

## ***The Anonymities***

THE ANONYMITIES.

The Eighth Day.

They introduce me as a Sculptor.

They might as well introduce me as a sailor, or a half-hearted adventurer - or a half-hearted scrounge, or a half-hearted househusband; or as the husband of so and so, Mr. Rose Charline Walker Durchanek. I write too, but its awful.

I suppose I ought return to woodcarving; when I'm carving wood I'm imagining all the poignant things I will write when I get through carving; at least I feel poignant; that's something.

The poignant pause.

What is it upon which one could possibly wax (oil) poignantly?

Before I attempt to answer that query, allow me to peruse the issues of relevance and effectiveness.

We have all pondered the paradox "Is there a sound when the tree falls in the forest, if there is no one to hear?" Inferentially one might also ponder "If one is to wax poignantly, and if there is no one available to receive the Message, can it be said there is a Message?" If one was an immensity, as perhaps there are immense trees in the forest, perhaps the sound would carry beyond whence it fell, as might the poignancy, or anything emanating from an immensity.

Well, of course, this is another of my absurd comparisons. The tree might sound poignantly to itself. I'm not so much an immensity as a grandiosity. One suffers with his grandiosity. One also suffers from the idiocies of his fellow azzoles, however well-meaning.

One could become an ex-patriot, or an ex-planetarian. But really, the word MUST emanate from the Source; the Source must exist as an Immensity. Without establishing some credentials, one has no right to be heard, although he may inherit the right to wear the ass's ears in order to be recognized, and be allowed to speak. He may also inherit the right to listen to others, since he owns EARS. Only The Source may speak and may be heard, even though he wears no ass's ears, and even though he is truly an ass. It all goes to say any ass may speak (bray.) A person might get himself nailed to a cross nowadays, claiming he is sacrificing himself to save mankind; since this little scene has been enacted before, he would be characterized as an ass. And why not the first one? Its all in the perception. Asses become transformed into something else; its all a trick of the imagination, the imagination influenced and inflamed by a wish (desire). To quote Clint, 'Everybody has an opinion like everybody has an asshole' (crude, but poignant).

As I have mentioned, in the beginning, I am mostly a half-heartedness, heavily infused with some grandiose impulses; perhaps as a pathological incident.

When I played baseball, I never hit a home-run. I liked to play first base or left field. I couldn't pitch, or throw particularly far; and

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catching scared me. I was, in short, an embarrassingly ordinary sand-lot participant. Even if I had hit a home-run as a sand-lot performer, and even though I might be possessed of the most poignant thoughts, if I had spoken, my Message would not have carried, for I was not a vested entity. "Who do you think you are; just because you hit a home-run, you think you have a right to be heard?"

Well, in the Big Leagues, in the mythological 'Pie in the Sky' area of performance, in the Great Temple of Baseball, where something is vested, and because it is vested, it is the Source, where, if anyone hits a home-run, he is guaranteed to be heard. We will hear all about the virtues of underarm deodorants, and how stalwart was the pitcher who mistakenly threw the ball which eventuated in the home-run. Home-runs in the Big League result in Instant Wisdom.

Wisdom is everywhere; we eat it, breath it, evacuate it; we hear it, see it, touch it, feel it, speak it, but it does not appear as relevant, and is not effective unless some charisma (a Big League Home-run Hitter, or President (even an ass as President), or some Harvard-trained Mule with Huge Ears, catalyzes a process which causes or effects a sonority and a rhythm to which we will (respond). Worst of all, the Wisdom could be no more significant or poignant, or truly relevant, than the 'pushing' of underarm deodorant which we will be sure to procure before we go THERE (wherever it is we are going - to the concert, to entertain guests, to bed). In its Wisdom, the Source has proclaimed, "It is not good to smell bad." We are hemmed in by the Message. In short, (we) create Relevance.

