

Post WW II

III

Apropos Of Nothing

Post WWar II.

Stalemate.

On The Road ?

A series of caroms.

In the beginning this writing had set out to recall some of the personal and bitter acrimony I had felt during a particular period in my life which centered mostly on the Vietnam War. I had given 'aid and comfort to the enemy', which was another way of saying I had become involved. Vietnam had also become part of the Sixties. It was during this period I had met William and Rose.

Before the Sixties, before the charisma of J.F.K., I had been non-involved. Even as a member of the Armed Services I was not involved. Because I had not been involved did not mean that things were not happening.

Things were happening; megatonning was happening. Edward Teller was loose in the world. Megatonning was happening in Russia and on the Bikini Atol. One was forced to recognize the outside agent, not in the hands of a Gudhead, but now in the hands of the Promethian Man. This caused one to reflect upon August 6, 1945, surely a date to remember, like BC and AD; to wit; BB and AB, no less significant. What JC could have done, with such a big stick. The Money Changers never would have returned; now they come in droves. We have become so inured to fright that we have failed in our assessment of the parallel significances. While the JCs and the Armageddonites have been running loose amongst us in the Eighties, there is hope of another kind on the horizon (There is always hope, oddly.).

Vietnam was not an isolated incident; that is, not just a bad period in our history. While we were fighting alongside Russia in the Big Debacle #2, Russia's leadership was looking beyond WW II. Stalin had already begun the Cold War; (it took a few for HST to catch on). The Fascists had merely masked the operatives behind the Communist movement-ideology; and in effect had made it easier for them to insinuate themselves into an outraged and devastated Europe; Fascism accelerated their Red objectives by invading and destroying viable governments, a viable cohesiveness that existed in Nations, leaving them vulnerable to purposefully organized outsiders. Fascism also paved the way for the end of Old World Colonialism, and facilitated the beginning of New World Colonialism.

Being aware of the frustration I experienced during the Vietnam period might have provided sufficient impetus to want to express some of what it was that I felt. And as I was doing so, it became necessary to

Apropos Of Nothing

ask questions about the human community in general; what had preceded this moment in time; questions I had not particularly cared to ask before that time. I was 'growing up'; that is; I was becoming aware of the larger Universe; that is, the larger Universe had become particularized Man in time, not some generality, some fuzzy notion, of an evolved and evolving life. Man was becoming motives, something not just external to me, but something with internals like me, but with internals that were not like mine. We were paranoid about different things.

Prior to the Sixties, I had lived in my own special kind of fog; but because I lived in that fog did not mean the world was not happening in ways of which I was not aware. The Megatonning was symbolic; of that I was aware; who could not be; one was aware of an outside agent as cause; the citizen was told it was Communism, or Imperialism. Red or Red White And Blue. But nobody really knew; there was nobody you could ask. It was all packaged and concealed as a National Secret. What else?

In essence, this story begins at some distant place in time, perhaps with a most singular Evolution, before Adam and Eve, in some other dimension, before our Universe (perhaps in a Multiverse, as suggested by y Gasset), Perhaps as an evolution in general terms, Pre-Evolutionary; while arising only as one concept of the way things might have happened. While it is so much easier to invoke a Singular Gudhead as a Responsible Agent, all appeals and supplications to this Convenience have not provided us with answers to some very crucial questions, not unlike what one would like to know of his government if he is expected to entrust his life with blind faith to that government. The Gudhead does not answer questions in the like manner Governments do not. Governments invoke National Security as dodge to the truth and as highway to power. What the Gudhead gains from this approach I cannot surmise. I rather surmise there is no such entity. We are evolved into this that we are, to create something from our own raw materials; and it is this we have created. Is it no wonder then that one states his case as *Apropos of Nothing*; when he perceives Man and his Intentions as the sole arbiter and protector of himself; and the repository of what he does and the reasons he does something, with his life? Transient prospects for us all.

Thus, before the Sixties, there was the postwar period, Post Good War period, which I now label the Fifties, only as a mark on a blank piece of paper.

