



## The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), the British author, who penned *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, et al, was said to be in the habit of lacing his tobacco with tincture of laburnum, as was Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), the great Irish author, poet and playwright. In Nineteenth Century England, it was the in thing to indulge in the imbibing of narcotics and opiates. The English, as history has recorded, introduced opium to China at about the same time that Oscar Wilde and hundreds of other Irishmen and Englishmen were stoned cold on tincture of laburnum, etc. In today's world, however, it is the Americans who are the promoters and proliferators of other kinds of opiates, which I call, 'mental hypnotics'. These mental hypnotics take the shape of the movies of such imaginary figures of Spiderman, Superman, Superwoman, etc, and other cartoon characters on television. And, of course, we should not forget the English series of *The Adventures of Harry Potter*. In China, we have, always, had movies about flying monkeys and the feats of our daring (and darling) fighting heroes who could walk on clouds, scale the highest walls, and never tire in a battle with enemies, no matter how long the battle rages. I can recall, not so very long ago, that one of my Filipina maids asked me in which zoo she might view a Mickey Mouse. Such is the world in which we live, today. It is pure escapism. Pity this generation, which has, to a great extent, lost the power of imagination and has to rely on cartoon characters, the adventures of mythical beings, etc, in order to understand the foibles of this world and that the righteous are the mightiest! It is apparent that George Orwell and his art would be lost on this generation because this generation has lost the ability to exercise that part of the brain, called the frontal lobe. Instead of imagination, people, today, require fabricated representations, or computer-generated imagery, in order to depict this and that so that people may understand some of the simplest of ideas. The printed word is fast becoming an outdated mode of communication, except for sentence structure, comprising not more than twelve lines per paragraph, utilising words of not more than five letters, in the main. A natural extension of the hypnotic syndrome is that no (or few) original thinkers will be produced, during our time. When viewing television for hours on end replaces the reading of great works of literature, philosophy, science, etc, and extrapolations and interpolations from the ideas, contained in such books, then, a society could be said to be in real trouble. In days of yore, the theatre and opera were the 'television sets' of the world; great literary works were produced from the prodigious minds of such people as Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), just to name three great writers of old. And, people of days, long gone, indulged in creating musical works of art, which tended to produce mental orgasms. Who is not moved by the musical works of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), Alexandre César Léopold Bizet (also known as Georges Bizet) (1837-1875) and, of course, Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Writers must write, composers must compose, poets must create poems by employing metre, similes and metaphors that stir the imagination of the reader. And thinkers must think. Sitting in front of a television set for long periods of time must, invariably, inhibit thinking, at least to some extent, since the thinking is done by somebody else whose main purpose is to entertain, or indulge the viewer in vicarious excitement, not necessarily to instruct or to raise the spirit of man to a higher plateau, or to create within the viewer that sensation that causes spirits to rise and man's ambitions to be elevated above his present stature. Comic books are fine for children, but for adults ...? If great works of

*architecture are indicative of the beginning of the decline of a society, then, that which is happening in our world, today, with cartoons, flooding programming on television, more and more, replacing the legitimate stage where plays of greatness were once staged, where mythical and imaginary figures are said to be able to fly through the air, and with couch potatoes, adding to the obesity of modern man, then, this situation must be indicative of the decline of great thinking. Mark my words, in the boondocks of China, Australia, and the African Continent will come the next generation of great thinkers, the next generation of poets, of musicians of merit because they will not have been corrupted by all the inhibitors of thought as have we, the (unfortunate) sophisticated modern people.*

*I must consider what to do about this terrible situation: Should I propose a ban on television in Hongkong? Would such a proscription cause more walkabouts by the plebeians?*

*Talk to you, next week. Love you.*

*Chief Lady*

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