The Source puts on its ears and states poignantly: "It is not nice to smell" (reek of some animal). We rush off to the Vested Market, somehow gliding through the embarrassment of procuring (admitting we stink) the ODOR-BAN - to annoint ourselves, in our priv-a-see, all those offensive areas, before we go There.

They insist I am a sculptor, although I deny that I am one. I swear, they must have their ass's ears tucked away somewhere upon their person. It is not so much of a poignant statement to deny that one is something he is not. Now, if the Harvard-trained ass poignantly states: "He is a sculptor.", contradicting the facts in the case, how is one to get at the truth; or to say it another way - 'there's a hell of a cacophony in the Forest'. If I went about proclaiming: "I am a Sculptor.", they would not accept the fact that I was one until some Yahoo from the Source had proclaimed I was a sculptor. In fact I had tried to say 'I am a Sculptor' after I had studied some, obtained a fellowship, and even had produced some work. In stating, "I am a Sculptor." I had hoped to qualify for further study, or grant-in-aid in order to continue performing. I was informed, in so many words, "you ain't good enough". Then, why is it some people insist I am something I am not. Even if I was, "Who needs sculpture?" Some collector? He's got plenty. The Society in

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which the sculptor lives?; yea-saying the temporal world by sculpting some hairy animal using deodorant? Sculpting DECADENCE? Or sculpting a sculptor writing, writing off the whole damned human condition because of what it is? Sculpting Ass's ears? How amusing!!; and Relevant? But not effective, unless getting oneself shot or banished is considered effective. Drink Hemlock, you'll like it.

Am I then to be regarded as a writer? Since my writing is not three dimensional, and out where it can be seen, and since it is not read in any case, how can anyone say: "He is a writer."? Since remnants of my old self still remain, I am known by my remnants, which I am not allowed to escape. My new self - well, I am very, very, very reluctant to call myself anything. Perhaps the husband of RCWD is what I am; but to say, 'I am a writer'; who would believe me?

I do not believe it myself. But I am not Relevant. Are you really the husband of RCWD? Isn't she your wife? Does she sculpt too?

Who can wax poignantly in this terrarium? What can fall or be heard in a wet terrarium? I am not immense enough to bray. And, it is always not nice to smell.

As a Source (a famous writer, let's say (on the NYT Bestsmeller List), I would be aloud to speak without donning the big ears. I could say most anything I wished, as long as I did not attack the State or the Church, at least on their own turf. I could eulogize them on their own turf; I could even PUSH deodorant (implying in another way that they reeked of some kind of animal). What is Relevance?

It is my way to wander off, to follow my nose, as it were. What is the scent? AYE! What is the Scent?

What has preceded? A Prelude?

If someone was introduced to me as a sculptor, or a writer, I might conjure a very different image than a person who was unfamiliar with these 'professions'. To me a sculptor may evoke a not too different image than yours; Praxiteles or Myron; certainly Michelangelo, and Rodin, and even perhaps, the whole host of others, including all the pre-historic anonymities. To you also, it may include the makers of roadside cupids and birdbaths, or even carvers of gravestones.

Sculptor means something, in addition, to me, in that my father had received that baptism, as did I; each of us because we engaged in activities that resembled those of the more notorious performers who have passed before us.

Having participated in the 'profession', even amateurishly, acquaints one with some of the facets, or elements of that endeavor. One eventually learns that the enemy of any endeavor is Time. This fact becomes particularly evident when involving any great undertaking such as a monumental piece of sculpture, or a novel, or a symphonic piece of music. If one cannot envision unlimited space-time before him, then,

