

The Island

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Cow Punching.

A fellah dropped by the other day to borry a cupla bales a hay. It appears he hadda cow thet calved unexpectedly (one that had miscarried previously); he wanted to lure the cow and yung un to his pasture, rather than allow the pair to run amok on the Island. He needed hay for bait and possible entrapment. Then he asked me if'n the animals showedup to let'im know; an' he wondered if'n he could use the farmer's cattle shoot (chute) to load the bovine critters on ta his truck. He said he'd be along the follerin' day. Wall, on the follerin' day, the cow showedup, but it wuz a sorta miserable day, rainy and wet, so I didn't expect the Island Rancher to show; and sure enough, bein' a true laid-back Islander, he didn't show. He was also on the road gang, 'n' when the weather turned foul, those'ns tended to congregate in the restoreont, soakin' up java. Now thet I've maligned my fellah man, I may more contentedly continyoo. I tried raisin' him on the Islands version of B.C. Tel, without success. So I did the next best thing; I fetched and heaved some hay, and 'taters over the fence along the roadway near the gate in order tuh get them critters to hang around, sorta makin' 'em into drugstore cows, jest in case the cowpoke made it down this way on his roadmending rounds, or until I could raise 'im on the horn.

That wuz all for day one. On day two, the cow and calf, and all their travlin' companions showedup mooing for an encore. So more hay an' more 'taters, while I tried the telephone trick, again without any success.

THEN, I wuz struck by this altruistic wrench, my Samaritan tic gittin' the better of me; so's I thought, now if ah cood lassoe thet critter and lead 'er into the pastooore here, I could simply detain her until the fellah showed; that is, whenever the spirit behooved him.

So ah fetched a rope about twenty-five feet long or so, makin' a trusty bowline (not quite as easily as I had seen it accomplished in a class instructing potential seamen in the various knots one is apt to encounter as a seamen, which was accomplished one-handed with the flick of a wrist - I sorta had to think about it for a while) (where was I?); Oh! Yeah, a bowline, that would slip easily (that is, when the opposite end of the line was run through the opening of the bowline) (where was I?); Oh! Yeah, a bowline that would slip easily, and stay put.

Then a coarse I gotta figger how ta git thet rope 'roun' thet cows neck. Wall, mah cowpoke genes comin' to the surface made it happin pritty eeze; ah jes let 'er git contentedly chawin' on a mouthful of hay an' simply slipped the noose 'roun', slick as a symphony orchestra. A coarse ah had already tied t'othuh end to a fence post; but its a good

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thing ah dinna wrap it around mah fist, or mah layig, cause whin thet cow got to feelin' thuh restrain'in eeffect of hemp (not *mary jane*) aaaroun' her nick, she raazed a ruckus (wreck us), snortin' an' whatall. I tried valiantly to pull against her willfulness (cowheadedness) in order to git her intoo the pasture through a gate, a post of which she wuz tied too. But all the other beasts in her train (drugstore cowgirls and bullboys), were milling 'round' obstructing my designs, an' the cows on mah sahd uv the fence wuz tryin' tuh git out to munch on the hay I had given the out-uv-townners (a slight oversight [undersight, really]).

Well!, if'n yoo've evah tried to manhandle over a haff a tun of cow bent on not bein' manhandled, you might jest az well try to stop a meteor. Anyway, she gave wun helluva good lunge in the direction she wanted tuh go, an' all ah cood do wuz play thet lahne out thuroo mah gluvd han's (notice I wuz bright enuff to ware gluvs) 'til they wuz smoki' - soz I lit go, an' when she reached the end of thet tether tahd to the gate post, an' it went **SNAP ! ! !**, an' awayeee she wayent down thuh road weeith twenty feet uv rope danglin' beehind'er, her caff in hot pursuit.

I tried callin' the fellah again what owned the cow, without success; how do yuh measure success?

Next thing ah knowed, anotheh fellah showszup in his pickup, three kids in tow, an' he's tellin' me he sees this cow down thuh road with a hunk a rope draggin' beehine. "OH!, izzat so? Well, I might know sumpin' 'bout thet." Well, to make a short story even shorter, it so happened he had been down the road lookin' for a cow uv his, which he didn't fahned, so wee deesidead to use his fixin's (bait) of turnips tuh go aftuh thet dadblamed cow with the rope 'roun' its nick.

