

## *Upon The Horizon*

### IV

### The Island

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I had heard voices, listening to many; remembering some, and forgetting many ; some uttering malice, some jesting, some relating the matter of fact, and others simply and nonchalantly passing the time of day. I had become some sort of instrument one might attempt to play. How will he sound this note? Can he be trusted? 'This must go no further than these walls.' Even Truth must bow to the needs and dictates of the hour. Had I not become a spy inadvertently, and a repository of dangerous information, even if the facts had been considered common knowledge by others? They had asked me to hold my tongue. Had I been compromised into alliances? The price of friendship?

Was it all so complicated?

I held my tongue.

I do not propose to reveal anything at this time. Everyone has a fair portion of open wounds that need healing, however acquired, or inflicted. As compensation I'll tell you all you need to know about myself. You have heard enough!?!?

Am I thus remaindered to gross generalities and composites? Personalities and issues are a common occurrence, sometimes in dramatic, sometimes in colorful array and configurations.

Needless to say, because we are dealing with men and women as raw productions of themselves and not some illusory configuration of the elements, permutations of strange events or places, phases of lunar bodies, anfractuositities of the Milky Way, confluences of Black holes, vortices of the Universe, or other arrangement of electrons, mesons, z sub-atomic particles, brownies, proglies, fate, or dark evil forces, it is to be expected and predicted that men and women will behave as men and women behave everywhere.

It is believed and put forth by some Tolstoians, that each and every man and woman harbors only good intentions, even the bad ones amongst us, although some criminologists will argue that some are simply incorrigible. Incorrigible does not signify all bad intentions.

Even if I was to assume that the 'bad' person deserves all the licks he receives despite Jesus' admonition to "Forgive", I may be simply throwing my voice into the crowd that rides the bandwagon to persecution. When a man or woman commits a bad act it is easy for the whole, the collective, to condemn him. And in proud retribution I had heard him say "If the bad act he commits affects me or my family in any way, I may surrender all reason in the case."

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Somehow I must escape the particulars which would expose those whom I would presume to bioiograph to some light that would tend to embarrass them, even if the Truth had not been violated.

Therefore I elect to remain neutral forthwith, determined not to betray confidences, reserving my partiality for condemnation of any principle or rationale that would allow for the tainting of Paradise.

This Island in which I shall presently become immersed has to my knowledge not spurned me or condemned me; in some cases it has accepted me, even so much as extending itself in a warm welcome, much to my surprise, this latter an unfamiliar circumstance within the urban community. I do not know most of the Islanders, although I may recognize faces and associate them with names, causes, deeds, and as 'One of Them'. I am aware that factions have formed and issues have polarized the residents. Howsoever, I may tend to demonstrate a bias in my ignorance, because I have apparently tended to flock with only one segment or faction, being somehow excluded from the other. Guilt by Association. I am convinced I would exhibit a bias from my own ignorance, allowing myself to be influenced by the strong feelings of those with whom I keep company. It is however my tendency to probe deeply into those feelings wherever possible in order to learn the seat and significance and dimension of the emotions involved, preferring to find a rational basis to one's critical condemnation and rejection of his fellow man.

Each and every faction is peopled with homo sapiens who quite often would rather not be held accountable to reason, preferring one's prejudice, believing there are too many occasions where reason compromises one against his intuition, better sense, and perhaps baser instincts .... In saying this I am aware I am only marginally ennobling my fellow man. It is my limitation that I should measure all men against myself ... and pray tell, who am I?

I am not without some self-consciousness in these writings. I have had drawn to my attention that my VOICE tends to vacillate. What I have interpreted this to mean may be found in my seeming slippings, or reversions to a cruder style (irreverences); to wit: my classifications of 'pissers' and 'non-pissers' and general reference to Quack-ups. This does reflect one VOICE which may seem inconsistent with the more high-minded philosophical or poetic transports in which one pretends to couch a more polished and literary rhetoric.