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immediately, a 'work' begins to 'lose' something. If one's consciousness is preoccupied with Time, getting a thing done by a certain 'time', 'squeezing a work in' after hours, or on week-ends (performing when one has the 'time') (or performing when one retires), or becoming 'somebody' by a certain age (earning the right [rite] of passage, so to speak) - THEN, the work suffers in quality, in depth, in all that it could possibly be. The more TIME prevails, the more slipshod the creative effort, the less it will be possessed of itself, becoming something lesser; the more embryonic, and near still-born. Thus, in having participated in the 'profession', one learns these facets first hand; that is, if he becomes reflective, and truthful with himself, not yielding to rationalizations and deceptions. What I have been describing then, provides an extended and expanded meaning to a sculptor, or writer, or Endeavorer. I do not wish really to tell you what a sculptor or a writer is. It is only that I wish to clear up the matter of what I am. The fact that A Harvard-trained person will introduce one as a sculptor or writer, or whatever, seems to anoint that introduction with some credibility whether or not it is true. He may only be repeating something he has heard from someone else, his wife perhaps, who has been to the bazaar where one 'hears all things'. One may inadvertently hear the Truth wherever he goes, and may or may not recognize 'Her'.

As a brief aside - suppose I was to introduce someone to you as 'He's a Harvard man, or she's the wife of a Harvard man', What would be your reaction; what imagery would this conjure in your scheme of things?

I do indeed want to rough-up this image, only a little, even though it may deserve a whole lot more.

I am curious to know what these who introduce one as a sculptor or a writer or endeavorer really think, and say out of earshot. or behind one's back. If it becomes common knowledge, and even if it comes from the Harvard connection, as long as one is still alive, while he may suffer embarrassment and denial, at least he will be able to defend himself by speaking the truth, whether or not he is believed - but if he is beyond speaking for himself, that is, Dead and Buried - then - well - there is no Then.

This very thing has happened to a man who has received great stature amongst us; a Writer of the first rank, who is now beyond recall in his corpus and three dimensionality (he stopped breathing in 1891). Having risen amongst the ranks, he, quite naturally, falls heir to examination in a Harvard Lit. Class, ordinarily construed as an honor and distinction accorded the few (us rankless ones are of no abiding interest).

If this writer-author could have foreseen what lengths modern, erudite literature classes will delve to uncover (discover) the 'truth', the essence, the substance, the core of a man, probing every nook and cranny, investigating even, Yes!, even what takes place in one's underwear; well,

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he might have 'covered his tracks'. But, can you imagine, instead of writing (spending one's Time writing -creating - with this one short life), spending one's Time creating an image, having anxieties concerning one's image, so that eventually, if one did become successful, successful enough to be included in a Harvard Lit. Class, he would not be vulnerable to some idle speculation. Of course, no matter how perfect one is, he will always be misunderstood and will most certainly fall prey to idle speculation; perhaps, especially, amongst the Brick and Ivy and Crimson of the prestigious halls of 'learning' at the Harvard Yard, in Cambridge, where one is encouraged and meant to flash his brilliance as a matter of principle, as a rite of passage. Intellectual 'put-downs' (character assassinations) are not considered in bad taste, but serve as emblem of a precociousness that symbolizes 'one has arrived', and indeed, that one is 'superior'.

I speak NOW of the assassination of Herman Melville.

I have not read everything there is to read concerning Herman Melville. I have read two full-length biographies of his life, most of his published writings, and a variety of analyses and commentaries upon his life and work. But not having attended a Harvard Lit. Class I was unaware of certain things; and although I should always be on guard in these matters, I did not realize the lengths scandal-minded professors and eager hotshot students would go to enlighten the world with what goes on inside a man's underwear (shorts); even unfounded underground underwear stories.

Herman Melville must necessarily be categorized as Pre-Freudian, perhaps placing him at a great disadvantage when one considers the usage of certain words in certain contexts and in certain relationships whether innocently and appropriately used.

Truly Herman Melville should have been a rake, a womanizer and a philanderer, and not sought the intellectual companionship, human companionship, kindred souls from within this world, all in order to be able to escape the 'inevitable' associations to be made and conclusions to be drawn from his activities, whatever they might have been. Make of them what you will Harvard. Harvard itself will deny any responsibility (hiding behind a concept of 'free inquiry') for what its students and graduates will promulgate. A lesser professor might argue sanctimoniously, 'the student did not listen'; Perhaps! The Harvard Lit Class is not above using quack publications written by biased authors (of a dubious sexual affiliation). To wit: Edwin Havilland Miller.

