

## *The Imperatives. Dealing With The Human Condition.*

“Is there any possibility we can return to more serious discussion?”

Catherine asks, “Mr. D., can we continue with a notion of modified behavior as accords the Golden Rule? Is there not some self-evident imperative associated with this notion?”

“I suspect you already know how I will answer that.”

Theresa adds. “I want to hear the answer.”

“OK, besides intimating that mn is not to be understood because a lot of what she is does not accord human logic, we proceed to human logic in order to understand humanity; not mn.”

“Mr. D., a circuitous answer.”

“It is an answer however.

“To answer it the way I have, previously, to Catherine. There is no clear logic that will accomplish the total compliance with the GR. Some individuals do not care. They are willing to take risks. If it is inconvenient for them to observe some code of behavior for the short term, although in the long term it still benefits them, they seem willing to violate the code.”

“Then, they need to have their ass kicked in a big way.”

“Head knocked!, Theresa.”

“Mr. D. can we get past this? Are there not other incentives beyond strict compliance with the rule?”

“You mean, sugar coating?”

“If it works, Yes!

“We have already implied that behavior modification is required in order to comply with the GR.”

“Yes, modified through a kind of awareness of the ‘other’, whom we now must acknowledge has as much right to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness as any other; you and I, for example.”

“Do we now acknowledge that?”

“If we expect to go any further with this discussion, we need to acknowledge something. The GR cannot exist if we arbitrarily refuse to acknowledge the other, and accord to the other the same set of criteria that applies to us.

“The possibility of anarchy and chaos exists in its place. I am assuming there is that ‘imperative’ inherent to our discussion.”

“Sugar coating, Mr. D.?”

“Give me an example, Theresa.”

“The most obvious is inherent to the GR itself. While it may not be construed as ‘sugar’ to be treated as one imagines he would treat another from out one set of ethics, scruples, modified behavior, or any

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another consideration, it does not behoove us to think this anything less than it is. The 'sugar coating' might be accomplished with a smile."

"Knock somebody on the head with a smile?"

"Come on Mr. D." Catherine chides. "Be serious.

"You asked Tess for an example. She acknowledges all we have discussed to this point, and attempts to answer the question.

"You mock her answer. That tells me it is futile to go any further in the discussion.

"We are friends here, involved in a deliberate constructive discussion regarding first principles. At least that is the way I view the discussion. It is not another opportunity for cracking jokes, or one upsmanship, put downs, devil's advocacy, smart-assed comments."

"Whew!, you have a low opinion of me today."

"A knock on the head, with a smile, Mr. D."

"Touché, Catherine."

"Can we move on Mr. D.?"

"My sincere apologies, dearest ones. Continue."

"Mr. D., I do not know that a 'smile' is the answer. I do not favor the 'sugar coating', a bribe, that is.

"What I want more than anything is for a logical resolution to a long standing problem. Somehow I keep coming back to our starting point. Unless we acknowledge the basic thing, we cannot go any further. 'Sugar Coating'. 'Pie In The Sky' is not 'where it is at' in my mind.

"We need to get beyond the arbitrariness associated with the application of the rule. We cannot base anything on convenience or inconvenience. That is, the self-serving aspect of the argument; even if that is the real truth of the situation.

"We must move along in the discussion as though the truth were otherwise than it is.

"If we do not, we will be forced into another think, namely, how to defend ourselves against arbitrariness."

"It is so, Theresa."

Catherine offers, "A Renaissance In Paradise."

"Now, who is being a smart-ass!?"

"Theresa, are you going to let her get away with that?"



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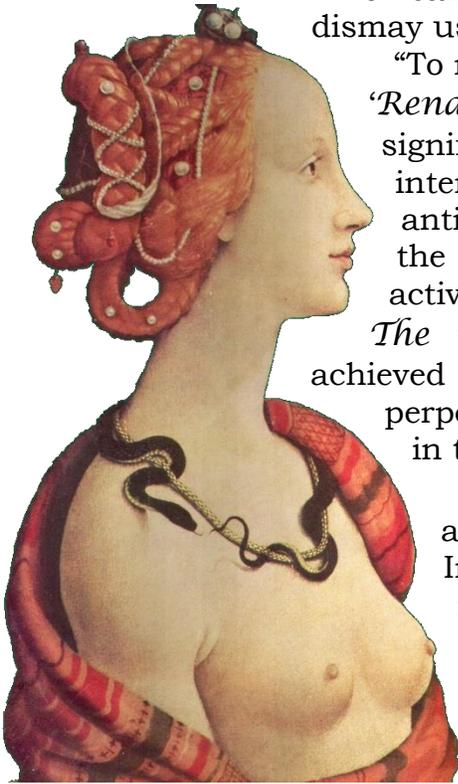
“I’m not so sure she is being a smart-ass, Mr. D., I think the suggestion is appropriate and consonant with the concerns of the author.”

“I’ll speak for myself for a moment, sis.

“There is a method to my ‘smartassness’, Mr. D.

“I am realizing that the centuries of dealing with the basic question have been unvarying in its inevitable irresolution.

“We cannot allow this apparent ‘resignation’ to dismay us.



“To return to the author’s query in the beginning: *Renaissance*. What does that signify? Does it signify, rebirth, renewed vigor, and renewed interest, revival? In what way? The revisiting of antiquity, embellishing the now with antiquity; the best of antiquity? That was part of the older activity from which we have derived a concept of *The Renaissance*? Is there anything we have achieved in our past that is worth preserving in perpetuity; or, is there anything we have achieved in the past that can enrich our lives now?

“He further inquired: ‘What was it about antiquity that so impressed itself upon us? Imagining, and desiring, a better day; a more replete way? Imbued with something that was then, and is now, missing? A mysterious missingness, if imitated, would bring us back to life? All those grand architectural remains from ancient Greece, imitated by the Romans, and so many others, and reborn during the Renaissance? Even later, by others? Something was absent from the daily trudge of mankind, that seemed to exist in a prior time? An intellectual something, a very defined order to the concept of man, an intimacy with Gods that lived on Mount Olympus?’

“What I am suggesting here is the weariness of Civilization, weary of dealing with an ages-old problem. For myself, wanting to break that spell; to get on with it.

“To my inner eye it seems, not only imperative that we resolve the issue, but logical that we resolve it. Is it merely a trick of the mind to view things differently than we do? Are we so habituated to this ‘our way of life’ that we can think of none other?

“Suppose it is really to our greater advantage, since we might wish to think in terms of advantage, that is, ‘what’s in it for me?’, to our greater advantage to live in a climate of peace and tranquility wherein

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life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, might be more easily and more readily accomplished, by everyone, equally.

“Trick of the mind? This does not mean we deny the truth of our natures, or the understanding of the reality of mn, lets say? If anything, it leads to a greater understanding of our predicament. We choose to deal with it as a logical extension of what we somehow recognize to be necessary; the imperative of the situation and the imperative of the logic. The undeniability of a certain course of action confronts us; it is in our interest to conform to the principle. Our own perception of sugar-coating, if you will. Yes!, if we can arbitrarily do this and that, getting our way most of the time, because we are stronger or cleverer, or more beautiful; maybe we perceive that as to our advantage, Yes!, in a more primitive culture; perhaps what we might now choose to denote as uncivilized. We might even view such occurrences derogatorily, as accords the more primitive modus operandi of mn.

“To me, it is a matter of choice. We have gone on so long in one futile direction. If we are sincere in our pursuit, why can we not change direction? The state of human society as we have come to know it, is in tatters, abominably so. It cries out as it never has, desperate for a solution.”

“Hah!, my sweet life, where to begin?”

“Harsh realities. Mr. D.. A kind of severe logic.

“Self-serving is passé. By that I mean, the advantage of the one over the other. The notion of gain, whether personal or corporate, has gone by the wayside. We have declared the advantage of the one over the other intolerable. As in our previous tome, we put up signs as ubiquitously as No Trespassing, to read, No Dominating.

“Tricks of the mind? The human condition cries out for more.

“It has been said if you took all the wealth of all the nations, and divvied it up equally it wouldn't be long before the piles would begin to accumulate once again. Or that if you ‘socialize’ that you destroy incentive. What!, incentive for gain?!

“These are such worn out saws in the affairs of men. The ‘imperative’ is to get beyond this ‘visceral’, this, protoplasmic thing. It doesn't mean we live an ascetic existence; one of self-denial, although there many of us who need to practice what we preach. It means we have chosen the one over the other, simply because it is more in accord with the basic rule; another kind of self-serving, or sugar-coating, if you will. A trick of the mind. A logical thing, whereas there seems to be little logic to calling something a civilization built upon greed and exploitation.

“What is missing here?”

“Strongly argued, Catherine. Getting beyond? Yes!

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“The How?”

Theresa wants back into the fray. “I think we are moving along in our discussion. But I do not want to miss any steps, to conveniently leave something out.

“I am weighing the ‘trick of the mind’ idea. ‘Trick!?’ Is there a logical advantage; can we prove the one is greater, or better, than the other?”

“It will be our task to persuade others of this greater, or better, advantage; more advantageous advantage.

“Can we accomplish this with logic? What can we promise an individual, or corporation, that is perhaps totally, habitually committed to doing what it does; the manufacture of ‘black ink’. ‘Black ink’ to me means ‘red ink’ in somebody else’s ledger. Will any accommodation result in failure, bankruptcy, foreclosure, a takeover, a corporate monopoly, controls, dependency?”

“What do we have to offer this self-aggrandizing dreadnaught, this gobbler?”

“Don’t offer them anything. They might assent to your logic to get rid of you. If you try to pin them down they will call out their security forces.”

“Mr. D., the sound of the hob-nailed boots coming up from below?”

“Perhaps you have hit upon it, Theresa.”

“In my thinking, anarchy, chaos; I can’t go there Mr. D.. It is not a solution, even temporarily. We have gone in that direction so often, with repeated failure. The ones who suffer the most are the ones already suffering.”

“What do you propose?”

“So that we don’t miss any steps, i.e., perhaps necessary steps, I want to imagine something both logical and practical, the one derived from the other. Realizing the intransigence of the status quo, whether from on high or on low, (hey! that rhymes), we are first confronted by an immovable object, 7,000,000,000 homo sapiens.

“In a deep rut.

“We want to wave a magic wand, ‘Presto!’

“We cannot only divvy up all the wherewithal, even as a fair-minded thing; not without some responsibility attached. It might not be the most practical action, although it does have its own logic. Along with the divvy, everything else must be divvied equally; no assumptions, and no one left by the wayside. Alternatively, we could do away entirely with the medium of exchange (or the species).

“We are not so fortunate as to possess a magic wand. Instead all we have are these raw ingredients of the animal, so labeled *homo*

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*sapiens*, an anthropological something or other, a biological something or other, as an example of a tentative evolutionary prospect. We only imagine that we understand ourselves in this capacity, what it means to be who we are, why we are here, and where we are going.

“It is a ‘we’ thing, is it not; it is not an ‘I’ thing, is it, or a whole slew of I’s?”

“I, that sound again, I; I assume the ‘we’; that seems self-evident. ‘We’ are all members of the ‘Corporation’, stakeholders in the Corporation, albeit a special kind of Corporation. We are incorporated as an intelligent design of our own making. ‘Presto!’ Let it be done. It is necessary, it is logical because of the necessity (we have heard ‘necessity is the mother of invention’; let’s invent something that accords our need), and is practical on several fronts.

“The ‘we’ ‘practices what it preaches’. If the ‘we’ fails to ‘practice what it preaches’, assuming the preaching originates as a well intended revelation; for example: ‘Do unto others as you would be done by’. If there are those who ignore the precept, what are we to do? Does the saying apply to the status quo as it exists at this moment, not only as a hypothetical thing. ‘Presto’ ‘Do unto other as you would be done by’. Is it clear what we mean?”

“What do we do with those who do not abide the dictum?”

“At this juncture I do not want to question the plausibility of what I am proposing. I want to get into the mechanics of applying the principle to our actions, that is, compliance with the preaching.

“I do not believe we arrive at this juncture ‘Presto’, through revelation. The mechanics of ‘Do unto others as you would be done by’ comes with the territory. It seems the most assured way of survival amongst the ‘others’; do I dare say, ‘it is the most self-evident way’? Otherwise, it becomes a ‘watch your back’ reality.

“What if someone else does not trust in the individual compliance to the rule, because that someone else is more persuaded to yield to the incorrigible nature of the ‘beast’. Suppose the someone else, a visionary, perhaps, augurs for the ‘benevolent dictator’ as being the more practical choice, more responsive to the necessity involved, not wanting to leave anything to chance, or to individual quirks, to put it another way. ‘Quirks’ there will be. Does that mean all must be the same?”

“In compliance, Yes!, either as the mandate of the ‘benevolent dictator’, as the product of an intelligent design, as a chosen thing, by the ‘we’.

“What is our objective in all of this?”

“Very good tack, Tess.

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“The ‘we’ must suspect the objective, even without a declaration. The ‘we’ need and want to make order of this chaos, as a practical survival tool. The status quo is a way-station that has failed to devise and implement the basic rule. ‘Do unto others as you would be done by’ are eight words; although implicit in their meaning, denied when convenient. ‘Lip-service’, disingenuous, temporizing, equivocation, blatant deception, disinformation, have been some of the watchwords that have revealed our truer natures.

“What must take precedence as accords necessity, logic and practicality? What is the imperative and what is to be the timing?”

“Do we allow, in the interim, the ‘benevolent dictator’ the floor. There can be no equivocation regarding the basic rule. There are implications to that statement. Compliance means no bargaining for those who feel they are about to lose a great deal, who suddenly want to become philanthropic in exchange for hanging onto some of their wherewithal. The ‘benevolent dictator’ would disallow any quibbling, and haggling. Who would be the ‘benevolent dictator’?”

“The ‘we’ that had been empowered to wave the ‘magic wand’?”

“Are the ‘we’ then empowered to ‘deny’ as well as to ‘affirm’. In affirming the Rule, the ‘we’ have no choice but to ‘deny’ as a matter of necessity, and practicality. Not only does the ‘we’ affirm the rule, it implements it as a logical extension of the principle it states. The principle is undeniable, both in terms of necessity and practicality.

“I believe the imperative to be ‘self evident’. What about the ‘timing’. To me that answer is relatively simple: NOW!”

“It follows from centuries of equivocation regarding the basic rule. Even though we have clearly demonstrated our lack of compliance, thus illustrating some kind of ill-will, or perversity of man, either of which have gained the higher position in the affairs of men (and women), ‘we’ the ‘benevolent dictator’ deem it no longer a tolerable condition, that is, the ‘human condition’, as ‘we’ find it, is no longer tolerable.”

“Such wonders are thee, thy lovelies. It is solved.”

“Watch your self Mr. D., you will be the first test case in our new order.”

“Yes!, Mr. D., I concur, of necessity!.”

“Don’t take me amiss here, my lovelies, my heart sings only your praises, because I recognize your sincerity in all of this. You do have a solution. The timing is, NOW!, the imperative begs intervention, the objective is to be found in the rule as both necessary and practical, and unmistakable in its intent.

“Implementation is not a matter of choice; the ‘we’ deems it so.

“The mechanics may seem harsh to some; however sound.

“One is mindful of what happens when countries are taken over as a result of revolution, whether by a ‘bad’ ass, or by a ‘good’ ass, both

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terms relative to some other set of values than these with which we are concerned in the moment.