The War was only beginning in August of 1945; WW II was only prelude to some larger work in progress. We were not permitted to rest, to wax victorious and virtuous. But even before that, the baddies amongst us were at work. The Baddies were so bad that Marx and Engels were prompted to provide coherence to a movement that was taking shape in Europe; and to devise some humane equalitarian doctrine to serve the needs of the, alas!, Yes!, *proletariat*, the mere citizens, that all

Post WW II

the monarchs, oligarchs, czars, emperors, dictators, and plutocrats had brushed aside as mere irrelevant subjects, or consumers. This movement, the 'sound of the hobnailed boots coming up from below', was not a spurious thing; it was Man who had become aware of his right to something other than servitude to a Crown or a distant unapproachable Government, or some capitalistic machine, wanting more of freedoms and a share in the fruit of his own labors.

We may question what Communism has done to test its own thesis, or what it has done to fulfill its own promise; we might well ask the same of what we have come to call Democracy. The first test of Communism that had emerged as an Ideology, as something to give form and doctrine to a State, grew out of a violent revolution, as contrasted to let's say, a passive resistance (which does not preclude violence to itself). The proletariat, despite Eric Blair's apprehensions, were served in a way they were not served by an unconcerned government under the Czar. Stalin gave birth to the apprehensions and predictions of 1984. Communism, per se, cannot be faulted because of Stalin, anymore than democracy can be faulted by what we do to it. There were many who could perceive, in the words of Marx and Engels, a viable equalitarian approach to the concept of the human community, which needed to stand the test, in the same way any proposition set forth in the Word might be obliged to stand the test.

Time did not stand still. When I became fourteen, our government created HUAC. HUAC was a parry in the Cold War. Behind HUAC was a theory of and fear of seditiousness within the ranks. A carryover from a particularly bad time in our formative history; the formative part that denied to the average citizen, that nebulous proletariat, something of which he felt entitled, namely a share. Ayn Rand, in *Atlas Shrugged* paints a picture of a tycoon who empathizes little with his fellow man; he is an arrogant type, who, after making his fortune, announces that, as he did it, others can do it; he felt no obligation to share any part of what he was. Paraphrasing, "If a man doesn't like his lot in life, let him work hard as I did to change that. If he has the talent and ability to succeed, he will, but don't expect me to better his situation if he fails."

This kind of attitude sets the stage for acrimony. Before I was born, Greed brought this country to its knees. All the good things for which our forefathers fought, ended in the colossal failure of our industrial aberration that had found form in speculating on the future of production, founded in some primitive part of our soul, known as GREED. The speculation outstripped the capital available to purchase the production. Whatever had been afoot in the way of trade unionism, whether based in some external doctrine, let's say socialism (to propound a more neutral term), or whether a legitimate growth of organized labor of the Samuel Gompers', when the Crash came, and

Apropos Of Nothing

when the need arose to resurrect this country, when it came time to infuse new hope in a failed promise, there were many who might have claimed some remedy for the failure of the system. America was growing up (or was it?). We were a nation of peoples all in this together, were we not? Some would claim we were not. And indeed if you adhere to Ayn Rand's philosophy, we would have to assume, we are not all in this together. Prior to the Crash we were not all in it together. The Speculators wanted what they wanted; huge earnings on their investments. The lure of the Almighty Dollar bankrupted the system. "The wealth created by the machine had gone, in appalling disproportion, to the owners of the machine." While various movements might have been afoot as part of some external scheme, of some foreign ideology, many schemes were afoot to enlarge the anonymous worker's share in the industrial revolution, to turn him from a drudge in the works, to an honorary member of the human community; and, Yes, to expand the horizons of an Ideology.

Anyway, before I was born all this was happening; there was nothing I could do about it. As a worker I have belonged to Unions; in hindsight I am able to see some of the good to organized labor, as well as some of the bad. In comparison to the goods and bads of the Corporate hegemony of capital, of resources, and, collusion with government, both in the executive and the legislative branches, I can see a far greater evil, if what the Ayn Rands speculate is true. Frankly I do not know what to think.

