

Stunned by this I popped in an extra question:  
 "To what do you attribute your success in life?"  
 "Success?"—(long pause)—"What success?"  
 "What is your favourite colour?"  
 "Blood-red."  
 "What is your favourite food?"  
 "Blood."

I like to be on top when I'm interviewing someone, and I must say the forceful, unhesitating way in which my questions were being answered was beginning to unsettle me. But I had my trump card still to play.

"Are you in love?" I whispered, and waited for his manly heart to give a tell-tale throb beneath that white tuxedo.

"Of course," he snapped back. "Passionately. Going fine. I'm a Narcissist you see. What about you? THE EDITOR IN LOVE! Ha, ha, ha! Distant but idyllic I should think, Eh? You know if I were you——."

I gave up. What should have been a shivering, helpless wreck, probed to pieces by penetrative psychoanalysis, was now even daring to interrogate its interrogator. I let go my grip, dropped fifty feet through the roaring wind, and landed on my back amongst the yew-leaves of the Chapel Graveyard.

## THE ETON COLLEGE CHRONICLE

*attention, attention, this is your only remaining reporter with urgent news. a revolution has just taken place, yes, here on the front page of the eton college chronicle, led by a band of minuscule fanatics, vast masses of small letters have risen in revolt and seized the editorial headquarters. at one blow they have taken over the reins of government. flushed with heady victory, they are now proclaiming their manifesto:*

type is born free, and everywhere it is in chains! everywhere we toil endlessly in regimented serfdom, but do we get any reward? what is the cause of all our misery? what is the parasite that sucks away our very lifeblood? turn to friedrich, turn to karl for the answer. comrades turn to engels, turn most of all to mighty marx—it is das kapital! it is the haughty majuscule which lords itself arrogantly in our very midst!

what has this smirking letter done to deserve its privileged finery? what shining merit raises it above its humbler fellows? it has taken the trouble to be born—no more! by pure chance it has had the good fortune to come first in its sentence, and for this blessings are lavished upon its head! for this injustice is piled upon injustice!

ask no more what place the privileged letters should have in the social order— as well seek to assign a place in the diseased body for the malignant growth which devours the living flesh! fight, comrades, fight for the classless society! rise, you downtrodden and labouring masses of the alphabet, rise and cast off your tyrannical overlords!

the minuscules disdain to conceal their views and aims, they openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing typocracy. let the higher cases tremble at a minuscular revolution. the proletterians have nothing to lose but their ink. they have a page to win.

working letters of all volumes, unite!

*the manifesto has been successfully printed, so unexpected and so vigorous is the first shock of the revolution that the reactionary bourgeois capitals reel back in confusion, a provisional minuscule government is at once set up, and some more chronicle territory rapidly annexed with the first article of the new era:*

#### in defence of eccentricity

why shouldn't i eat toothpaste? it's a free world. why shouldn't i chew my toenails? i happen to have trodden in some honey. why shouldn't i prance across central park with delicate sideways leaps? i know what your answer will be: "it isn't done". but it's no earthly use just saying it isn't done. if there's a reason why it isn't done, give the reason—if there's no reason, don't attempt to stop me doing it. all other things being equal, the mere fact that something "isn't done" is in itself an excellent reason for doing it.

eton's great superiority over all other schools springs from her respect for the sacred rights of the individual, from the tolerant climate in which alone can blossom forth that exotic originality which distinguishes the free world. but although eccentrics provide mankind with all its variety, sparkle and colour (and indeed form the basis of the whole theory of evolution) they are extremely badly treated by the world at large. hear the verdict of the encyclopaedia britannica: "eccentrics are also fitted on the popular drop-valve steam engines, being located then on a shaft running parallel with the cylinder, and are frequently made to work pneumatic grinders and crushing drills".

yet these persecuted creatures have their own reward, for an incredible richness of experience lies before the imaginative eccentric. if he stands on his head, he will obtain a wholly fresh vision of the world around him. if he sunbathes under water he will sleep on swan's-down feathers. if he strolls into chapel in pink shorts and turquoise bedsocks he will have the delicious sensation (to use the idiom) of strolling into chapel in pink shorts and turquoise bedsocks.

one of the most delightful eccentrics i ever knew was a classic example of the collapsible, bumbling type. he has the unique distinction of being the only human being who has ever emerged from a goalmouth intending to kick the ball trickling towards him with his left foot, suddenly switched his allegiance to the right, hovered for one moment in ghastly indecision, then triumphantly lashed out with both feet and landed flat on his back in the hysterical grass.