“When Idi Amin came to power, he kicked out all the governmental functionaries, creating a vacuum in the day to day functioning of even his governance. When The US of A took over Iraq it kicked out all the members of the Baathist party, who had been the government functionaries, who kept the country running regardless of whatever Saddam was doing. It has been so wherever the yoke of colonialism has been overthrown violently. Even the more peaceful withdrawal of the colonialists has left behind something unclear in its objective; all too formative and vulnerable to those who would not do as they would be done by. If you can't get at me, you can't do unto me as I do unto you. What was wrong with colonialism was not greatly improved by the powers that succeeded it. The colonialists were not good guys. Colonial regimes, Dictatorial regimes (banana republics) replaced by more egalitarian regimes, whether 'democratic' 'socialistic', or 'communistic', these, for the sake of argument, being perceived as 'good' guys, became antagonistic to other regimes by virtue of their ideology. One tragic example in this case: Chile. There are others, like Angola. But Chile, although putting on the appearance of operating some kind of democratic rule was not much more than another baronial colonial enterprise. Most of the country was in the hands of those same European, colonial in spirit, foreigners, exploiters, possessors, and seekers after fortunes, who second classed the indigenous population, and who controlled the so called democracy; as well as the land and wealth. The 'fait accompli' of democracy was tested when power came to the people under Allende, rather than the others, who had been in control, and still controlled the assets.

“Land reforms were instituted, whereby the large estates were broken up into serviceable units to the whole, the 'we'. Foreign ownership was nationalized. Wages were raised for the people, price controls were instituted, denying more lucre to the rich; confiscation of plantations and gobbled up land. Share the wealth of the nation. Raw Socialism, that heinous crime. Since the ideology of the government was different than the ideology of others in the hemisphere, it became a 'doctrinal' contestable state of affairs. The practical problems of changing from one system of government to another were slow in resolving themselves. Not that what had been conceived on paper was inherently wrong; it was that the opposition to the change was serving, not the whole, the 'we', but the 'I', which was being expropriated for the 'we'. The 'I' found an ally in the other hemispheric ideology, which helped to overthrow the 'duly-elected' under the recognized 'democratic' aegis, ironically, recognized by the other hemispheric ideology. That 'democratic' ideology, The United States Of America, essentially disavowing its own ideology, supported

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instead a dictatorial regime to rid the hemisphere of another (the other) ideology (Raw Socialism); a practical choice? Any other ideology that argued for a more egalitarian society, a more equal society, also served as a threat to societies that did not conform to such principles, but rather operated outside them, although espousing them. In another day we heard of 'preventative war', as today we hear of 'preemptive' this or that, along with 'collateral damage' What happened in Chile was an example of the fear the status quo felt when contemplating the insinuation of the demos; preventing a takeover by ordinary people, and preempting their right to do so.

"Chile is trying again; she has even elected a member of the distaff side as her president. Let the hemispheric ideologue deal with that. Suppose the new presidente wants to institute more socialistic reforms, once again? Doomed to fail? It will truly fail if it ignores the needs of its own humanity.

"The hemispheric ideologue rants that 'terrorism' equates with other ideologies. Gotta have a 'bad guy' to keep the populace fearful, fearful enough that they will look to 'government', a vested interest, to protect them, 'control' them.

"I wrangle in order to bring into focus what one must face with the attempted alteration (corrective, perhaps, dispersal) of the status quo, especially NOW.

"We cannot ignore the deviousness, collusion and conspiracies of government. While it is 'us', it has a way of not acting like 'us'. We are deceived by the appearance of something; they look like us, but they are not us. The assumption of 'us' is transformed into 'they'.

"Despite what you imply here, Mr. D., 'where there is a will, there is a way'."

"Two wills!?!?"

"Perhaps more.

"It seems the argument favors the 'benevolent dictator', who may not seem so benevolent to some.

"The call for some alteration is imperative - NOW.

"After your spiel, I do envision what must happen at the outset. Almost the same as any overthrow that is well-motivated. The self-evident proof must follow without delay. Chaos cannot be replaced by chaos."

"Acquiescence troubles me. As it is now, the human condition is a stratified affair, a system of hierarchies. That are enforced, of course, by those on the highest rung, who often operate in collusion with government. They have the most to lose; they are the most interested in protecting what they have.

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“All those on the lower rungs aspire to be like those on the higher rungs. But they must wait their turn, if ever they will have a turn. Those on the lowest rungs mostly suffer disparity, humiliation and despair, for their entire life. Their very humanity is called into question, simply by their lowly place. Doubly disgraced by fighting amongst themselves over pittance and scraps; and the tendency to self-destruction through drug abuse and sexual adventurism (escape and thrill seeking).

“I use the word ‘acquiescence’; it seems so, because the human condition does not change. It remains a heap, as though that was the only alternative.”

“We are going far afield in our discussion. We are beginning to lose sight of the basic objective.”

“I think not Theresa. It is important to recognize the ‘enemy’ know his fortifications, study his methods. There is the enemy within as well as the enemy without.”

“I had imagined we had already assumed these things, that we were discussing the mechanics of accomplishing our nominal objective. I see that objective as we have often stated it amongst ourselves, as a fair, equitable, egalitarian and just society, based upon that basic rule to which we have so-often referred. We agree on the imperative of the objective, the necessity to achieve this ‘civilized’ society, as a practical thing, as serving the needs of the vast majority, that, as a consequence, as we imagine it, will offer a more stable status quo, not dependent upon a power elite and their weapons of enforcement. The dismemberment of an intolerable hierarchy is a foregone result.”

“In some ways, Tess, it seems so transparent what needs to be done to alleviate the human condition. To become truly civilized. How we can opt for anything less seems all too fatalistically cruel to so many. Such a condition is intolerable. There isn’t any rationale, or logic to support the ‘status quo’. The acquiescence to which Mr. D. refers, is mostly brought about through intimidation, with an ingredient of ignorance (what can I do? Ignorance).

“It might be argued that we do not know, that we are guessing that things could be made better for the majority.

“I can only insist that the status quo is wrong because of its hierarchal and exclusionary structure. It breeds ill-will.

“We must break free of the mould in which we have been cast.”

“Hah!, once we have broken the mould and scattered the pieces, what follows?”

“Mr. D., we do what is right; and we do it right.”

## *The magnitude Of The Condition*

The author has, throughout his writing career, shown an acute interest in the subject which these three are now debating. At various times during that career, he has abandoned the whole prospect of theoretically trying to improve the human condition, though, in a Quixotic fashion, tantalizing it remains. He senses a rankling ungratifying futility in the whole endeavor, beyond being unhorsed by a windmill. He has never been resigned to the so-called status quo, but has felt it to be a very heavy cumbersome, essentially immovable, rock. He contains no might in his meager carcass to deal with the rock. He envisions a large explosion as the only means. So large that the rock will have been rendered into scattered millions of unreassembleable pieces. Better seven billion scurrying creatures than this fake civilization. As seven billion scurrying creatures, at least there is some semblance of equality. The human condition becomes redefined.

If it would be possible to blow the whole of the status quo to smithereens, then it would also be possible to create a world in which it would no longer be possible to assemble an hierarchy. There might exist the more primitive 'big over the little', 'justice in the interest of the stronger', but only on a local level; and the stronger, if a violator of the basic rule, must watch his back at all times. There would be no real advantage to using (abusing) one's relative strength; bullying; to becoming the biggest asshole.

The author realizes the impracticality of seven billion scurrying creatures. The planet cannot support that *modus operandi*. The natural carrying capacity of the planet is far far far less than seven billion scurrying creatures.

The author realizes that seven billion is not an optimum number, however it is organized. It is not known of course what would happen if all the monetary and natural resources were redistributed, whether all seven billion would be adequately served in their basic necessities. It would seem there exists a 'real' problem for the mathematicians and the economists, as well as humanists; it should also be a concern for those religions, cults, sects, which promote uncontrolled reproduction.

It is our obligation to study these things and know what exists. Should the final accounting inform us of an excess, redundant number, than cannot be supported in the manner suggested, then the equation must change. Reduce number. Minus-Zero population growth. There exists more radical suggestions.

The author feels the imperative to get the numbers down to a manageable size; and, if organized, to be maintained in accordance

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with the sensible, fair and equitable. It is to be understood the whole species lives in jeopardy, as it must seek its place in order to survive, even minimally, within the status quo. It is clear that too much and too many jeopardizes the whole prospect for humanity.

The author believes the species is in great danger of an extinction through its internecine bickering, brought about more certainly through the irritation of number, and grasping for the medium of exchange; the urge to control and climb atop the heap, employing more and more devastating and diabolical means to achieve his ends.

The author believes the dominion of the one over the other is patently unfair and antithetic to the basic rule. He believes the basis of a just and equitable society is to be found in recognizing the least.

He believes mankind must get beyond this dour entrenchment. He does not favor an explosion, rather favors a self-evident logic that cannot be refuted by dissembling arguments; such as 'if you socialize, you destroy incentive'. To the author, that is bullshit.

He desires a civilization that makes manifest: fairness, equity and justice for each and every individual. These are not mere words, but are the key to alleviating disparity and suffering in the human community. He believes we cannot ignore the implications of anything less.

In the ideological debates, particularly those at odds with so called free enterprise democratic societies, where a free-for-all exists in almost every phase of life, survival is far from a gurantee; the opposite might be true. In order to remedy this state of affairs, the socialistic aegis, advocates of share the wealth, augured for assuring for meaningful justice, equality, and fairness. The USSR, the Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics, to some outsiders, a repressive regime, enforced by the Communist Party, has suffered the birth pains and demise of such an ideology. To the many, insiders, from all walks of life, they felt the government offered a stable society, guaranteed by the government, from cradle to grave. When the Union became dismembered, direction was lost, guarantees were abandoned. The Free Enterprise world cheered their demise, claiming it a victory for 'Our Way Of Life'. Perhaps an ideology before its time. The author clearly states: 'The debate is far from over'.

If you should have taken note of the Header: '*On The Road To Civilization*', wondering whether one is questioning it, or merely charting its course through history, you will find both. It reflects a hopeful prospect, because to contemplate any other prospect, seems so unreasonable as to cause one to deny that it could ever exist; and that mankind should not exist.

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To the author's knowledge, mankind has evolved upon this planet, this magma-filled rock; not anywhere else. One could argue that the process is incomplete, that randomness (unaccountable arbitrariness) in the affairs of men is only part of the evolutionary process. One could argue that the planet is a finite entity, and that all which must survive upon it must be considered finite. There can be no biological immortality.

As a biological entity man may not be obedient to reason. To construe the ability to make a stone ax, or a CT Scanner, does not confer upon him the ability to civilize himself beyond the manufacture of tools. His biological imperative may differ from his other perceived objectives.

If reasoning is the operative when he makes tools, reason might conceivably be applied to the designing of a system of government that assures for the survival of all (fewer than seven billion), without establishing an hierarchal structure, rather the abolition of an hierarchal structure, and all instruments that favor such a happening.

How much do we wish to consider the nature of the beast, making full allowance for its proclivities and tendencies, when we design and implement our Golden Rule system?

If we assume an incomplete evolutionary model in ourselves, what do we envision as the complete evolutionary model? This question is not asked to illicit certain physical traits. There have been an adequate number of physical traits to have sustained the model throughout the millennia; increasing number, despite all the impediments to it, fat, skinny, tall, short, even ugly, none of which prove an impediment to what follows osculation.

However, any further evolutionary development is confronted with greater obstacles to its survival (reason-to-be), through the number accessing finite resources, in order to assure that survival. Number has also become the generator of burdensome pollution (overload) of the natural environment (what other kind is there?); thereby further threatening the evolutionary prospect. The 'who are we, why are we here, and where we are going, has become a redundant overstatement of a purpose to existence (considering the fact there is no obvious purpose whatever).

Mankind must be perceived as opportunistic, as opportunistic as the bacteria, fungus, and viruses, other unnamables that invade or develop within him, and threaten his evolutionary prospect. Immunities and symbiosis often fail to succeed, the host often perishing, taking its killer, and partner with it. These latter may be encouraged and exacerbated by the manner in which mankind conducts its evolutionary affairs upon this planet. Number, crowded

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disparity, increases the likelihood that disease will become invasive, and perhaps fatal to the species as a whole.

This is your author speculating. If his brain is functioning like the reminder of his aged carcass, there is much left to be desired. Part of his lacks may be found in his repetitive bashing of his head against proverbially hard substances. So be it; he does then, obdurately resolve to batter conundrums.

## *On The Road Again*

The girls, anticipating the author's thoughts, try to regain the initiative, and resume the discussion.



“Is man not an intelligent animal? An animal aware of so many things, perhaps even acutely aware of balance in his environment, that is, aware of causal relationships, cause and effect; if I, or we, do such and such, there will be consequences that any aware individual cannot ignore.

“What does an intelligent animal do with such awareness?”

“Tess, let us always be mindful that everything of which we are visually aware is in a state of flux, that old Heraclitan paradox. Certain more of change than anything permanent, we might hope for a better day, as well as imagine the worst, of the evolutionary prospect.

“The intelligent animal has envisioned himself at the apex of the evolutionary ladder; as an advanced life form; has this occurred spontaneously? How much more enhanced might this intelligent animal envision his evolution; not only his?”

“Ironically, as a scientist he propounds a descent from the apes, whereas, ironically he means the opposite. True, it matters not, only as an illustration of his awareness of evolution, and change; how he might perceive it.

“How does knowledge of this bear upon your question?”

“It is, as you inquired, how he chooses to utilize that awareness. If he senses there are very indistinct tomorrows, he might be more tempted to ignore consequences for the future, and live only for the

## *On The Road To Civilization*

day. He might be heard to rationalize: 'In fifty years, nobody will know the difference.' Or if he is aware of his depredations, but if he enriches himself through the depredations, he might be heard to rationalize: 'Don't think of it as 'less later', but 'more now'.'

"Do we want to argue with him when he uses this kind of logic? More than likely we will want to eliminate him.

"We are confronted with something that has arisen through the politics of private property. Individuals acquiring, 'developing' and exploiting areas of the planet to better their own circumstances; often to the detriment to the planet and the other occupants of it.

"The three of us deem this intolerable. We clamor for a change to this modus operandi. Instead of thinking of eliminating the individual, we need to eliminate the possibility of the individual, any individual, exercising this private property prerogative."

"Catherine, I take it you are about to propose the denial of individual property rights."

"Without equivocating, it would seem to follow, as one construct, we might so propose. In the area of 'real estate' one might so propose. A different scenario would arise with corporate holdings, especially if we were to form a commune, a corporation, let's assume, land partnerships, intended to husband and protect the land from the uses and abuses that we abhor, to distinguish ours from that which might result from a different corporate holding, that would indeed only use and abuse the land; or not use the land at all. We get into sticky semantic meanings. 'Corporation', 'Commune', for example, carry heavy negative connotations, although were we to use them as the lexicon might define them, they would seem more innocuous and reasonable. In essence we have defined the terms in other ways through action. A Corporation seems a headless thing designed to accrete in terms of wealth and influence, for itself and its share holders. A 'Commune' suggests 'communism', 'socialism', the sharing of the good and the bad equally; even more so than a self-proclaimed democratic society that is mostly undemocratic in its actions. We infer this latter judgment from our own 'exemplary democracy' because it largely controlled by Corporations (not the stakeholders).

"Even land held in public trust in the form of parks, wilderness areas, ecological reserves are not fully protected in perpetuity; they are constantly subjected to the pressures of those who would exploit their resources, not even for the benefit of mankind, but mostly for personal or corporate gain."

"If I may interject something here to maybe alter the focus."

"Since you are such a nice fellow, I might allow that."

"Thanks, my sweet."

