



## EXPERIMENTAL CITIES

BY

TOM BALL

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes...When I review Tom Ball, I always go back to my roots. I remind you, dear reader, that while I wax poetically, and tell you he's my boss, there's a reason the mother cuts the paychecks (figuratively).*

*He can write.*

*His vision is one that we all aim to be able to see.*

*A modern-day Tiresias.*

*A doom-sayer of hope.*

*"Experimental Cities, A.D 2185," is a catalogue for the future. A story which extrapolates our human insecurities and turns them into science fiction and satire.*

*I think that one of the main themes throughout issue fifteen is the hypocrisy that every writer has experienced in contemporary society. A sense of helplessness and anger at having to watch exploitation and violence under the guise of progression or righteousness. Tom's use of style and genre is the perfect vehicle, the tape around a solid fist, to drive the absurd into a modern-day metaphor.*

*I'm reminded of a line while reading, "another experimental city was a "city of bull shit fighters." They fought for the truth which was in short supply these days. Some people even said the truth is all subjective and there is no truth. But the people here said they believed in the facts, things that had been done by humans."*

*Apropos.*

*The fight for truth is still the good fight. The fight for a utopia in the dystopia is still a good fight.*

*The words are about the fight.*

*Read on.*

*Stay strange.*

*Five Stars.*

Experimental Cities, A.D. 2185

By: Tom Ball

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There were a lot of other experimental cities, like, for example, "Sport's city which was a city where everyone played video game sports. Almost everyone was very good at at least one game. And people bet on the outcomes. If one lost one's shirt, one could still play on. Game devices were free. But the elite winners lived a life of unparalleled luxury, and everyone wanted to hobnob with them. Old-fashioned sports had died out. It was the year 2185.

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Another experimental city was "Space stock market city." Here people bought and sold Space real estate and futures and invested in the Space car industry. And the space suit industry and gravity/ anti-gravity technology. And frozen water was melted and lucrative. And hardy plants

and animals that could stand heat or cold. And so on. People had now expanded into 15 different Star Systems, 4 of them were en route.

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Also, there was the “city of no drugs.” It was a real World in which people suffered pain, but also found pleasure in love. And they had alcohol, and most people were drunkards. Many of them asked, why couldn’t they have drugs? Their leaders told them that drugs only lead to oblivion and madness. But a black market took hold here, selling various drugs. People craved panacea drugs and said that it was a World of pain.

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Then there was the “city of the Sun,” a colony on Mercury. Here people laid around under their sunny dome which filtered out much of the UV rays, but everyone had a tan. And the people drank cocktails and were served by servants. And the experiment here was with Sun worship. They worshipped the Sun God and the high priests taxed the people to build temples to the Sun God. The priests claimed the Sun God was sentient and they conducted “mind reading tests” to converse with the God. The God said they could travel in a worm hole from Sun to Sun and they were working on it.

Another experimental city was on Barnard’s Star. Here they tried to develop androids with totally human brains. Most androids today had strange, alien brains, which people nevertheless thought were sexually attractive minds and they wanted to make them more human, here. Their experimental “human androids,” were a hit with all the energy and good looks of an android and a totally human brain.

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And another experimental city was a “city of bull shit fighters.” They fought for the truth which was in short supply these days. Some people even said the truth is all subjective and there is no truth. But the people here said they believed in the facts, things that had been done by humans. For example, crimes were factual, one either broke the law or one didn’t. But some people said that most humans base their life on true love, which doesn’t exist. And the b.s. fighters said one knows love when one finds it, but it is indeed hard to quantify. And some critics said, the law favored the rich, rather than being just. And our whole society is based on the rule of law. And the b.s. fighters said no society is perfect, but they were trying at least.

Also, there was the experimental “city of body chemistry,” and altering it to suit one’s lovers. One would simply program their own drugs in order to suit a potential mate. Programming drugs to suit was a new concept and many other experimental cities copied their approach.

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Another trial new city in Brazil, was the “city of New Radicals.” The radicals wanted everyone in their city to be a radical thinker. They told the people, they wanted the cleverest humans

according to IQ to be the rulers. Of course, androids could do very well on IQ tests, with their Supercomputer brains, but the radicals didn't want androids to rule. Indeed, they wanted to bring society back to 1975 in terms of technology. Many thought this was outrageous, but the radicals had a lot of support. Some pointed out there were still nuclear warheads in 1975, so finally the radicals demanded to go back to A.D. 1700. And the new city was voted in. But as they were building it, they were attacked by a neighboring state and were all put to death. And so that was the end of the New Radicals...

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Another experiment in living was the "Death at 75 Trial." Here people agreed to die on their 75th birthday. They argued it was long enough and those that didn't agree were welcome to leave. But if they stayed, they would have to go through with it. No getting cold feet at the last minute. And people here whose time was up would be given a nice wake featuring video highlights of their life and last wishes. But as it turned out, many people here wanted to die at 50, or even 40... This was allowed, however. And in fact, many people praised those who died young. But outsiders said these people were not wise and were reckless maniacs who were against the gift of life and indeed cheapened life when everyone had eternal youth. And these pro-death people took no eternal youth drugs, nor drugs of any kind, which the vast majority of people found hard to understand. And people outside the city joked about these people saying they were miserable losers who didn't deserve to live anyway.