Labor was out in the street, hungry; farms were going belly up, the nation was in trouble. A fresh approach was required. So don't get so damned uppity about Democracy; it wasn't working; the demos were getting shafted. And the New Deal brought many new ideas to the fore, not the least of which was a Socialistic thinking, and in some cases, a socialistic policy, however disguised. Of course, the power, and perhaps the 'wisdom', still lie with those who were already 'in power', and how to keep it; and they kept it. Not only did Karl Marx foresee the evils of Capitalism; so did Pope Pius XI, who had no stake in Communism; and so did Huey Long who had no stake in either the Church or in Communism. When the Banks failed, who might not perceive some other way of doing things? Sure the Communists had a field day; why not? Tell me; why not? "Worker's, Don't Starve! Fight!" Revolution was their trademark (Stalin's trademark).

Did you starve; would you starve? The Communists and Socialists did not see eye to eye; the latter being the more practical "No men -still less children - can live on the bread of Utopia. They hunger now. Cold and hungry children make for no constructive social revolution; they only add to its woes." Edmund Wilson saw the 'collapse of Big Business as a justifiable end to some thing that was crass and fraudulent; it was a time of exhilaration; it gave one a new sense of freedom'. Not only the

Post WW II

'Left' was at work; the Right wanted to consolidate the Big Business interests into government policy. Fortunately FDR was a man of some vision, who found extremism anathema to that Vision.

Enter Fascism. The worldly Alliances were laughable. Monarchies enjoined to Communists enjoined to the Democracies enjoined to the likes of Shanghai Check; against the Nationalistic Dictators, Quislings, and Militaristic Landgrabbers. While these fought it out in WWII, America had pretty much outgrown the depression years, and American Communism, as a viable alternative, was pretty much a thing of the past, since the apparent source of discontent was removed. Rosie the Riveter was the answer to Joseph Stalin.

The upshot of the Great Good War, that rid the world of Fascism, ended in some other dubious achievements. Our Communistic Allies obtained half of Germany; all of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Manchuria, and might have gained more of the Yellow East if Madame Shanghai had not been so close. The other Allies retained their colonies with our help. And when we came home, we discovered our Russian Ally had become our enemy.

The share of the spoils. Quack humanity; we had just got a whar over humanity - stoopid, I'd say.

Anyway, we got HUAC when I was fourteen. Do you imagine that I could comprehend even the smallest degree of meaning or purpose or significance of this hatchment of the red, white and blue? Hell no; I had a crush on Marie Scali, or was it Dorothy McEnroe?. Fantasies were rife and cheap! Like, God help those that were probed by the likes of RMN, the young red-baiter from Whittier; I could not help them.

When HUAC was created, it was created, not to make answerable those GREEDY Plutocrats who expropriated, and brought to ruin the Nation in the Twenties, but the remnants of those who sought remedy in the Twenties and Thirties, by becoming members, or showing sympathies toward the Communist Party. Not all Communist Party Members were aligned with the Joesph Stalins; many were Marxist idealists, in the same way some might become idealistic with regard to our Declaration of Independence, and the basic tenets of our Constitution, all further enhanced by the Federalist Papers and the writings of a Thomas Jefferson or an Alexis Tocqueville. HUAC was not formed to do justice to the naturalized expatriated Japanese citizen.

The logic went like this. The Commies, those guys in the movie the Song of Russia, were O.K. in 1944, however questionable as bedfellows, and birds of a different feather. An alliance of Convenience that ended abruptly. After the War, the logic changed; those even remotely associated with the movement came under fire; they suddenly became odd badfellows. They had become bad to the extent, that if you were one, knew one, sympathized with one, a black smear (Red) was spread all over your red, white and blue - **badass!** -and if

Apropos Of Nothing

you shook hands with the questionable you were indulged with a gray smear (Pink) across your raid, whate, and bloo. A modern day Sinkquisition. Treason, Sediton. Sleazy Politics is more like it. People getting into high places by smearing their brethren with soot. When I was fourteen some even said HUAC was rife with fascist overtones borrowed from the Third Reich, continuing the purge of the Jews. So some say! Its all rather unbelievable now, in retrospect; to hell with when I was twelve or fourteen. Its unbelievable that WE did it; its not unbelievable that the species did it, because its something that the species has always done: Guilt by Association. But when WE did it, we showed our true colors - no different than anyone else.