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“We are born into a situation wherein the planet is already subdivided, used up, in terms of occupancy and ownership. We might even beat the shit out of each other over the control of the moon, or closer by, Antarctica. Because there are so many of us, the value of each subdivision increases daily for each individual parcel, out of the reach of the average pocketbook or wallet. The planet is comprised of sellers and landlords. When we are deposited here, naked and helpless, very dependent, we are subject to the fortunes of our parents, and the vagaries of ownership. Such our budding awareness might inform us.

“Each subdivision becomes a series of fences or walls demarcating the area which we will occupy, and which others may not, and vice versa. The fence or wall not only restricts the passage of us or our look-a-likes, but the passage of any other type of occupant of the planet; other life forms, to be specific; at this moment, I have in mind the fencing in the Khalihari (in Africa) that hinders the migration of the wildebeest (a dramatic instance of what happens to the wild on our western range lands). All other living forms, whether human or animal, are confined to the commons, and the byways. Since there are laws everywhere regarding vagrancy (cluttering the commons and byways with indigence), the commons and byways thus denied, forcing upon those so affected to find lodging elsewhere; on house boats 200 miles out to sea, on frozen mountain tops, in the middle of dehydrated deserts, or ugly tenements. Any animal, homo sapiens included, found wandering suffers a terrible fate. Wild animals belong in zoos, wild humans belong behind bars.”



“Very bleak, Mr. D.”

“That is so. But it follows, grimly indeed, from what you were already suggesting regarding ownership of the planet by individuals or corporations. When you set foot upon this planet, you are already excluded. You are barred enforceably. Your inclusion is very dependent on the good graces of your look-a-likes.

“Only those with means and property are allowed continuance. The remainder is consigned to the heap; or something worse. The same applies to all other forms of life.

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“That is bleak! It is wrong!”

“Agreed, Mr. D.”

“Agreed, Mr. D. The question remains, ‘What do we do? Do we really do what is right? Do we know what ‘right’ is?’”

“We may not know what is right specifically; but we do know what is wrong specifically. Only the ‘righteous’ insist that ‘wrong’ is ‘right’.”

“Can we begin then by specifying all the things that are wrong?”

“Catherine, we will be making choices based upon experience. We bring a certain kind of knowledge to the table.

“Its like much of what else we do as humans. We are more prone to dole out punishment than reward. We are not rewarded by doing what is expected of us; but we are punished when we do things that are contrary to those expectations. We are sometimes rewarded when we do things that are not expected of us; but often the opposite is true, no matter how well-intended. Infringement upon the assumed prerogatives of another is sometimes punished, regardless of the intent.

“We can easily bring a lot of ‘wrongs’ to the table.”

“Mr. D., in our judgment of history, not the history of the planet, or other forms of life, but our judgment of our own history (we do judge it, do we not) is done from this higher position in which we imagine ourselves to be situated. It is as though that former self can never be again. We are above such behavior in the present, because we have judged it. It might even be implied that we have learned from it.”

“It only seems that way. There are those clever people amongst us who intimate that there are no lessons from the past from which we can learn anything; because each situation, each set of circumstances is different. A lot of smart-assed equivocation emanating from that smug blasé clever Eastern establishment.

“Even in a system of generalities, how many wrongs can there be? Even in a more imaginary system of generalities, the wrongs are not infinite in number.”

“Mr. D., if we are continually judging our history, with an eye to improving our performance, by now we ought to be a fairly perfected model.”

“Only theoretically, Theresa. The lesson, per se, cannot be transmuted into the flesh; it must be taught, and learned, even as a generality, as something that can never be done again. Hypothetically, the teacher will point out the particular as a wrong. In the specific it was wrong; that is our assessment of it. Anything we would do that would resemble such a thing would also be considered wrong. Parallels are easily demonstrated.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Then, Mr. D., perhaps it is the way we are taught and the way we learn that is at fault. Even if the lesson is not transmuted into the flesh, and even if we are ignorant of the lesson, per se, we still interpret the happenings in our immediate surround as to their rightness or wrongness. Pain is wrong for us. Causing pain in others is considered wrong. If someone else inflicts pain upon us, we object. We need to know in new ways that throughout our history 90% of that history is tainted with WAR in one form or another. Our milestones in our history books are marked by Wars. The History of Pain; and as one philosopher has pointed out, the study of history is the study of ruins.

“We can teach that War is painful; and worse. What we need is an ongoing War, a perpetual War in which each individual, student or otherwise, should be immersed, experiencing the pain and suffering associated with it. In the classroom one feels no pain.”

“Yes!, we learn the simpler lesson when another look-a-like does us wrong, causes us pain. We object. In that moment, do we seek to avenge, or do we learn to say to ourselves, ‘I will never do that to another’ or do, as we have heard of the middle eastern hippie ‘If a man smite thee, offer him the other cheek’? Only two cheeks!”

“Catherine, I strongly suspect the latter is not the first reaction to pain. Nor is one very much concerned about the Golden Rule.”

“Mr. D., are we approaching the ridiculous in our discussion? Always returning to the beginning?”

“It would seem so, Theresa.

“The nub of the argument exists

in how we are affected by our own experience. In our closer associations with others we might extend our experience to include those others as being like ourselves. If one of them feels pain, we cannot remain indifferent to it. We imagine their pain being inflicted upon us. But more, we want somehow to prevent such a thing from happening again. Thus we might proselytize the Golden Rule, even as a preventative, like a ‘preventative war’. Thus also, we have returned to your ‘beginning’. In the immediacy of the moment we have learned that same lesson, propounding a solution. The most humane solution. ‘Turning the other cheek’ is not a viable option. “‘Avenging’, while addressing something in the immediate, a reaction, does not provide a lasting solution. It might be done deliberately as a wakeup call to announce the Golden Rule.

“Our historical record reveals time and time again the most effective solution; the Golden Rule. It is my belief that we can not improve upon thee standing upon the ramparts declaring: ‘If you do that to me, you will be breaking the rule.’ The other, to whom one has declared the admonition, will in the next moment strike one down.

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“There are no teeth in our rule.”

“Theresa, you are so correct in that observation. Only if one lives after the moment. He must put teeth into the argument, after the fact, not as vengeance, but as lesson.”

“Such tribulation, Mr. D., such tribulation.”

“Yes!, Catherine.

“In every extension of the rule, such tribulation.

“There are many forms of pain. When another takes advantage of us, cheats us, steals from us, makes a pass at our spouse, we feel wronged.

“Little homilies are applied to these situations, ‘if you don’t get caught, its OK.’ ‘its easier to ask forgiveness than to be held accountable’; and to those with presence of mind, with conscience, with a sense of accountability, ‘two wrongs do not make a right’ (without presenting the other cheek); and yet another dubious thought promoted by one of those smart-assed New York intellectuals; ‘error is a fiction’.”

“Mr. D., the general tenor of this discussion brings to mind ‘Civilization And Its Discontents’, and what we have intimated with regard to the ‘fatefully inevitable’; and which we find intoned by the Chorus in so many of the ancient Greek Dramas.”

“Catherine, we are not resigned to any of it.

“We cannot lie down before the juggernaut of reality.

“We will tilt at the windmills; at least you will.”

“Those who have tilted at them, who would counsel us, who speak in a simple clear language, begin with the most self-evident truths; realities which we cannot ignore, or obscure with intellectualizations.

“Our friend, Sigmund perhaps sadly recognized that man was truly hostile, aggressive and self-destructive. These he might view as part of his instinctive behavior, albeit natural behavior; wherein he could not discover in man any natural imperative to morality. Because something seemed so resistant to reason, or lacking in any natural deterrent, Sigmund tended to attribute such phenomenon to powerful instincts.

“If it is or was so self-evident that reason (ethics) could play no part, and that reason itself possessed no instinctive quality or property of its own, then one might attribute the same to the Devil, rather than that ‘fatefully inevitable’ human nature.

“If one would suppose that reason evolves from an instinct, equally as do the others, for every action an equal and opposite reaction, as might be the case; which Sigmund accounted when he qualified his judgment with ‘mastering the disturbance’. Even the suggestion of the possibility implies a lot. In ‘Future Of An Illusion’, he thought reason would eventually master our anxieties.

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“Noting the value of Historical perspective, in another vein, Y Gasset propounded at the end of the *Self And The Other*: ‘To excel the past we must not allow ourselves to lose contact with it; on the contrary, we must feel it under our feet because we have raised ourselves upon it.’. Note the imperatives connected with the statement, ‘must not’ and ‘must’. The assumption of excelling. ‘Mastering the disturbance?’”

“Mr. D., a working model? Sigmund also wrote of ‘trends’, which are thrown aside and replaced by ‘other trends’. He also wrote what he construed to be a Commandment: ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’ I had never thought of the latter as being a Commandment, any more than the Golden Rule is a Commandment. They are more in the way of plausible suggestions, mostly pragmatic suggestions, as a way of avoiding something else.”

## *The Persistent Condition*

Another round of conjecture and discussion upon the human condition. Another round of the hands upon the face of time. One might have lollygagged by the sea, pondering its ceaseless motion. One might have felt its rhythms in his soul, soothed by its constancy; its inoffensiveness. One might have lain his head upon her divine breast, listening to the throb of her life.

However, one could rarely forget; only briefly.

The human condition.

The condition for all of life exposed to homo sapiens.

Man has attempted to separate himself from other forms of life. He thinks of them as lesser, more victims of circumstance than shapers of it. Without thought, without reason. Prey.

Man is lonely on the mountain top. He is not content with his self-acclaimed superior place. He is seldom aware of his past, or aware that there is a past; he lives for the now, like any other creature he would judge as lesser, and ignorant.

Our three thinkers, debaters, have chosen to fathom the depths of their concerns. They believe there is a solution, as one might believe in anything. They feel there is an imperative, there are plausible, almost self-evident, solutions, based upon reason, and intent; as well as desire and good will.

They will not allow themselves the luxury of human naiveté.

Whatever solution may seem plausible and feasible will require dedication for its implementation. There can be no shirkers. The one

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constant refrain 'we are all part of the problem, we are all part of the solution', recurs again and again.

All three feel there are some things that are self-evident; that to ignore these is wrong, and perilous for all.

If it is as Sigmund propounded that instinct rules us, as it would seem probable, then it appears imperative, if we choose to alleviate, mitigate, and do away with the suffering in man caused by man, and suffering caused by man to other living forms, we must 'master' those instincts. We cannot lay claim to superiority if we act like the lesser ones, whom we regard with disdain in their seemingly aimless lives.

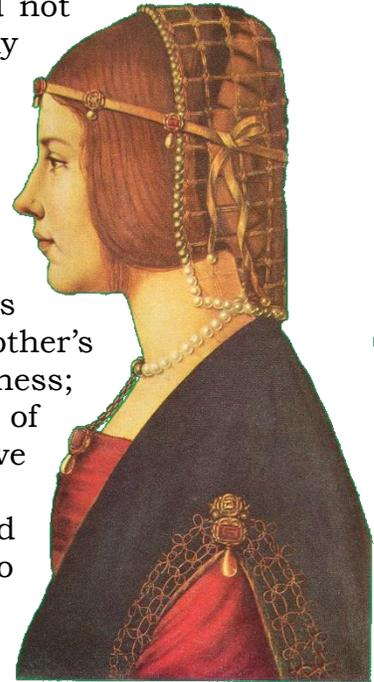
To our three humanitarians, Quixotic dreamers, the 'mastering' of the instincts that cause so much grief seems self-evident. A cause and effect relationship, that must be understood; man must be held accountable for his actions.

What do you think? Do you think it is a self-evident truth that we should all 'master' our hostile, aggressive and self-destructive behavior; that is, end such behavior, once and for all; because we know it to be the right thing to do? To put an end to 'civilized violence'?

All is not negative, or 'fatefully inevitable'. We are not entirely doomed. There are people out there who do care about human suffering, not only human suffering. Many besides our three debaters. Many of those in the medical profession expose themselves to diseases, transmissible diseases, that they do not fully understand. Their compassionate natures put them in harms way. You might say to your self, 'I wouldn't do that', and you would not be faulted. There are many who would run away from such exposure, afraid for their own lives. That is natural.

It also true that feeling compassion is natural. Natural empathy, is that like an instinct? Why do some feel it, and others seem to not? Why do others seem indifferent? And others cruel, and sadistic, deriving pleasure from other's pain? Is that also natural? Or is it a sickness; fatefully inevitable sickness that grows out of certain hostile, aggressive and self-destructive 'instincts'?

In any model of human society we would create, what do any of these inherently have to do with survival of the individual, or survival of the species? Are these latter of such imperative nature that all other considerations are waived?



## *On The Road To Civilization*

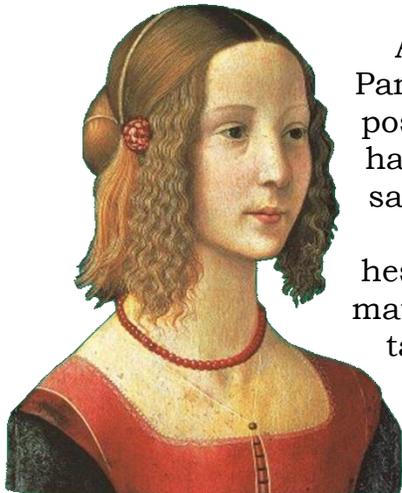
Even without knowing who we are, why we are here, and where we are going? Do we join the legions of other lives in this 'not knowing'? Are we so ruled by instincts and passions, without any true purpose beyond a blind continuance of something that has happened opportunistically; going along for the ride; not even really interested where we are going; in it for the thrills; getting high on the thrills, shooting up? Or do we go along, seemingly acquiescent, passive, only hoping for, waiting for, anticipating the thrills, a few wayward pleasurable moments, rolling in the hay? Hoping? Driven by the promise of pleasure, regardless of the consequences? Crawling in the gutter seeking one last hit? Hoping to perish on a high? Is that also 'fatefully inevitable'?

Last rights, full of regrets?  
Stoned, fearful of the regrets?  
Does one regret his own dying?  
All is possible.

Disturbing questions. Dubious answers. One must live through his or her life in order to know certain things. One must test the thesis that life is worth living, even though it seems purposeless and redundantly full of suffering.

The suffering seems to serve no purpose. It is as though a sadistic presence was there to make certain that all got a dose of something. Well, not all, or so it would seem. The presence seems to favor some above others.

We are abandoned with this oversized underutilized encephalon that can only propound such a stupid question, 'Why?'.



Are you intrigued with a notion of a Revival In Paradise? Perhaps another chance? Does it seem possible? Do you imagine, in the least, that we have advanced over the centuries, despite the same recurrent themes?

Do you feel any hope, that would make you hesitate for only a moment, not 'go for it', no matter what; that there are others who one must take into consideration?

Do you know enough and understand enough of history to determine there is hope, that, as Y Gasset has intimated, it is our conscious desire to excel the past; that in order to do so, we must not forget the past, as though it never happened, that we must feel it beneath our feet, because we are who we are because we have 'risen' with it.

## *On The Road To Civilization*

Have we truly 'risen'?

What!? Are we likened to bread dough? 'Risen'!

Inflated by yeasty notions concerning the purpose of life, our life?  
To do 'whose' work? To alleviate suffering?

To create great monuments to ourselves, celebrating our presence here?

The man with the gun had imagined a life-long safari hunting down the forces of evil.

You are wondering: 'Is he serious?' 'Is he toying with us?'

We haven't been here long enough to lay claim to anything. We rout around in dinosaur bones seeking clues to our own existence. They tell us that life doesn't amount to a hill of beans. That evolution sucks; that one cannot escape the inevitable. That evolution, that has developed this highest evolutionary prospect, has all been for naught; the oversized, underutilized brain is more bent on being clever, furtive, devious, conniving, malicious; secretive, abetting a self-centeredness; than it has been designed to further the cause of the species. All for naught? The species will be impelled to succeed on its own, with or without the intervention of high-minded notions.

