

# E-SUETERRY-C

November 30, 2009

INSPIRATION  
IDEAS  
HUMOR  
FILM  
PHILOSOPHY  
MUSIC



WEEKLY  
COMMENTARY &  
PHOTOS  
ON INTERESTING  
STUFF...

## CONTROL

My husband and I had a fight. It wasn't a knock-down drag-out, although it could have been, because we're both martial artists. Perhaps the knowledge that our mere hands are lethal weapons served to curtail our argument. And what was the subject of our heated discussion, you ask? Well, it all started with the design for the [2011 Volvo S60](#). Gil says it's good, and I say it's not!

This automobile will come equipped with the new "Pedestrian Safety System", which uses a built-in video camera to identify pedestrians and bike riders in front of the vehicle, and assumes control by braking if the system assesses a probable collision.

"Why *wouldn't* you want the car to brake if you were going to hit someone," said Gil. Aha! The classic argument: Solution X benefits people, therefore it is a good thing.

"That's not the point," I said. "The point is--who drives my car--me, or a computer? I should give up control of my vehicle to an automated system?"

--Knock knock.

--Who's there?

--Control Freak. OK now you say, "Control Freak who?"

I'm not a control freak, I just play one onstage. I do have issues with Control, however. You see, Control is not like Love. With Love, the more you give away, the more you have. But with Control, the more you give away, the less you have.

We started small. We started by letting other people tell us which restaurants, shows, and Jazz records we should patronize. (Because obviously if it's not listed in Zagat's / it closed in a month / it didn't win a Grammy-- it can't be any good.) Skip ahead to 2009: Not only do we outsource control to machines, but we then hire other machines to control the first machines. People are using computer programs to stop them from using their computer, as I wrote about a few weeks ago. This week, I read about a new service you can sign up for called ZoomSafer, which disables your cell phone while you're driving. These are just a couple examples of this ubiquitous trend.

It's true that controlling one's actions is a big energy drainer. It also causes stress, which can lead to a heart attack, stroke, or other debilitating illness. Much better to outsource it! Now I don't have to decide when to turn off my computer, or whether to answer my phone while driving. What a relief to be freed of that responsibility! Now, my mind is available to make more important decisions, like, ummmmmmm. . .

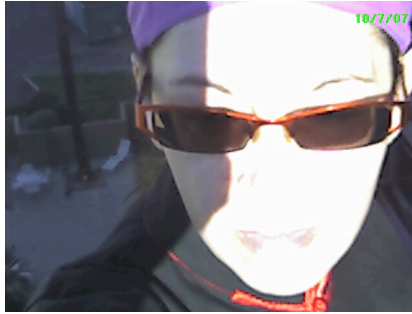
## CON'T Control: an opinion

The more I read the news, the more it seems just about everything is about battles of control over one thing or another. It's like visiting a modern art museum, and when you come out, everything on the street looks like art! Art, which life shamelessly imitates, is chock full of futuristic scenarios of humans vs machines. The world of film alone has contributed many of these stories: 2001 A Space Odyssey; I, Robot; and The Day the Earth Stood Still come to mind. These particular

I do read, and  
welcome, your  
comments!

[HERE](#)

films all had their origin in literature. The first is a book by Arthur C. Clarke; the second is from a series of short stories by Isaac Asimov; the third was based on a [short story by Harry Bates](#) called "Farewell To The Master." You may recall that The Day the Earth Stood Still was not ostensibly about human vs machine conflict. On the planet from which Gort and Klaatu traveled, however, humans are "policed" by robots. This is presented in the film as an ideal societal arrangement. (The haunting music, incidentally, is by the great film composer Bernard Herrmann. He used two [theremins](#) in the orchestration of the score.)



Harkening back to 9th grade English, we learned that all narrative plots fall into one of the following categories: Man against Man, Man against Nature, or Man against Himself. Apparently some other categories have been added since then, but they always involve a conflict of some sort, otherwise there would be no plot. (In case you were absent that day--Wikipedia has an article on [Narrative Conflict](#) which, although somewhat informative, is prefaced by the amusing sentence "This article appears to have been written by an illiterate. Please help improve this article by rewriting it in a less imbecilic fashion.")

Flashback to real life: In 1942, the year after Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japan, the United States decided to take control by [rounding up all the Japanese Americans](#) and putting them behind barbed wire for four years. Indeed, there were no further attacks--until 9-11. Therefore, one could conclude that such a strategy was effective. Following that line of thought--since we are currently at war with some Muslim countries, some people think it might be a good idea to control terrorism by arresting anyone roaming around our country with a Muslim-sounding name--you know, like '[Timothy McVeigh](#)', or '[Charles Manson](#)', or '[Theodore Kaczynski](#)'.