Wall, woodn't ya know it all, he walks raht up to thet critter with his turnip, an' she falls for it raht on cue. He takes a holt uv thuh rope, handin' it tuh me, an' gehss whut ah do with it?; shor 'nuf ah ties thuh loose end toowah tree. Well!, oncet thet turnip's gone, thar ain't a hope in hayell uv keepin' thet beest aroun' agin her weill. She gits tuh feelin' uneezzee with thet hemp agin, itchin' away, so she goez intuh a rompin', stompin' maypole act, wrappin, thet rope 'roun' anuthuh tree an' **SNAP ! ! !**, oncet agin, with her hindfeet a kickin' an' a stompin'; an' away she goezz; only this tahm thuh rope is only six feet long. (obviously the story is getting closer to the end). Wayall!, we chased 'er an' chased 'er, gettin' lucky wuntz when we galluped by an open abandoned dugwell fulla water, that not a stirrin' creature fell in. Coarse her caff wuz runnin' long side 'er all thuh way. This uthuh fella, not any more of a cowpuncher then ah wuz; only difference iz he uzed turnips, an' ah uzed hay. Anyway he tried all kines uv reedickulus rope tricks tuh lassoe thet caff; wall, are cattle russlin' soon ended as thuh cow an' her caff rode off intuh the immortal Island murk.

Next day ah foun' the uther peece uv rope on a trail, mah bowline still in tact, the rope havin' bin choosed throo; but beefour thet, ah

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fahnally had suckseeded in reachin' the fellah what preecipihtayed all this cowpunchin', tellin' im' whut ah had dun for 'im, which wuz nuthin', but tuh trah tuh strangle his cow, an' thet she wuz loose with a six foot length uv rope 'roun' 'er dadblaymed nick.

Allswell that en'swells; thuh cow an' her caff r still loose, enjoyin' thuh freedumb (like are felluh Grenadins) in typical Island splendour.

Thuh uther fellah with thuh turnips, whyll he wuz in thuh nayhoorhood, had speyed sum bushizz lowdead with rowze hips; sed he had a reel fansee fer 'em an' wood ah mahnd if'n he caym back toomorry tuh pick 'em. Ah sed, "Wah shore, hep yersef.". Natshurully he nevuh showed - Natch.

Later while having a great opportunity to play GUD, interfere with the instinct to survive, and other exeges to natural selection, I caught the cat, who had just caught a wren; I snatched the cat by its tail, giving it a heave through the vale; and, as it arced through space it opened its mouth to **Y E O W !!!!**, the little birdy took flight. No sooner did the cat alight, in pursuit of the birdie it went; and in pursuit of the cat wast I bent. The cat, upon discerning my intent, decided his wont to relent, feigning interest might lie with my morality, thereof, catfashion, retreating, a fearfully contrite mortality.

Whilst dwelling upon Noah's Kingdom, it would not seem untoward to mention the natural extensions of the beests variously derived therefrom whom have taken up residence upon the Island, their exact primogenitors unknown. The most adaptable species seem the Polled Herford, with the occasional dairy animal in the likes of Holstein-Friesians, a Jersey cow, and a Charolaise (*sp.*) cow, with the random naturally occurring interbreeding therefrom, initially introduced to the Island by you know who. These bovine creatures are free to roam as they please throughout the bush, very often to the great displeasure of the gardener whose fences proved not sufficiently fortified against the wiley blandishments of these freely foraging beasts; indeed some have earned a reputation as leaners. You might well imagine a leaner as a member of that bovine entourage, casually chewing its cud whilst bracing itself in a relaxed position against a fence, suddenly yielding to this weighty preoccupation, might have, after successive repetitions of such events, learned to use the technique to gain entrance to private verdant and succulent gardens. However it transpired, these animals have been observed to use their body weight to challenge those delineaments erected to deter their passage, one such beast employing his hindmost part as a modified battering ram. These selfsame roving meatlockers have been known to decimate a prospectively lucrative crop of *cannabis sativa*, the enclosures of which are most notably constructed of flimsy materials consisting primarily of netting with such poling and bracing as might be found in the bush. (Ahha, rather than dope sniffing canines, the

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agencies responsible for enforcing the covenants enacted to control the production of 'controlled' substances might train some select ruminant species [Poled Heretoford] to hunt down the offensive lawbreaking growth, consuming it as they go.

