρό είναι τελικά, και πόσο επηρεάζει την πορεία ενός ανθρώπου;

Η ιστορία, τα γεγονότα, η καθημερινότητα, μας πιστώνουν ότι η επίδρασή του είναι καταλυτική, καθώς δύναται να σταθεί ισάξια στη ζυγαρία, ακόμα και να υπερκεράσει τις δυνατότητες, τις ατομικές ικανότητες κάθε ανθρώπου, την εμπειρία, τις γνώσεις και τις αξίες του. Αρκετοί επιμένουν να το ονομάζουν άστρο, με αποτέλεσμα μόνο η ελληνική επικράτεια να είναι ήδη υπερπλήρης από επονομαζόμενους «σταρ», οι οποίοι θεωρούν πως αιχμαλωτίζοντας την προσοχή του κοινού περιστασιακά, κλέβοντας λίγα λεπτά από το χρόνο του τηλεθεατή – καταναλωτή, πως καταξιώνονται, πως αναδεινύουνται αίφνης σε προσωπικότητες ιδιαίτερου βεληνεκούς.
Η διαφορετικότητα, που κάποτε ήταν ταμπού, αντικείμενο κριτικής, αποτελεί μια μοναχικότητα, αιτία πνευματικής συστολής και ανθρωπισμού, μέτρο σύγκρισης και αφομοίωσης, θεμιτού ή αθέμιτου – ανταγωνισμού. Και όλα αυτά γιατί η εποχή της μετανοετικότητας, η ζωή σε μία παγκόσμια κοινωνία, τείνει να παραπληροθείσας, τον πρώτο στοιχείο της συνειδητοποίησης των ανθρώπων κατακτούσας ανθρώπους με έργο, πνευματικό και μη, με αποδέκτην πνευματικής αντοχής, ανθρώπους δημιουργικούς, πρωτοπόρους, παραδείγματα προς μίμηση. Οι παραδόσεις, οι αξίες, τα πιστεύω και τα ιδανικά, δυστυχώς δεν μεταλλαχτίστηκαν σε κάθε περίπτωση. Η ενοποίηση, η ανάγκη εξεύρεσης του ενιαίου, κοινού χαρακτήρα, του κοινού κώδικα, «ψαλίδισαν» ότι περίσσευε και κράτησαν μόνο το ευπροσάρμοστο, το ευμετάβλητο, το συμφέρον, η ενοποίηση, η ανάγκη εξεύρεσης του ενιαίου, κοινού χαρακτήρα, του κοινού κώδικα, «ψαλίδισαν» ότι περίσσευε και κράτησαν μόνο το ευπροσάρμοστο, το ευμετάβλητο, το συμφέρον.

Είναι σαφές ότι η μεταβολή της κοινωνικής πραγματικότητας αντικατοπτρίζεται σε κάθε τομέα της καθημερινής ζωής, σε κάθε κλάδο της σύγχρονης πραγματικότητας, στη θρησκεία, την επιστήμη, τη λογοτεχνία. Και δε θα μπορούσε να είναι και αλλιώς, διότι η επικοινωνιολογία, ανθεί από το 1960, αλλά έχει φτάσει στο 20ο αιώνα, καθώς έχει ίσως το περιβάλλον μας, από ένα μεμονωμένο ύπατο, ως μία πολυεθνική εταιρεία, δε νοείται να έχει διάρκεια ζωής χωρίς δημόσιες σχέσεις. Πράγματι, το οποίο, μέχρι εδώ, ήδη μας επαληθεύει πως το «εγώ», φτάνει πάνω και πέρα από κάθε αντικειμενικά συγκρίσιμο μέγεθος, ικανότητα, ιδιότητα, προσώπου κτλ.