When the cataclysm comes. When the earth belches. When the other opportunistic thing comes along to render us into relics, a creature that invented tools, all kinds of tools, tools to master the environment, to master each other, to overwhelm and subdue the planet. All for naught?

Where's the humility? Coming from that oversized, underutilized brain. Humility!!!!?

Arrogance!!!! Superior to anything living!

The place reeks of some kind of animal.

Someone was heard to say: 'You expect too much.'

Perhaps, but any life form being made to suffer, having cause to suffer, to feel pain and neglect, is intolerable. Is it not? Does one expect too much when he makes such a claim? Especially suffering caused by the presence of man? Where is the empathy, the compassion? We announce, 'There but the grace of God go I', relieved that it is not us suffering. What the fuck!

He sits ensconced in his Ivory Tower making such a pronouncement: "What The Fuck!" '.

## *More Time At The Anvil*

“Mr. D., you are under siege.

“They want to make of you a charlatan as they have Mr. Gore. No pudding. A lot of noisome gobbledygook.

“They perceive you only as a mouth. Don’t let it bother you. Maybe those who would assault you, are also seeking an out.

“You have eyes and ears as well, and other parts that move you in ways that you choose not to avoid. Because it is your habit to question everything; all assumptions, all expectations; and to question your own motivations. Your own integrity.

“I have questioned your ivory tower stance, thinking you ought be making pudding on the front lines of your beliefs. Now that I think I know you, I know you are not an idler in an ivory tower, you are the conscience of us all. It is not an unseemly profession. It might even be a noble profession.

“It all depends on one’s perception of things.

“We all seek to escape our responsibilities to some degree, to find relief from things that have been ingrained in us, however insincere, or sincere, were those who so burdened us in this manner.”

“Catherine, you are being kind and considerate toward the noisome one. Prayers before breakfast.

“When it comes to others attention, there are a few of those who actually inquire ‘What do you write?’. Is it out of curiosity they will ask? How do you suppose he would write? Is he writing stuff about me, about us? What is he saying about me, or us? Because I do not cast pearls their way, does not mean that I am harboring any secret thoughts regarding them, in particular.

“What would they say if I told them the human condition both interests and dismays me? Do they fear my judgment, assessing their share of the responsibility for the failure of human institutions? Would I single them out as an example? They might wonder if they were portrayed as malicious, doing terribly disruptive things with an intent, or pray tell, hypocritically; and G. forbid, carelessly; or worse yet, indifferently.

“What would it mean to inform them I am sounding my own self, for its own worth, seeking its own song, attempting to fill the hours with the imaginary being of myself, perhaps solipsistically. That it is what came with this life of mine, the sack of flesh and bone filled with palpitations, lest the sack wither and rot away for the lack of motion. An animate presence that might come and go without a whisper, embraced on each side by enormous incommensurate eternities of time, a spark unseen amongst the glare of gillions of other sparks, as thought I had never been. To ask then ‘What do you write?’ Then after

## *On The Road To Civilization*

one has writ, has been read, the critics begin to irrelevantly tear one down. Like, 'he fornicated with youth'. 'He is a misanthrope'."

"Let it be writ, Mr. D.. I am aware of these other noises, sometimes, not so pleasant to hear, perhaps motivated by envy. Also I am aware of the shrunken self-centeredness of so many. Still, however unexpected, it is comforting when someone will ask.

"There you might be, Mr. D., useful or useless, with your pen. But I deign to argue against your perceived solipsism. When some real news comes your way, you leap at the chance.

"Mr. D., I know you feel badly because you were not there to catch me when I fell on the front lines, when I became ill.

"You may have thought me stupid, but your concern frightened you. 'I should have been there. Suppose she had died.'"

"Catherine, I am aware of many of those who have gone there where you were, to that desperate continent, wanting to help, and all those who have perished in that capacity.

"I want to say it is a noble sacrifice, but if it had been you, I would have thought it a terrible waste, a loss of someone who was needed elsewhere; here, with me; and as another conscience; importantly. One who could articulate our dilemma."

"Hands! Mr. D., hands, willing hands, is what is needed.

"Before you respond to that, I will acknowledge, hands are needed everywhere."

"Hearts and Minds too are – What!? – needed."

"Hearts and Hands, Mr. D."

"Yes! Mr. D., Hearts and Hands." Theresa affirms.

"May I speculate upon 'need' for a moment; hopefully without getting way off the subject. Is there a subject?"

"If I May anticipate you Mr. D., I suspect you will be telling us about the purpose of mn again; about blind indifference. That man isn't any kind of exception; part of the soup, if you will.

"I will agree, in principle, because it is true. However, to man, man is exceptional."

"Well put, sis." Catherine affirms.

Theresa continues: "While engaged in our Big City experience, I have thought of seriously studying pathology and epidemiology. So many people are becoming ill, and essentially incurable, overcome by evolving, mutating little beasties, even ones that have been with us for a while, that have found a way around our few pathetic defenses, our stop-gap antibiotics."

"I think you will need to study 'public relations' as well, Theresa."

"Mr. D., don't mock me. I am serious."

"I am serious as well, Theresa. I do not mock you.

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“You both have spoken of need. The ‘public relations’ aspect is needed, perhaps as much or more than the trained technologist.

“There is an epidemic of humanity invading the planet; or crawling all over mn, bunching up in big heaps, living in places that will not sustain them, living in squalor, malnourished, with depressed immune systems; a random accumulation of beasties in themselves; host or breeding grounds for other opportunistic little beasties.

“I believe we, you, cannot address health issues without addressing these others as well.”

“Back to the beginning again Mr. D.?”

“Yes! seriously.

“You speak of ‘hands’ being needed. May I say not only ‘helping hands’; or the ‘humanitarian touch’; I distinguish human and humanitarian. There is also the ‘heavy hand’ which might be needed more than the other. Not so humanitarian, but human none the less; that is, emanating from homo sapiens.

“The ‘heavy hand’ is used by dictators to control people.

“I do not propose the methods of dictators, but I do recommend the use of the ‘heavy hand’ to bring about something that does not exist, and, in my mind, cannot exist without the use of the ‘heavy hand’.

“In our recent discussions, we have mostly agreed that ‘reason’ does not serve us very well. That we cannot deliver ourselves from the human condition through ‘reason’, even when it is evident that we should be doing so. That is, we might provide a plausible and possible solution to the human condition through ‘reason’ but cannot implement the solution, because it depends so much on others accepting the rationality of the plausible. Because that ‘something’ is still ‘missing’ from hypothetically plausible equation, we must rely upon the ‘heavy hand’.

“If their ‘ox is being gored’ or if they perceive it as such, then we cannot gain the compliance we need. They will not let their ox get gored.” “Well, it so happens, their ox needs goring.

“Hence the ‘heavy hand’; and, in so many walks of life.”

“Doesn’t sound like a very good thing to me.”

“Necessary, Theresa. I believe you know what I mean.



## *On The Road To Civilization*

“A not-so benevolent dictator, who is doing what he (or she; you got the job Theresa) must do in order to assure that equity, fairness, and justice (in all things) to which we so often refer.

“Can you, as the benevolent dictator, accomplish the task, either with an army, or with public relations; perhaps the only effective agent of public relations is an army.

“A visionary benevolent one; a kind benevolent dictator, who must use the ‘heavy hand’ in order to obtain compliance.

“Compliance to what?”

“If he or she deems that the optimum human community requires such and such, which he may determine through a kind of pragmatic logic, a reasoned approach, he or she feels obliged to implement it without a lot of discussion; more with the imperative to which we have referred; and with the use of the ‘heavy hand’.

“One might follow with an imperative, by demanding compliance NOW!

“The optimum human community will be what he or she deems it to be.”

“Gored oxen all over the place, a breeding ground for bad beasties.”

“Don’t get silly on me.”

“Mr. D. can’t you have the one without the other.”

“In reality, there is the imperative which, for the sake of argument, I do not ignore. To answer your question, I cannot predict what will be the consequences of the application of the ‘heavy hand’.

“You imagine resentments that will fester, seeking ways to undermine any interference in the status quo.

“Our previous experience informs us that is to be expected. However, the overriding issue is the ‘total human condition’.

“While there may not exist a best solution, it is my belief any solution must be applied in an emphatic manner, through the use of the ‘heavy hand’; a lot heavier than Moses, seems the only alternative.

“You girls look at me like I’m some kind of ogre, a devilish devil’s advocate. Rest assured, I toy not with thee.

“I choose the word ‘benevolent’, when I might have used ‘humanitarian’. Its all the same in intent. A humanitarian with a ‘heavy hand’.

“Let us regard this whole proposition from the stand point of ‘free choice’; an expression we use a lot in this land. If one is granted ‘free choice’, he or she may simply choose not to participate in any grand scheme, even if is for their own good. In rectifying the human condition, we must deny free choice, until it is proven that the choices made are in accordance with something that includes reference to the other, inclusively. That ‘other’ might simply be regarded as oneself.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“OK, Mr. D. you don’t need to hit us any harder upon the head; we get the drift. You may even need to deny free choice to the well meaning.”

“Precisely!”

Catherine speaks. “My turn to be the devilish advocate. What are we hoping to accomplish? In using the ‘heavy hand’ which in essence has become the ‘magic wand’, we invent a whole new civilizational approach. This is the way it is, you will comply, you are denied any choice in the matter. It may require that your ox will be gored. There will be no appeal or compensation; because it is for your own good. Though it hurts, it is still for your own good. Endure, and you will be saved. We have created a new Paradise in which all will be welcomed ‘equally’, or rather to which all will be consigned ‘equally’. There are no alternatives. So, get a grip!”

“Fair enough, my devilish handmaiden; though you jest.

“You stress the ‘equally’, as though to mock it. What? Don’t you think humanity can stand ‘equality’; that humanity ‘really doesn’t want ‘equality’. That ‘equality’ becomes a battleground only when humanity is denied ‘equality’; but that any individual really wants to be on top of the heap after all; that instinctively, any individual denies ‘equality’?”

“You read too much into what I have said, but you raise a most interesting point. Being consigned to ‘equality’ whether one likes it or not is only part of the ‘benevolent one’s’ task or vision. It is not his or hers to guarantee happiness through ‘equality’. ‘Equality’ is a practical consideration, whether or not it seems to contradict human nature.

“But you do put a spin upon the notion, is ‘equality’ what we really want; do we not want something even more? To be on top of the heap?”

Theresa offers: “It would seem all the more imperative we deny free choice in the matter, especially in the matter of assuring equality. We must consider that the heap will have been abolished.

“Another consideration which the ‘heavy-handiness’ may not be able to control. Our individual differences. Would it be right that all be made the same, like something that came off a production line; cloned?”

“Quality control, Theresa.”

“Mr. D., a serious question, if you don’t mind.”

“I repeat, quality control. It was you who chose the analogy of the production line.”

“OK, poor analogy. To state something more emphatically, how do you propose to deal with individual differences, hence individual

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responses to the ox goring, to the denial of free choice, to the enforcement of equality?”

“I suppose that aspect of individuality must be denied as well. Though it will only be through edict, a forced compliance. Obviously we cannot alter the beast; we are stuck with what the process yields, no two alike. Cloning the beast may be a theoretical solution, but is it possible? Is that the ultimate goal of evolution? A perfect model to be preserved through cloning? Also a more convenient host for some insidious opportunistic microbe.”

“To follow on then; what will the ‘heavy hand’ do to get us where we want to be?”

“What would you think?”

“Mr. D., you are avoiding the question.”

“I was hoping our public relations specialist might seize the initiative. Our designated benevolent one.”

“Mr. D., you realize I will be forced to close down your operation. You will not be allowed to voice your opinion in these matters. In short, your ox will be gored. You will be commended to Silence. Can you live with that?”

“You’re asking?!?”

“Withdraw the question. Silence!”

“Can you live with that?”

“Think you got me there. I will order your counsel through the use of my heavy hand, gently.”

“As long as you do not turn me into an enforcer.”

“That may be the only way to implement our scheme. Public Relations, Mr. D.

“We should be serious here.”

“Agreed, Tess.

“Mr. D. has proposed, now, the three of us must dispose.”

“Cate, this round of debate began when I mentioned returning to school to study pathology and epidemiology. Then, our mutual friend badgered me about studying public relations.

“I now think the point is well-taken; that you can’t do one single thing; you have to do a whole lot of things, directing your energies and efforts toward a larger goal than one’s single goal.

“I don’t really know how you do that? It seems monumental and impossible.

“Let’s say I am one of the lucky ones, who exercises free choice to do this study of great importance to me. Regardless of whether I want to do it through free choice, or I am ordered to do it through the edict of the ‘heavy hand’, it remains important.

“In this day and age, it should be said, ‘what affects one person’s health, affects all’. We cannot take on the health issue in isolation. I

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see the point. As it has come out in this discussion, I can't see where public relations will do any good.

"I am aware of the lag times, and the obstructionism, the competition, the alas!, politics (stupidity), that comes into play when the health alert is sounded. Its usually a health alert that's gonna get those guys in high places, on top of the heap, so to speak, that gets the public involved. An ox of a different kind."

"Clever, Sis.

"Mr. D. thinks so too.

"It is hard to imagine denying almost everybody. I realize there can be no gradualism in this effort. Our whole historical record is one of half-hearted, half-measures designed to appease certain factions; sometimes, at best, only a lip-service to 'something for everybody' mentality that does not effectively achieve the most important objective.

"Its so very hard to question the very premise by which we claim to live, imagining it to be the most 'democratic'. I believe 'democracy' is a catchall, vulnerable to abuse. Its an ideal without assessing any personal responsibility. 'Free choice' has raised havoc with democracy, and with the planet.

"One must regard himself like we do the bacteria and viruses, as opportunistic. 'Democracy', per se, fosters opportunity. But we know this has repercussions. As much as an organism prospers through opportunity, although only chemically, as we might perceive it. We really do not understand these simpler organisms any more than we do ourselves. Perhaps the organisms are more straightforward. They do not equivocate with yammer about equality. They go for it tooth and nail, survival; whereas we hesitate through scruples, or fear of reprisal (being done unto, as one did unto another). We don't know exactly how much symbiosis ('balance' might be another word) is operative amongst all these organisms in relation to each other (whether there is some kind of implicit Golden Rule that pertains to all of life). As we rely upon certain organisms to do certain tasks for us. 'What can we do for them?' seldom occurs to us. If we don't like them we try to poison them. Not very friendly; so they return the favor, by generating toxins. 'Unhand me!'. But their production of toxin is a predictable survival ploy; or mechanism, if you will.

"To back up a bit here. Even though mankind should get a grip on himself, through the implementation of the heavy hand, partly to control or to avoid disease, as a benefit to everyone, any subject organism will not know of our intent; we cannot conduct a conference of organisms. They will remain as they have always, adapting to new trends. If we are all healthy with strong immune systems, they may learn to live with that, especially if there is a consistency in the host. What is their objective; certainly, in our way of thinking, it cannot be

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to kill the host. Unless it is the host's intent to rid itself entirely of the organism through poison (antibiotics). I cannot speak for the organism, but I can imagine the operatives at work beneath the surface, not vengeance, but survival; dodging the bullet, so to speak, or the wearing of a Kevlar vest. As it might be construed more humanistic/anthropomorphic to treat all life with equanimity, it might be very organismic to treat all of life with a little pepper spray. An irritant instead of a deadly toxin.