As time and sympathies aggregate, the beasts have earned themselves a diminishing reputation; some have been shot point blank in their transgressions; others because they happened to pass by conveniently when no one was looking, as a source of meat. Open range, like all democratic institutions suffers from laxity. It has been proposed by one Islander that a stout fence be placed across the middle of the Island; all animals desirous of free range may migrate southward, all animals suffering the constraints of totalitarianism that exist north of the line must be maintained in enclosures. We have yet to deal with Noah's other four legged creatures, one of which at least was brought to the Island by you know who. The sheep is for the most part a feral sheep, one that is only harvested for its meat, for its wool is of the shabbiest quality grossly carded in its endless roaming through brush and bramble and from the otherwise absolute neglect of its coat which is never sheared lest by ancient strands of barbed wire, or tangles of blackberry bush. The sheep appears to show some genetic affinities with the Dorset and Suffolk breeds. These animals would be free to roam on both extremities of the Island for they seem less inclined to ravage the various attempts at agricultural indulgence found thereupon.

There does exist the occasional black sheep, initially introduced for its wool, a few of which are still maintained in fenced areas for that purpose, others of the darker hue disposed to whim.

In addition to sheep, some goats, a few domesticated and staked, the balance of a wilder type, rarely seen.

Deer are relatively common, and while also a source of meat, are also destructive both to gardens and orchards. Considerable investment in constructing high fences is necessary in order to keep these high-borders away.

Both the canine and feline species are represented; the former nominally as a leashed, or rigidly controlled entity, that they might not wantonly decimate the open range cattle and sheep. The cats are much in favor for mice abound upon the Island, not to mention the need and desire for companionship (warm fuzzies; notwithstanding all I have said and intimated, Islanders are not what they seem).

The horses that have been brought to the Island, and allowed to fare for themselves as do the Herefords and the sheep, have grown noticeably wan and thin in the bush; their number is sufficiently small as not to warrant too much concern, but it is not a place to pasture the equine species, without supplying supplemental fodder.

Raccoons stand in some disfavor for their plundering of fruit and raiding of vulnerable flocks of winged farm creatures. Beaver fare on

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par with the raccoon as a menace for they damn up spillways on earthenware dams causing erosion and dam deterioration.

It would appear from this cataloging, a rather poor prospect for the wilder emanations so ardently saved by the ancient Noah, while the domesticated variant could benefit from some civilizing here and there.

In an earlier TEXT; in the First Book of Moses: It was writ:

26 Let us (more than one) make man in our (more than one again [most likely not a typo then] {when you think about it, when you are concocting such a grandiose scheme as the origin of the world, and, as you concoct, you are aware of yourself as the concoctor, albeit the presence behind the concotocreation, what are you to write, "I made man in my own image.", "God {{that is, me, the author}} made man in his own image." ?} How many us's or ours were there? At times, as a matter of convenience, or as a matter purist ethic, the textuary promulgation is taken literally. This is one of those times, only because the thought happened to occur to me. However, this is not my chief concern at the moment; which in fact exists in the peroration, or admonition found in the text, as we have perceived it; perhaps not as it was concocted.) image, after our (there it is again, that plural; probably written on Mount Olympus) likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (considering the way we use 'creep' these days, this passage is open to some rather humorous interpretations).

27 Gotta figure some way to perpetuate this perpetration (almost as an afterthought [doubtlessly a bunch of old farts {m} who suddenly recalled their origins]).

28 Following therefrom It is writ (a second time, amended, and with particular emphasis): Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth. (The creepeths have been reengineered to moveths in the space of one practical redundancy found in #27).

It is the dominion over moveths and creepeths that interests me, and the implicit argument in the passages that followed. Man had made himself the center of the Universe, and in doing so assigned himself prerogatives, which could not be challenged by the creepeths and moveths, and other meats of the green world so subsequently named. What interests me most is the perception of admonition, which has become prophesy against life and the living. If one was to so concoct today, he would be obliged to alter the text, admonishing in a different spake. What spake indeed? Moses eventually addressed part of this 'Center of

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the Universe' with his ten spakes, but as a being apprehending only the incipience of this aggregation (a primitive, in other words). Today there are many a Moses, or would-be Moses decrying our foul ways, but because of the period in which they live (that wonderfully Godless period) they are unable to obtain any clout; no Shazams, no sacred Mounts upon which to become energized, and no way to energize the aggregation by counterspake, or counteradmonition.

We have evolved beyond those early perorations, fulfilling some condition we are unable to define. We are apprehensive, which might be construed as a SIGN, whether perceived as emanating from an internal or an external revelation; the apprehension exists.

We are not comfortable as the dominionators. While we might invoke some external as the initiator in our prophesying against life and the living, we sense we are the responsible party; i.e. if we Quack it up its on our head.

