

# Arts Council

## Work displacement a theory

by W.E. (Bill) Hanna

That the human mind is still, despite all of the research and probing into its operation, "a far country" is a modern truism. Although I have no pretensions to Freudian insight, nor any experience or training in the field beyond that which most people hack out for themselves in the course of daily living, I believe I have inadvertently stumbled upon a phenomenon, function of the psyche or mental anomaly, call it what you will, that deserves further study, may indeed revolutionize the way we go about our work. It is a sort of displacement effect (if I may use a Freudian term) which I like to call the next-but-one syndrome.

This function, or malfunction if such it turns out to be, of the human subconscious (I am convinced that no rational creature could consciously invent such a devious subterfuge) was discovered in the following way. I should explain that at the time, I had undertaken the job of writing a newsletter for a local organization, a voluntary task that for the most part I

enjoyed, but that always seemed to be needed at an inconvenient time and was often a bit of a chore. I had one of these to do on the morning in question and I was somewhat reluctant to get at it. In fact, I lingered over breakfast, had a second cup of coffee, did the crossword and generally diddled around for the best part of an hour and was casting about for some other means of delaying the dread event, when suddenly I was struck with an overwhelming urge to finish doing over my basement, a job which I had neglected for the previous three months. In a moment, I was filled with more energy and creative drive than I had known for many weeks. I could not wait to take hammer in hand and get to work. I installed studding; I stapled vapour barrier; I measured and nailed panelling, with a brief break for lunch, until I collapsed exhausted late in the day, having completed a whole wall of the project.

The following morning, since the lawn was getting a trifle long in the blade, my wife suggested that it

might be a good idea to get it cut before the heat of the day. Instantly my mind became filled with brilliant ideas for my newsletter - interesting little snippets of information, funny remarks, clever quips which amuse without hurting anyone, wise advice to be given with suitably modest disclaimers - and I immediately got out paper and began writing. In jig time I completed the job, typed out the master, ran off the required number of copies and folded and addressed them ready for mailing. I need hardly report that the grass got cut two days later when the toaster needed fixing and the toaster... well, you get the idea.

Now usually this sort of thing goes by unnoticed in the course of our hurried lives, but, for some reason, this one stuck in my mind and I could not let go of it. Finally, a principle of sorts began to emerge, a principle of deferment, in which the mind rejects the immediately apparent in favour of a more remote but also more attractive alternative. The brain, I reasoned, unable to cope with the urgency of the first job at hand, seeks to

defer consideration of it - or possibly refer it to the deep subconscious - and, to justify the delay, suggests, or rather, enthusiastically promotes ideas for an alternative in the interim. If this is true, and I realize it needs more research and verification, it has tremendous implications, not just for the organization of jobs around the home, but for the whole working world.

Office managers, for instance, could demand that certain urgent jobs be done immediately, while slyly leaving on the secretary's desk work that is really needed; shop foremen could insist on deadlines for some work, while cleverly insinuating tempting alternatives into the workplace, and so

on. Judging by my own experience, admittedly limited, I would estimate that, by such means as these, more subtly designed, of course, efficiency in the work world could be increased at least 100% with a corresponding improvement in the morale of the workforce. Given further research with proper scientific controls in place - double-blind experiments and the like - I believe that this theory could make an incalculable contribution to human progress. It is a project that I think should be undertaken as early as possible. Need I add that I should be more than willing to co-operate in any such endeavour. In fact, I'll get to work on it right away...as soon as I've washed the car.

tanka  
by chris wind

more terrifying  
than Hiroshima victims  
whose eyes are burned out  
is the awful knowledge that  
it will not move me to act.

Miami Vice and Donald Duck  
by chris wind

you say its a sign of health  
(Maslow, hierarchy of needs)  
that a society like ours  
is concerned about violence on t.v.  
there are real people being tortured  
in a thousand interrogation centres

so i say its a sign of sickness

by chris wind  
when her mother explained  
what a hope chest was  
she didn't know  
whether to laugh or cry.

canary in a cave  
by chris wind

i see shadows on the wall  
of things happening beyond me.

petrified into paralysis  
by too much and too little,  
i sit in the dark  
and chirp.

Thank you for the Flowers

Oh, save the lovely daffodils  
To put upon my grave,  
For when April comes to passing  
There'll be one more soul to save.

My sweetheart Mary left me,  
Now six months gone by,  
She took with her my heart, my hopes,  
And left me here to die.


And everyday I visit her  
A home of grey and stone,  
I cry these tears of sadness  
And of being so alone.

The monument my Mary has  
Inscribed beloved wife,  
Is but a trifle token  
For one who held my life.

The time it passes quickly now,  
I feel the end is near,  
Pity not this man so old and bent  
For death is nought to fear.

Soon I will join my true love,  
Her smile again I'll see,  
Then you can take your lovely daffodils  
And lay them over me.

Sharon Parent



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