Ιδιαίτερα στον τομέα της πολιτικής, τα φαινόμενα είναι εξόρθωτα, τουλάχιστον σε όσους επιδιώκουν να διαβάζουν «πίσω από τις γραμμές», πέρα από τη λεγόμενη «προτιμητέα ανάγνωση». Χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα το ακόλουθο: οι επικοινωνιολόγοι έχουν καταλήξει στο συμπέρασμα πως ο Μέγας Ναπολέων (Βοναπάρτης), είναι ο περίπου της στρατηγικής και κυβερνητικής μεγαλοφυΐας του 19ου αιώνα, δε θα είχε στις μέρες
μας την αντίστοιχη απήχηση, καθότι το ανάστημα του δεν αντιπροσώπευε την μεγαλειώδη προσοπικότητά του, - ήταν εξαιρετικά κοντός, ακόμη και για τα δεδομένα της εποχής του - , και το παρουσιαστικό του δεν θα κάλυπτε τις επικοινωνιακές ανάγκες του διαμορφωτών του σωστού prestige ενός πολιτικού. Και είναι πράγματι πιθανό να το πιστέψει κανείς, αν τον συγκρίνει με το σημερινό πρότυπο του πολιτικού. Ευθυτενής, με άνεση μπροστά στον τηλεοπτικό φακό, με αδιάφορο πολιτικό πρόγραμμα και καθώς όραμα, αλλά με περισσότερες ρητορικές δεινότητες, τάσεις να πείθει το κοινό και να δημιουργεί ρεύμα, που σημαίνει μάζα, να τον ακολουθεί..

Μία καλή κίνηση των χεριών, ένας παθιασμένος λόγος και ίσως μία φωτογραφία με ένα παιδάκι στην αγκαλιά, ίσως αρκούν και με το παραπάνω για να κερδίσουν τις εντυπώσεις της προεκλογικής εκστρατείας και να υποφέρουν από την κυβερνητική του πολιτική, ή να μην καλύπτονται στο ελάχιστο από την ουσία των προγραμματικών του δηλώσεων - εάν αυτές υπάρχουν -. Με λύπη μου παρακολουθώ, ως νέος άνθρωπος, γεμάτος ανησυχίες ότι οι τηλεοπτικοί μας δεκτές κατακλύζουν καθημερινά από την ουσία των προγραμματικών τους, εάν αυτές υπάρχουν -.

Φέρνοντάς τη στα μέτρα τους, με αποκορύφωμα την ένταξή τους στην ψηφοδέλτιο οποιου κόμματος θα πρέπει καλύτερα να παίξει το ρόλο της ψηφοθηρίας, μοντέλα που προστάζουν τον κόσμο και τα προσόντα τους αναμετρώνται με αμιγώς πολιτικά πρόσωπα, και το χειρότερο, έχουν περισσότερη προσοχή, όταν δημιουργούν καθήκοντα, παρουσιάζοντας εαυτόν ως ανθρώπους και να βιώνουν την κατάπτωση και να μιλήσουν τάχα, στην καρδιά του μέσου Έλληνα πολίτη.

Ο λαϊκισμός στην Ελλάδα, πράγματι, έχει απογειωθεί, αγγίζοντας τα όρια του επικίνδυνου, καθώς, καλώς ή κακώς, τα σύγχρονα Μέσα Μαζικής Επικοινωνίας, ακολουθούν κατά πόδας κάθε αντίστοιχη πρωτοβουλία. Βεβαίως με το λαϊκισμό, συνάδει και υποκρισία. Οι ίδιοι αυτοί που πρωτοστατούν, εκπροσωπώντας τη λογική της κλειδαρότρυπας, τείνουν το δάχτυλο επικριτικά απέναντι σε κάθε άλλη πράξη, παρουσιάζοντας εαυτόν ως λαϊκούς με παιδεία, αξίες, κουλτούρα.

Γιατί λοιπόν, ενώ μπορούμε να μιλάμε για τηλε-σκουπίδια, αυτά ως φελλοί επιπλέουν, επικαλύπτοντας κάθε άλλη
ποιότητας και πολιτισμού; Διότι, κατ’ εμέ, οι άνθρωποι, έχοντας απηυδήσει ταλανιζόμενοι από τις αντιξοότητες της ζωής, έπαιξαν να ασχολούνται με το βάθος και αφιερώθηκαν στην πράγματι ελκυστική επιφάνεια, το περιτύλιγμα, τη βιτρίνα. Εγκαταλείψουν την ουσία για να σπαταλήσουν τη φαίνοντας ουσία καταναλώνοντας κάτι ανάλαφρο και πεζό. Η ειδοποίηση διαφορά όμως ανάμεσα σε αυτό που πιστεύουν και στην πραγματικότητα, είναι ότι το ανάλαφρο και πεζό, δεν το καταναλώνουν. Αντίθετα, είναι αυτό που τους καταναλώνει. Τους κατατρώγει...