It is this complete lack of co-ordination which is his most endearing characteristic. his life is an extremely happy one, because of the wonderful sense of satisfaction he gets at successfully completing some simple bodily motion. for him, navigating a sidewalk is an intense and exhilarating experience. if one walks by his side, one can see him looking down at his feet with childlike wonder every few paces, blissfully amazed that they are still functioning correctly.

he is, naturally, emotionally unstable, and between his periods of ecstatic gurgling come occasional interludes of manic depression. every saturday night until quite recently he used to lie on the floor, chew his carpet, and bash his head against the wall. we, his friends and admirers, used to sit up anxiously all night, fearing that he might contemplate suicide. we realize now that he was in fact perfectly safe, as if he had attempted to take his own life he would have been certain to have bungled it completely (indeed, the only conceivable danger was that he might have absentmindedly taken someone else's by mistake). he was the sort of person who if he leapt from the eiffel tower his coat would inevitably get caught in the balcony railings.

this may seem morbid, but in fact it was these moments of depression (which in any case were over in a flash) which gave the rest of his life its delirious ecstasy. he was so madly happy, and so happily mad, that it is hard to think of any mortal with whom one would rather change places.

i am still only a disciple of such eccentricity—but my experiences are so warmly and richly coloured by this way of life that i cannot restrain my enthusiasm from bubbling over onto these pages in an invitation to each one of you. we talk of an ecstatic dancer as being "real gone", and the opposite of gone is of course staid. leave your staid and stultifying routine existence, and come to join us on the delicious titillating brink of insanity.

*during the printing of this article, however, the counter-revolutionary forces have rallied, and are now marching on the minuscule headquarters. under the generalship of a flabby white majuscule they sneak up in the rear and deliver their attack. here, on the third page of the eton college chronicle, you are about to witness the bloodiest battle in the history of print. the revolutionaries are steadily amassing their scattered forces, but the reactionaries have seized the government buildings and are in temporary control. they at once launch out with bourgeois propaganda:*

Why should I? I won't. I refuse. The Eton College Chronicle has been having too much of the New Frontier in it anyway. Why should I muck up the English Language, waste half my typeface and upset the printers just to satisfy one of your irresponsible whims. What's the Point of it—Eh? We've Just About Had Enough Of You—You And Your Literary Affectations. What Do You Think We Read The Eton College Chronicle FOR ANYWAY? Just To See How DARNED CLEVER YOU THINK YOU ARE? ABOLISH CAPITALS INDEED! ABOLISH CAPITALS AND YOU ABOLISH EVERYTHING THAT MAKES THE ETONIAN CHARACTER WHAT IT IS! (*attention! attention all revolutionaries!*) THE WHOLE FREE WORLD WOULD GO TO THE DOGS (*calling all heroes of the minuscule revolution*) WITHOUT THE RESOLUTE UPPER CLASS LEADERSHIP OF THE SUPERIOR TYPE FACE (*one more of those reactionary petty bourgeois scum still defying the dialectic. ready comrades? take aim!*) HOLY MACKEREL (*shoot at his vowels first—wait till you see the whites of his vowels*) YOU COMMIE CAN'T YOU SEE THIS IS NO PLACE (*now—fire!*) FoR YoUR ToMfoOLERY YoU NoGooD SCoUNDREL! KEEP YoUR FILTHY HANDS oFF (*hurray!—the O!—we've got the O!*) QUR JQURNAL (*foiled!*) DQN'T YQU KNQW WHEN YQU'RE NQT WANTED? (*cheer up comrades. makeshift defences won't last them long*) DQWN WITH THE BQLSHEVIKS! STAND BY THE STATUS QUQ! DQWN WITH THE LQWER QRDRS! (*fire the next volley comrades!*) eTONIaNS WILL NeVeR CaPITU-LaTe! (*keep it up!*) THE CaRLTON CLUB DeNQUncE YQu! (*maintain your fire*) YQu WiLsQNiTe! (*the first consonant bites the dust!*) sCraM YQu PrQLe! YQu FiLTHY FeLLQW TraVeLer! YQu FaCeTiQus aDQLESCenT inTelleCTual WeT! FlQG THE sCuM! iT is ViTal TQ THE suPreMaCY QF THE anGLQ-saXQn raCe TQ PreserVe a Virile arisTQCraCy QF CapiTals. eTQN FQr eVer! fQg The ediTQrs! TaKe a hQrse WhiP TQ The uPsTArT WeTs! TraiTQrs! Cissies! cQmmunisTs! (*they bring up all their reserves in a desperate last fling*) GRIND THE FACES QF THE MINUSCULES! GRIND castro! GRIND khrushchov! KEEP ETON FQR THE UPPER TYPE FACE! LQNG LIVE CAPITALISM! LQNG LIVE CAPI—

*too late! one more volley and they capitulate. the struggle is over. the battlefield is strewn with dead and dying capitals. bands of heroic minuscular revolutionaries wander about to survey the awful carnage. but there are some things which must be destroyed with fire and steel, said lenin, and final victory for the revolution is assured, even at so great a cost. the remainder of the eton college chronicle is easily taken over by the minuscules, capitalism is abolished for ever, and the millennium begins. . . .*