I am unschooled, but not 'uncultured'. I am formative, and shall remain so until I leave these environs and trappings - or sensibility fails me entirely. Claiming formativeness at my age may seem to polemicize in the hope of escaping some kind of judgment; perfection of artistic form and sensibility thus eluding me as an act of willfulness. I must confess to a feeling of great discomfort when too neatly packaged, as though the package has become the thing of the moment, to the exclusion

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of the contents. A scuff on the freshly polished shoes, or the blackhead, or mole, whiff of the animal, simply appear as some grossness too absurd to be accounted. If one is destined to be subjected to such discomfort he might as well go about naked as did Diogenes. However mine is not to flaunt or unnecessarily mock, but only to feel comfortable through resisting a too rigid conventionality of manner.

Confronted directly with flaws or lacks I have been encouraged by RCWD not to apologize.

Do not interpret what I write to mean something it does not. I must live within the boundaries of my personality and not within the absolutisms of a literariness, even as much as I might appreciate this in others; and I do appreciate in others something which does not afford me the latitude I seek in personal expression. Yes, I am of the quippy sort. While I am engaged in the act of writing, regardless of the solemnity of the theme and my own serious respectful regard of the most momentous and most solemn issues and occasions, I do not lose my awareness of the paucity of the language. I cannot fail to be humored by some turn of phrase or quirk of the language as well as some quirk in my own nature. I am aware, as well, I wield a broken lance and dull sword. It is the realization that language (sound) is both the organ and method, and the limitation of a given form of communication. At one time I had conceived the notion of writing a poem composed with the use of one single syllable/word/sound, expressed over and over again in the myriad intonations and inflections of voice signifying love, hate, joy, sorrow, anger, rage, exhilaration, frustration. UGH purported to be the nominal choice of sounds.

At times I do wish to convey to you only a serious demeanor, unseasoned with smart-aleckness, wishing to stimulate serious contemplation, or move you to action, while at the same time feeling an existential question mark hovering above all thought and action. Thus my inclination to mock my own words, or to play amidst the seriousness, realizing most of what I am and what we are as individuals goes for naught. Nonetheless, I consider myself mostly serious (moralizing), and tedious and boring for those reasons, wary under those circumstances in a mood of solemnity, but perhaps equally aware of overdoing the playfulness with words and ideas.

Thus, in summation, what you feel and read is not some literary production, but a person such as he might be, attempting to enjoy what he is about as much as create an impression.

I realize the net result of this rationalizing projects some form or irresolution; at least an unending parade of loosely connected schizophrenic persuasions. RCWD would label this last an apology. William James might proffer that, in all artistic endeavors, one finds a certain amount of pathology.

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A memorable decal pasted to the rear window of the old green American pickup tends to sum up the position of humanity everywhere, but perhaps more appropriately upon The Island. First one observes a translucent colored rainbow in the form of an idealized arc, and upon closer scrutiny, at its base, one reads: "Ho Hum, Another Shitty Day In Paradise" Hah! Why Appropriate? In my opinion a most apt phrase for the owner of the vehicle. Although I know mostly nothing about him, having spoken to him only briefly regarding some land surrounding his own, I am left to my own imagination to guess at the hows and whys of human relationships and the failure of Paradise to salve them, repair them, bind them; to ward off the evils of a life bent on going its own destructive way, sometimes right straight to hell.

The man was polite, and did not consider my presence an intrusion, giving freely and cordially what information he could -over a cup of coffee. We spoke briefly of the plans he had had for the unfinished house before the end had come, the new representing, as yet, an unknown.

Appropriate, because irreconcilable differences rived what Gud had put together betwixt he and another, from which was born a child unable to be divided in two; one might venture to guess some abandonment of the flock by the Chief. Having experienced a riving in my own life I could only acknowledge and speculate how one might feel "Shitty" regardless of where he might find himself upon Earth or in Paradise. The loss of a person to whom one had become attached, and toward whom one eventually became embittered, seems to me tantamount to some abject pathos; when considering this as the most finite of lives.

