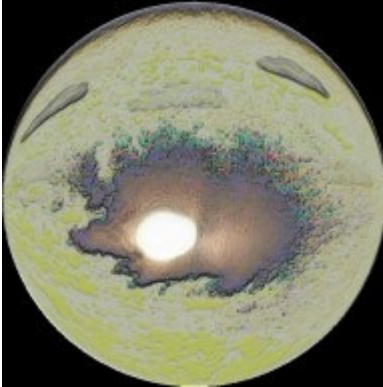


## The Great Sameness



The year the Great Sameness began seemed as ordinary as apple pie on a Sunday afternoon. We didn't notice the slow change in temperature. The covert looks and superior insinuations had yet to begin. The rewrite of all that had and was taking place was only now appearing in the local schoolroom. People were still excitedly displaying the individualism that makes every turn in the road a possibility. Men and women were whistling as they walked the sidewalks of occupied neighborhoods before the desertion. Clotheslines filled with garments in various stages of drying produced hidden steam on a sizzling afternoon and lemonade stands made of card tables and cardboard with frosted pitchers of that remarkable beverage still cooled the throats of motorists passing by.

No one saw it at first. It came on invisible wings. It may be that it invaded like a virus or it was inhaled like bacteria. In any case it arrived after the war. The soldiers coming home to a heroes welcome never knew or understood that they were bringing it with them. The first sign of it that most people could recall was the sudden proliferation of houses that looked alike. Trees disappeared before the sameness and erosion followed it. Cement began to cover up fruit producing farmland. The friendly hamburger stand was replaced by the replicated stand with clone like fingers forming stamped out patties for the multitudes.

What's that cloud, Daddy? "I haven't seen the sun much lately." The little boy had never seen such a thing before.

"That is smoke from the factories Johnny," the daddy said.

At that time the haze had begun to stand between the city and the mountains that surrounded it. Over the years the haze increased so that the hills were all one could see except on rare days when the wind was strong or the rain had washed the sooty air.

A *Crystal Ball* began appearing in stores with images running around inside of it. People saw it as a novelty and purchased them for their homes. They slowly became experts at crystal vision and were able to see events in other times and places in the glass. Soon the glass began helping them. It taught them how to think, what to wear, what to eat, and finally what to believe and who to talk to. The more the people learned from the *Crystal Ball* the clearer it became. The more they used their crystal vision the smokier it got in the heavens surrounding them.

The more people understood how things ought to be in the crystal ball the more they reproduced it in their own communities. It took awhile but Ed's Hardware and Castle Brothers Grocery and Joes Service Station and many other businesses were absorbed and replaced by Hungry Giants who moved into town while the people were crystal gazing. Over time more and bigger stores appeared. The little stores they had grown up with faded out like the sun in the sky.

In order to become more like the people in the crystal ball the people ceased making their own food and clothes and bought everything from the Giants stores calling to them from the tube. Soon a person was considered a non-conformist who did not dress like the tube people. Then an amazing thing happened. The crystal balls sub divided. One *Crystal Ball* could offer hundreds and even thousands of choices of what to see in it at any given moment. It was all dependent on how complicated a crystal ball you wanted to buy. One could also buy crystal vision glasses that made the images in the ball appear in your eyes like you were there. All the while the dense smoke thickened.

The *Crystal Ball* began to instruct people that they had mysteriously evolved out of the past. They were not born in the world of the Sun and subject to its limitations. No, they had appeared out of a mist and they could only understand it through crystal gazing. Great Sorcerers appeared who could manipulate the *Ball* and make unheard of events seem to spring out of it so that people could hardly wait to see the next special effect. Though the birds still sang, fruit fell off the trees and no one picked it or ate it. It was safer they said to buy the fruit sold in the Hungry Giants store. The people began to love the anonymity they felt when they went to the Hungry Giant. The Sorcerers told them that it would be even better if they just took a number then they would become invisible to one another. Only the Hungry Giants would know them and of course they would protect

them. The people willingly took their new numbers. The Giants then told them, that it would cost a lot to keep track of these numbers so they should pay a fee to the Giants to keep track of all these numbers. At first it was a small fee but gradually it cost a person large amounts of money just to have a number.

Some people rebelled and began to dress and act in ways displeasing to the city people. The Hungry Giants were not displeased. They began to sell clothing, food, music, jewelry and every imaginable thing for the rebels. After a few years the rebels began to wear special styles that identified themselves to one another. The *Crystal Ball* offered special visions so they could relate to other rebels like themselves.

In the middle of all this the Sorcerers made available wonderful mind altering pills, smokes and sniffs. The idea they presented was that one could escape from all this to whatever reality one desired. This sounded wonderful so millions began taking the potions. Now many no longer needed the crystal ball because the crystal vision was in them every time they took the pills, smokes or potions. They thought how wonderful this is, we will give the pills, smokes and sniffs to our friends and they too will escape into this new and better world.

Soon the atmosphere of their world began getting warmer. People warned them this was not good. But who was to say. After all they still had the crystal ball, and the potions. Their heroes and heroines had become entertainers in the crystal ball. Someday if all went well they could be like the images in the tube. Outside the world grew dimmer and warmer.

Gangs arose in the streets so that people could belong to something. Many were so hypnotized that they could talk to no one and no one talked to them. The great loneliness was settling in. They began seeing each other as crystal ball images rather than children of a Creator. Then the killing began. It meant less and less to kill a number, another number would take its place. Killing in the streets, killing in the home, and killing in the womb. The curriculum of violence became the teaching of the tube. The *Crystal Ball* loved to reveal murder, hatred, robbery, sexual crimes, and with it a mysterious darkness emanated from the tube. Anxiety filled the people as the Sorcerers multiplied in every City.

Men began desiring men and women desired women. What freedom the Hungry Giants proclaimed. We have new products to help you in your quest. The wizards of the *Crystal Ball* began

teaching that all who could not embrace these new and liberated values needed to be re educated and brought into the Correct view point. In Schools and Universities classes in Correct Vision, *Crystal Vision* were taught so that every one would have equal opportunity to be alike. No difference should be tolerated. To be totally free we must be totally the same. Anything to the contrary would no longer be seen or talked about and it would not appear in the *Crystal Ball*. People who rose up to oppose the Sorcerers mysteriously disappeared.

The day the Sorcerers stepped out of the *Crystal Ball* and unmasked was the day the Great Sameness was complete. All the people cheered and some offered sacrifices to the Sorcerers who had given them their numbers and their great freedom. The Sorcerers rewarded their followers by giving them tiny implant chips with their numbers on them. Now the Sorcerers would be able to protect them, knowing where they were, all the time. This was the day they all became in full what they were already in part, slaves.