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[Previously on Beyond TPT: A giant dinosaur is pacing the streets of New York or Tokyo depending on who you believe. It treads on buildings and tends to eat people but we do know that it likes fish. We are collecting a great many cans of sardines from Wal Mart in case they turn out to be beneficial. Now read on...]

Beyond The Porcelain Throne

Series 3 /6

No Turn Unstoned

Yo Dude returns with a selection of pharmaceuticals including a bag of mushrooms and dumps them all on the ground.

"Now let's see"...he moves the bags and boxes around a bit and ends up with three different heaps.

"Okay, over here, I have a selection of substances that help me chill out and stop worrying about things. If I take them I relax, if I take enough of them I haven't got a care in the world, and that's because they push me towards the relaxation response; the 'satisfaction' part of pleasure that Mick Jagger couldn't get no.

"Over here on the other side, I've got a bunch of things that make me feel speedy and excited. I feel more interested in things, I don't get so tired, I can concentrate and I feel fit, when I take them. They're triggering the "desire" part of my pleasure response. Mick Jagger didn't appear to have any problem with that part. In fact, most of us don't, but many of us can't get no satisfaction. That's why drugs that chill you out are so popular, including Prozac. We take them because we can't get the relaxation response without them, and we know unconsciously that we need it. The reason is most likely to be the guys at the front end of the ship are having to work while they're sick and are getting stressed out.

"Those of us who prefer the speedy and exciting kind of drugs generally have crew overworked or poorly at the back end. We find it difficult to get interested in anything or anybody, and life somehow lacks excitement, and we put it back with chemicals, knowing that we need excitement to stay mentally healthy. We know the Gnomes are poorly and we self-medicate to make them [and us] feel better.

"In short, intelligent people who take drugs have merely noticed that there's something missing, and they've put it back. And that's because your brain should be on drugs; it is designed to function on drugs that it manufactures all by itself. ...Until the Toilet Lords stop it from happening so that they can sell it back to us –in a bag, at a price.

"What, you don't remember ever feeling that high as a kid? That's not surprising, since most of us don't get the right input to develop these responses even in the womb, and certainly not when we're born. These responses don't need to be 'turned off' by the Toilet Lords –in many people they've already been prevented from ever being turned on.

"-So you may be thinking, how do you know these states even exist; that I didn't just make all

this up? Go and study some recent neuroscience, is all I can say.

"Here's Heroin, for example. Heroin reproduces the brain chemistry you should feel naturally when totally in the relaxation response. It's like being in the womb -Safe, competent, 100% in the right place at the right time doing the right thing for a beneficial outcome. An absolute sense of 'belonging'. Some have called it a 'oneness' with all things. That's how you're supposed to feel, naturally, without having to take any drugs or meditate for 20 years. That feeling is an emotion called Fulfilment and it is your birthright –it's a natural part of being human. You were genetically designed to feel it whenever you're in deep learning and fully coming to understand something. It rocks. We get a poorly simulated substitute in heroin, but many still risk their physical health to keep their mind "feeling more like how its supposed to".

"And here's my grass... I know that different people get different things from grass, but I find it hits both parts of my pleasure system –I get inspired and have loads of creative ideas, then I'm able to relax and chill out, just like I'm supposed to. Inspiration is a natural human emotion too, it's what motivates you.

"Aha, you're thinking, "But what about the third pile of drugs?" –weren't you? Well anyway- these are the things like LSD; shamans' drugs, peyote, the red pill, mushrooms [and for some, MDMA]. These are drugs that help you to follow the rabbit. I'd better explain that, hadn't I?

"Remember there are four parts to learning –You concentrate on the basics, you observe the details, you model or copy an example [of a state of mind and/or the motions of a task] and then you practise and vary things a bit. There's an easy way to remember it –COMP [Concentration, Observation, Modeling and Practice/variation].

"Well your pleasure system feeds you little hits of different drugs as you go through this process, like so: First the Gnomes feed you a bit of noradrenaline [speed] and dopamine –this gets the desire to learn more coming along right with the energy to concentrate. Then the Darragdomians feed you Oxytocin and Acetylcholine, [a lovely mix rather like Ecstasy] that makes you more adept at communication and more able to pay close attention and observe well. Oxytocin also fires up the mirrors to record imagery and make copies. You feel more friendly and more able to communicate & interact. Then you copy the model, and the Darragdomians release Serotonin and more dopamine and build their bridges, [a good joint and a line or two of cocaine] as yet another drug [ACTH] bursts onto the scene. This enables most of the processing work and association to take place [you 'follow the rabbit'] and you suddenly

'understand' [reach your destination], after which you're given a blast of endorphins [opiates] to elicit the relaxation response, where the memories are made long term and all the details tightened up. The opiates turn off the speed and you can fully relax and bliss out. Good trip, huh? Your brain can really do this –and the good news is, it does it without any annoying side-effects like falling over or being unable to speak.