"But this is assigning an intelligence and a reciprocity (symbiosis) that does not exist. It is we, homo sapiens, that have some different kind of intelligence. We are aware of so many things. This awareness is not common to a common degree, but is present nonetheless. Whereas the organism deals with the hand it is dealt, we do the same, and more, because we are able to expand our awareness beyond the moment. We are cognizant of our history, if we take the trouble to acquaint ourselves with it; we are cognizant of a future beyond the moment, so much as to account for it, to plan for it.

"We use words like 'community', instead of 'colony'. We are more than, and have become, more than we seem in the moment."

"It is so, Catherine.

"We cannot consistently capitalize on our difference. We are more victim than agent of our own betterment. Our intelligence as measured by our awareness makes for ponderous reading.

"Something is 'missing' in our way of doing things.

"Our friend, Y Gasset, tried to point out our difference from the monkey whom we seemed to resemble. The monkey could be, while not sleeping, observed to be mostly constantly in motion, anxious in the moment, not able, in his mind, to feel self-contained within his environment. Gasset attributed this to anxiety and fear. He thought man was able to be more self-contained because he was able to remember objectively that there were certain things about which it was not necessary to feel anxious, or fearful, in the immediate surround. Man could appear to be at rest, relaxed; he could tell himself there was nothing to fear in the moment.

"I don't think it is so cut and dried. Man, by virtue of his memory, or his ready access to it, carries latent baggage that most likely creates far greater anxiety and apprehension in him than the more immediate threatening things, or still other unidentified things, that might otherwise occur in the moment. He is able to slow down the reaction time within the moment, but what does he do with those nagging memories?

"Y Gasset might give one the impression that we are in control of something. Perhaps we learn to lengthen our response time, so it is unnecessary to jump, to react every time something or someone makes a loud noise, or moves quickly. We don't burn so many calories

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in seemingly unnecessary activity, relearning every moment, that which was forgotten in the previous.

“For those of us who are fortunate, we live in houses where we can lock, even bar the doors and windows at night, if necessary, and feel relatively safe and secure; and we can slumber peacefully. We are able to leave our houses, locking, and/or barring them to prevent easy entry, with additional imaginary assurances that private property is a sacrosanct territory. At least, before the onerous Patriot Act, the government had needed some authorization to enter the premises. Of course, thieves do not. But we are able to take additional precautions to frustrate the burglar; security systems, dogs; not so, the righteous government. In short, we install alarm systems to alert ourselves, to hopefully ward off intruders.

“Animals create burrows, or live in the tree tops, move about in herds, packs, flocks, schools, disguise themselves. Insects build nests, hives, webs, live in hidey-holes; gather into colonies, swarms. Microbes, microscopic things like bacteria and viruses, yeasts, protozoas in constant motion, invade, multiply, occupy, passing from host to host by various means, often abetted through the bad habits of the host, enabling them to expand their territory.

“We live amongst these; for the larger animals, the ones we can see, anymore, we have little fear. The smaller animals, we fear even less, but any of them can be pests; some, carriers of disease. The insects are a more worrisome entity, they carry poisons, toxins, parasites, diseases, that can be harmful to us and to our domesticated animals. The microscopic ones can be and often are more deadly. Our greatest fear of the natural world is rapidly taking the shape of the microbe; for the moment, excepting mankind itself.

“We can make our houses animal proof, other parts of our territory animal proof, we can screen our houses against the entry of most insects. We cannot prevent the entry of the microscopic ones. We cannot control our genes to any marked degree. There are processes at work that alter our DNA, enough to generate aberrant cells that are able to live in our bodies, serving no function or useful purpose other than to enrich, and enlarge themselves for the duration of their dubious, but virulent tenure.

“We are fearful of these microbes and aberrant cells. We have found we cannot control them. We pour enormous resources into an attack upon them, into ways of outwitting them. We can never relax our vigil. Very often we fail in our attack, and we find we cannot outwit them. Abracadabra.

“When one of the ‘bugs’ gets us, or when our cells go berserk, we forlornly ask, ‘Why me?’. ‘I have lived a clean life, ate healthy foods. I have worked hard to get where I am today. Why me?’ Boola Boola!

“Something is missing; Abracadabra.”

## *The Imperative Persists*

“Yes!, Mr. D., our assumptions are sometimes unrealistic. We imagine we live in a world we have created. When actually we have evolved into a world into which many other forms of life have also evolved. Life is symbiotic on the one hand, parasitic, on the other, and if there was a third hand, it would become prey, if not sacrificial host.

“On earth as it is in heaven, Mr. D.?”

“We are purported to yearn for life everlasting in that place; this place, then.”

“Yes, and we would choose life over death; that is because we are who, and what we are. We would deny life to anything that infringed upon ours. The infringement quotient. Really selfish bastards, you know. Intolerant.

“We don’t want to be wiped out by some insignificant little thing, some rudimentary thing on the evolutionary ladder. We mount our assault on the rudimentary thing, the microbe or the aberrant, useless cell that wants to eat us alive. Antibiotics, chemotherapy, radiation, ancient herbal remedies, I Ching, Voodoo, Abracadabra. Still we die on time.”

“Mr. D. there is nothing wrong with wanting to live a full life. To hopefully die peacefully, without any regrets.”

“But how do we figure such an entitlement? We have blood on our hands.”

“Mr. D., I beg to differ.”

“Theresa, we are all culpable, as a species, as a nation. No, not you personally, of course.

“Your family has done and is doing things to wash the blood away, to salve the wound we have made.

“A few days ago, I ran into an island acquaintance. He was pondering the notion of evolution, wondering how we can measure such a thing. He was concerned about what is happening in our warring upon each other, that so many women and children are being killed, that which, or those whom, we have coldly assessed as ‘collateral damage’. He wanted to compare the old days, maybe a thousand years ago, when men warred upon each other. It was man against man, combatant against combatant; or so he wanted to

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imagine. Good clean war, no indiscriminate killing. After the good clean war was over, the 'spoils' fell to the victor. What were the spoils?

"He was implying that we are moving backwards. Trying to imagine a measure to evolution, somehow wanting to prove that evolution as a civilizational model was advancing, using war as measure was not the thing to do.

"War has become impersonal; rarely do combatants come face to face. 'Collateral damage' does not seem to horrify us as it should. It horrifies you and I, but those who wield the 'sword' seem more ruthless; perhaps desperate. Like we are becoming desperate in our war upon the microbes. They keep returning to haunt us, to invade us. There is no escape from either them, or human nature.

"There is no measure for evolution. It has neither advanced nor regressed; it has brought us to this place and time. We have come together often enough to address a common problem on a world scale. We have attempted to establish 'rules of war', to assess 'war crimes'. We have created a forum where, as nations, we are supposed to bring our grievances against other nations, seeking redress, and resolution. Our hearts are not in it. The process is too slow and cumbersome, and riddled with politics. We have failed as we have failed in our administration of antibiotics. The bastards keep returning with more lethality than before, and acting more indiscriminately.

"Where do we find a measure for evolution? It has taken us a few thousand years to create the bickering ineffectual United Nations."

"Mr. D., War is not a measure, obviously. Yes! a very negative aspect of our oversized underutilized brain. I believe we are horrified at the consequences of violence, the violence of war, how it does not solve anything, it simply expends itself in destruction. Because diplomacy so often fails in these bickerings between nations, because nations as political and territorial entities, can and do, act unilaterally, aggressively upon others, it seems the only solution is do away with nations.

"You want the evolutionary prospect to finally weed that out of our genes. Your friend sees a backward step in it all; 'impossible' he would say; 'there is no evidence for such a prospect'. Its dog eat dog with more vengeance, more viciousness, more indifferent impersonal brutality, more diabolical implementation, more unconcern for consequences."

"The nuclear thing hasn't hit us yet; like the ultimate plague hasn't hit us yet.

"Maybe they are on track with each other. Man began working on the atomic bomb and penicillin at roughly the same time, during the

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ferment generated by our increasing knowledge of unseen things and unseen forces; we thought of these mutual pursuits as science.

“We have improved the nuclear device and its delivery system. We have ‘improved’ our disease fighting weapons. At the same time diabolically, we have also developed incapacitating and lethal diseases as weapons. Diabolically, we have also developed chemicals as weapons, that will incapacitate and kill.

“Our arsenals are filled with horror. We are more successful at eliminating ourselves than the ‘bugs’ which plague us. When we assault a bug, it simply does a frame shift. Almost laughable.”

“No it is not, Mr. D.

“You continue to hover with your deviltry.

“But you do offer different perspectives to our perception of ourselves; you perform your own antical frame shifts.

“We are being challenged to think outside of our assumptions, and our expectations. Your friend challenges us to think outside of our assumptions about evolution. He is not quarreling or quibbling about evolution, per se, as a factual thing; he assumes there is such a thing as evolution, but he is asking, where is it at; where’s the proof, not as viable explanation, but, as an assumption, he is saying, it misleads our expectation that we are improving, ascending or advancing toward a ‘better’ more civilized creature.

“Y Gasset would argue with that, claiming we have advanced.”

“A very qualified argument. He didn’t live long enough to witness the new oligarchy; *The Corporation In Collusion With Big Government In Collusion With Corporations*. A headless monster. Now, The Masses really do need to revolt.

“Something is Missing. The Missing Link. We skipped a Link. We leapt ahead too fast with our oversized underutilized brain.

“Once again Herman asks, ‘Is civilization a thing distinct, or merely an advanced stage of barbarism?’

“Part of the answer to that question seems obvious; ‘civilization is not a thing distinct’; whatever else we may say of it may imply something barbaric.

“We need to know what is missing.

“We are dealing with an animal here. A very devious and diabolical animal. It is probably very presumptuous to classify this animal as some advanced creature, even as the apex of some evolutionary gambit of mn.

“Perhaps we haven’t any choice, given the limits of our imaginations, given the limits of what we can know.

“We assume things not in evidence. Because we appear to be the most highly evolved creature, we assume prerogatives that will make

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us Lord and Master. The Lord and Master thing is kind of egotistical. We swagger, we assert and insinuate ourselves, we bully each other, we bully the planet. We are presumptuous enough to imagine that as 'civilization'. We lord it over all other species which may have developed a more cohesive civilization than our own; we judge them inferior because they are not like us.

"If we truly set out to define what we mean by 'civilization', each of us knows we will fail to meet the parameters set down in the definition. We may excuse some part of that by claiming we have not fully evolved; 'give it time'. The definition is only prospective. It represents a desire for something that is missing.

"To reflect on Y Gasset again: '..... *What is most valuable in man is his eternal and almost divine discontent, which is a kind of love without a beloved, and like an ache we feel in members of our body that we do not have. Man is the only being that misses what he has never had. And the whole of what we miss, without ever having had it, is never what we call happiness. .... man (is) the only being who is unhappy, for the very reason he needs to be happy. That is because he needs to be what he is not.*'"

"Poetic Mr. D. Not something we often say about an animal.

"Value added.

"Ortega may have been such a creature. Was he what he needed to be?

" 'Man is the only being that misses what he never had.'

"To keep it simple, if man presumes to define what he means by 'civilization', and if he applies the term to something in which he believes, then .....

"We expect something to flow from that; its not what we must face every day, 'misses what he never had'.

"So, can we conclude that man has never had 'civilization' as he has defined it.

"Do we give up in the face of the improbable; or must we fatalistically accept the dictum 'eternal discontent', because we can never achieve this thing, 'civilization'?

"I would not ascribe divinity to man.

"An ache', as though we were missing a 'leg'; what, a third leg? Or do we assume we have lost a leg? 'Civilization' is the leg that is missing; something we have never had, yet we miss it as though we have had it at one time; we are constantly reminded by the ache that it is missing.

"Did we at one time have 'civilization'?

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“According to our definition of it? Are we referring to some kind of social order? That order may be something imposed by the Collusion of Corporations and Government, instead of by the rank and file.

“Would it matter, as long as every individual was accounted, and included (equally) in the social order?”

“A corporation of the rank and file sounds more plausible in terms of assuring the inclusion and the equal part.”

“Gee, you guys, good going.” Theresa chimes.

“Listening to you two gives rise to all kinds of thoughts.

“Outside are the great generalities; even defined, ‘civilization’, is a generality. Yes! there are specifics, which might be construed as covenants, or laws. On the inside are the intentions of those who are part of the whole. Do I refer to ‘good’ intentions? Lets say for the sake of argument, I imagine only ‘good’ intentions, because the majority of the rank and file will declare they have only ‘good’ intentions. They might rationalize their ‘good’ intentions; that is, in order to achieve this thing, we must be something special. We must put our money where blah blah blah.

“In their hearts and souls, they desire this ‘civilized’ condition. As Gasset intimates it may be the source of happiness he seeks, assuming man seeks happiness.

“It seems a fairly reasonable assumption that we seek happiness.

“Missing? Does that mean unattainable? Happiness unattainable?”

“If we measure what is happening today by what we have been discussing; we must say it is not attainable. Our ‘good’ intentions appear mostly as lip-service to the notion of ‘civilization’ as we are apt to define it. Our ‘good’ intentions are a matter of convenience. When it is convenient, we act ‘civilized’. To mock an expression in use these days. A Coalition Of The Willing.

“The Collusion of which you speak is another way station (link) in this evolving thing we are missing. We argue it cannot be the final link, simply because it does not meet the criteria of our definition. We are hard pressed to tolerate this condition, but are powerless as individuals, even as an amassment of the rank and file, to bring about the change we seek. Even removing the necessity to fight amongst ourselves, can we really master the situation; that is, implement a ‘civilization’ that accounts everybody.

“Statistically, it grows more difficult with time.

“We are obliged to deal with something more pressing before we can even begin to work on the model.

“For example, let’s say we put our money where blah blah blah, accounting the needs of mankind as we know them and recognize

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them, would we have enough wherewithal to take care of these needs? Let's say we are trying desperately to move from this heavy burdensome status quo to the other thing we claim to so desire?

"Is this need so great as to overwhelm the prospect before we even get started?

"Do we attempt to remedy the social ills and, and rescue mankind from them, all in one fell swoop?

"Or do we let things run their course for a time, allowing for a die off of those who burden the prospect? Perhaps we could appease our humanity by making them comfortable on their way out the door, pain killers and euphoria for every doomed soul. Who will be chosen as the doomed souls?

"Then What!!?"

"I imagine we will not get off so easy. We will not be able to withdraw, while things run their course. We will need to face this thing on this planet; I believe we have dared to use the word: NOW."

"Yes! Theresa, we're in deep shit. The place reeks of some kind of animal."

"OH!, your colorful phrases."

"In the olden days, those with their brougham filled with their jewels and wares could run away from the plagues, the rat infested hovels. They could escape to the 'country' while the die-off took place.

"In more modern times, those who could, built 'bomb shelters' against the Hiroshima/Nagasaki model, without being able to test them against the new model. Some of the clever, 'true believer' models put forth by the 'believer' physicists proved exquisitely laughable in their glaring ineffectuality.

"Like all things that have characterized our predictions, we tend to underestimate the reality of any situation. Any nuclear model might conclude with 'On The Beach'.

"Even without such a dire consequence, I suspect we might not be able to run away this time, while the die-off occurs. Unless we are able to subsist on nothing. The bugs and their vectors are expanding their range; not unlike us. The weapons against them have failed, anything radical we propose to deal with them requires living in Boccacio Bell Jars until the scourge has past. We strongly suspect, some of them are never going away. That, if and when we return, we must reestablish peaceful coexistence with that which invades us and lives within us.

"After that great advent, should we have learned anything at all, we will be living clean wholesome lives as a matter of necessity, not as a matter of choice, and what one does in that regard, all will need to do, none excluded, as part of the working model. The only key to

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survival for the most of the individuals. Some will perish, but not for want of inclusion in the model.