Some have gone so far as to say that the ideological bushit played right into the hands of those most shocked by the war's end, that comfy collusion between Government and Industry (Corporate and Big Business interests). (Christ!, even Krupp and Mitshubishi were allowed to resume operations immeditately). And those that enjoyed the prospect of war, those behind the lines (one imagines - maybe even some of the great warriors had not got enough of glory); they loved the feel of war - of action.

Have I pursued this rant far enough?

In our fantasies, we are still beating the hell out of the Nazis and the Japs, as we do the American Indians. In Korea we didn't beat the hell out of anybody. We got into it with the Reds; but the chief instigators didn't commit any manpower although they belonged to the United Nations; the Other Side of the United Nations. It was a stalemate. It wasn't a shootout at O.K. Corral.

The peachie-keene baggy-pants Hollywood image of a confident, work-a-day America, basking in the fatherliness of IKE, and the saccharine wild west of Roy Rogers, the inane humor of Milton Berle, the constant allusion to female parts of Bob Hope, the awful plethora of mooning croooners, Frankie Snot, Perry Comb, Tony Bene, Mel Torment, Vic TheMoan, and Vaughn Wild Goose, to name a few who popularized triviality to its heights. All the while Sky King, The Lone Ranger and Kemo Sabe, Blondie and Dagwood, And 'Who Knows What Evil Lurks In The Hearts Of Men?' Sam Spades Knows, Or was it Buster Brown Who Lived in a Shoe?. Then there was Mark from Columbia or some such Ivy covered place who kept answering the 64,000 Question as though there wern't nuttin' tweit; you can't stump a man from the League; just give it up. Later on we got Mamie Van Doren; in her case there was no call for an I.Q. Was she animal, vegetable, or mineral? Twenty guesses and she's yor'n. The Fifties were a set-piece, an enactment; not a happening. Perhaps this was unavoidable for the great mass of people whose lives were disrupted by the Big Debacle.

Post WW II

Family Time, USA. Question: Who was Mark Van Doren? I remember father telling of the guy up the road who began collecting old automobiles for the next war. It takes time.

Father sat on the mountain tuned into the world, to WQXR, whose waves were captured in the Wards Airline Superheterodyne, the kermungous AB battery pack line. Mostly he didn't care for the Wine and Restaurant sponsors of the Classical Music that wafted throughout the Berkshires, which very often required an application of the screwdriver to tweak the beat oscillator in order to minimize the band widths and wail of Frankie, Perry, Torment, and the Wild Goose.

Mother and I took to the road to get away from father; at least I think that is what happened. Mother wasn't 'Beat'; she wasn't looking for excitement; she wasn't into all-night drinking bouts, jazz joints, wild parties; not hip, not cool; not seeking a religious experience; not after a wild ride. She was 50; she needed and wanted a rest.

I 'got outta high school' in 1950. I was nowhere. I was pushed out the door; I was on the move. I may have been 'beat', but was unaware of it. I was not 'beat' in the Jack Kerouac sense, looking for Excitement. I was a loner; Yes, I hit the road, because there was no other place but the road. The road was better than living with my Catholic aunts in New England, working in Hogue-Sprague shoe-box factory, or living with father while working in a cardboard factory. There wasn't as much as a thought given to higher education. What was that besides something one could not afford; but what was it, really? Why get into more of something you always hated, because you were forced into it? On the move from place to place, from job to job, until I could not escape the thing I barely understood; the government. The government was that thing of Paul Revere, Betsy Ross, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. It meant nothing to me; my spirit was imbued with none of it, but it had sought me out, wanting to put a gun in my hand so I could fend off the baleful legions. Instinct prompted me to 'enlist', while there was some possibility of choice. I put in my time, grudgingly, and not on the front lines; I was not a hero, nor was I looking to engage in heroics. John Wayne and Audie Murphy may have got to me when it came to the sweet young thing that was their reward for being such good patriots and fine upstanding citizens, but I wasn't prepared to do it their way. Besides, something inside kept me apprised of my success ratio with sweet young things; I might fantasize, but I knew my limitations. I wasn't sufficiently motivated to risk anything for the off-chance that some Hollywood damsel would be mine, much less some home-town belle.