I should be careful not to throw the 'baby out with the bath water', that is, I'm confident there are some who attend that Institution whose human qualities, whose personal integrity transcends or obviates the atmosphere of the place. The score of those whom I have personally met who did not project a superiority or conceit, either as an extension of Harvard, or in their personality make-up (without invoking

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the Crimson Halls) has been one against four, with one to be considered a draw. One of the most obnoxious individuals I have ever heard speak from a public lectern as a person of 'great eminence', one awarded a Nobel laureate, has emanated (was 'spawned') from those sacred halls. What made him obnoxious?

I do not know the answer to that question, but he did utilize a large part of his lecture time sneering, in a most superior manner, at all the foibles and inadequacies (as he saw them) of his competition. Harvard does not toilet train its products.

I could inform you of the one individual whom I have personally encountered who did not measure up to the standard; perhaps later, in another context.

At this juncture I wish to return to the defenseless Herman Melville, who has been introduced to me by the Harvard Graduate who, en route to a bachelor's degree, had undertaken to study and analyze (or so he intimated) the work of Herman Melville as part of a Literature Survey Class at Harvard University. He concluded Herman was a homosexual; not firsthand, however, from the reading of his works.

In the Literature Class it is assumed nothing is 'sacred'; all is 'fruit' for idle speculation. It is further assumed Herman Melville donned underwear, and since it assumed he did, it is 'fair game' to grope about therein. Having been Pre-Freudian (that's like being pre-Oedipal) he was not only 'fair game' but RIPE. And exposed; actually 'fair game' for any hack gifted with a mean intellect. One justifies this kind of activity as 'learning through analysis'.

Herman Melville left some words behind (couldn't take 'em with him) and some associations that clearly show he was a queer. Ahab put his wooden leg (peg) in an auger hole. He chose Moby Dick as a title for that epistle, which also delivered Ishmael and Qeequeeg into the same bed. Besides, in his search for intellectual companionship, human companionship, a kindred soul, in his lonely walk through life, he sought the friendship of one Nathaniel Hawthorne (A Male)(To be sure?).

Therefore Herman Melville was a homosexual. Inferentially, was Nathaniel?

No, of course not.

But if you are like me and wish to malign the sacred...

Herman is not Sacred. I am not Sacred. And Harvard is not Sacred. A stalemate.

What is a Stale Mate? A male companion in whom one has lost interest?

I wish neither to comment upon homosexuality or whether, if Herman was a homosexual, what such an inclination contributed to his literature.

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There exists a generalization or two that constantly reappears in popular culture, that artists, per se (say), tend to be 'queer', 'odd', eccentric, and even pathological. Surely, many of them do not fit the model. If one should succeed, through whatever combination of virtuosity, technical skill, imagination, or favorable coincidence of the stars, he or she is likely to fall heir to scandalmongering; there is no escape from this reality.

Most of the great artists have had their underwear probed, and many have been 'found wanting' for the lack of a better expression, or have been 'found lacking', for the want of a better expression.

If Herman Melville had been exemplary (which could mean, if he had existed as STONE in every respect), but happened to love animals, or dogs, let's say, would he have been considered an animal lover or a 'lover' of animals?

As far as I know I have not let slip any Freudianism that would impugn me as a homosexual, although I have used such epithets as 'cocksucker!', 'peckerhead!', 'fucker!', 'fucking bastard!', queer, monk's cloth, blow job, Ω; even 'gay'; you get the drift. To my knowledge, Herman never even thought such things. If he had gone West in our early days to observe the scene as we formed our More Perfect Union, and made the World Safe For Democracy he might have queried, "Is civilization a thing distinct, or is it merely an advanced stage of barbarism?", instead of, "Holy Cow, look at all them Ωucking Indians!".

