

Hystery of Heat



RIC ROYER



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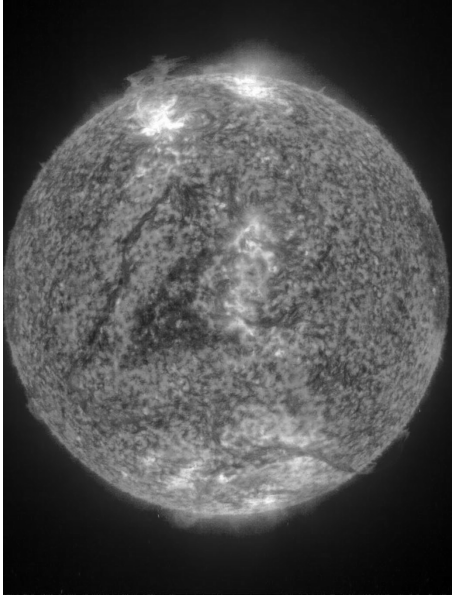
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Hysteria of Heat was first performed at Manhattan's Ontological Hysteric Theatre in August, 2006. It featured Ric Royer, Bonnie Jones, Jackie Milad, and G Lucas Crane, with special appearances by Lauren Bender, Dan Breen and occasional others. Dramaturgical assistance by Christopher Fritton.

The text in this book was written by Ric Royer. The images were chosen by Bonnie Jones. "Joke" courtesy of Emo Philips.

It's the year 2095. Most of the love songs have been replaced by visceral screams accompanied by a long howl of wind. The only fashionable look is the look of Great Fear. That boy who injured himself trying to recover a red ball from a storm drain has grown up fast and healthy. He never thought about his contribution to the whole world before, and suddenly it seems that just thinking about it is contribution enough. There are many pretty girls, but there are also many good movies, so there's no reason to leave the house: The rock concerts will go on without him, the universe will go on too. When he threw the ball up in the air, it reached its peak and seemed to hang on for a moment. In that moment the boy hoped that the ball would stay there suspended forever, but just as the thought entered his head, it came back down with ever increasing speed.

Sure, we heat up. We heat up because that's what happens when things are rubbed together. We heat up, because that's what happens when we're stressed out.

We all know how important it is to remain "cool" at all times, but as our research shows, it will be awfully difficult to stay cool when we are all really, really hot. And it's no good that we are all "in it together" either, because when we're all in it together, as in an enclosed room, it just gets unbearably hot. And bigger, and closer, and closer and closer . . . And mass hysteria is the last escape.

Hystery of Heat

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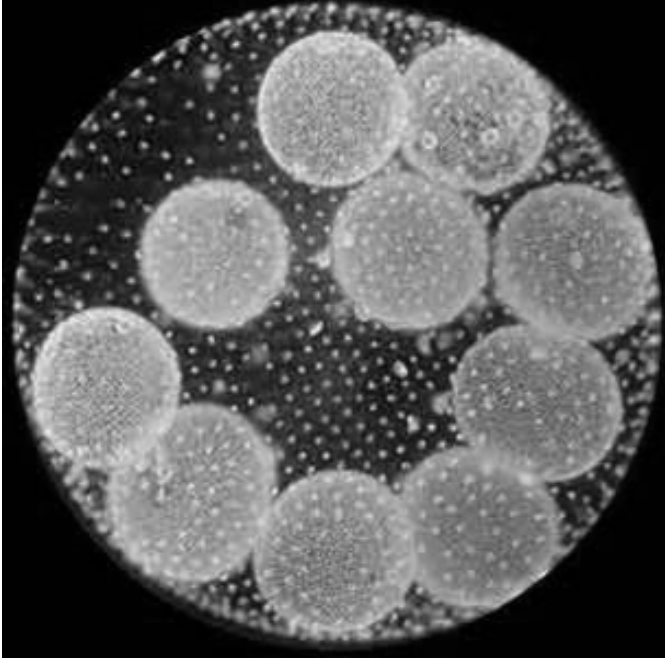
FACTS

- In November 2007, the global population exceeded 7 billion people.
- The past nine years have all been among the 25 warmest years on record.
- There are 784 ways to die but somehow only 781 ways to stay alive.
- The human heart is 96% chemically identical to an onion.
- There is a great abyss that lies beyond every statistic.

