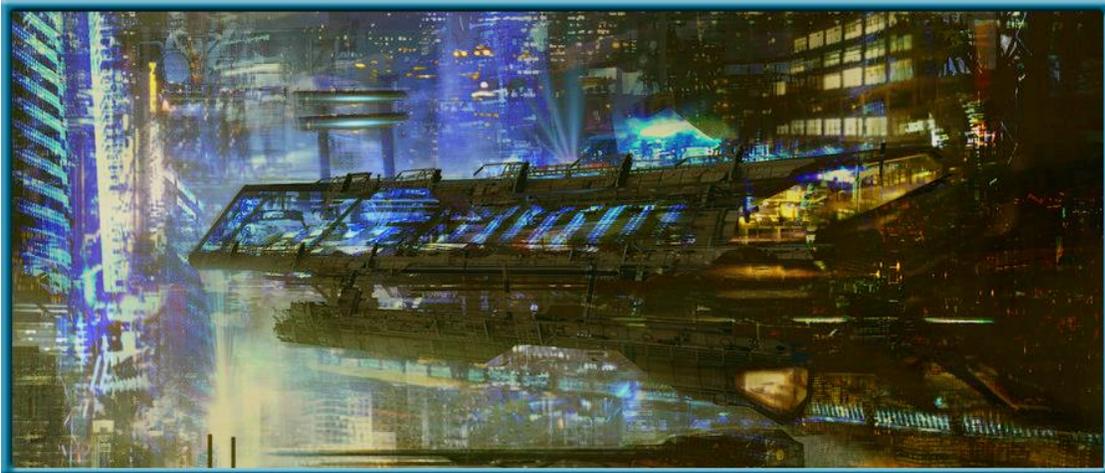


Reflections on life so far -Ray Melnik 3/7/2020



As a human being I finally understand that almost no one has a lock on reality because as much as we understand, there is that much more to learn. But we are learning; we are trying. I for one will continue exploring established science for my answers. For me, it is the only dynamic practice, and the only one that will continue to grow as our tools get better. As Carl Sagan said, it is a collaborative endeavor spanning the generations.

So, I'm grateful I was born in a time where collaborative knowledge is at a point where I was raised in a house, with refrigeration, and a heating system, hot and cold running water, a bathroom, sewer lines, gas to cook my food, and shelter from the elements. I was raised with media to explore beyond my town through television, movies, radio. I was raised with vaccines and medical technology that may have already lengthened my life. I grew up in an environment where I could be educated, and I work in a career that did not exist 40 to 50 years ago. I like living in a time in history where I hold the knowledge of the planet in the palm of my hands, and I can speak

with anyone, anywhere on earth. I can easily travel to many places on earth.

I could have been born hundreds of years ago, before all of these comforts and advantages. Think for a moment what that was like when homes were not insulated, most windows had no glass, food was grown or hunted, bathrooms were in the woods, baths were in the local streams when it was warm enough. So many of the things we simply take for granted were years in the future. Now think for a moment of hundreds of years before that. And again. And again. Bad luck was from an angry deity, even minor changes in climate, and seasonal abnormalities were unmanageable, and so much of life was time spent simply trying to survive. Make no mistake though; all but philosophers believed they lived at the pinnacle of humanity. As we do now.

We do not. At least let's hope we do not live at the pinnacle. That would mean it was us who sent humanity downhill. There is so much more that can be known. There is a possible bright future for humanity if we will help make it happen, and it asks so little of us to make it so. Many past sacrifices are the bed we walk on, so it's the least we can do. And don't let people try to convince you that changes in wasteful practices are sacrifices too great. Make better choices. Support what will sustain us, and educate yourself to know the difference. Not only are we our brothers and sisters' keepers, we are our children and grandchildren's keepers, and our decisions are their base to walk on.

If we don't get in the way, there will be cures for today's hopelessness, all will have access to care, and there will be all the comforts we have and more without damaging the health of people. People will live even longer. Traffic accidents will be mostly a memory.

Artificial Intelligence will solve countless problems and benefit us in amazing ways. Robotics will evolve to be lifesaving equipment, helpful tools, and companions. We will eventually see how artificial borders really are, and better understand how interconnected we all are on this tiny fragile planet. We will realize that with how far we have advanced, some solutions must be planned and enacted together, globally. There will be far more open borders, travel will be easier, and it will inform us even more. Think of the knowledge that will be gathered in generations to come, and the ease of accessing it. But still my hope is that no future generation imaginable is at the pinnacle, at least for a billion years.