However common an occurrence upon The Island, riving always leaves someone in the throes. It has been opined by some that the advent of the New Year seems to carry with it some sort of ritualized behavior amongst a number of the 'counterculture' contingent bringing about a change in marital or consortial partners; with such regularity that one youngster was heard to remark that she and her brother were the only children in school still living with their original parents. However not to single out this facet of human behavior, relegating one group to possible public calumniation, they are not the only ones finding it difficult to 'stay the course' in Paradise. As a matter of fact, some are so oblivious to their behavior as to become the laughing stock of all, not without its own fair share of pathos. Those who are betrayed appear most forlorn, doubtlessly severely embarrassed in a rejection amplified in a dastardly public exposure, in this relatively small community, where the 'Hot Line' often seems to announce and precede an event long before its happening. Typical was the sale of a piece of machinery. The seller, in answer to my question 'To whom', deferred to the buyer "I can't tell ya; he doesn't want people to know." (At least he revealed it was a he). Nonplussed, and feigning respectfulness, I

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accepted the reply. Within the same day, the next individual I encountered, inclined to prattle, inquired after the fate of the seller, informing me he had sold his machinery to so and so. The not so ubiquitous so and so.

Though it is not particular to The Island, some of those I have encountered there appear to wish to live life with an unusual degree of intensity; perhaps in their own minds, to the fullest, verily sparing nothing. Spending the evening before T.V. congratulating themselves on well-earned hours before the tube is not the circumstance that satisfies. While one may yield to its seductions from out some boredom; in the end it is the tedium of wakefulness that seeks some involvement or resolution, perhaps hungering for some elusive pleasure, the naked throb next door, up island or down island. The resplendent sunrise or sunset, moonrise or star-studded heavens seem to go begging for viewers, almost as though this humanity had become satiated with the amenities, such they had become as ordinary and blas, as themselves. Perhaps satiation in one form of pleasure is simply not enough; it is the oppressive wakefulness that screams for oblivion. In lieu of endless rounds of Solitaire; Ah! Narcosis, blessed is thy salvation! The 'boozevors' reach for the tankard, the 'trippers' for the *mary jane*, coke (acid free), uppers (reds), magic mushrooms; gunpowder, animal's blood, and chainsaw grease strained through sheep dung; Ah!, the blessed transport of body and soul, both heightened and dulled, intertwined in soothing abandon, until neither can prevail against exhaustion. One climbs aboard the horseless carriage, driving it into a tree, over a cliff, runs over his worst enemy or his dearest friend; or perhaps one falls into a swooning slumber, awry, disheveled, untucked, to awake puffed and red-eyed, perhaps covered with blood or vomit, the head in a vise, or askew, and out of focus, swearing at the world that has let in too much light and has dared to move, and din away crashing against the eardrums. One has lived to the fullest. One had been laid, while floating on a magic carpet over the precipice into a paisley kaleidoscope. UGH. With fried brains.

*Si vis vitae, para mortem.* Thus I sit in judgment.

I am unable to determine if this is any truer statement than:

Drugs are a serious Social Problem or; Tedium is a serious Social Problem or;

War is a serious Social Problem; or

Is Death a serious Social Problem?

Dishonesty, unfairness, social inequity, racism, ignorance, arrogance, bigotry, prejudice, insolence, pettiness, egocentricity have serious social consequences if ignored. Hunger, poverty, rejection, lovelessness, are all part of the human condition. They remain with us as some awful persistency, like a mongrel or stray cat. We may not desire them as our companions, but they haunt us wherever we go. They also



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fill our lives, keeping our eyes from the clock or calendar. Then, upon a day, one awakens to observe an oddly colored hair; regardless of its former color, it has matured into slate. Once the yellow corn stalk had been green.

Dylan Thomas has sung in 'Under Milkwood' "Time Passes" and in 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' he has admonished "Rage, Rage, against the dying of the Light" (Dylan was nominally a poet, often pickled, and dead at 39.)

Human existence remains a mystery to its host. It is often intolerable on a variety of levels. On occasions we have sought abatement or relief from the persistency of the human condition. T.V., Prayer, Drugs, Suicide, War, are a few of the more radical remedies. The human condition is intensified in its gross number. Genocide is a concept that arises from the pressure of number. Genocide actually appears as a solution to number. In lieu of partition, apartheid, enclaves, reservations, boundaries, our arsenals contain lethal neutrons, chemicals and diseases in order to effect a consideration of options. After reading this unfavorable assessment who wouldn't reach for the social elixir and the radiance of brotherly love.

