

Occasionally, there are times when one just runs out of things to say. That's not necessarily a bad thing. After all, Confucius, or was it Mark Twain, said, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."



Alas, even though it is better, here I go removing all doubt again. What the hell; that's what they pay me to do.

The cynic in me says there's probably not an original thought left on this planet. I can't say that's true for sure, since I've only been around 43 of the several billion years spaceship earth's been at cruising altitude. Also, they say – whoever "they" is – that if you scratch a cynic long enough you'll find a burned out idealist.

But some things make me wonder. I mean, how else do I explain to my grandchildren that the technological savvy of putting a man on the moon has resulted in such modern conveniences as self-heating coffee cups, the ability to steal intellectual property instantly, and the capacity to send all the jokes ever told – all of which I heard by the time I was in the fourth grade – around the entire planet in seconds?

It is in this weird spirit of completely non-intellectual, quasi-hopeful nihilism that I cobble together this offering, largely consisting of quotations from folks much pithier than me. You know, sort of a re-invention of the average blog entry, as it were.

For starters, let's talk politics. One of my favorite analysts, eminently quotable, always irascible, and someone I agreed with more often than not, was the late great George Carlin. Like him or hate him, the man certainly had a clear eye and a stiletto voice. Take this gem; it's applicable in so many ways at so many levels:

"Now, there's one thing you might have noticed I don't complain about: Politicians. Everybody complains about politicians. Everybody says they suck. Well, where do people think these politicians come from? They don't fall out of the sky. They don't pass through a membrane from another reality. They come from American parents and American families, American homes, American schools, American churches, American businesses and American universities, and they are elected by American citizens. This is the best we can do folks. This is what we have to offer. It's what our system produces: Garbage in, garbage out. If you have selfish, ignorant citizens, you're going to get selfish, ignorant leaders. Term limits ain't going to do any good; you're just going to end up with a brand new bunch of selfish, ignorant Americans. So, maybe, maybe, maybe, it's not the politicians who suck. Maybe something else sucks around here – like, the public..."

Sadly, I do not possess the courage to actually say things like that. I can't even bring myself to note, as Pete Hamm did before he stuck his head in an oven, "There is no real solution, just power changing hands." No; I'm more of a sellout, like that queen of courtesans, Sir Mick Jagger, who, even as he counted his billions – as I and every other selfish putz in the world aspire to do one day – could only shrug and say, "What can a poor boy do, except play in a rock and roll band?"

Granted, where Mick is a million dollar courtesan, unashamedly so, I am but a five-and-dime 'ho aspiring to a slightly better spot on the boulevard, as it were. Still, it should be Carlin's take, not Jagger's, that should be seriously taken to heart by all who care about the future.

Is it that my generation and the increasingly sorrier ones after it are wallowing too much in the banalities of the lotus dream? The party that never ends? All the cake and ice cream we can shovel in our greedy maws? Has self-perpetuated drama replaced the mundane life's plan? Are

we so starved for entertainment that we will – to bastardize some great quote from elsewhere – fiddle as Rome burns?

Wow. Pass the Prozac, please. No, scratch that.

Strangely enough, the idealist still lives.