Κάποιος θα μπορούσε να μου αντιτάξει το ότι τα άτομα έχουν νου, δεν καταναλώνουν άκριτα ότι τους τραβήξει την προσοχή. Και βέβαια, ο άνθρωπος είναι έλλογο νου, σκεπτόμενος, όμως αρκετά παρορμητικό και φυσικά όχι χωρίς πάθη. Στην περίπτωσή μας, η έκθεση σε πρόσωπα, απόψεις και πράγματα που δύνανται να διαφθείρουν, εξελίσσεται σε απειλή αφ’ ης στιγμής όλο αυτό εντάσσεται στην καθημερινότητα, ως συνήθεια. Η συνήθεια, γίνεται εθισμός, κι ο εθισμός, αδρανοποιεί κάθε συνειδησιακή διεργασία. Το λάθος μήνυμα περνά υποδόρια, επιτυγχάνοντας τον αρχικό του σκοπό.

Κι αν είναι δύσκολο κανείς να πείσει μία μεσάλικα νοικοκυρά, χαμηλού μορφωτικού επιπέδου, πως θα μπορούσε άνθρωπος κενούς, των οποίων το ΕΓΩ, είναι έτσι διαμορφωμένο, μπορούμε να πούμε εκπαιδευμένο, να αντέχει στους κραδασμούς και να επιβάλλεται, τουλάχιστον είναι επιτακτική ανάγκη να πείσουμε γι αυτό τα παιδιά, τους εύπλαστους αυτούς χαρακτήρες που στην προσπάθεια τους να σημαίνουν κάτι, καταλήγουν να θεοποιούν το τίποτα..

Κι όπως κάποιος είπε κάποτε πολύ σωστά:
"Ανάμεσα σε έναν έξυπνο και έναν ανόητο, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι τον ανόητο. Η άγνοια του, είναι πολύ νοικοκυρά, να φοβάσαι.toum e eν υποδόρια, επιτυγχάνοντaς τoν aρχικό του σκοπό."
Many of the articles in the ‘ME’ theme issue refer to Rene Descartes’ “Cogito Ergo Sum” statement, so we thought it only right to publish the fourth chapter from his Discourse On the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, And Seeking Truth in the Sciences (1637) that the statement first appeared.

Descartes’s original statement was “Je pense donc je suis,” and he uses the Latin “Cogito ergo sum” in the later Principles of Philosophy (1644), Part 1, article 7: “Ac princi hae cognition, ego cogito, ergo sum, est omnium prima & cerissima, quæ nullhabet ordine philosophanti occultatur”, by which time it had become popularly known as ‘the “Cogito Ergo Sum” argument’.

In the fourth chapter, Descartes discusses the reasonings by which he establishes the existence of God and of the Human Soul, which are the foundations of his Metaphysic.

I am in doubt as to the propriety of making my first meditations in the place above mentioned matter of discourse; for these are so metaphysical, and so uncommon, as not, perhaps, to be acceptable to every one. And yet, that it may be determined whether the foundations that I have laid are sufficiently secure, I find myself in a measure constrained to advert to them.

I had long before remarked that, in relation to practice, it is sometimes necessary to adopt, as if above doubt, opinions which we discern to be highly uncertain, as has been already said; but as I then desired to give my attention solely to the search after truth, I thought that a procedure exactly the opposite was called for, and that I ought to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which I could suppose the least ground for doubt, in order to ascertain whether after that there remained aught in my belief that was wholly indubitable. Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was
willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations; and finally, when I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time of my dreams. But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, I think, therefore I am (COGITO ERGO SUM), was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search.

In the next place, I attentively examined what I was and as I observed that I could suppose that I had no body, and that there was no world nor any place in which I might be; but that I could not therefore suppose that I was not; and that, on the contrary, from the very circumstance that I thought to doubt of the truth of other things, it most clearly and certainly followed that I was; while, on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although all the other objects which I had ever imagined had been in reality existent, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that “ I,” that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is.

After this I inquired in general into what is essential to the truth and certainty of a proposition; for since I had discovered one which I knew to be true, I thought that I must likewise be able to discover the ground of this certitude. And as I observed that in the words I think, therefore I am, there is nothing at all which gives me assurance of their truth beyond this, that I see very clearly that in order to think it is necessary to exist, I concluded that I might take, as a general rule, the principle, that all the things which we very clearly and distinctly conceive are true, only observing, however, that there is some difficulty in rightly determining the objects which we distinctly conceive.