“That is when real intelligence will have taken over. Other things will be accounted when real intelligence takes over.

“Real intelligence learns from its past. Real intelligence plans for a future in which it will not live, but in which one’s progeny will live. Real intelligence will account for and leave behind a place in which that continuance will be possible. Real intelligence will recognize that we are the product of a process that is ongoing, not fixed. That immortality is not possible, even through our progeny; that one day, the process will take a turn that does not favor our continuance. We may become the missing link, the primogenitor, of some more highly evolved creature. We will do all the work, we will do all the suffering; we will have learned all the hard lessons, and they will derive all the benefit, will receive all the credit.

“In the meantime, real intelligence will recognize that number, which outstrips resources, can never be an option, even temporarily. Also that continuance is not the sole prerogative of any one individual. It is assumed that ‘natural selection’ through diversity, got us this far down the road. We have shown ‘unnatural selection’ that is, fucking to produce a King, inbreeding amongst the royalty, has produced questionable models. We have no way of knowing whether cloning the perfect specimen will assure for any better product than what would naturally evolve through the more diverse prospect of natural selection.

## *Impediments To A Resolution*

“There are many dos and don’ts; one must pay attention.”

“Mr. D., while you were speaking just now, a thought arose concerning what you intimated regarding ‘immortality’, that it is not possible even through our progeny, that the end will come all of its own accord, that the eons of working toward some goal, the interminably long march through time will have been for naught, that all the suffering by those auguring for the better, and all the suffering caused by those auguring for dominance, will have acted in vain. All the heart-felt do-gooding is doomed from the outset. All the selfish grab will have been in vain.

“Mr. D., as we have intimated in our earlier discussions, some things must run their course. What can we do to intervene? How can we intervene? With what kind of persuasion?”

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“Earlier we debated whether Ortega was correct in his assessment of advance, when mankind overthrew the aristocracy, only to regress into a Corporate aristocracy.

“Mr. D., I do want to intervene. If all we surmise about our tenure here is true, how can we not try to make it a pleasant sojourn for each and everyone. Is it true that evolution serves no purpose, since any evolved product is doomed to extinction, regardless of how evolved, or that what was yesterday may have produced another form, perhaps so different in time as to no longer be recognizable as the one from which all the striving had emanated?

“A free-for-all, a colossal blunder. Those with the means, however they acquired them do sit atop the heap, with their razor wire and guard dogs.

“Pay attention!, you advise. We have not paid attention. Because we assumed the King was long-removed, that we had advanced, that the individual was now King. We have been doing other things, and while we have been doing other things with our individuality, the monopolists have been doing other things. The situation is worse than an aristocracy, with a King on a throne; because it is now a headless King. Gerry Spence opines, the wolf, the elected official, under the influence of the corporation, is King.”

“Yes! Catherine. This brings to mind a somewhat improbable tale, a different kind of sea story than the ones with which we are more familiar, like single-handed sailing around the world (in the old days, before high-tech sailing), and stories of piracy on the high seas. The Shipkiller, the gist of which was the new breed of ocean traveler, the Supership, a monolith, 1500 feet long, built in one country, registered in another, with corporate offices in yet another, built in Japan for a Consortium Oil Company, registered in Liberia, with Corporate offices in Luxemburg.

“The ship, once upon the sea, becomes a navigational hazard to all those single handers. In the old days the Rules Of The Road provided that a ship under sail on a certain tack, as long as it held its course, had the right of way. I believe the rules still apply except in given channels where commercial traffic has no maneuvering room. But on the open sea, it is another matter. Unfortunately in close proximity on the open sea, the sailing vessel is at an overwhelming disadvantage if it happens to be anywhere near these monoliths. It may have the right of way, but the monster, traveling at a speed of 16-20 knots requires miles of sea room ahead to stop. It cannot alter its course but a few degrees at a time.

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“Even if one is on watch and mostly alert, sailing at night, if one happens to miss the sighting of a bow light, there might be hundreds of feet of ship passing before a port or starboard light will appear.

The gist of the story is a collision on the open sea wherein a Supership essentially runs over a sailing vessel without as much as a ‘by your leave’, perhaps unaware that it has done so. The sailing vessel is demolished, one of the crew killed, the other left to survive as he will.

“Then the story begins, the search for the culprit, the search for redress, which leads us to your headless monster; from whom there can be obtained no redress. How do you deal with the Headless Monster? There is garnishment with a female presence.

“The Old Testament provided a solution with an Eye For An Eye, and sundry other options including, Let Vengeance Be Mine.

“The end result may provide some satisfaction to the reader who becomes involved in the story, not caring for the probability of the denouement, but does not really provide a solution for modern man seeking to rid himself of our Man-Eating Monster, the Corporation.

“In real life those who, as individuals, fought the Corporation and Big Government, Ted Kazinsky failed, Randy Weaver failed, John Singer failed, David Koresh failed, Timothy McVeigh failed. The martyr bombers are more successful, and 911 was a success. The wave of the future? You may construe that I do not see much difference between Big Government and the Corporation. Big Government is also headless; as Gerry suggests, it is bought and paid for by Corporations. One and the same to me.”

“‘Eye For An Eye.’ How did that work, Mr. D.?”

“Sink the offending ship.”

“Did that also include human life; euphemistically, ‘collateral damage?’”

“You are left to imagine it might have.”

“Was that life the responsible party?”

“Only marginally; just doing its job.”

“Then what was gained in the long run?”

“Only a moderate satisfaction for the individual; a fantasy fulfilled by those who want to read such things.”

“Did you feel a moderate satisfaction.”

“If it really could happen, I might.”

“Was the ship carrying a cargo of oil?”

“To be somewhat politically correct; No.”

“Mr. D., do you suppose the crew had any idea why someone might be trying to sink their ship?”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Depends upon who might have known of the original collision; we might suppose the Captain knew.”

“Do you suppose the Captain felt remorse as his ship went down?”

“We’ll never know, will we?”

“Well, gee, then, isn’t it all a bit much.”

“I suppose. 911 was a bit much.”

“Touché!, Mr. D.”

“Headless; Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia. Some resentment, some animosity there.”

“Do you suppose the resentment and animosity would go away if Israel was ousted?”

“If we helped, maybe, or if we stood by without doing anything.”

“Why does everybody need a State? A Jewish State? A Palestinian State?”

“People leave their States, often to never return.

“I don’t know the rights or wrongs of the issue; or why there is so much hatred; almost as if it was inbred.

“Its not only in the middle east.

“What breeds so much hatred in Northern Ireland? In the former Republic of Yugoslavia? The bloody Tribal and Sectarian rivalries everywhere. Racial hatred? Gangs, gang warfare?”

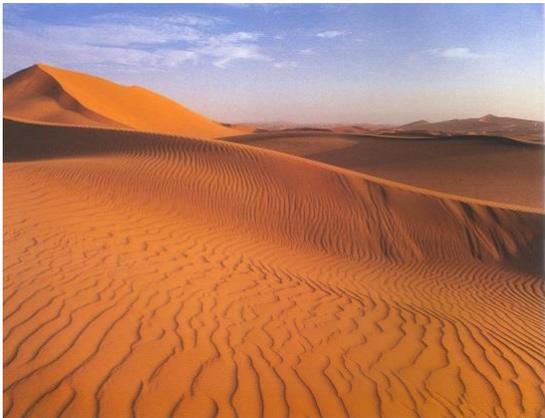
“Catherine, I suspect we are looking too closely at our subject.

When we do so, it all seems so hopeless.

“We need another planet for us good guys. A Good Guy State.”

“What would be the qualifications?”

“I wouldn’t worry too much about qualifications. Hearts of Gold, perhaps. Defending a herd of Hearts Of Gold might prove the problem.



“Assuming there would be such a place for Good Guys, on Antarctica, in the Sahara, or some abandoned open-pit mine, or other totally expended section somewhere on this planet. Can’t have any green grass; or oil, or precious metals.”

“Isn’t that more or less where Israel is located; what’s there, really?”



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“A place to call Home, full of Ancients and Relics, and Touchstones. The Synagogues of New York don't cut it.”

“Aren't you being a little bit anti-Semitic?”

“How do you figure that? No more than I would be if I took the Irish to task, or the Arabs; the Tutus, or other tribal or ethnic enclaves. Any amassment of individuals seeking an exclusive enclave seems antithetic to our objective. What is happening in the middle east does not bode well for our imaginary 'civilization'. Is there a fault; is there a solution?”

“There is the element of the non-assimilable to these gatherings. More than protecting ones heritage or one's culture. Resisting a soiling effect, some identity apart from the remainder of the untouchable. As though one's shit didn't stink, or if it did stink, it was understood to be a Sacred, even Holy stink; an unpolluted stink. Too precious.”

“You Mr. D., have you too not spurned New York?”

“I consider that an unfair juxtaposition. I think you know my feelings in the matter. To put it simply. A surfeit of redundancy; a case of indigestion. An amplification of what is already too much. What I might intimate regarding one ethnic group applies to all exclusionary ethnic groups; I might add, for obvious reasons.

“You, young lady, have been witness to the results of the redundancy; I need not elaborate.”

“Sadly true, Mr. D.; somehow misconstrued as 'civilization'.” I still find your rancor difficult to stomach. It seems too pointed, too sharp an edge. I'll grant that non-assimilable exclusivity smacks of something we might question. However, the desire and the need to maintain one's individuality seems paramount, even if that means one's ethnic ties and religious affiliations are part of the baggage.”

Theresa, feeling the polemic was not yielding the desired results, interjected.

“Are you two going to take me with you to the Good Guy State?”

“It goes without saying, sis.”

“I'd be honored Theresa.”

“Seriously Mr. D., the gist suggests the all too familiar dire, when I thought we were pursuing some other less familiar discourse.”

“You mean, making the best of a bad deal?”

“Mr. D., you know very well what I mean.

“True, we were discussing something hypothetical; based in reason, characterized and qualified as real intelligence. We were working with a simple self-evident construct. All the finely worded Declarations and Constitutions, if not founded upon that simple

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construct, are worthless. Now we have our president (a demented king) rewriting the Constitution everyday to suit himself, claiming it is his prerogative, as outlined in the Law; claiming that in order to fight 'terrorism', which he equates with 'nazism', which in turn he equates with 'communism', or bad-guyism, axis of evil, he must avail himself of the extraordinary measure in order to assure the State; he must do it NOW; and he must not be thwarted by the People, the stupid quibbling, equivocating people, us. A not-so benevolent dictator; his aim is to serve his cronies.

"Sorry for that outburst; we were hoping to clarify any gray areas of the GR, and to find some way of implementing such a simple construct; or should I say, 'enforcing', such a simple construct."

"The Rub, Theresa; Enforce. Enforce a person to be reasonable. As opposed to being arbitrary and selfish; and a lot of other undesirable, 'inconvenient', things.

"I believe we have covered the ground; we'll not unearth anything new. We are reduced to the practicalities of implementation. As is the claim of our president.

"What have we going for us?"

"The United Nations as a concept, and as a working model that requires revision. A common need and some common goals provide a reason-to-be. There have been other attempts to regulate the activities of mankind, to reduce the brutality of, or to do away with, War, for example; that is, if one must engage in this activity, not to become dehumanized in the process.

"There is a demonstrable awareness of something; perhaps each individual's, each nation's, vulnerability. Not from some intergalactic invader, but from the one who sits across the table from us. We are aware that individual is not a statue, but a protoplasmic entity, with desires, perhaps with a desire to live a peaceful, constructive existence, free from internecine conflict, but with ethnic, cultural, religious, and whatever else, differences from our own, which he insists be retained and preserved."

"A working model then?"

"At this juncture, all we've got; however riddled with self-serving interests, issues of the gut and viscera.

"Some basic flaws from its inception spoil the brew. Permanent members on the Security Council is a flaw, especially when a single vote from such a member can nullify any action, any decision.

"The reinforcement of property rights is another basic flaw. Not a very forward looking precept. In principle, the planet belongs to everybody.

"I'll anticipate your reaction to this statement. The natural model, as we might observe it, seems to operate by establishing a territory.

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We say, of animals, when we observe conflict within a given species, that they are being 'territorial', or they are establishing a pecking order, even dominance, as often associated with the male over other males with regard to the female(s). Even Bambi so behaves.

"Such argument cannot be disregarded, since man is also an animal; perhaps an animal before he is a human being. He also establishes territory which he might identify as 'nation', however large or small, or he might identify as 'private property', which might include 'chattel'.

"Each attempts to exist in perpetuity, or assure a perpetual existence; both mindlessly.

"As we have seen with colonizing, the grab in Africa did not recognize indigenous boundaries (territories, if you will); the grab by the Soviet Union purportedly divided its eastern frontier purposely to break up the indigenous boundaries, to destroy the tribal cohesion. When the North and South American Continents were invaded and expropriated by the White Man, indigenous boundaries were not recognized (we know the indigenous people were regarded as savages). After the WWI, Europe was divided into Nations, which did not recognize ethnic boundaries. The English divided up the Middle east into national boundaries, creating States, imposing lines drawn on a map upon the indigenous, tribal 'territories'. Israel was an area of the middle east promised the 'Jews' in the famous Balfour accord. An imposition upon the indigenous inhabitants.

"Some have said there can be no turning back from these happenings. Others claim a gross injustice has been perpetrated by them upon others; some have claimed 'genocide'. While we have denounced slavery, and serfdom, we live with the results of both, and even a new form of slavery to Corporations; no turning back. We are not comfortable with some aspect of our history."

"We are ambivalent with regard to 'private property'. The haves, as an institution, and the haves nots, as an excluded entity. Only those with title to 'private property' (real estate, land) should be allowed to fornicate, to perpetuate through inheritance, an institution, the status quo. The others, the excluded will be permitted to die out (to become extinct). Problem solved."

"You are being facetious, Catherine."

"Mr. D., I am sensing the 'deep shit' again. The 'no turning back', and what that means, as a repository of injustices. We must tackle the status quo as an institution, as a thing that breeds its own ills; these latter must be addressed, discussed openly; if not entirely resolved, at least accommodated.

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“I know we cannot change much of our history; even that with which we are most uncomfortable.

“Perhaps the middle east will see the eventual demise of the State of Israel, through a kind of attrition, or all out War. Then what. Will the region become a happy place? We suspect otherwise. Didn't T.E. Lawrence make that fairly clear?

“Is there something that Israel could do that would avert what might seem destined? An accommodation? A greater accommodation? Would the 'Palestinian' respond to an accommodation? Do the 'Palestinians' want complete occupancy and control? No accommodation?”

“Cate, that larger conundrum remains: what to do with regard to occupancy of the planet, as a function of territories, and private, which includes corporate (as in Corporation) land holdings. If land, per se, is put under lock and key, access denied as a possible source of subsistence for those born out of statusquolock, do we find a way of annihilating those unfortunates, or do we radicalize our approach, by sterilizing them; getting back to your 'deep shit' fornication?

“What do we do with them until they die out?

“Do we at least feed them, provide them with public housing, and health care? If we do not, could they not be construed as a menace; a health menace, potential thieves 'undesirables'?

“In the end, what does any of it say about our self-professed humanity?”

“Not as much as we might delude ourselves into believing.”

“Allow me to interpose, if I may. 'Fornication' seems the root of evil in this discussion, or should I qualify 'unconscionable procreation'. 'Biblical 'multiplying (and subduing)'.”

“Mr. D. I feel the urgings of the Great Tome have not had anything to do with peopling the planet, with exception perhaps of the Catholic scruple regarding contraception. We have gotten what we have gotten, or begotten, as the case may be. Numbers, Malthusian numbers, mounting numbers, straining all resources of the planet, fuel for Adam Smith.