"The drugs we take that alter our state of mind –both recreational and medical- fall into three categories because they reproduce the states of mind and the emotional response from our pleasure system that should take place during the different parts of learning. We take speed because we want to feel more alert and energetic. We take opium to chill out. And we take LSD and stuff like that because we're explorers and we can learn from our own imaginations too. Unconsciously we know all this, and when people first start taking drugs they may even unconsciously 'recognize' the states of mind induced as ones they have experienced before; somehow familiar or "deja-vu". They should be.

"Humans only discovered this in the last few years and months, because that's how fast science is progressing in neuro circles, but it seems like the genome is only a search-engine of possibilities, a bit like Morpheus' clipboard, containing anything we 'might need'. All of our abilities are potentials only -if the triggers don't happen, the genes don't turn on, or they don't turn off when they're supposed to, in some cases. Most of the triggers depend on cues from the environment changing brain chemistry. And the Toilet Lords keep taking those cues away.

"You might be feeling a little bit annoyed about the idea of having had your natural highs quashed by the Toilet Empire, so it's a good time to remind yourself that most of these things happen because of naivety and ignorance; not via any conspiracy or on purpose. [If you're one of those people who thinks that ignorance is deliberate, I can't help you there; I tend to think of it as accidental and unfortunate, but reversible.]

"Because it is reversible. Our wisest use of chemical aids is in learning how to get high without them. They can teach us what the states of mind feel like, but we can teach ourselves to reach those states without needing the chemicals. Of course it takes time, if you've spent many years buying the Toilet Lords' drugs, either from doctors or street corners, your system has gotten used to that and it isn't going to change overnight. But just knowing that it's possible is enough, because if you start practising now you'll need to spend less and less on chemicals as time goes by.

"I used to think the Darragdomians et al put magic mushrooms in their cake at first, because of the little red pill, y'know? But actually they don't. They're not trying to tell you that you should take hallucinogens; they're trying to tell you that you won't have to. Now that we know how people's brains operate during interactions with others, it's easier to understand why satisfying relationships, for example, have far more powerful effects on brain function, particularly the neural centers for pleasure; stronger emotion, bonding, and that all-elusive satisfaction. Developing parts of your brain that perform these functions is not hard. Applying yourself to the methods of doing so is the hard part. Starting, and then having duration.

"There is well-known data showing that once people leave poverty and are able to satisfy their basic needs, there is little to no correlation between earnings and happiness. Why? Because only some things can satisfy humans, and they are Real things. Artificial things, like money or material objects, cannot provide lasting satisfaction to a biological based intelligence. Many may blame their misery on lack of funds, but once given funding they lament other causes of unhappiness; relationship problems, work problems, or of course now, money problems.

"We cannot bond to things that are not Real, but we can get attached to them. Bonding is based on enjoyment of interaction; attachment is based on fear of loss. The novelty aspect of any attachment soon wears off, whether it's attachment to a car or a pet or another human being, and we start to desire "something new". The 'satisfaction time' gotten from any new object unfortunately falls with experience, so new things are required more and more frequently to stave off anxiety. As a result, the rich end up needing more to be 'satisfied' than the poor do with less money and lower expectations. Learning to empathise strongly and to bond well brings a permanent satisfaction; not a temporary one.

"Hey man, you know, I feel like I'm trying to describe in words how to ride a bike! Because when you start doing this shit, it turns out to be a lot easier than it sounds. Remember, when we start to develop our intelligence we are not starting from nowhere; we have known territory to start from. For example, you probably have no difficulty noticing if someone is attracted to you or interested in you. When you look at another person who is attractive to you and they appear to be looking you straight in the eye, your brain gives you a dose of dopamine, the brain chemical that delivers desire-as-pleasure. If the person was not drawn to you, or if their eyes looked elsewhere, no molecules of desire or joy are produced. If you're close enough to a person to form a bond, and you look at photos of those you are close to, your brain lights up neural areas that also activate during another kind of euphoria: narcotic addiction. The intense happiness of genuine love owes much of its ecstasy to the same brain receptors that respond to opiates. But you won't get those chemical hits in attached relationships.