One need not impugn the Island unfairly, nor disproportionately award it prizes for elevated social behavior; nor ought one deprive The Island of its uniqueness.

A letter to the editor from an Islander appearing in a Mainland newspaper, representing the selfsame community most frequented by the Islanders, had stated, in essence, that 'those outsiders who criticized the growing of marijuana in Harmony Heaven had overlooked what the proceeds had contributed to the local economies'.

A local merchant reading the rationalization would ponder the salutary effect of the world's need and traffic in controlled substances. Where governmental bureaucracies, and private enterprise had failed to stimulate the lagging economy, an audacious fringe element had not been found wanting. Nicotine, caffeine, cacao, betel nut, chewing gum, ice cream, lollipops and extra-strength bullshit are not the answer to our social disequilibrium. Governments survive on the dole, private enterprise in controlling markets, and drug dealers because saccharine infusions do not suffice as a palliative for the balance of society, who, in its state of exclusion from the good life on this earth, waiting for the afterlife, need something, almost anything, to fill the emptiness.

Getting off on Nature is an O.K. proposition if you are able to find any 'Nature' that isn't Quucked over by government and free enterprise. A little dope or snuff, booze or designer drug enhances an otherwise

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mutilated landscape (mother earth). Then! By Golly!, its in the eyes of the beholder - Wowie!!

What might appear as too-good-to-be-true to the merchant casts a dark shadow over the men in blue uniforms with side arms. Whereas such activity may not have been unknown to them, and whereas they had conducted cursory raids during harvest time, a certain level of tolerance had existed. While normally the enforcers of law are needed everywhere, doubtlessly to flush more serious offenders than these, this flaunting of the tacit understanding society possessed concerning certain illegalities attendant to pot growing, they were hard pressed to answer to the apparent degree of permissiveness allowed. Such blatant activity inadvertently sealed the fate of the Island's contribution to the economy. The ensuing harvest was met with less than a cursory raid; more, by a determined effort with a plain clothes and a heavily armed contingent. In addition, the men in blue had begun investigations and surveillance, had made arrests, and had involved agencies in other countries to hunt and flush the malfeasant. The revenue agents had a hard time tracking gold bullion.

And, Alas! the media were quick to seize the opportunity to generate copy and footage - in exercising the public's Right To Know. Harmony Heaven was singled out by the protectors/scandal-mongers to answer questions with the cameras running. The Old Timers let it be known they were unhappy with the adverse publicity, but were truly glad something was being done. One complained he dare not utter to friends, customs agents, or casual acquaintances where he lived for fear of harassment. The obviously guilty, sometimes easily identified in their distinctive ensemble, attempted to elude the Big Eye, or would provide furtive or cute answers to probing questions. There had been enough information gathered for the discerning eye to rate inclusion in the evening news, as part of a week-long series on the Problem of Drugs within the Province. Harmony Heaven, singled out for the final episode, did not bask in the glow.

The Constabulary from the Big Island were compromised into making their validity a compresence with the world, notwithstanding the formidable separations comprised by bodies of water. Indeed they had been much in evidence, making several trips a week via Hovercraft (Coast Guard Vessels). The exact purpose of these visits had not been determined, initially giving cause for great concern amongst the 'counter culture' people; but latterly had given all Islanders cause to rue, since most of the vehicles on the Island were unlicensed, and uninsured. Alas, so it would seem we have host of offenders upon the Island. The Constabulary could not appear to single out certain types for citation; the 'straights', who had enjoyed many years of freedom from the watchful eye of the Law were more than annoyed at this costly turn of Fate. And to teach the Islander's the circumspection of the Law, the

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otherwise bumbling unlicensed driver, and unlicensed and uninsured vehicle characteristic of the Island's private transportation, had been succinctly ended with warnings of violation; followed by citations and fines. While the men in blue made no mention of seat belt infractions, the Islander's were not about to publicize the leniency of the Law in this regard.