“Since abstinence seems a difficult option, contraception must be made mandatory. If, over the next fifty years, lets say, only one child per couple was permitted, our number would hypothetically be reduced by half, but in practice would be reduced by more than half, given that pairings off do not guarantee an offspring, and that couplings are not necessarily of the opposite sex; plus infant mortality, accidents, disease factors, or other factors.”

“Hasn't something like that been implemented in The Peoples Republic of China? China hasn't even been able to achieve Zero population. Fucking works! And lately, the older generation is

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becoming more predominant, necessitating earlier replacement. More fucking to solve the problem.”

“Mr. D., your choice of words does not enhance the conversation.”

“Not intended to, Catherine. But does emphasize a point. It takes some pressure off the non-assimilables. It makes livelier a discussion that seems destined for a fizzle.”

“How can you say that? If we do not propose something, an even greater fizzle is in the offing. Mandatory birth control, and/or, selected abortion, would seem a far more humane thing than the other dehumanizing conditions we find in our current precious status quo.”

“Did you not a while ago propose the die off of the rejects, a natural attrition on the commons?”

“I did not propose that. I recognized it as a solution, but did not propose it. You know very well what I might propose.”

“My apologies, love.

“This is a serious business, for which we can provide a number of solutions, without ever a hope of implementation. The more natural thing does seem a die off on the commons while the status quo heads for the hills during great plagues and scourges. But even with all of that, number is overtaking the planet.

“I don’t know what end result we can predict; I can imagine something not very pleasant; it is what you suggested as result of allowing things to run their own course; a natural attrition; a die-off. No hope. No plan.”

“That does seem to be the most accurate prediction; ‘fatefully inevitable?’”

“The creation of an immense midden; the planet reduced to Adam Smith’s scrap heap, the junkie pile. Consumed, used up.”

“Yes! they have even taken Mr. Gore to task for his excess of consumption. At best, we all come off a little bit hypocritical. They awarded the Prize anyway.”

“How true. Tess. Each no exception. Fatefully inevitable?”

“Mr. D., we can change, we must change, but not by very much. Until we do, we are being hypocritical.”

“A case in point here, if I may.

“The three of you, sisters; to me, exemplary in your lives, your intelligence, your physical attributes, your natural proclivities. In one sense, the most desirable candidates for selected traits, beneficial to both the species and the planet. Yet, are you to be favored above others? And should you become baby factories? Who should be your partners?”

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“Oh!, Mr. D., we cannot improve the argument through preposterous suggestions. No case in point, Mr. D. If we can plan to such an extent, we can plan other things as well; more in line with more practical solutions. Limiting our number seems something upon which we might concentrate. Effected through edict, enforced compliance. Perhaps through abortion, more than through abstinence; alternatively contraception, or sterilization after a single birth. Practical. Not really interfering with our compulsions or imperatives involving pleasurable experiences. Your ‘fatefully inevitable’ ‘fucking’.

“Perhaps each of us three sisters will produce progeny, but one can never guarantee the result. Selecting for physical traits in horses or dogs is one thing. Selecting for intelligence is more dubious; since it is generally agreed we all have an over-sized under-utilized brain. It is more a matter of training. Breeding for inspirational qualities, or enhanced awareness, might be more to the point.

“Cloning’ remains unexplored as a source of perpetuating the perfect model. Alas!, the perfect model!”

“As I follow this discussion, I am beginning to realize we are moving away from the Golden Rule as a valid *modus operandi*. In a more Utopian State the Golden Rule would seem to ‘come with the territory’. The things you have been proposing are definitely non-Utopian, even as much as they might seem so to some. The Golden Rule is not a matter of individual conscience, but a practical consideration, an imperative imposed upon the individual.

“Only a trick of the mind really, whether one does something on his own initiative or whether he is compromised into doing so; the end result is what matters, however non-Utopian.”

“Clever observation, Theresa. Clone that thought.”

“Mr. D., Don’t!”

“Yes, Mr. D. Don’t!”

“The call to apologies again?”

“Suit yourself, Mr. D.. I do not mock your words. Golden Rule stuff here, however Utopian that may seem.”

“Got me there.”

“I don’t want to get you anywhere, Mr. D. Its your task to get wherever you are going.

“My object is to engage in meaningful discussion of things that are of concern to all of us; but more importantly, in this case, amongst the three of us. Conviviality is what I desire in this instance. I can get ‘shit’ most anyplace else without asking for it.”

“I do apologize, Theresa. I lose focus.

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“I could not ask for better conversation anywhere. I am in the company of the choicest people. Ones that I love. I am most fortunate.”

“Acknowledged, Mr. D. Just be apprised that we love you also, and ask special considerations of that love. Not to stifle you, but to use more delicacy in your banter. We are vulnerable to untendernesses.

“Focus’ is what is favored here. The long road is fraught enough with whimsy and hazards.”

Sadly for all three, Theresa returned to the Big City.

As the author moves from irresolution to irresolution through a series of parries with his protagonists, he asks the reader to bear with him; but mostly he asks of the reader to think upon things. As before, to engage in his own dialogue with the author, with the sisters, and Mr. D.; and all others known to him who might be interested in solutions for the ‘human condition’. If he seems to favor a hard line toward exclusivity, he wants to see a yielding to the question, rather than the insistence upon perceiving the question as an example of prejudice. All must yield to the question. He reiterates that the GR is not a matter of convenience; it is a requirement.

Although, at times, the author seems distracted by romantic interludes, he would rather the whole of life was a romantic interlude than the gross tragedy it appears to be.

Man against man, and man against nature seems such a dubious malignancy, destined to destroy everything for everyone.

Yet when one converses with the individual, the vast majority of individuals, while he might find peculiarities of thought, and idiosyncratic behavior, he does not, he does not sense the latent possibilities that become manifest in the larger problem of man. Most individuals will acknowledge some common basic ideas, and interests; will seem complaisant and comfortable with them. He is often impressed by the reasonableness of many, but is also taken aback by a strident lack of that same attribution when the going gets rough. It seems the conviviality of the parlor is lost when one steps outside.

From those with more obtuse notions, he still does not imagine the ‘how come’ of the gravity of the human condition. Even from the most obtuse, he does not suspect from whence comes the fierceness of the maelstrom of man, that hostile aggressive and destructive element. Certainly an obtuse idea cannot gather such fierce expression, such dominance, raise such havoc. It is irrational, an irrationality that rarely appears in conversation.

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So, thus, may it be construed as something primordial, an inner monster that is madly, insanely, compelled to roar against the world that spawned it, leaving no survivors? The purpose of life is to destroy life, to consume life?

Although in other contexts he has mentioned some of his experience while enlisted in the USN, he recalls again his experience while stationed in Iceland.

His executive officer was a reserve lieutenant commander recalled to duty for the Korean debacle. Perhaps the Icelandic duty was not a preferred assignment for someone working his way up the ladder. While the author was stationed there, the Commander of the base, when there was a Commander, also of a Commander rank, were older 'passed over' officers; an older 'passed over' officer was one who was not promoted to Captain, and mostly, never to become so anointed. The interims between Commanders was filled by the executive officer. That individual was one known as Lieutenant Commander George Lincoln Rockwell. Something cutely American about such a name, but misleading in some contexts. The lieutenant commander was a tall, mostly trim, handsome fellow, made somewhat in the mold of Barry Sullivan. While the author had little to do with him personally, the executive officer was also the pilot of the amphibious aircraft in which the author flew as crew, serving as radar and loran operator. To the author George Lincoln Rockwell seemed a competent straightforward captain. He related well to his men. His tone over the intercom was matter of fact with an overtone of humor when he issued any orders. 'OK, you guys know the drill, lets do it like its supposed to be done'.

As acting base commander, he was noticeably lax in his enforcement of military discipline; he did not interfere in the daily operation of his base, he did not hold inspections, and was never heard to be barking orders; the ship could sail itself without his presence upon the bridge.

He was reputed to be most interested in the Icelandic women, a not untoward proclivity which the author might have shared if it had been possible. But the commander, when seen out of doors on the base, was often accompanied by a blond presence.

To all, a seemingly nonchalant fellow, enjoying, to the best of his ability, service to his country.

Not a hint of his future reputation after leaving the military.

He became the leader of the American Nazi Party.

He was shot dead in a parking lot somewhere in the eastern part of the United States Of America.

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The author worked at one of those Universities that had earned the distinction as a Center Of Excellence, mostly attributable to its scientific research. But notable all the same. The Student Body would invite controversial figures to give lectures in the Student Union Auditorium. Amongst them was the leader of the American Nazi Party, the leader Of the American Communist Party, Gus Hall, the fall guy of the American Drug Culture, doing Community Service in order to stay out of prison, Ken Kesey, and another somewhat radicalist social planner, Ian McHarg. The author wasn't particularly interested in attending the Gus Hall lecture; he had his own private thoughts about Socialistic thinking; he wasn't particularly interested in hearing hate promulgation, so did not attend the Nazi Party leader's harangue, although his employer, of Jewish descent, had encouraged him to do so, especially after learning that the leader had been his CO and pilot in Iceland. But, the author thought it would constitute an offense to his employers to attend. His employer was inclined to be a name dropper. He may of thought I was dropping a name when I learned George Lincoln Rockwell was coming to the University.

The author did attend, and taped, two lectures given by Ian McHarg, the author of Design With Nature.

He also attended the Ken Kesey Lecture, which was more of a performance than a lecture. The title of Mr. Kesey's lecture was Mom Dad and Dope. That packed the house of course. When Ken appeared on the stage, the lights were turned low. Kesey brought with him a candle which he alighted, himself assuming the lotus position, with the candle placed in front of him; illumining him in a flickering eerie, hocus pocus glow.

He spoke LOVE LOVE LOVE. He admonished each member of the audience to take the hands of his neighbor's in his hands, and to concentrate on, and chant: LOVE LOVE LOVE. Then admonished each to chant LOVE LOVE LOVE while glancing at the neighbor whose hand he held. To my right I found that somewhat objectionable, but to my left, I might have been enchanted without Mr. Kesey's intervention. She was looker who smiled with some essence of pity rather than LOVE. She could detect the tone of smitteness, but felt obliged to discourage any interest beyond the moment. The hand that held her hand grew sweaty and sticky as had happened to him when he held Marie's as they climbed the stairs hand in hand of George's (Washington's) big thing in DC.

Since the author held no one on one conversation with his CO and Pilot, he knew not of his Nazi leanings. There wasn't much happening in Iceland to bring to the fore such proclivities; its populace mostly of Teutonic origin. In hindsight one might wonder whether he was not a Nazi-sympathizer while he was fighting during WWII. Perhaps he was

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in the Pacific theatre. Not too many Navy men fighting in the European theatre.

Who Knows What Evil Lurks In The Hearts Of Men?

The author does not wish to condemn the Mr. Rockwell he knew. Others will have to condemn him for what he became; a person he did not know. Diabolical!?

“Mr. D., your George Lincoln would blame our people for all the world’s ills. We are the termites (kikes) in the woodwork. In realizing that, you haven’t any choice but to condemn him.”

“Catherine, I suspect if he got one look at you he would make an exception.”

“Mr. D.!!!! Tread Lightly!!!

“You know, Mr. D., there are those who believe the Holocaust never happened. There are those closet haters who believe it did happen, and want the job finished.

“There was the president who laid the wreath at Bitburg, but didn’t visit a concentration camp. The same one mixed up in the Iran/Contra deal. The Social Retard Gip. The SDI man. The one who brazened his way in Keflavic. The one who capitalized on Jimmy Carter’s misfortune; Mr. Ron was a true patriot, who believed the Panama Canal belonged to us, much more, the whole western hemisphere belonged to us, even Granada. They found a sacrificial fall guy to take the hit for Irangate.

“A lot of lurks in that one, Mr. D.”

“When you are a politician trying to find a way to finance your program, you go to the Rothchilds. You promise them a homeland; then, when they get their homeland at long last, you support them in their usurped encampment. Follow the money. It is not only the Chinaman who can say ‘Money talks’.”

“The price of survival, Mr. D.

“We all wonder at the substance of our leaders, but must also wonder at the gullibility of the electorate, or should I say, we must wonder at, and be fearful of the ignorance, if not the prejudices, of the electorate. Lurks!, Mr. D. A nation of Lurks!

“No greater evidence than what we have elected, and what leads us now.”

“A bit of reflection, Catherine; looking back. Taking stock. During my lifetime, let’s say, although, to me, the most humanitarian president was our Old Testament prez., Abraham, part of whose name was sullied by my Pilot.

“My life began with FDR, perhaps a close second to Abraham. We had Eleanor into the bargain, a social conscience and humanitarian.

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“We don’t know what deals FDR made with the devil, unless you can regard Stalin (Koba) as the devil; effdeerrr must suffer some disapprobation for bartering away Eastern Europe to that Russian shrimp; the UN for a blind eye.”

“Arm chair generals, Mr. D.”

“Yes!, I realize that; more than that, my sweet, Great Expectations.”

“If it was put to you, ‘No Eastern Europe, No UN’, what would you say.”

“I imagine it was not put by Stalin in exactly that manner. That would have been too blatant, and would have incensed Roosevelt; certainly Churchill, if he heard of it, which would have defeated Stalin in his purposes.

“In any case, ‘the evil lives after us’.

“Allow me to make distinctions here. I haven’t any quarrel with ‘socialism’ per se; or ‘communism’, per se, in their basic ethic, and purpose. It is those who usurp what is not theirs, as GWB usurps and corrupts our rights, our ‘democratic’ institutions. with his ‘National Security Imperatives’, as Koba usurped and corrupted his mandate, as his country’s leader. Each of these men polarizes the human community in ways that end eventually in a very destructive confrontation with others; leaving a trail of blood and death behind. They righteously stand unmoved, essentially untouchable, in their fortresses.”

“Mr. D. I recall the feelings I had in Anthropology class, trying to imagine Homo Erectus, Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon, nomadic, surviving with rudimentary tools, rudimentary shelter; our primogenitors; on a planet both conducive, and hostile to life, any, and all, life. I tried to imagine their fears compared to ours. One wonders about the Golden Rule; when it became an applicable concept; and how. There isn’t any evidence of a language; that is only our deduction. A series of noises, like chatter and grunts; and coos and screams. Then marks on cave walls, whole stories, sensitive articulate drawings; and further along, glyphs. Still one wonders when it all began; the most obvious rule; the most obvious relationship.

“We, now, so advanced, in terms of our language, still dealing with this most obvious thing about relationship, still at each other’s throats. Armed against one’s look-a-likes; and diabolically. It makes no sense whatever.”

“Perhaps it is because life itself, makes no sense.

“To say that something IS, without a rationale, is unthinkable to you and I, because we are so imbued, and feel such a kinship with reason. But when we are confronted with supplying a rationale for some of the behavior and acts of our look-a-likes, we are at a loss

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because much of the behavior and many of the acts seem wanton, and arbitrary, happenings that threaten all, including the perpetrators; the 'survival' rationale does not suffice."

"Mr. D. Yes! Anti-life and anti the living, is the way it seems. Defiantly So. Yes!, Even self-destructive. Carrying a dubious argument to the extreme. The horror of the dictatorial regimes during WWII, and after; now; even now.

"Is it possible that our primogenitors were so inclined? More than surviving; bent on killing for possession, for dominance, for control? Their purpose for existence?

"Imagine, at the apex of civilization, what happened in that War. Like your friend inquired, where is the advancement over the previous 2000 or 1000 years. How do we answer?"