**Heat Theory #3 :
The temperature is
increasing because
things are heating
up.**

So here we are again. This time it's even warmer, this time it's a few minutes later, this time moving slowly but always further away.

So
what
have we left
to share
but distance?
Distance
in time,
in space,
in temperature . . .



3.5 billion years ago, it was different. The single-celled organism, our common ancestor, took from the environment and excreted into the environment. Each organism did this and only this until it died. And the abyss, with time passing, pressed on, and when pressed, made pressure. So it began, mostly a mystery. How it breathed, how it stared out into a universe mostly empty and full of things, a universe that began before us and will end after us, is unknown. All that is certain is that events took place, events even where no matter exists, and between events that took place life continued to grow. First from a simple breathing bacteria draining and dissipating energy, then to a strangely shaped soft creature, then to the luxury of nostalgia and loss and the development of the human hand. The one with the pinky finger, the smallest digit on 99% of hands. To some degree, the human pinky has evolved into a hand of its own. Giving and receiving. In this way, it is a tiger and an island. Or at least it used to be. Now it moves, as in travels, from the hand to the wall to the question:

When did heat begin?



Could you tell which one was the joke and which the hurricane? The joke was the one labeled "A Joke", and it was also the one that was very funny. It came slowly and repetitively, threatening to steal time, only to arrive with a surprise at the end. As long as it was amusing, the time spent was not wasted, but worth it. On the other hand, the hurricane was not funny at all. It came in a heartbeat, pulsing its way to the throat to choke out its breath. It threatened to take away time, and it did. It took and gave nothing. Took, took, took.

If you could not recognize the difference between the joke and the hurricane, you are crazy. If you think that disaster is waiting always, is always waiting, will find you faster than any fortunate moment, you are right.

Just look at you. You love being looked at, it makes you sick.

Are you feeling the devil inside you, making you do all sorts of diabolical acts? YES.

Are you feeling ill and delirious? YES.

Are you feeling anything, anything at all? NO. Bang. A bigger BANG. A succession of bang bang bang. You have been looked at from way above and way in front and way behind, you are here. You are here because the earth was seeded so long ago extraterrestrially. They put us here, they abduct us to examine our development. We will do the same when our planet is no longer habitable. It is not us, but them again. It is not, for better or worse, just as bad as it was before, but worse. It is not the sun, the erratic sun, the steady clouds, the thinning of layers, the Satan and the children, the looking and the beating, the bleeding and the wasting, the wasting and the children, the men and the young, the old and the women, the hoping and the lasting, the lasting and the dying, the dying and the dying, and the luxury of nostalgia.

Every day we wake up and ponder that question: "What should I wear?" Weighing into the decision goes the consideration of what we will do with our day; going to work means a certain outfit, going shopping another, and exercising yet another.

But what is the right outfit to wear when you are planning on reaching the outmost realms of passion and ecstasy? What is the right outfit to wear when it is 112 degrees Fahrenheit and you are planning on reaching the outmost realms of passion and ecstasy? Life was easier when we were simpler organisms. Warm springs and solar energy. That is the beginning, right here: Memphis.

It begins at Sun Records studios, 1953, where a young Elvis Presley pays four American dollars to have his voice recorded singing some of his favorite numbers. As legend has it, Elvis just wanted to record something for his Momma's birthday. But when he sang, he made them all want it. And the kids went wild. His gyrating motions, his exaggerated boyish charms, and his violent Dionysian sexuality put parents and preachers alike into an uproar. There were reports of people throwing their bodies against other bodies, strange and occasionally malignant. Teenagers. Moms. Moments like this in history are only described in the language used to speak of war.

**Heat Theory #1 :
It is getting hotter
because there are
more people rubbing
other people.**

Game: Can you tell the difference between a joke and a hurricane?

A joke:

Once I saw this guy on a bridge about to jump. I said, "Don't do it!" He said, "Nobody loves me." I said, "God loves you. Do you believe in God?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Are you a Christian or a Jew?" He said, "A Christian." I said, "Me, too! Protestant or Catholic?" He said, "Protestant." I said, "Me, too! What franchise?" He said, "Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Baptist or Southern Baptist?" He said, "Northern Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Conservative Baptist or Northern Liberal Baptist?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region, or Northern Conservative Baptist Eastern Region?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region." I said, "Me, too!" Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1879, or Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912." I said, "Die, heretic!" And I pushed him over.

