

This is not an argument for physical as opposed to digital books. A book is a book, regardless of the format. What really matters is where that book ends up, in the reader's head or somewhere in the ether, or in the din of white noise that is social media. Social media—Twitter, Facebook, and all that have followed them—and endless texting, have become a plague that has caused serious harm to the mental function of individuals, institutions (including a press that chooses to believe blogs are journalistic sources), and the collective mental functions of our society. There is real danger here. I'm not talking about texting while driving, although that is insane. It is like trying to read a map while going 75. (I have seen people do that too.) Rather consider the tragic but common scene of people together, groups or couples, busily exchanging texts with people who are somewhere

else, or even sadder, people who are actually in the same room. Their physical bodies are the zombie avatars of the infantile, narcissistic fluff that has overtaken what was once their minds and memories. Space, time, and memory have collapsed to create a digital prison. This is the diametrical opposite of the memory palace, where people had the ambition of taming and reshaping huge chunks of knowledge

and creative work in order to advance their own innovations.

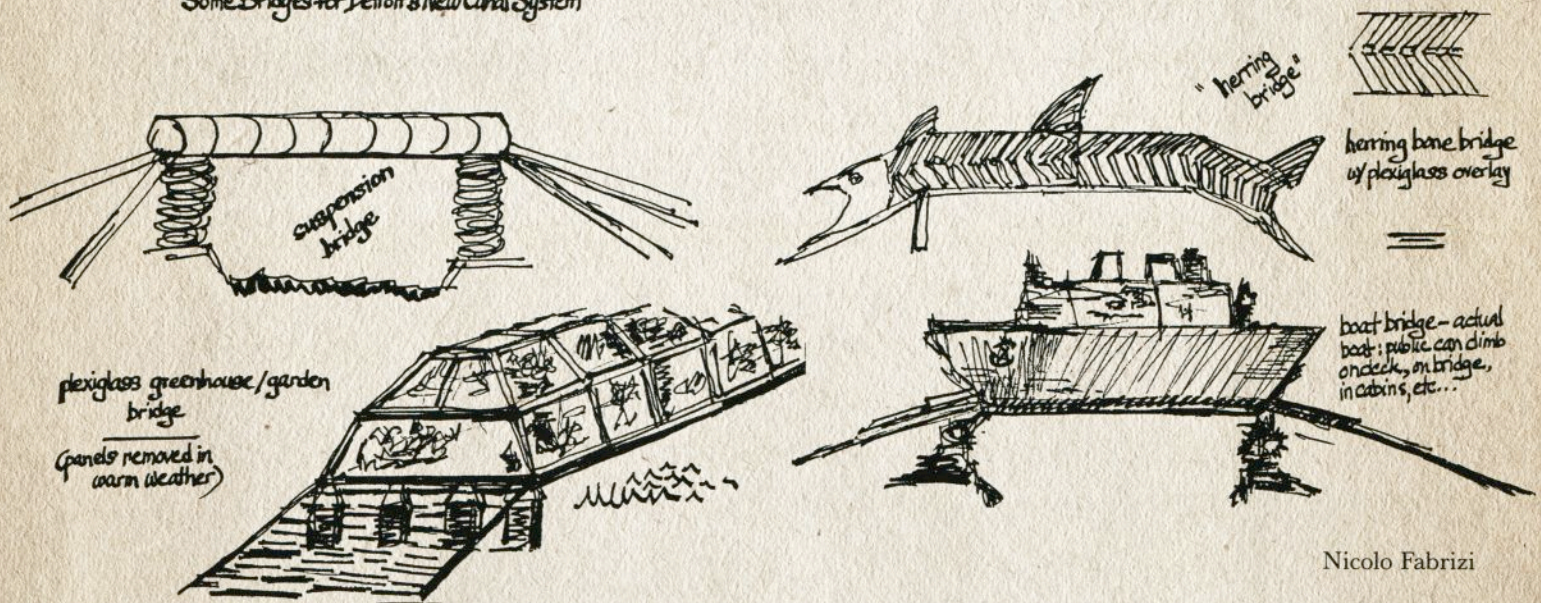
We have become a society obsessed with the preservation of memory on the most literal level. The fear of Alzheimer's disease has touched almost everyone. I admit to the same anxiety. But it is never too late, young or old, to build a memory palace. Think how much more fun it would be to read books of all different sorts, rather than memorizing number

sequences or image grids to stave off dementia. It is unnecessary to be restricted by the Harvard Bookshelf or someone's idea of the hundred greatest books. Read widely and with an open mind, be surprised how often you find brilliance, and how often in a place you never expected. Be a memory hero; start building the palace now.



A week after "The Practical Utopia in Detroit Revisited" (*Caliban Chronicles* #9) came out, an interesting op ed piece in the *New York Times* appeared: "Let's Build a New Bridge. No Cars Allowed." by Mark Vanhoenacker. With the idea of oneiric bridges passing over canals still rolling around in my head, I was struck when Vanhoenacker said London's Millenium Bridge was "both a destination and a transport link." That was exactly what I was arguing for! Then he delivered the best line of the piece: "the iron grace of bridges remains our simplest metaphor for connectedness and uplifted civic space." Wow. His poetic line excited me so much I decided to reprint Nicolo Fabrizi's selection of bridges from the original project in *Caliban* #6 (1989):

Some Bridges for Detroit's New Canal System



Some recent book releases from our contributors:

Diane Wakoski, *Bay of Angels*, Anhinga Press, Tallahassee, Florida, 2013, \$20.00

Nico Vassilakis, *Letter of Intent*, 2013 (visual poetry)
(<http://www.scribd.com/mobile/doc/168267849Nico>), no charge

(This will be a regular feature of *Caliban Chronicles*, so we are asking contributors to keep us updated on new book releases.)