Such were the repercussions on the Island that some of the residents (primarily the counterculture {..er .. alternative culture} contingent) had sustained what they labeled an "Image Crisis" convening an anonymous impromptu meeting at the Community Center, only marginally invoking one of its nominal public meeting aegis as pretext, to discuss Harmony Heaven's Image. All were enjoined to attend.

Indeed, the occasion did draw representatives from both sides, perhaps curious to learn of the meaning of the novelty of an Image. Pros and cons were discussed, the meeting moderated by a nominal member of the 'alternative culture' group. I had attended this meeting which provided some meaningful discussion as well as entertainment, along with some irrelevancies. There did not occur any out and out name calling like, "You goddamned pot growers", or "You goddamned rednecks", but some sharp confrontations did arise; at some point the objectivity and coolness of temper gave way to recrimination sparked by one Old Timer of some standing in the community, when he declared that "Everything was fine in Harmony Heaven until those draft dodgers and hippies showed up...", whereupon one of the mouth warriors from the other side of the isle took exception to such an all-inclusive and damnifying statement, declaring, "It wasn't the hippies; it was the greed of the potgrowers". Another claimed it was sos-and-sos letter to the Editor that started it all, much to the chagrin and embarrassment of its writer who confessed to her error. Still another suffered abuse for having aided the gendarmes in providing transportation for them, thus incurring suspicion as being some kind of informer. The most succinct statement of the evening came from one of the Old Timers "You wanta get rid of the cops, stop growing pot!"

The Constabulary was not present at the meeting. It was assumed that most of the counterculture people grow the stuff, and will probably continue to do so. Nobody really fessed up to growing the stuff; it was just implicit. There was some speculation that the 'commercial growers' were not in attendance; one would wonder if all the absent counterculturists were thus the source of the problem?

The body politic's seeming representativeness, if one excludes the Constabulary and the more nefarious, also included an attorney. The attorney, invited at whose request was unknown, but one who was obliged to travel from the Big Island to attend, and who had nominally been identified as a pot lawyer (his watercraft christened



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Crime Pays), provided information, mostly for the pot growers ears, concerning their rights which appeared to be non-existent given the power of a Constable armed with a Writ Of Assistance. Such Writ permits a named individual unlimited powers of search, even to the point of the demolition of one's private property, including one's home, and four walls, so to speak, and in an unannounced fashion in the dark of night upon the most inauspicious occasion (appealable?, of course?); and in the case of an ordinary Search Warrant, while naming the object thereof sought, even if the object thereof sought is not discovered, other materials noticed or found not described in the Search Warrant, later, whose possession is to be found in violation of the law, it is deemed one is not protected against prosecution for these other illegal possessions; fortunately more circumspection is required than in the case of the Writ as a means of gaining entry to one's premises.

In the end, if the Island had not already achieved a reputation of its own, perhaps justly earned therewith, from its share of clandestine enterprises, it was receiving one from those offenders charged with possession. When asked by the authorities as to the source of their '*mary jane*', they would reply "Why, That's Harmony Heaven Green". Harmony Heaven had become the scape goat for both the user and the public.

By way of recapitulation, the moderator, he, whom nominally represented the 'alternative culture' faction, conspicuously omitted the cessation of growing dope as a way toward improving The Island Image. He thought it more apropos to facetiously suggest an invitation to the Constabulary to engage in some sporting events as a way to improve the Harmony Heaven Image; to which another jocular soul added, "Yeah!, let's play hide and seek!"

As the meeting appeared to be nearing its end, one last hand was raised to speak. Ah!, Yes, a Man of God rose; he of an Anglican denomination, who came to the Island once a month to 'hold forth' in the church of The Good Shepherd. He spoke to the issue of Ecology as instrument to improve the Image of Harmony Heaven. His example consisted of suggesting the discontinuance of the practice of the abandonment of junk cars in the Church's parking lot. He further intimated The Island was a microcosm of the world; a flat utterance, if there ever was one, a pontification standing on its own merits. While all listened patiently to this seemingly loosely irrelevant, and mostly inappropriate banter, well, it all fell upon one's ears as a rude juxtaposition; yet all sat in perfect silence as though deafened by an explosion. I struggled to suppress a fit of laughter; It was as if someone had barged into the meeting casting into the throng a dead mackerel as divine revelation for all to marvel, and perceive yet wondrous things. No connection.