We also have accessories that help us maintain control: but it's so inconvenient to carry around money, and credit cards, and checkbooks, and a library card, and a work ID, and a drivers license, and an insurance card, and a Starbucks card, and a Mr. Z's discount card--hey, here's an idea. Let's just put all that on a computer chip, and implant the chip right into our bodies! Then we could just press our thumb, or

whatever, on the scanner and the price of the newspaper we're buying will automatically be deducted from our bank account. While we're at it, let's have our medical records on the chip too, because we might fall down unconscious in the street and not be able to tell the nurse in the ER that we're allergic to soybeans.

The New Age business pundits say that in any situation, you should always focus on the outcome. They say you should visualize what you want to happen. Wait--a vision is coming to me . . . you're a billionaire on a tropical island, sipping margaritas, playing tennis during the day and dancing the night away. Or else, you're a pauper on a tropical island, making margaritas, picking up stray tennis balls and dancing the night away on weekends only. But whatever your life is, it's entirely in your mind--because in the "real" world your body is encased in an incubator, hooked up to a giant machine that feeds off your electromagnetic energy. You are controlled by a machine! But since you're living in your mind, what do you care? You're on the tennis court, and you're ahead 6-love! If Keanu Reeves is playing doubles with you, so much the better.

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I guess there are two kinds of people in this world: the ones that choose the red pill, and the ones that choose the blue pill. Maybe by the time The Matrix has as many sequels as Rocky, we'll have all this figured out. Till then--good night, and good luck.

# NO NEWSLETTER DEC. 7 & DEC. 14!

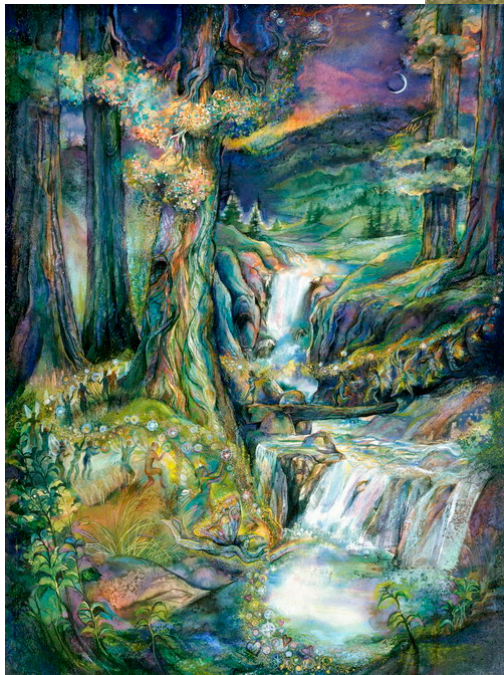
I'll be doing field research in Peru, after which I will go to Vilcabamba, Ecuador, to teach my [Creativity workshop at the Montesuenos Eco Retreat Center](#). This is an amazing place, founded by two visionary leaders in science and art.--Dr. Brian O'Leary and Meredith Miller. It's not too late for you to sign up.



Montesuenos main house, designed by Meredith Miller



Dr. Brian O' Leary has taught at Cornell, Princeton, Cal Tech, & MIT. He's an international speaker and has authored 8 books.



“Bringers of the Night Rainbow” & “Celebrating Freedom” • paintings by Meredith Miller

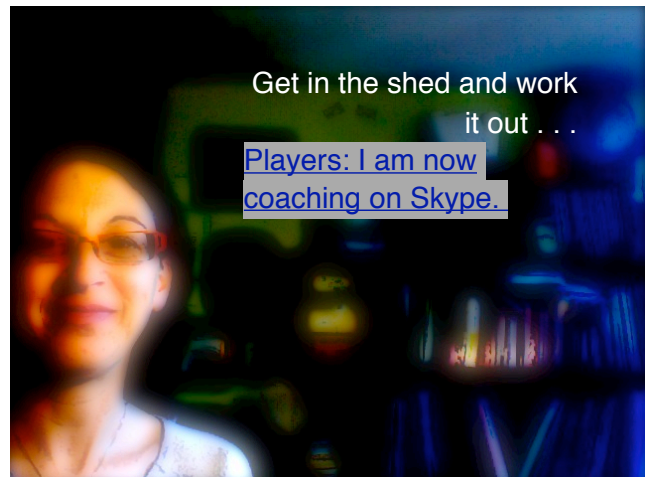
**Tuesday, Dec. 1:** THE LAST TAPESTRY SHOW FOR AWHILE! [“Tapestry Rewoven” returns to Iridium](#), New York City, with shows at 8 pm and 10.

**December 4-10:** Sue will be on a research trip in Peru.

**December 12 & 13:**

Sue presents [a workshop on Creativity & Movement at Montesuenos Eco Retreat Center, Vilcabamba, Ecuador](#).

**December 30:** Pre-New Year's Eve with singer Scot Albertson at Kitano - 66 Park Ave. & E. 38 St. NYC. tel 212-885-7119 Sets 8 & 10. Sweet Sue, reeds; Daryl Kojak, piano; Cameron Brown, bass; Tony Jefferson, drums.



Get in the shed and work it out . . .

[Players: I am now coaching on Skype.](#)