While in the Armed Services I learned a lot about state-of-the-art electronic military hardware which stood me in good stead as a means of earning a 'livelihood' (isn't that a quaint expression?) after my

Apropos Of Nothing

internment expired. The shortest route to Korea from my overseas duty station was over the north pole; I could not have been further from Joseph Stalin's proving ground if I had planned it. A cousin of mine wasn't so lucky. A Reserve Officer in the Marines, a left-over from WWII, he was 'called up' for active duty in Korea.

I moved around considerably while in the service of my country. By the time it was over, half of the Fifties were already gone. For some reason which I cannot determine, I had begun to show some interest in reading, some interest in study, perhaps because I had discovered it was possible to learn something (electronics, [which my general classification tests indicated I was only marginally capable of comprehending {the electronics schools provided the longest duration of time away from any consideration of Battle}); one thing led to the next. After exiting the military I moved around even more, perhaps as much as Jack Kerouac's 'Beats', mostly because it felt good to be on the road, but I would alight to study, to do, to produce something with my hands, my feelings, my thoughts. I even fell in love with one of those ethereal creatures of the opposite sex, not in the manner of anything one might encounter in a Hollywood production, but more what one might encounter in a August Strindberg, a Soren Kierkegaard, a Frank Wedekind, or a Fyodor Dostoevski; and no simpering little throb, that one might have felt for one of those home-town lovelies.

If a person was not clean-shaven and did not sport a crew-cut, (that peculiarly prison-like, or military, appearance) he was considered a 'Beatnik'. A Beatnik was a sort of non-participant, who espoused non-violence. This was before real drugs. There was a lot of looking over eastern religions, eastern philosophical precepts, a lot of travelling around, searching for something that wasn't out there. Korea was out there; Indo-China was out there; Hungary was out there - all way out there. Curtains were out there - Metal Curtains - It was Curtains! Uncertainty was out there - Way Out! Man - creeping closer with the din of the **bomb**, the overwhelming certainty of the Bomb. Tornado, Hurricane, Earthquake, Deluge, and Drought, were periodic occurrences; but that goddamned Quacking **B O M B!**, virtually GUDlike, Omnipotent Quacking thing that it was **IS** struck into our consciousness - the press of dominion upon our friable, soft base metal, revealing an image of horror, of impotence (shriveled); Man Impinging Upon Man. Whereas the first Gud Man had created in his own image was promoted as the way to Salvation, this new Gud Man has created is without Salvation, and he was PROUD; and **IN GUD HE TRUSTED. T E R R O R ! ! ! ! !**

Joseph McCarthy took the fall for all the other red-baiters, like RMN. Joe was their mouthpiece, the right-wing demagogue. Advocacy of purity. A preventative medicine scheme; stay healthy; don't smoke, don't drink, don't out of wedlock; don't commie. HUAC mandated that

Post WW II

Reds would be dangerous to your health. Thomas Jefferson had better watch what he has to say these days.

Flabbergasted by syncretism; two roosters; two chickens on the heap. The New Spain and the New Portugal divvying the pile; each afraid of the sacrifices necessary to become the Supreme Rome; its been a shabby piecemeal affair conducted by both sides, both intolerant, both fearful: Korea, Hungary, Cuba, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, Nicaragua, Poland, Afghanistan, Guatemala, El Salvador, Grenada; all only vaguely resembling a fairy tale, but in the Fifties, anyone who had any association with the bad fairy was branded with a big letter 'C', as insidious, possibly seditious or treasonable; a bad dude or dudette (badette dude). Paranoia. It's still with us. However, in 1988, a confident Russia is playing at Glasnost, while a corpulent, broke and uncertain America still whacks away at the outside, in an attempt to revive itself; and, some how, for gudzsake, try to avoid another greedy capitalistic wrench, a virtual collapse. Later, how we Quacked Russia with the Free Market Aegis; McDonalds in the Kremlin as the way to nutrition and fast Democracy