Hence, the apprehension; if we lived with a clear conscience, i.e., if we could abide the dominating, the subduing, as personified and exemplified in the blandishments of **consumption**, the enslavement to it as the perfect and natural order. AND, that when it appeared to be getting out of hand, Moses would indeed be called upon the Mount to receive the timely message thus precluding the catastrophe that I prophesy (In a sense I am minding my own Moses, but know within that inaccessible interiority (*penetralia*) of myself, I shall not be called upon the Mount; and neither shall any other MAN).

What to do with the apprehension, is the question?

Since I perceive for myself a shortening tenure within this place, my inclination is to abandon any further traffic that pertains to what fate opposes.

Because the collective view emerges as one that is sold on the peroration to consumption, mostly as part of a social phenomenon, finding its basis and fortification in some elementary greed, some process whose aegis we might question, but whose existence we seem persuaded to affirm, only because we feel we will be unable to survive without those material extensions of ourselves. We are unwilling to make meaningful sacrifice toward any other mode of conduct of our lives; we would rather expire in our automobile on the way to Disney Land, than to live without the auto and Disney Land; we have filled our lives with materiality, with saccharine fantasy, and without which we would be bored TO DEATH. Are we not already so DEAD?

Allow it to run its course.

I really wanted to reveal another little anecdote involving animals and the Island, and the ubiquitous individual who appeared at my most dire moment of embarrassment, as the cow trundled down the road sans noose. Mr. Ubiquitous appeared upon another occasion involving

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the bovine species; and as matters stood, wherein he necessarily required the involvement of another as his witness. And since the Farmer, whose farm or semblance thereof I was caretaking, was the nominal sovereign over some head of cattle upon the Island, very often he became the butt of those forced to deal with errant animals, as he was also consulted in the manner of butchering, and when a stray animal was in distress he was notified that it might be his. In (upon) Harmony Heaven, circumstance dictated that certain animals disappeared without a trace, which inspired many a confabulation and engendered much speculation as to the who and how to remedy what appeared as rustling; for it was learned that Harmony Heaven beef was being sold upon the Mainland.

The ubiquitous one had been down island 'hunting' sheep in a manner that many Islanders do, cruising while encamped in a pickup; failing an adequate sighting therefrom, one is wont to return home until another time. On this occasion, the ubiquitous cowpuncher, turned hunter, on his homeward journey, espied at the edge of the forest, nearby the road way, a lone and rather lethargic Hereford heifer, which upon further scrutiny seemed to have a most swollen cheek anointed with a mark of blood/bruise thereupon. Without venturing for a closer examination, he continued downroad to that Kingdom upon which I resided, making way through gate upon gate until he had reached the present occupant of the Throne, who happened to be Alas!, Alas!, none other than me, MOI le ROI. Pursuant discussion revealed his concern, which was for the animal, and whose it might be. I did not enjoy the acquaintance, nor memorize the specific physiognomy of all my whitefaced subjects; however remiss that might seem, it was none the less true. I do believe the farmer might encounter difficulty in identifying whose was whose at any particular time; there never having been an imperative to do so beyond a cursory 'neighborly' understanding. One could not improve upon such a codification, nor was one particularly sought, beyond a handshake. The drawbacks were obvious. Setting these considerations aside, it became necessary to enact another provision inherent in this disposition of human affairs; what to do with the animal, that, in his opinion had obviously been shot; such assessment occurring to him, rather than some spearing by an unidentified aborigine. At this time it was also broadcast that rustling had been taking place; one came to easy conclusions with regard to the injured animal. The ubiquitous one had already decided on a plan of action in which he elected not to engage unilaterally; that was to put the animal out of its misery. He required a witness, that he might not be accused of rustling; therein I felt I could accommodate him.

Whereupon we adventured further in what turned out to be somewhat of a protracted execution and chase (the cowpuncher in us). It was affirmed upon closer scrutiny, without startling the creature, that

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indeed the animal appeared to have been shot, esteeming his jaw to be broken, mandating the action which had already been decided. The object was to fell the beast beside the road to all the more readily handle it after its demise. The first firing of the small bore (.25 caliber) rifle, seemed to produce little effect upon the animal, but, either as a result of being struck by a projectile or reacting to the actual noise produced by the firing, the beast did break into a run across the road into the trees, whereupon we gamboled in pursuit attempting to head it back toward the roadway, which having been accomplished, it recrossed the roadway, with us following, our objective remaining the same. A second halting in the vicinity of the road saw opportunity for a second shot which seemed to produce a more pronounced effect upon the animal, a peculiar sort of reaction, as though being struck a heavy blow, but to serve as further stimulus to move away at a noticeably slower pace, further from the road into a swale where it seemed to slow to a stop, still standing breathing heavily, not particularly responding to our urgency to drive it toward the roadway. Rather than risking further penetration into the woods, a third shot was fired from a closer range, which, once again showed some sign of affecting the animal, but which did not fell it, nor, this time did it particularly provoke movement. The animal remained standing. The ubiquitous one, probably embarrassed, dubious of any further value in shooting, approached the beast with knife in hand, and upon their encounter the animal still seemed to want to struggle, but was felled in the wrestling manner familiar to a rodeo rink; whereupon its neck was severed penetrating with the ubiquitous knife, to the proverbial jugular and whatever other blood vessels would disengage. The animal was then summarily disemboweled, the object being to save the carcass for meat, for whomever would claim it.