A hurricane:

It's 1900, a killer weather system is detected over the tropical Atlantic on August 27. While the intensity is not fully known, the system reaches Cuba as a tropical storm on September 3 and moves into the southeastern Gulf of Mexico on the 5th. A general west-northwestward motion occurs over the Gulf accompanied by rapid intensification. By the time the storm reaches the Texas coast south of Galveston late on September 8, it was a Category 4 hurricane. After landfall, the cyclone turned northward through the Great Plains. It became extratropical and turned east-northeastward on September 11, passing across the Great Lakes, New England, and southeastern Canada. It was last spotted over the north Atlantic on September 15. This hurricane was the deadliest weather disaster in United States history. Storm tides of 8 to 15 ft inundated the whole of Galveston Island, as well as other portions of the nearby Texas coast. These tides were largely responsible for the 8,000 deaths (estimates range from 6,000 to 12,000) attributed to the storm. The damage to property was estimated at \$30 million.

Heat Theory #2 : It is getting hotter because of increased human anxiety.

In the middle of an Elvis concert a guy entered the bathroom. He is an average witness, no more, no less. During the concert many exciting events occurred, like dancing and young women passing out, but these events happened to other people, not him. He is just a guy, and he needs to pee. He might not be considered an important person, but the moment he enters the well-lit, nearly empty bathroom, he is special. He is in fact the most important person at that moment because he is aware of a problem. A problem with his body. As he stands at the urinal, he rests his head back, he feels a sharp pain. There is nothing elegant about pain, it jerks the nerves around. He rests his head back again, he feels a sharp pain. Again, the body trembles. He's never felt this pain before and it shoots all the down through his entire universe. It concerns him so much that he loses focus on his urination stream, causing a dark trail to spill down the front of his khakis. This is when he uttered "*Jesus Christ!*" This is when he thought about absolute suffering, suffering from endless symptoms for which there is no disease. He is blind and deaf, he has seizures and bouts of paralysis, he vomits, pisses his pants, and now he is even pregnant.

"It's 1953", he says to himself. "Where has all the time gone?"

And the answer to that question, whether he knew it or not, was nowhere.

It was 1953, that's all. A gateway year into a formidable warming cycle on earth, but this time assisted by the human hand. It was one degree hotter than normal that year, but why would he notice? It's just one degree, just a pinky finger.

Thirty-six years later it is 1999. The CO² levels are on the rise, trapping in heat with expert efficiency. The ice caps are melting faster than ever anticipated, millions of species at the brink of extinction, hundreds of thousands of people dying every year from warming. Not only has the heat been on the rise, but so have the number of heat related mental breakdowns. Initially this phenomenon was being called Heat Hysteria, but more recently the medical community has coined the term Psychoheliosis to apply to the devastating mental effects of heat and the fear of it being permanent, incapable. This is just another case of too many things in one place at one time, too many noises circulating amidst the collective unconscious. People on people, hot garbage, and Death Death Death. It is all death, from the opening mouth to the eyes closing. Death has a voice, it's very quiet, death has a gender - it is little.



What is the temperature right now? What time is it? Do you see a distance? Distance is best measured from far away, like this voice.
D i s t a n c e .

A voice spoken low. One may say it's the distance. It's unfamiliar and therefore strange and therefore — scary. It's unfamiliar and therefore strange and therefore — it makes us laugh. Laughing hurts. It too takes too much. It's deadly. And the drums roll. Blast beats, 180 beats per minute. Death metal. A double-bass drum operated with as many feet as possible turning out a rapid-fire succession of percussive noise. The faster the better, the denser the sexier, the sexier the hotter. The hotter the better. The young lovers of rock, the same as the young lovers on the living room couch understanding nothing about the violence that thrusts them upon each other, sweating, bleating, keeping in some gasses, letting others out. They are acoustophiliacs, sexually attracted to noises, usually loud ones. Bangs, the harmony of sustained voices.

From rock and roll we get the heat in and out at an accelerated rate. In and out at an accelerated rate. Gyrate, pump it, pass out.

We are moving forward, like animals. But without as much hair. It's so big, the universe. But 98% empty.

What is the temperature right now? And what time is it now? There is a distance. The density. Like the distance between me and you. Hello?