

0.4 BY MIKE LANCASTER



Throughout the book there are notes in the text giving additional information to the reader.

These notes give us a picture of how society has changed both physically and socially in the 0.4 future.

NOTE—*The Apprentice*

What was known—ironically—as ‘reality TV’. Entwistle in his paper ‘Manufacturing nothing: Light Entertainment’ writes: ‘Afraid to see the world around them as a larger picture, people instead reduced their views of the world to the tiny, artificial windows called “reality TV”. What is certain, however, is that reality played little or no part in such programmes.’

NOTE—*‘Vegetarian Stew’*

Apparently ‘vegetarian’ was still a dietary choice in Straker’s day, rather than a social responsibility. See Chadwick’s informative history: *What didn’t the eat? Flesh as food.*

NOTE—*‘Bioluminescence’*

Although dramatically simplified, this is indeed the way that we produce light. One of the strengths of the Straker Tapes is, I believe, that they do show us the things we do normally and naturally in a new and different way, as if Kyle is really experiencing these commonplace sights for the first time, in the position of an outsider.

In *Identity Crises: Bodies as text*, Steunmetz writes: ‘Things we take for granted are shown in a new light by Straker’s words. Filament networking and bioluminescence are so familiar to us that it takes a boy to remind us how precious these things are.’

- What kind of a society is the note maker living in now?
- What opinions might they have on the way we lead our lives today?
- How would someone from a century ago see the way we live in the 21st Century?
- Do you think that they would feel as separated from us now as the 0.4’s feel from the rest of their society? Why?

In some of the NOTES sections, there are attempts made to explain some things that are familiar to us in our time. These things do not translate well to the futuristic society and although their definitions are wrong, there is often an element of truth in the description given.

NOTE—'Teletubbies'

Many Theories exist about this word, but none are particularly satisfactory. Or, indeed, convincing. Kepple and his essay 'A Pantheon of Teletubbies' seems sure that it is a word of deep religious significance, referring to a collection of gods or goddesses almost exclusively worshipped by children, although his evidence is seen by most scholars as, at best, fanciful.

NOTE—'Coldplay'

O'Brien makes a persuasive case for a 'Coldplay' referring to a kind of dramatic or musical presentation characterised by being utterly bereft of any signs of genuine emotion.

Using a similar style of writing, can you try to define the following social phenomena in a way that people from a different generation (your Great-Grandparents?) might understand!

Facebook

Kindle e-reader

Solar Panels

Jeggings

Spork

Twilight

DVD

