

- One-tenth of our nation's population eats at McDonalds everyday.
- One-third of all Americans are overweight to the point of clinical obesity.
- I'm two-fifths disgusted.
- I'm one-fifth appalled, and frustrated by the manner in which commercially-driven society has obliterated whatever ties we had to normal, physical, and natural abilities to function.
- Two-fifths of me would kill for a Big Mac right now...

A year ago, I won't lie, I would have still gone for the Big Mac. But I would have also debated in my mind, the hypocritical philosopher I was, over whether or not I was the sort of person who would have my cravings preprogrammed by "the man." I would have joked about McDonalds being an evil corporation, would have gone home and laughed at C-Span, or something along those lines, wondering why I was among the few who actually realized the futility of [fill in anything here].

After all, I was a junior at a kick ass liberal college in Massachusetts. Despite never having experienced any semblance of reality which wasn't financially supported by parents or a work study job, I thought I knew the world pretty well. After all, I knew who Trotsky was; I took a few philosophy classes. The world wasn't going to fool me—I was your basic apathetic student; changing the world in my mind on a daily basis, living off my parents, and feeling pretty smug about it all.

And I was so full of shit. I know I'm going to catch hell for this, but, crap, a little controversy goes a long way. Every now and again, while waltzing into the U.C. for one of several daily mail checks (you know you do it, too, so put a sock in it), and I am encouraged to shell out a considerable amount of money for a socialist newspaper.

I try and convince myself that I, too, was once overburdened with ideology, had read a manifesto hear and there, and was a little too keen to jump on the bandwagon. I look at them, smile, and I walk past. Perhaps these students have spent many years in a commune, or a kibbus, and are so well acquainted with the benefits of socialism that they just can bear to imagine what keeps us consumer ridden lunatics alive. It would, I can only imagine, take much careful research and consideration for one to denounce the system which granted them the very opportunity to denounce it. Somehow, though, I have come to assume their activism to be based much more on speculation. And, considering the state of the world, some speculation is necessary.

I wonder the similar things; they are worth the effort of consideration, especially when the most popular option is to blindly follow. But, my God, I am not going to spend my life living on a street corner, sincerely believing my life is better, because I'm resisting the system. Is that winning? Are you joining the ranks of the super geniuses by refusing to play into the system? Who has won, the system, or you?

I used to think it would be me, but I've had a change of heart. Finally, a few months from graduation, I think I've figured it out. I finally am able to reflect on all my ideological foolishness, looking forward into the inhospitable land of the real world (not Mtv), where real people actually vote for republicans, where living off your parents is a sin, where green hair is unacceptable, and where self expression means absolutely nothing, because nobody gives a shit about why you want to be different or unique. I'm going to live in this world in three

months, and I've finally stumbled upon some decent advice.

Again, I may take some shit for this, but if I cared I wouldn't be typing, I suppose. *Clark is not the real world!* Reality isn't so wealthy, it isn't age 18 to 22, it doesn't get up at noon everyday, it doesn't debate social crises from the confines of the international cafe, or whatever its current name is. We inhabit a fantasy land of (categorizing people is all we do here!) jocks and hippies and New Yorkers and assholes like me who think they're good enough to make fun of everybody else.

Yes, we undergo certain trials, and some of us donate our time at community centers, or have a little brother, and make a difference in our various way. Some of use simply sit around planning to make a difference, but not until the steady diet of the college lifestyle has worn itself thin. If you think for a second that Clark is in some manner a microcosm for the world around us, and if you think that based on heresy from a friend, a professor who's never lived anywhere *other* than a college campus, or a socialist newspaper, you can judge the world, then you are drastically full of shit, and in for a big shock.

Personally, I am trying to lessen the shock by admitting I know nothing about the real world. Nothing. I am in no way prepared, and I do not feign to know what to expect. But I think I can comprehend the system, and the only personal victory I could win on such a front has involved cutting my hair, retaining my normal wardrobe, and basically flushing all my ideology down the can in favor of a new resolution. I will get job, whether it sucks or not, and I'll work my ass off to be successful. And yes, I will manage to find fulfillment in that, because like it or not, my socialist friends, somebody somewhere a long time ago tasted the forbidden fruit of capitalism, and despite the lack of nourishment, they liked it immensely.

I have stopped fooling myself into believing that it will ever change. We will never turn back. I am a cog in the machinery, and I cannot deny it. But, don't dare insult me by even thinking to yourself that I'm the sellout, or that I'm the one who doesn't have the guts to face reality. I'm facing it right now, and yes, I'll kiss ass, I'll brown nose straight into the work place. I strap on the tie and all that shit, I'll take up

racquetball with the boss. I'll learn the rules, and I'll play by them to get ahead. I'll use the system to benefit me, and those I care about. That's the world I live in, and that's the world which envelops our little haven. I can't change it, yet I'm no defeatist. I'm not the sellout. I'm realistic.

You want to tell me otherwise? When I was ten I played with transformers. When I was fifteen I was trying desperately to get a date, and dreamed of becoming a baseball star. When I was twelve, I thought I was going to be the next Luke Skywalker. When I was seventeen, I couldn't bear the embarrassment of my parents. All along they told me I was going through various phases, and I scoffed. What do they know? They're old!

Well, every year that passes lends me new knowledge, and it scares me that I continuously stumble upon the fact that my parents were in fact right about everything. Sometimes I talk to younger relatives, convincing them that they know nothing, as my parents tried to do, and that their strong beliefs are only phases of development. Of course, they think that I, the old guy, am up to my ears in bullshit. I understand: despite not having any legitimate foundation for their immature beliefs, they cannot bear the insult of not being taken seriously, when they take themselves so seriously it scares them. Phases are necessary, they help one actively understand their environment, and so I try not to attack them.

The developmental strata at Clark is quite similar. Thus, I urge, go ahead and say I'm full of shit, if it makes you happy. Take it all personally, and then get insulted. You're not hurting me. I understand that overkill on certain social beliefs probably constitutes some normal, healthy pattern of development. I certainly wouldn't condemn puberty, likewise I'll do little more than belittle these late stages. Nevertheless, take this advice: there's a big, fucked up world out there. I don't know what it's all about, but I do know it will suck you dry and kick your ass if you're not prepared.

So, try to keep in mind that Clark is fun, and it is educational, sort of like sesame street. But also remember it's little more than that, save expensive, and that reality is made up of all those people you look down on, and that those are the people that actually make the world work, and allow it to function. Remember that, because you'll either be that person, or you will fail miserably. I only wished I realized this earlier in my life.

Again, if thinking I'm full of shit makes you more comfortable, then sell your papers, and do what you like. It's no skin off my ass. I do believe, though, that if there's any possibility for national salvation, or whatnot, it will spring from the minds of people like Clark students, and not from the automations cranked out by some of the less liberal institutions around the country. We are encouraged to be thoughtful, but I see a dangerous trap in too little thinking, and too much activism. You can get away with it here, but only for a short while. After all...

Two thirds of all Americans get all their voting information from television. A majority of Republican voters in New Hampshire would vote for Pat Buchanan. Sure, we'd vote differently; we think we'd make a better choice. But based on what? Have we put any more thought into it than they have?

[About the Author: We're guessing that he's probably a senior.]

Trotsky to Buchanan, Big Macs to Bismark



What the Fuck is So Wrong With Us That We Can't See the Truth Behind the Thin Veneer of Shinola?

a Parting Shot by Jon Kamp