Was Herman Melville ramming it up somebody's ass when Ahab stuck his peg leg into an augur hole?

Moby DICK.- Dick Tracy!

Ishmael and Qeequeeg - score 1.

Nathaniel Hawthorne - Does it take one to know one? Was there unrequited love? Miller and Whitman!??

Where it all began is immaterial. Whether the gay people in the world want to believe that everybody is Gay - I suppose if everyone was only a little gay, a 'bi', let's say, then those who are, find a commonalty, and feel part of a larger brethren, feel less odd, less marked, and less vulnerable. Perhaps the Harvard undergraduate was masking his own ambivalent sexuality.

But, for a prestigious institution to allow and legitimize the probing into underwear as a proper investigative function of a literature survey class - perhaps it is proper, given our seeming proclivity for prurience. 'Anything Goes' in the classroom, under the Brick and Ivy. Long-haired smut, in lieu of ethnic jokes? AIDS in the Wings, Love?

In the last analysis, it must be said it is we who suffer the taint; we become suspicious that everything begins and revolves about one's underwear. In another discussion, I have rankled in the abuses to which

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Freud, Darwin, Christ and Marx have been subjected by the dim-witted, and those of a meaner, narrower disposition.

One step further; to suggest in the aforementioned classroom to the impressionable mind, awed by the tradition, the Source; for the Source to even unkennel such a notion that the moon is made of green cheese; does that unfrocking become the responsibility of the Source? Scandal does sit on the high road mocking all the passers by! The Crimson Tide - a reddish hued bath!

I am not a sculptor; I am not a writer. I am not a sculptor as defined in the spirit, context, example, or tradition of a Michelangelo, Rodin, Ernest Barlach, who are Sculpture to me, and neither am I a sculptor in the spirit, context, example or tradition of a more anonymous entity. I am not a writer in the spirit, context, example, or tradition of a Herman Melville, Charles Dickens, Thomas Wolfe, James Agee, or James Joyce, who are literature to me; neither am I a writer in the spirit, context, example, or tradition of less accomplished and notorious, but virtually anonymous writing entities.

I am not a cocksucker, pederast, or sodomist. I am not a Harvard graduate.

But if I wanted to enter the lists as an IDLE SPECULATOR, I could trot out my one favorable, personal Harvard experience, just to illustrate that all are not the same, and that there are those who rise above all the snobbery into another realm of performance.

As preliminary, I would mention, as a Source, the Saturday Review of Literature, purported to be a high-minded periodical that had examined the contemporary American Arts and Literary scene (not only on Saturdays). Anyone even marginally interested in current literary successes and directions might have perused this magazine, if only to gather what the title portended, even if not familiar with its somewhat accepted place in the literary world. That being the case, those wishing to contact others of like interest, might use its Personals (advertising space) as a convenient place to solicit for one or another of the connections, permutations or extensions of the literary interest or pastime.

Thus it happened Fate decreed I should peruse those very same Personals found in one such periodical 'way back when', of a spring, as I resided in my twenty-fourth year. Therein I discovered an advertisement which drew a response from me. It sought a caretaker, preferably of a writing bent (bent on writing), for a property in Chappaqua, New York. I responded to the add, providing some scant assessment of myself, mailing this iffy summation to the designated BOX, never expecting to hear, not one whit. Months later, after I had forgotten, and was about to depart for a fellowship somewhere else, I received a much stomped envelope that had traveled from New York City, to



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Oregon, only to return to (upstate) New York, the contents of which indicated a favorable reply to my long-ago response; and would I be interested in arranging an appointment, etc., an event, which, in fact, did transpire.

A man had placed the advertisement in the periodical. His name was Edward Aswell. I knew nothing about him; he knew more about me from my letter. He suggested I come to the city in order to meet him at the Harvard Club in N.Y.C., at noon for lunch. I complied.