Our next task was to broadcast to nearest dwelling the cause for the shooting and apprise them it was not the result of rustling. Such dwelling drew forth an individual who owned a few animals casting their fate to the lot of the open range philosophy; and upon hearing the description of the beast, felt assured it might be his. He thus followed us to that heinous sight to identify it. He had wondered if we might be interested in salvaging the beast, since he had commitments which required his leaving the Island on the morrow. We thanked him, No, to which he responded with an "I'll take care of it".

It was learned much later in time the cause of the whole debacle. The animal had been shot while doing naughty things in a 'garden' by one of the more volatile entities on the Island, someone inclined to shoot first and ask questions later; at least so it is deduced from the marked behavior of one who is wont to shoot his mouth off repeatedly, mostly with impunity, suffering all ears to a prepossessing din. His admission came about upon his hearing of the story from the owner during a private alternative culture social gathering. What inspired the

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admission is unknown; perhaps a preponderance of guilt; perhaps a need for expiation, or some glorying (insuppressible egomania) in having done a mysterious deed, perhaps nobly relieving the suspicion of rustling, which in turn, might invite the unwanted presence of the constabulary in their environs. Argument for having done the deed was put forth in a manner to suggest some encroachment and culpability when an animal invades a private garden, which, for a thoughtful man, viewing it as a young animal, a heifer no less, might have involved merely chasing it away, or making an attempt to locate its owner, giving ample opportunity to righteously expound at great length a noisy harangue and attempt at retribution for an abused garden. One might so encounter and muse upon his fellow man. In the end it was agreed the man who wounded the animal should make restitution for all that was deprived of the owner with an untimely death and butchering; in this way the irate shooter remained partially within a framework of acceptability as a member of his community.

You will correctly observe Harmony Heaven languishes, as does the entire human prospectus for want of a better model. Therein you will find such as might comprise any archipelago of humanity, a large contingent of retire,s, amongst them a sea captain, a boat builder, an astrophysicist, a librarian, an accountant, a fisherman, a bus driver, a logger, a building contractor, a linguist, to mention a few; others not recognized as officially retired entities, with a known means of support, include a newspaper editor, storekeepers, school teachers, a nuclear physicist, welders, highway workers (local), bus driver, nurse, aquaculturists, taxi operator, barge operator, barge owner, mechanics, machinery operators, machinery owners, ship builders, ship owners, butchers, restaurateurs, others living on inheritances, on investments, and the many who live on the good offices of the foregoing as carpenters, gyp-rockers, plumbers, and handymen and handywomen, masseurs, herbalists, acupuncturists, body piercers; without any visible means of support (or of gaining a lielihood) and last, but not least, the clandestine, nefarious, and iniquitous, who purloin the good will of their fellow man in bringing calumny upon Harmony Heaven's good name.

One will find pacifists, anti-nukers, fundamentalists, atheists, agnostics, mystics; smokers, drinkers, drunkards, potheads, coke heads, sundry trippers; Native Indian lovers, Native Indian haters; communists, socialists; equalitarians; monarchists; interventionists; non-interventionists; almost to a man, loathers of bureaucracy; philosophers all.

What model doth one thus distill from such an aggregation? An activity common to the larger part involves fence-building and fence mending, therefore it would seem a more vital and innocuous part to mine from this hoard. Fence-builders we shall export, to delineate

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properties, and nations of properties, and continents of nations. Adding to this crude model we might add automobile mender, for it is everyday one observes one or the other atop, within, underneath his four wheeled horseless carriage, frowning, imploring, monkey-wrenching, performing transplants, Gud help them lest they be obliged to walk. And as the Exemplar had taken to carpentry, so do the majority thereupon become their own fashioners of many a free-formed and dubious structure, as manger either to house themselves, their water reservoirs, their woodpiles, their animals, their pump houses; their generators and machineries.