

January 23, 2008

Dearest professor Jacoby,
quite recently I read your book “The Last Intellectuals” and realizing that we share a deep love and admiration for the work of Lewis Mumford I decided to ask you for your opinion (and possibly advice or even help if your opinion is encouraging) with regard to an effort I’m making to make his work functional in our days (my not saying “functional after recontextualization to our days” was deliberate since his work is as relevant now as it was 40 years ago and it is infinitely more relevant than most of the contemporary analyses of what is going on now). In the folder “Selections for Russell Jacoby” of the enclosed CD I have put one file presenting him to not necessarily academic audiences (the file “Mumford, man-for-all-seasons for our season”), one file putting his ideas in the kind of wider context that would help an academic overcome whatever he might consider as objections posed by “rigor” to the rate and stride of Mumford’s pace (the file “In and out of Borgesian and non Borgesian Labyrinths”), one file responding to one of the points of your book (the file “R. Jacoby’s “The Last Intellectuals” and M. Albert’s ZNet”), and one folder that I call “Academia Blues”, that Jacobian Eliot-ists would probably call “Crime in the Cathedral of Academe” and Jacobian Tom Sharpe-ists would probably call “Princeton’s Porterhouse Blues in the Age of Social Amnesia” (a file that aspired to be for Academia what “happenings” were for theater, but happenings take two, not just the performing actor). I feel it is an omission that in a file called “Selections for Russell Jacoby” I only included essay-format things on Mumford but I make up for that by also putting on the same CD a folder placing Mumford in another, even wider, and more relevant and more honorary, context and company, namely between two folders that are called “Mount Bushmore, farcitragedy in soap-opera format” and “Overground” (one tragicomix in the format of road-movie and one in the format of space-movie) addressing the general public and presenting Mumford in a way making possible the interaction of his work with the work and activism of men-for-all seasons for our season like Neruda and Theodorakis (that bigger folder is called “www.johnalevizos.net” and is the way all this shows on the internet; “Mount Bushmore...” was installed about three weeks ago (and it will be googlable through key words occurring in it etc a couple of months after installation, they told me) and the rest of the site’s files will be installed more or less at the time you’ll be receiving this, I mailed the PDF’s downtown for installation on the same day as your letter. If you decide to also take a look at the artistic part of the CD, I’ll be happy to send you the soundtrack of “Mount Bushmore”, namely “Canto General” by Neruda and Theodorakis, which I refrained from doing just in case a second CD made my letter sound as implausibly pressing as a homework assignment or something... Well, I can’t resist sending it to you anyway; I’ll just mail it separately, some days later, so that you don’t receive it the same day and possibly feel strange)

With the deepest esteem for your work and eagerly waiting for your feedback
which I will be grateful to receive any time your obligations allow

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