In the next place, from reflecting on the circumstance that I doubted, and that consequently my being was not wholly perfect,...
(for I clearly saw that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I was led to inquire whence I had learned to think of something more perfect than myself, and I clearly recognized that I must hold this notion from some nature which in reality was more perfect. As for the thoughts of many other objects external to me, as of the sky, the earth, light, heat, and a thousand more, I was less at a loss to know whence these came; for since I remarked in them nothing which seemed to render them superior to myself, I could believe that, if these were true, they were dependencies on my own nature, in so far as it possessed a certain perfection, and, if they were false, that I held them from nothing, that is to say, that they were in me because of a certain imperfection of my nature. But this could not be the case with the idea of a nature more perfect than myself; for to receive it from nothing was a thing manifestly impossible; and, because it is not less repugnant that the more perfect should be an effect of, and dependence on the less perfect, than that something should proceed from nothing, it was equally impossible that I could hold it from myself: accordingly, it but remained that it had been placed in me by a nature which was in reality more perfect than mine, and which even possessed within itself all the perfections of which I could form any idea; that is to say, in a single word, which was God. And to this I added that, since I knew some perfections which I did not possess, I was not the only being in existence (I will here, with your permission, freely use the terms of the schools); but, on the contrary, that there was of necessity some other more perfect being upon whom I was dependent, and from whom I had received all that I possessed; for if I had existed alone, and independently of every other being, so as to have had from myself all the perfection, however little, which I actually possessed, I should have been able, for the same reason, to have had from myself the whole remainder of perfection, of the want of which I was conscious, and thus could of myself have become infinite, eternal, immutable, omniscient, all-powerful, and, in fine, have possessed all the perfections which I could recognize in God. For in order to know the nature of God (whose existence has been established by the preceding reasonings), as far as my own nature permitted, I had only to consider in reference to all the properties of which I found in my mind some idea, whether their possession was a mark of perfection; and I was assured that no one which indicated any imperfection was in him, and that none of the rest was wanting. Thus I perceived that doubt, inconstancy, sadness, and such like, could not be found in God, since I myself would have been happy to be free from them. Besides, I had ideas of many sensible and corporeal things; for although I might suppose that I was dreaming, and that all which I saw or imagined was false, I could not, nevertheless, deny that the ideas were in reality in my thoughts. But, because I had already very clearly recognized in myself that the intelligent nature is distinct from the corporeal, and as I observed that all composition is an evidence of dependency, and that a state of dependency is manifestly a state of imperfection, I therefore determined that it could not be a perfection in God to be compounded of these two natures and that consequently he was not so compounded; but that if there were any bodies in the world, or even any intelligences, or other natures that were not wholly perfect, their existence depended on his power in such a way that they could not subsist without him for a single moment. I was disposed straightway to search for other truths and when I had represented to myself the object of the geometers, which I conceived to be a continuous body or a space indefinitely extended in length, breadth, and height or depth, divisible into divers parts which admit of different figures and sizes, and of being moved or transposed in all manner of ways (for all this the geometers suppose to be in the object they contemplate), I went over some of their simplest demonstrations. And, in the first place, I observed, that the great certitude which by common consent is accorded to these demonstrations, is founded solely upon this, that they are clearly conceived in accordance with the
Neither our imagination nor our senses can give us assurance of anything unless our understanding intervene.
rather than those other which we experience when awake, since the former are often not less vivid and distinct than the latter? And though men of the highest genius study this question as long as they please, I do not believe that they will be able to give any reason which can be sufficient to remove this doubt, unless they presuppose the existence of God. For, in the first place even the principle which I have already taken as a rule, viz., that all the things which we clearly and distinctly conceive are true, is certain only because God is or exists and because he is a Perfect Being, and because all that we possess is derived from him: whence it follows that our ideas or notions, which to the extent of their clearness and distinctness are real, and proceed from God, must to that extent be true. Accordingly, whereas we not infrequently have ideas or notions in which some falsity is contained, this can only be the case with such as are to some extent confused and obscure, and in this proceed from nothing (participate of negation), that is, exist in us thus confused because we are not wholly perfect. And it is evident that it is not less repugnant that falsity or imperfection, in so far as it is imperfection, should proceed from God, than that truth or perfection should proceed from nothing. But if we did not know that all which we possess of real and true proceeds from a Perfect and Infinite Being, however clear and distinct our ideas might be, we should have no ground on that account for the assurance that they possessed the perfection of being true.