We lunched in that ostentatious hall - not before we had procured a bow tie from a waiter for me in order to spruce up my casual attire (only a small formality; at least they did not inspect my underwear). We talked.

The man was in his fifties, I would estimate. He seemed earnest, which later discoveries has led me to reaffirm. He truly sought a caretaker for his property in Chappaqua. He confided to me his own son, to whom he would gladly have extended the same offer and more, was not particularly interested in living there.

Mr. Aswell thought one interested in following a career as a sculptor might find the Chappaqua property not to his liking, for no real facility existed for the nominal requirements of a sculptor. But if writing was one's game, then, he would consider me for that position - as live-in writer-caretaker adequately compensated while so engaged. What better offer; one should be amazed and grateful.

True, we met at the Harvard Club. As an alumnus, he most likely whiled a good many hours there, since he lived and worked in the city. It seemed the most 'natural' meeting place; he was not attempting to impress me. It was an impressive place nonetheless. In lieu of being a live-in writer-caretaker, Mr. Aswell sounded the possibilities of my being interested in attending Harvard University; if so, he would pave the way. I do not believe he was attempting to impress me; I believe he was sincere in all he was saying; I do not believe he was attempting to proposition me.

I informed him I had already planned to accept a fellowship elsewhere, pursuing the career of sculptor.

It was not until some 25 years later I learned of and recalled Edward Aswell, as I read a biography of Thomas Wolfe.

Without going into the reasons for saying these things I believe it was Edward Aswell's 'love' of Thomas Wolfe, as a person, and the interest and belief in Wolfe's creative work, that prompted him to seek out those, or someone, to assist them, or him, in their, or his, endeavor as artist-writer. I believe Edward Aswell held an abiding interest in the creative writer, and knowing some of the hardships of the Thomas Wolfes, he attempted to assist them. At the time of the interview (1958) Edward Aswell was an editor for Doubleday.

I did not feel any condescension from this man; no conceit; no Harvard hangover. I did not appreciate fully his offers, nor was I in a

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position to do so. Whereas his own son had not fulfilled some ambition he had entertained for him, I was 'helplessly' bound in a spell of attempting to fulfill some vain and vague ambition my father had entertained for me.

I did not fulfill that ambition, which to this day remains unclear in my mind, as it must have been in his. It was right then, that I should not have accepted any offer made, considering the lack of any true commitment.

I am not a sculptor, nor am I a writer. I have played into the hands of Fate, being allowed the privilege to engineer my own downfall.

If I had had the balls, I would have told my father to take a flying fork at the moon. But when one has been castrated, he has no thingies with which to exercise such an option. By the time I was in need of the Edward Aswell, he was dead. He died three months after our meeting at age 58.

On the Eighth Day, other possibilities had existed; instead this befell us.

Regarding Herman Melville.

As a kind of addendum it should be mentioned that, as a species, we are too quick to judge. I do it all the time. We are also inclined to seek to find mirrors of ourselves. There must be some reason for this kind of behavior; I am not aware of the reason.

I have written of this in Mien Hump *Leviticus*. I wanted to show what happens when scandal mongering reaches the Marquee.

99% of scandal mongering is based on hearsay and innuendo. None of it would sustain an argument in a court of law.

The Scandal mongers are of a low sort, who try to achieve notoriety, and other venues to satisfy their conceits. If these ones are successful in finding some kind of dirt (soiled underwear) in those who have achieved; they feel an exposure is in order for which they will be rewarded.

Herman was 'gay'; by inference, every male with whom he came in contact was gay. Abraham Lincoln was 'gay'; by inference, then?

Walt was 'gay'; Gore was 'gay'; Leonardo, Michelangelo; and so on and so forth. Nearly everybody is 'gay' by inference. especially these assholes who start the rumors.

Does it bother me; only in the sense that, I want to get my hands on those who tarry too much with gaiety. Bunch of low lifes who have a great dislike for people engaged in the arts. Probably just a lot of misplaced envy. Lah Dee Dah.