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The meeting accomplished little toward remedy or rectifying the tarnished image. Nothing was resolved, yet in summation one would have to say the whole developed into a refreshing 'gripe' session, as do most of the other public meetings involving forums for the Island's political candidates, issues regarding ferry service, hydroelectric power, the approval of a pub, the location of fish farms, log dumps, barge ramps, or mariculture leases, and albeit, Harmony Heaven's Image.

Where previous to the Island's notoriety, the men in blue (also referred as the In-Laws) made appearances only when summoned, they now made regular unannounced visits to the Island. They came in pairs and used their own vehicular transportation which, subsequently, they had installed upon the Island. They continued to issue warnings and serve written citations to the unlicensed driver and vehicle, as well as apprehend the pot-growers caught in the act; some rather childlike, certainly amateurish in their attempts to escape detection and capture.

For some time, a number of recalcitrants kept an ear to the ground (or the grapevine {the advanced guard} [minute men or women]) listening for the presence of the Law, this alert being maintained mostly to circumvent the vehicular licensing requirements. Indeed, even the school children could be heard shouting from the bus as it drove up or down island that the fuzz were about. Eventually one took too many chances, sustaining a substantial fine, and being deprived of further private transportation until licensing, insurance and fines were paid in full.

Harmony Heaven was thus delivered into the real world, and asked to live like decent folk everywhere.

The diminished 'trafficking', along with The Heat, caused some of the fringe and hanger's-on to depart Harmony Heaven, some rather suddenly. Marginal pilferings, breaking and enterings, and animal rustlings resulted in summonings of the Law without locating guilty parties; however, with the summoned infusion of the Law, a noticeable abatement occurred in this latter aberrant and malfeasant attempt at survival.

From all appearances, on the surface, Harmony Heaven would seem to have been restored to some marginally restrained social behavior. Doubtlessly Mary Jane would spontaneously burst uncontrollably from the earth, a self-perpetuating pest, a persistent threat to land owners and the dubious equanimity of a blessed life.

The discussions concerning drugs in general, proved most entertaining, but not especially enlightening, or conducive towards action one way or the other. Prayer in schools, abortion, gun control, terrorism, war, or drugs, do fill our waking hours, generating apprehension, unsettled and unresolved feelings. Occasionally we speak of love and the grandkids; the grandkids signifying and

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stressing our marked agedness; and the hope for the future. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we did not saddle them with our inadvertencies.

Germane to '*mary jane*', Mrs. Farmer, an educated lady, who had raised a family, and taught elementary education, thought it was O.K. for one to grow the hemp for oneself. Mrs. Farmer, being a person who ingested *nicotina glauca*, home made wine, and other alcoholic decoctions, and caffeinated substances, none of the ingredients of which she grew herself, lest of a year one obtained a good set in the orchard to ferment some plum wine, she tended to extend a fairmindedness, not limiting others to her own practices, feeling what a person did on his own was nobody else's business, so long as it did not harm others. She began to draw the line on two fronts, one involved trafficking, i.e. growing the stuff to sell, or to promote the use of the stuff beyond one's own environs; the other involved the more complicated area of honest folk doing honest work for an honest living, summarily calling the opposites 'cheaters', not without sound unprejudicial reasoning. She argues that cheating amounted to anarchy, something which was intolerable, and incompatible with leading a reposefully constructive existence. She would further argue that others who labored long and hard to earn a living would be stirred to envy by those who obtained the easy way by contravening law and social practice. Not that Mrs. farmer was an upholder of the 'status quo', per se. She maintained her own disagreements with the established order, and would be ordinarily sympathetic to those who quarreled openly with social inequities, racism, and man's inhumanity to man. While she might even nominally identify with and support a disenfranchised group (counterculture, let's say; or Flower Children) who were not part of the mainstream, and never could be, she would not abide irresponsible selfish activity that endangered others. To her, trafficking in drugs, even 'innocent' traffic in marihuana, ran too many risks down the line, whereupon pushers would eventually get to the children. To her, children were truly innocent, and sacred. She lost all reason at this point in her arguments, forced to draw the line. Yes, if it became necessary, in order to protect the children, then declare war on all the growers.