But after the knowledge of God and of the soul has rendered us certain of this rule, we can easily understand that the truth of the thoughts we experience when awake, ought not in the slightest degree to be called in question on account of the illusions of our dreams. For if it happened that an individual, even when asleep, had some very distinct idea, as, for example, if a geometer should discover some new demonstration, the circumstance of his being asleep would not militate against its truth; and as for the most ordinary error of our dreams, which consists in their representing to us various objects in the same way as our external senses, this is not prejudicial, since it leads us very properly to suspect the truth of the ideas of sense; for we are not infrequently deceived in the same manner when awake; as when persons in the jaundice see all objects yellow, or when the stars or bodies at a great distance appear to us much smaller than they are. For, in fine, whether awake or asleep, we ought never to allow ourselves to be persuaded of the truth of anything unless, on the evidence of our reason. And it must be noted that I say of our reason, and not of our imagination or of our senses: thus, for example, although we very clearly see the sun, we ought not therefore to determine that it is only of the size which our sense of sight presents; and we may very distinctly imagine the head of a lion joined to the body of a goat, without being therefore shut up to the conclusion that a chimaera exists; for it is not a dictate of reason that what we thus see or imagine is in reality existent; but it plainly tells us that all our ideas or notions contain in them some truth; for otherwise it could not be that God, who is wholly perfect and veracious, should have placed them in us. And because our reasonings are never so clear or so complete during sleep as when we are awake, although sometimes the acts of our imagination are then as lively and distinct, if not more so than in our waking moments, reason further dictates that, since all our thoughts cannot be true because of our partial imperfection, those possessing truth must infallibly be found in the experience of our waking moments rather than in that of our dreams.
Every day I feel...

... I feel that I am!

I am...

Just me...
...Walking and...

...Waiting...

...Alive...

...One more day!
The unbearable lightness of me

By Thanos Kalamidas

I feel that I have a confession to make, something that undoubtedly will make me look... I guess bad, but the truth, it is said, will set me free. You see, despite the fact that I don't like saying it often and despite the fact that when others say it, I'm so bloody great! I mean, I am!
I know, I know, it offends you to hear it like that but you have to admit that you had the very same thought so many times. When you change a lamp or when you cook this unique omelet, you cannot stop thinking, ‘I’m so fucking great, I’m superb, I’m the best!’ I feel I had to say that just to make you understand that I’m not alone or at least I’m told that I’m not alone! I know, I know, I’m big headed and so damn arrogant but it is so nice to say it out loud!

I’ve been taught for so long to be humble and quiet, now I started I feel I cannot stop and I have to admit I never understood why there is a problem in recognizing that you are totally, absolutely uniquely special, that you acknowledge it and you want to say it loud and that it is worth all the way! A few months ago a friend who was doing a deal for a new job said that he felt weird bragging for himself and that it was really bad. Why? Wasn’t he doing it to get a job with good money that would give him a better life? And wasn’t he worth all these things?

Why then should he feel like bragging, if he wasn’t as good as he said then why he bothered in the first place to apply for the job and why he went to the appointment in the second place, he should have stayed home undercover crying for his humble reality? Did he really believe that being modest and meek he would have any chance to get the job? I’m not so good there are so many others better than me … then piss off man, we want the best not somebody who thinks that there are better; then we want to find these others!

Satisfaction, this is the word. I feel satisfaction every time I’m thinking how great I am and this only one of the rewarding I get of being me! You see so many people undervalue themselves and live in their misery blaming the society and the state. They are afraid to recognize their value because this will bring responsibilities - the responsibility to carry around something so valuable. I … I

just enjoy it! And remember there is no measurement to this value; it is not coming with the paycheck, the car or the size of the television. On the contrary, things like that makes you lose perspective of your value!