During the Fifties I brushed by what others might have construed as opportunities; I had met Edward Aswell without knowing who or what he was; at that time he was an add in the Saturday Review of Literature, but he was also the Harvard Connection, which I turned aside because of all those irons that were in the fire, some of them not even my own. As in the military I felt strengthened and encouraged in my ability to learn, I also was encouraged by my 'talents' as an incipient sculpting entity (as a way of pleasing father - his iron, really) to pursue that field of endeavor. While the first ethereal love ended as might those of Strindberg, Wedekind, or Kierkegaard, a second, in the offing, to which my heart was most inclined became bogged down in 'pillar to post' uncertainties involving 'art and wimen don't mix' as well as already being mixed with someone from whom I should have become disengaged as she should have become disengaged from me (which neither one of us could do although we tried - too many times), and which eventually happened (as fate notably decreed). Meanwhile, the one to whom my heart had reached out went on with her life and all that entails. It may not be nice to regard a woman as an opportunity; she represented an opportunity in the sense that if I had had the courage to follow my heart, and it had indeed proven that she, who was above me, in my own mind, would have found me as she might have imagined, then perhaps my self image would have changed for the better; as well, perhaps my career might have taken an entirely different direction. And indeed if I had given her happiness in proportion to her needs and desires, might it all not have come up roses. 'Art' may very well have become my forte, my reason to be, my wherewithal, instead of what ensued as I became as a

Apropos Of Nothing

father, and a provider, living with the one from whom I should have parted, and from I eventually parted (as fate so decreed).

Therein, somewhere, at the close of the Fifties I became father and provider, and ill-gotten husband; there was little romance; I had gravitated to my own inborn belief in my own nothingness; and for the lack of any direction and conviction, bumbled along.

This brief wander into the autobiographical has developed by way of creating an impression of how a period in one's life, a world may slip by unnoticed for one's other preoccupations, which in the end may not be preoccupations, but a series of caroms.

When, as a student, or later, as merely someone who hung around the campus, because one did not become a 'crewcut' he was regarded as 'beat'. Because one did not live like 'decent folk' he was regarded as a 'beat'. I lived in a greenhouse, and pretending to engage in sculpting. I wore funny hats, sheepskins, and sported a beard. Perhaps some of it lacked sincerity; but I knew not what else about which to become sincere. It all passed by rather quickly, too fast for one to really grasp what was happening. One piled a bunch of stuff into himself that acquired meaning mostly as something upon which to reflect, as a Why? or maybe even a What If?; such presumption attends our speculations.

The Fifties saw the burgeoning Civil Rights 'movement', the Rights of a people, one, in his naive protected little world, would have assumed had been guaranteed by the Constitooshun, and clarified for all time by the Civil War. While I was in the Armed Services (integration was being practiced in the military by that time, although the only black with whom I served was a standard bearer in our company in boot camp), I spent more than two years of that time in the South; there were certain areas of certain cities that were simply off-limits for service personnel. Well, of course, it didn't mean anything to me, but certain of my discussions with white southerners did seem to indicate the Neegrow was an inferior type suited for servitude; it was a tradition and an inherent right of a Southerner to think and feel this way; it was part of his Red, White and Blue. It didn't persuade me, but I wasn't involved. I had my problems.

But, Colonialism was in its last throes; Great Britain was becoming a lesser Britain; Portugal, France, The Netherlands, Spain; The United States of America; all but Russia were forced to yield to the persuasions of Independence. And it became necessary to include Hawaii and Alaska as States. The Philippines were too far away; and we were too slow in Cuba. We have always been a little slow; it a National trait; some basic conflict with the Christian ethos. Nonetheless we manage to corrupt with the dollah, and surreptitious away with the CIA.