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Then there was the trial of the pure spinsters. Here only virgin women could come and live. And they dedicated their lives to creating new types of nuns who they sent out to help the poor and starving throughout the Earth. Many people couldn't believe there were nuns in this World of fornication and pleasures of the mind. But there was no doubt that in some cities there were a lot of poor people even in this era of the late 22nd century. And somebody had to look after them. Most of the nuns were plain looking in a time in which most people had plastic surgery and genetic therapy. But some men considered it a challenge to seduce one or more of the nuns, but very few succeeded. If a nun lost her virginity, she would be cast out of the order...

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Another test city was the settlement on Greenland. Here they relished the cold, and lived in

houses of ice kept at -8 C, year-round. And they weren't very warm-hearted, but they were rich from tourism. Tourists were always looking for new types of experiences.

And these "people of ice," imported food and drugs. The food and drugs were served at 5 C.

And the people were a branch of Laplanders who didn't care for modern living, except for the drugs, and had no reindeer.

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Another trial city was the home of the “sky dwellers.” These people lived at 500 m elevation in floating pods. The pods were not geostationary and so had wonderful views of the lands below. And meaning for them was to live in Utopia. Their Utopia was to live amongst angels who did only “good things” to one another. And good deeds were rewarded with pleasure bursts in one’s mind, so people were falling all over themselves to do good deeds.

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Another experimental city was a haven for poor people. People who could manage to get to this new city in Texas were given a paying job to do and so they lived quite well. Most of the jobs were easy service industry jobs. And androids cried foul saying these humans were taking away their jobs. But no one here felt sorry for the androids who were turned off. But elsewhere androids protested the “murders,” in Texas. But a great many people thought androids were becoming too powerful, and counter protested. The issue of work for the people dominated modern discussions. But ultimately most humans didn’t want to work and so most cities were totally automated. Anyway, there were more and more cities which catered to the poor and downtrodden and by the year 2185, there were no more destitute people in the Solar System. It was a truly grand experiment.

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Still another city was a study in training troops for UW (United Worlds) peacekeepers. The peacekeepers were stable minded and tough and clever and were well-trained in modern warfare and weapons. There were some trouble spots in the World today. Like tyrants with android armies. But gradually the UW troops defeated such armies and there was peace in the Worlds.

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Another experiment was with frugal people who were trained to get by in Space with less comforts. Of course, they still had access to every drug known to humans but had to get by with tiny quarters and aggression from one another. And they had to be able to get along well with others. Cabin fever had to be wiped out for the new breed of humans. Gregarious, easygoing people were the future.

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Then there was the experiment with android/ human cross breeds. They had a mind that was half android, half human. Essentially, they were a type of cyborg. Most cyborgs were fully human with Supercomputers attached that were invisible. And these new cross breeds also appeared to be human. They had all the energy of an android lover and all the wisdom of a seasoned human and were attractive to androids as well as humans. Many thought such a persona to be the golden mean and a perfect compromise.

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Another study done was the merits of foiling attempts at creating holograms. Many were addicted to their Holoworlds, but what if we took them away? The study found that many humans considered themselves to be victims and were very depressed when their holograms were taken away. They were lost. So, in the interests of peace this experiment was halted.

Then there was the experiment with designing architecture which changes according to those who perceived it. The architectures' Supercomputers were able to take the sum of the beholders' desires and change into that. The architecture was of course of light covering the solid parts of the buildings. Modern architecture was constantly changing, and many people thought it was good. Sometimes the physical structure moved with gears and creative gases to create new forms. It was heady design. And there were a lot of artists who became architects and could draw well and it paid more than paintings, sculpture, pottery etc. And today, most people wanted to live in a futuristic looking tower condo. Of course, some preferred old-fashioned architecture and that was their prerogative. But most cities passed laws that required all structures to blend in with one another. And cities vied with one another to be the most beautiful, most romantic, most imaginative and so on and competed for tourist dollars. However, many just lived in their air cars, and so architects tried to design nice forms for the air cars. Some air cars pulsed with their look, constantly changing in appearance.

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Another experiment was with identical quadruplets, all females. Essentially, they were clones of one another, but the experiment tested how they could live and become totally different from one another. Many people wanted a clone that would be just like them, only different, and wanted to explore the best of all possible lives. Others wanted clones that had the same memories as them and were basically identical in every way.

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Still another experiment was with using MRT (Mind Reading Technology) to essentially program humans from birth. The MRT would generate nighttime dreams and daydreams that would mold one's character. In this experiment Superhuman minds were copied and used to tutor with MRT. It was very powerful this MRT and made perfect citizens, in the opinion of the investigators of this study.

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Another new project was a Supercomputer which could predict the future. Many people wanted to know their future and the Supercomputer typically gave them percentages of varying likelihoods. Like how and when you would die, who would be your favorite lover, what your job would be, if any and in short, the machines knew you better than you knew yourself. And the Supercomputers predicted an 80% chance of nuclear war in the next 10 years. And predicted that androids would inevitably take over most cities, using battle robots and android troops. They were producing android troops at a rate of 2 million per day now, and no one seemed to be able to stop them. And hologram Worlds were out of control increasing at an exponential rate;

everyone seemed to want a hologram Dreamworld of their own. It was the day of AI, and the future was coming hard and fast.