I’m great and my value starts exactly there, in knowing and accepting how great I am. Does that make me an ego-maniac? Perhaps but it is all semantics as well - an ego-maniac because I know how great I am? It is not a case of narcissism, but of acknowledging and accepting the value of something that in this case it happens to be me! Why you can say that somebody else is great and you cannot say it for yourself? Don’t I deserve it? Haven’t I proved it! I’m the best and I know it!
OVI MAGAZINE STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD

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Nuclear fusion TEARS the world apart
SAY YES TO PEACE
A dreaming mind is able to escape from the physical body, transforming ideas into images, sensations and emotions. In these unreal images, we can also represent other individuals. In real life, to better understand the others we should try "to see through others' eyes".

My contribution is a mosaic of many dozens of "Me" tiles - a mosaic of all OVI Magazine's contributors. The multiplication of multicultural contributions strengthens and amplifies the OVI (logo), a matrix for the tiles.
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From the opening scene of Julie Andrews, swirling around on top of a grassy Alpine hilltop, belting out “The hills are alive…” to the Salzburg Music Festival audience all singing “Edelweiss”, there is nothing better than to sit back and immerse yourself in The Sound of Music, a cinematic world packed full of singing nuns, clothes tailored from curtains, Nazis, catchy tunes, vomit-inducing children and a long list of favourite things - there’s even an intermission!

At a time when Austria is suffering from further revelations about certain disturbed citizens, I felt it befitting the country to travel back 43 years to Robert Wise’s Best Picture 1966 winner set in the beautiful Salzburg countryside during the period leading up to Anschluss, the 1938 annexation of Austria into Greater Germany by the Nazi regime. You may think that this is a strange background for a love story between Maria, a wannabe nun (Andrews), and Georg Ludwig von Trapp, a retired submarine commander (Christopher Plummer), with seven children, but it was actually based on a true story.

The real Maria von Trapp was not fond of the movie depiction and was once quoted as saying, “It’s a nice story, but it’s not my story!” Pah! What does she know! Okay, quite a bit, but when I chose The Sound of Music as my next Best Picture critic because it had the lyric “Me, a name I call myself” and it fitted our ‘ME’ theme issue I wasn’t really enthusiastic about it. It had been a number of years since I last watched it and I have never been a fan of musicals, so when the three-hour epic began I fidgeted in my seat for bit.

‘What’s a bit?’ I hear you ask, well it was exactly four-minutes; the time it took the camera to fly in over the Alps and zoom in to Julie Andrews perched on that hilltop. It is a great opening scene to a movie made even better by Andrews’ horrific haircut and when the intermission pops up you can’t believe you are halfway through. The characters, the plot, the songs and the look just draw you in until you too are frolicking around Salzburg naming some of your favourite things.

When I read that Christopher Plummer intensely disliked working on the film, referring to it as “The Sound of Mucus”, and likened working with Julie Andrews to “being hit over the head with a big Valentine’s Day card, every day,” I couldn’t help but smile because she really is a spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine to do down… The Sound of Music was made two years after Julie Andrews won the Best Actress award for Mary Poppins and she was afraid that the two roles were far too similar, but it only helped to establish her in the hearts of her fans even more and she even received a second Academy Award nomination.

One of the first films that I saw starring Christopher Plummer was Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country and he was under heavy Klingon make-up in his General Chang role, but he was still one of the jewels of that film. He may have hated making “The Sound of Mucus”, but he certainly did a good job as the widower estranged from his seven children, living in a regimented house bereft of laughter and music. His portrayal of the straight-laced retired captain slowly changing with the arrival of Maria is fun to watch, plus he delivers some of the best lines: “Oh, there’s nothing wrong with the children. Only the governesses.”

In 2007, the American Film Institute ranked this as the #40 Greatest Movie of All Time (#39 Dr. Strangelove & #41 King Kong) and it certainly deserved its five Academy Awards from ten nominations, so why don’t you (re)discover the guilty pleasure of Robert Wise’s The Sound of Music and sing-a-long with Maria, Georg, Leisl, Friedrich, Louisa, Brigitta, Kurt, Marta and Gretl? Come on: Doe, a deer; a female deer; Ray, a drop of golden sun; Me, a name I call myself…
NEXT THEME ISSUE: DRUGS

Send submissions to asa@ovimagazine.com by July 31st
We believe there is nothing more disabling than pity.

Every month over 2,000 people are killed or maimed by mine explosions.