"You'll get lust alright; biological desire is a basic drive, and you'll get the increased self-confidence of any person with a new partner. But your relationship will be increasingly laced with fear of loss like a potent, slow-acting poison. The thoughts this produces will make you start churning out the chemicals that induce paranoia, jealousy and possessiveness, and at the same time you'll become less tolerant of your partner's "little faults". You'll spend a little while trying to reprogram each other's subroutines, then row increasingly until one or both of you gets fed up with it and goes looking for a new partner. And round and round you'll go, until you can climb out of that Toilet, both playing Margarets or Floyds, neither interacting. Childish, instead of childlike.

"...You thought having sex was interacting? Oh, no man, Freud was wrong –everything isn't about sex! It's just that sexuality is about everything. Attraction and repulsion are a polarity of the universe, sexuality and intelligence are based on the same forces as those that hold the atom together or bust it apart. Feeling good is just biology's way of providing an incentive; motivation, for survival. A lot of people encounter their first experience of the relaxation response when they first start having orgasms. They've never managed to feel so relaxed as they do after one. On the other hand, meditators are often rather shocked at the sensual experience of relaxation. Meditation does make you horny [why do you think Buddhist monks grin all the time?]

"Modern Western tradition sort of embarrassedly frowns on involving sex with spirituality, and that habit of thought holds back a lot of those who were brought up and taught about 'sin'. If you're unlucky, this is another train of thought you may have to rewrite...in Reality the only 'sin' is anything that leads all things good towards extinction rather than entelechy. Obviously that means, just like "beneficial" and "not-beneficial", that 'good' and 'evil' in personal morality depend crucially on the variables of life's ever-changing circumstances.

"Another emotion that can be both sexual and spiritual and quite thrilling, is rectitude. This is part of the pleasant buzz we get from oxytocin; the chemical that floods a mother's brain after childbirth -[as long as the baby is, well, there. As opposed to in a crib five wards away]- and while she nurses the baby. It surges in both men and women after orgasm. It imparts both a desire and an ability to bond, to communicate, to interact. It heightens empathy and can get quite trippily telepathic. Massage and cuddling releases oxytocin, as does people having a good time together in any way.

"Humans prefer to be with others with whom they have already experienced the brain's natural doses of oxytocin and opioids. This neurotransmitter-induced serenity should be part of what forms our friendships and family ties. Repeated good times with loved ones strengthens the

bond, until simply thinking about them triggers the same brain chemistry we would feel in their presence. That's a good reason to have pictures of people and of things that you like.

"Now this is important. You can fully develop all your superpowers in time only if you start soon, because the sequence of brain development in humans is designed to be going full blast from before birth until we're around 25, but there's a fair bit of catching up to do for many, and human lifespan still isn't all that fantastic, so it's possible to run out of time. You're still going to improve your intelligence if you look after it, whatever age you are, so it's worthwhile, but to make the most of your potential genius you have to have enough time to develop it.

"That means if you're under 25 and you know all this stuff, you are one lucky sonofabitch. But whatever age you are, if you've kept your mind healthy it can only improve with having adventures.

"But I have to give you a warning here. When you see how everyday behavior shapes future mental health, it may occur to you that some people are not going to make it; they are going to lose the fight to depression or oppression or apathy or senility or anxiety and fall as casualties of the Toilet Empire. And the trouble is, some of those people might be people you happen to like. You might even decide to go halfway across the bridge and share these ideas with them in an effort to help. But here is my warning: -"Never put a foot more than halfway across that bridge if you don't want to be beaten about the head with a blunt instrument."

"That means, if someone isn't interested and they don't have any questions, or they don't have any desire to change, leave them alone. Intelligence has a Prime Directive. It is an absolute respect for autonomy; for freedom. As strongly as it demands that free information should be available to all, it demands freedom from coercion into viewing any of it. Those who have the potential to become Captains will already be trying to learn; to explore. They'll be building their own halves of the bridge. To venture further than your own half is preaching; it is pushy and coercive and quite simply very rude. It shows a lack of respect for free choice and implies that the preacher thinks s/he knows better than the mind's owner what its choices should be, which is incredibly arrogant. It's an offensive Margaret action, and quite understandably it can trigger an opposite reaction, like a fist in the face, or the 'listener' running away. Nothing subconsciously vexes people so much or makes them more nervous than having their ability to choose for themselves questioned. It's an affront to personal freedom on a very basic level.

"Y'see, because intent must come before the ability to do, preaching to the uninterested will

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never work, as many parents know" –he smiles- "and teachers should know. Someone has to have the intent to improve themselves and be actively seeking ways to do that –they've come halfway- in order for them to be able to change or even to understand you.

"...Now you're starting to get the hand of what it takes to be a super-diplomat, aren't you?
–What's it take? –Reeeee Spect!! Okay man,

Now excuse me,

While I make some tea,

Cos that is the end of series 3"

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