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It was also the day of Joan G. She had a perfect look and was unbelievably charming. A former actress, she got herself elected Mayor of Chicago. As Mayor she experimented, and she forced everyone to get plastic surgery on their bodies and faces and so Chicago became known for its beautiful people. And tourists poured in. And she experimented with playing the matchmaker, believing she knew the people best. And many came here searching for love. And she experimented with people living by a pool and drinking cocktails with no worries for the future. In winter they simply went indoors. She told her people, they lived in an Utopia. And she experimented with drugs of pleasure, offering the people a variety of drugs. Most took stimulants, though some wanted blissful drugs. But it was all good for Joan. And she experimented with having everyone able to draw and draw the architecture of their house to be built. And she experimented with people being a sex worker to get lovers they had never expected; to broaden their minds was her goal. And her World attracted a number of gays and multi-sexual people who were welcome here. Indeed, gays were welcome in most Worlds today. And gays were known to have children, many of whom were gay. And Joan, she encouraged people to have children born in the lab and picking a personality to suit and tweaking their minds. And many wonderful children resulted, and they were the future.

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Another experimental World was all about creating new brave people who would not be afraid to speak out and stand against injustice. People here said that most people were cowardly, and bravery was the highest human attribute. They said if they didn't live in a brave World, then they didn't want to live. Indeed, many people were critical of modern humans, saying they were decadent sybarites who only cared about comfort for their mind. And believed the Worlds were in decline. And we needed natural leaders to step forth into the void.

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And another experiment was on Mars #13: "Cat's city," living in an economical, sustainable way in which everything was recycled, and few resources were used. And cheap fusion power gave them plenty of energy to create things.

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Another experiment was with Debbie T. She was obese in an era in which almost everyone took anti-fat pills. They experimented with her mind with brain surgery and got her to take the pills. So, she did and became slim, but friends said she just wasn't the same person, and had a

different, elite philosophy, now. They wanted the old Debbie to be back. But they were told the previous incarnation of Debbie set a bad example for the people.

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And then there was the case of Martin Y. He was a movie maker and made good love stories on the silver screen. But his films were obscure, and few people knew of his talent. He was truly a starving artist. But it was the plan here on Luna #5: Talent city, to search out great thinkers throughout the Solar System and make them famous. They had well-trained talent scouts ever.

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Then there was the study conducted on Vera R. Like many modern people, she was insane. But they overhauled her brain and got her to live for good mental health and found her some sane lovers who cheered her up. And one by one the authorities here on Mars #8: Cool city, dealt with many of the insane people and made them sane. They wanted to change the name of the city to "Sanity city." And they got clones of some of Earth's best shrinks to come here and had sanity drugs which calmed and relaxed people and the shrinks got into their heads passively so as to discover what the problems were, and sometimes gave the insane some "angels," in their heads to help them make decisions. The "angels," were AI programs designed specifically for each individual. There were a lot of people who came here as tourists and many of them wanted to see what mental health help they would get.

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Another test subject was Lionel S., who was the most famous experimental drug taker in the Solar System. He had a strong mind and was very sensitive to the effects of new drugs. For example, they tried an anti-suicide drug on him, and he said, never did he want to live so much as when he took this drug. And they tried to set him up with a

drug industry. And he was one of the ten richest personae in the Universe.

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Then there was the nuclear war simulation experiment. People were placed in safe bunkers that had the ability to grow food and stem cell meats and last indefinitely. The experiment had gone on now for five years. And the human guinea pigs had access to all Earth entertainment until 5 years ago but were cut off from all the new shows. There were 6 men and 6 women in the experiment and two women and two of the men were bisexual. But as the years rolled by, the people in the study were suffering from extreme cabin fever and spent most of their time with their hologram Worlds which had the illusion of space and freedom. The hologram Worlds were somewhat primitive by modern standards in 2185 A.D., but the test subjects loved these Worlds. And they had cerebral sex with their holos. The experiment proved that survival was very possible for humans in case of nuclear holocaust. And this made a whole lot of people very happy and millions wanted to live in bunkers while still going out into the World and kept up to date with the latest entertainment.

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Yet another test was an experimental city on Moon Triton. Here only women could rule or lead companies. Men were just useful as lovers and spent most of their time in debauchery. Most of the women had a job and were relatively sober, whereas the men didn't work. And everyone in the experiment claimed to be reasonably content. Some observers thought the settlement was a sad commentary on the existence of human males.

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And there were many other studies being done today, experimental humans were what modern people mostly called themselves.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *This story is about experimental stories of the future. There are many possibilities and this story just catches the tip of the iceberg. I believe that many future colonies will have philosophical themes, just like a story submission has themes. Probably they will have contests which will determine the theme of new cities. Many Space cities will have remarkable architecture and strive to set themselves apart from other colonies. This story examines some of the possibilities.*

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