While the 'cheating' stirred envy and righteousness in others, it also developed in the cheater an enlarged devious and furtive behavior. Conscious of his own wrong-doing, it was as if badness became a sickness; since bad already, what harm is entailed in further badness. Only the fear of being caught had any restraining effect. It was a sad day when Mrs. Farmer learned that a close friend was growing *mary jane* on her and her husband's property. She learned subsequently, it was customary practice for offenders to grow the product on the government's or somebody else's land. The cheater had announced blatantly he had little personal integrity, little valuing his

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neighbor and friend. One thus began to hold the whole counterculture, 'love' children, contingent in suspicion; as ones not to be trusted.

Perhaps Harmony Heaven's image had suffered a taint in the eyes of the outside world, but what of its own internal image? Suspicion and polarization, a compelling situation in Paradise.

Mrs. Farmer was not one to routinely attend public meetings feeling she spoke her mind on enough occasions to have made her sentiments known to the thoughtful. While she might learn more rationalizations concerning a particular issue in a public forum, it was her belief that enough controversy filtered into her life without inviting more. When it became a matter of exercising her vote, if the ballot measure was not clearly defined, or the candidate waffled on the issues, neither received her vote. Voting prejudices or "Which side of the fence are you on?" did not appeal to her. Additionally, choosing from amongst evils simply perpetuated evil.

Mr. Farmer tended to put forth less reason than his Mrs. He empathized little with those who brought controversy and contentiousness into his life. While he believed in 'live and let live', he resented the efforts of the counterculture contingent to arrange Harmony Heaven as their private ecological niche in the Universe. Such activity interfered with his property rights, and he was adamantly against it. His seeming inflexibility extended to the pot-growers and pushers as well. He did not reveal his reasons, feeling he had no obligation to do so, adducing it was obvious what they were up to; and he was against it.

While both he and his Mrs. felt betrayed by the friend who planted cannabis sativa on their land, they said nothing and did nothing. Without hard evidence, only a firm suspicion, they did not confront their friend who lived nearby, and whom they knew to be a grower. They only hoped the exploitation would cease. Although the friend owned acreage equivalent in size to theirs, he had observed the basic rule to not grow 'grass' upon his own land. The more immediate problem for Mr. and Mrs. Farmer was how to conduct a hypocritical yet convivial relationship. All was not well in Harmony Heaven.

While Mr. and Mrs. Farmer justifiably felt slighted in their friendship with a seemingly unscrupulous entity, since the subject never reached an open confrontation, they were abandoned to their suspicions. He that might have seemed unscrupulous in a betrayal of friendship might only have thought if the patch was discovered by the authorities, all that would be required is the denial it was their doing. The fact remains it might have been another grower, not even suspecting whose land was in question; only that a source of water was available, and a place to secret the patch; perhaps one of many. Actually, during a day's walk about the Island, especially in the proximity of various watering holes, one might encounter the grave of, or the birth of, an 'enterprise in green'.

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And if one is to believe the Customs Officers, he or she is apt to find mary jane growing in any suitable place within the province; this information was volunteered after I had challenged the Officers to tell me why I had been stopped upon each crossing of the border, especially when I thought it hinged upon the stating of what I had imagined were the 'buzz words' of my destination: 'Harmony Heaven'. They would neither affirm nor deny my suspicions; nor would they impugn me as a naturally suspicious type. Perhaps it all goes to say that Harmony Heaven is indeed no different than any other place, and that to lay claim to special considerations either as den of malfeasance, or as the paradise it seems, would be to misconstrue its reality, as one might any other place - On This Planet.