"We are not like that.' That is how we answer. Most people we know, and many we do not know, would answer the same way. Where's the catch? Where's the glitch?

"Homo Amorphous? Homo Ambivalent? Homo Ignoramus?

"We'll never know. We seem to realize what we can do to improve things for all, but we cannot program the flesh to comply. It is my belief, as much as I am inclined toward the evolutionary argument, that the end will be upon us before that prospect will reveal its purpose, or perfect its model.

"Hence we make the best of an unpromising situation. We must ride side-saddle because we have only one buttock remaining.

"I must live with the possibility that you will lose your youthful beauty, and that I will become an old crone. We will both be wondering where our lives had gone."

"Mr. D., Yes! one day we will no longer be here, and our lives will seem to have not been; only to us, perhaps, however uncertain. If we should live so long, our memories will eventually fail us, and what seems a hypothetical regret now will vanish. Doddering over the precipice.

"Mr. D. I am still too young, and too full of life and desire, and recent memories, to think of such a thing now. I cannot escape my mistakes; I am willing to see them as something, intellectually not to regret, but as part of myself for the good. I have ventured. Although I sought it not, I have suffered. I know now something I could not have otherwise known. Intellectually, that is satisfying. One person, one path, one foot placed in front of the other, often without hesitation.

"I can stop right here, go no further, build my comforts around myself, sit by the sea, contemplate the verities, Siddhartha, perhaps attain that sublime state through meditation. Best of all, Enjoy You! However, as unintelligent as it may seem, I find myself wanting to

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return again, whether or not exposing myself to something that will do me in.”

“The fudge factor. But glad to be of service to the woman of mysterious wonderments and inclinations.”

“Mr. D., we are equals; there is no servitude.

“More to the issue, we seem compelled to do things for which we can offer no particular explanation. Much to do with making things better, much to do with an unclear imperative to fulfill oneself; somehow to gain brownie points, to avoid the pointed finger; regrets! Under which admonition do we operate with clear notion of what we are about?

“Back to that, ‘who are we, why are we here, where are we going?’”

“No answer since the last time you asked.”

“So, if we are having such difficulty figuring things out, imagine the predicament of others, and imagine the nightmare of seven billion souls pushing, and shoving their way toward some nebulous goal. Very bleak, very frightening; and a long way from where we imagine we want to be.”

“Mankind is such a hypothetical thing. With a chance at possibilities.

“One day you were a possibility; but, by all accounting, also an improbability. But, here you are, no longer either. All that for which I could have wished. You are now part of everything I am; you will, for as long as I live, be in my thoughts.

“I realize this does not serve as the best metaphor for the whole of mankind and the possibilities that might exist. The improbables multiply with the many.

“But, let's say, you become lost to me through one circumstance or another. I will have experienced you, I will know for certain, that what you have been is what has been the most rewarding, most fulfilling experience for me.

“Might this also not be said about civilization, about the civilizing experience, that once we have experienced it, we will feel we can never be without it, because of what it brings to our lives.

“Once again, Herman asked: ‘Is civilization a thing distinct, or merely an advanced stage of barbarism?’

“Is civilization an unexciting possibility, a homely thing, that will only minimally entrance us, only because there is nothing else to capture our imaginations?

“Will we not want to chase after the elusive anyway: Yillah?

“You might have become Yillah; but you hesitated.”

“Oh! Mr. D., you are such a romantic. But we cannot afford the luxury of imagining ‘civilization’. It must not become an elusive thing.

## *On The Road To Civilization*

We must hesitate long enough to seriously regard the possibility. As did you and I.”

“Not I, You! All was entirely dependent upon you.”

“The other might also be true, if you were not you.”

“Is this one of those conversations full of hidden meanings?”

“Meanings; we must always be alert to meanings.

“Have we two formed a civilization?”

“We have challenged the status quo, we have broken with tradition, we have ignored the taboos. In all other respects, we live within boundaries. We do not flaunt, or otherwise exhibit ourselves. We do not run about naked; we are not unkempt.

“The land, the sea, the air, the sun, the stars and the moon are as much a part of our selves as any other.

“We are not ‘wild’ animals, are we? We are domesticated creatures. We do not forage. We do not knowingly cross borders. We might reach across the fence for a fruit hanging from the tree.

“We tolerate to a high degree the ‘wild’ animal. When it appears, it looks at us, when it might bolt. We are so ubiquitous to the animal that it is not surprised to see us; but it still runs from us if we reach out to touch. The idyll fades from us. We are estranged from something which we cannot change. It is not a matter of giving assurances. Reason plays no part. We are inclined to use a word like ‘trust’. With regard to man, such a word. Such A Word! Often the ‘wild’ thing proves a pest. It does not recognize the boundary; it enters the orchard to feast. It enters our storage bins to feast. It defecates everywhere. It is often a carrier of the pestilence. It lacks in sanitation and circumspection.

“But it does not attack us. It merely lives on the periphery.

“I’ll not speculate what the animal might do if it suddenly became armed with more than horns, claws, bites and stings.”

“What are we to the animal? ‘Trust’ does not apply. Can never apply, because we are treacherous. We are arbitrary, inconsistent; self-centered, self-absorbed. The wary must be wary in order to survive the whims of the upright two-legged beast.

“It has been said we, those like us, the empathizers, those who want to break down the barrier, the natural thing, to make it our little plaything, our companion, that we only encourage a false sense of security in the animal. That the next upright beast will violate with a chuckle. ‘Dumb animal’. ‘Easy Pickings’.”

“Walt Disney rides again. Bambi becomes venison.”

“Yes! a fine line separates our sentiments from our stomachs.

“I must add here that I have often refused to eat of the flesh of the wild animal, even though it might be safer to eat, even with its parasites, than our on-line marketed meat products. Another fine line separates our sentiments from our stomachs. Our sentiments about

## *On The Road To Civilization*

life; our 'reverence' for life. Because some animal has been selected from the fauna and cultivated for our sustenance does not lessen or alter the basic sentiments about the living. And we quibble with our animal byproducts in our vegetarianism. Sea Food, Milk products, eggs. Gifts from the animal kingdom, no!?' 'Flesh' is the magic word.

"I reluctantly chew on Bambi, or Bruno, but I have eaten Porky and Ferdinand, Nemo, The Egg Layer, and others. These were placed on my plate before me in our Western World. I was obliged to give thanks to our heavenly father for such things.

"Now, in these later years, my palate favors Nemo's relatives, more than any other; I no longer thank our heavenly father."

"Mr. D., you do have a way of mixing your metaphors. But I agree totally with your sentiments, however else I might partake of flesh. I'll not engage in a polemic regarding my diet.

"I require brain food, stuff rich in phosphates."

"Hey!, don't neglect your figure."

"Mr. D., my figure will take care of itself."

"Can't leave anything to chance."

"You will need to thank our heavenly father for what you get."

"A choice cut!"

"Mr. D., such blasphemy, and such indelicacy, in one breath."

"Catherine, when I first met you, you took my breath away; you continue to take my breath away. You are a great wonder to me, as though you were happening in a dream."

"This one dream has contracted Boola-Boola."

"Does that mean you are contaminated; that you should become less desirable?"

"You are asking. Does that mean you have your doubts?"

"Silly conversation, my sweet."

"Yes I suppose. Perhaps all relationships reach a stasis; a series of comings and goings, of recognitions, of departures, even though these may only involve our daily movements. One must settle in; we cannot live in a constant state of enrapturement. In between, we engage in silly conversations.

"But I love you no less. Your silliness, and your supersilliness are part of your charm."

"Hmn, speaking of charms. Might I indulge myself in a swoon, embracing you with all my might; coursing my hands over what heaven hath wrought, a heavenly indulgence, per se?"

"Try me, see if all is you had remembered, and anticipated."

The two of them hug each other with some intensity, dancing about the floor without loosening their hold.

"Catherine, mind your Boola-Boola!"

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Mr. D., I’ll not break in an occasional frolic. Especially in this climate.”

“Tempestuously, she speaks.”

“I also yearn.”

The author presumes to inquire, ‘What are we achieving with this hanky panky?’

Whether or not Catherine is restored to health will somehow affect the outcome of this writing. If she perishes, the will to continue most likely will perish along with her. Would her sisters vanish from the scene as well?

Hence the world of man will be abandoned and fail of its own for lack of maintenance. Civilization will disintegrate into rust and ruin. Not unlike the remnants, chards, relics and things we unearth and ponder. What indeed are we pondering? Are we also silently lamenting the impermanence of things?

Therein we perceive our own doom. We are destined to the same fate. For lack of maintenance?

Lack of maintenance is a byproduct of lack of interest. Lack of interest is a byproduct of denial of responsibility, of laziness, of self-absorption. Failure is the predictable outcome.

How say you, reader? Are you involved in your own destiny? Your own fable, perhaps? Are you involved in this fable with all its fits and starts? What do you anticipate? What would you like to have happen?

The author recalls once again the TV enactment of the Torn Birds, wherein the jazzercise instructor, Mickie, by name, who was absorbed in the dramatization, exclaimed: ‘If Richard Chamberlain doesn’t get it on with Rachel pretty damn quick, I’m never watching TV again.’ Mickie knew where it was at.

Catherine and William have got it on. What next?

A so-seeming relevance to the human condition?

Do we return to the opening scene wherein Catherine and William first declared their love? And unleashed their desires? Is that more like what Mickie would want, repeated over and over again.

As Catherine has said of her first time:

“Instinctively I realize we cannot remain on the heights every moment. Already, we have descended to the mundane world auguring for its place in our consciousness. We might return to our little heaven of love in the dunes to have found the principals have departed, never to return to that moment, even should they try for ever. Its magic belongs in our memories, to course through our bodies, however dimly recalled. It is our hope we might yet find other

## *On The Road To Civilization*

little heavens. But for me, it was my first taste of a heaven, it is special for all that, and guides me toward other heavens I seek. So tread lightly upon my 'fling'. ....”

Pretty good, Huh? We'll see.

## *A Reality Check*

“A letter from Detrick.”

Catherine reluctantly takes the letter handed to her. She opens it. “Its from Dr. Klein.”

‘Ms. Tellerman, I realize I need not remind you of our previous arrangement, which was mostly dictated by me, and which I wish to emphasize at this time.

‘Our people have dedicated a good deal of research time to the Boola-Boola cause. Our original proposed course of action has been confirmed. We have been able to duplicate the course of the disease you have experienced, in our test animals, rhesus monkeys. That is, we have exposed them to the disease. Many became ill. Since the monkeys were a healthy lot, many of them did fight off the disease with their immune system, and when stressed, became ill again, many succumbing with the second infection. Except where we intervened with the serum we have been developing. None succumbed when the intervention took place in a timely manner. All subjects previously infected, but recovered to normal health (with the exception of the latent ‘virus’ still being present), were infused with the serum. These have not become ill again, even when stressed.

‘We are still unable to detect low levels of the latent state. This means, that even though no occurrence has occurred after infusion, we do not know of cure in absolute terms.

‘It is very encouraging to note that, after infusion, and once again exposed to the ‘virus’, that reinfection has not recurred.

‘This does relate to you.

‘I would feel safer now with our proposed protocol of infusing you when you are healthy. I would believe that if you are not showing any signs of increased titer, and that you are following a regimen of exercise and rest, and are feeling good, that is, not exhausted, and are eating and sleeping well, then the time is opportune and right for us to proceed.

‘Please contact me as soon as possible regarding this matter.

‘Sincerely yours,      Norman Klein MD’

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Mr. D., it seems we do not live in a dream of irresponsible hanky-panky. We need to decide something.”

“Catherine, I cannot decide for you.

“All of the health issues I have addressed for myself were entered with a degree of apprehension after my first experience. I would be bad counsel for you. As much as I have been helped by medical intervention, I am still very apprehensive; dread any further encounters with the Hippocratic institution.”

“Then I must decide. Since I do not know the risks either way; I mean my chances either way, what am I to do?

“The Klein thing would be taken on faith, either way.

“That is why I ask ‘we’. ‘We’ are one. I do not want to be separated from you in this decision. At least say Yes or No. I will agree to either because it is a ‘we’. If I decide one way or the other and you say No, I am alone.”

“Then we will do as he says. Call him.”

“Right away?”

“Catherine!”

“Yes, Love.”

Two days later they were on their way to Detrick.

Theresa and Lydia, both were there to meet them.

Theresa had called her father regarding Catherine’s condition, and what decision had been made. She informed him concerning William’s part and presence in her life, and that he would be in the vicinity of Detrick during the treatment. Her father indicated he would come.

Dr. Klein had ordered a battery of tests before beginning anything. Satisfied with the results he recommended beginning the infusion almost immediately, which followed on the subsequent morning.

Catherine was carefully monitored during and after the procedure. She seemed to be responding well. The slow drip of the antibody concoction into her bloodstream did not seem to produce any adverse affect. None was expected. Her course of response was very similar to that of the rhesus monkey. Dr. Klein was pleased.

Catherine’s body temperature became slightly elevated the following day, remaining so for another day. She indicated she felt a little under the weather, which concerned Dr. Klein during the second day, but, when her slight fever began to subside, he was relieved. This represented a difference from the monkey trials. They had not any kind of reaction to the serum. He thought perhaps the dose was more than was needed. The body weight to cc dosage based on the

## *On The Road To Civilization*

monkey's may not have provided a proper ratio; and the response might be an individual matter. More to be learned.

Most of the intervention in the monkeys was after the initial exposure, not waiting for a relapse. The mortality after the relapse was too great. There is still insufficient data on survival after a recurrence, since most of the recurrence occurs in the indigenous peoples who are stressed from malnutrition; many of these suffer high mortality. Catherine was strong enough to sustain herself while beating off the two sieges.

It was clear that stress played a factor in encouraging a relapse.

A question remained. Could the infusion become the model for a vaccine for wider distribution, especially in those lands so exposed; and so vulnerable? This particular question is of great interest to the Pharmaceutical companies, who have already invaded the continent with largely untested vaccines, using the indigenous population as a laboratory.

## *The Father*

William avoided Catherine's father (with Theresa's help). But Catherine wanted them to meet. She made the suggestion to each of them when the opportunity seemed favorable. William seemed adamantly opposed to such a meeting. Her father was reluctantly willing to oblige his daughter's whimsy.

Catherine decided to finagle a 'chance' encounter between them. She realized that soon she would be released, and that her father would be gone as soon as Dr. Klein felt she was no longer in her guinea pig phase. Dr. Klein did want to keep her for at least a couple of weeks after she seemed to return to 'normal'. He was hoping to stress her with vigorous exercise, while exposing her to the virus. He thought it an important test.

William became exceedingly outraged at this suggestion, but Catherine was prepared to follow through; begging William for his support. She claimed she would not forsake the 'we'; but used every persuasive technique at her disposal.

Her father was scheduled to leave long before the added routine, feeling comfortable with the regimen proposed by Dr. Klein, after a long discussion with him. He thanked the Dr. for looking after his daughter, although he realized she was a guinea pig.

Catherine had arranged for William to come to visit her when she had also arranged for her father to visit her before he departed. William knocked upon her door while her father was there.

## *On The Road To Civilization*

After her summons to enter, upon entering, William noted her father, excused himself, "I'm sorry, I must have the wrong room".

"Mr. D., not so fast; you have the right room. Please come in. Please come in.

William hesitated, long enough to contemplate the 'fatefully inevitable' quotient to life, before relenting.

"Father, I want you to meet Mr. Duranachek. Mr. D., I want you to meet my father."

"Your daughter is insuppressible.

"Catherine has told me much about you, Dr. Tellerman. It would be my desire to meet you under less complicated circumstances."

"I cannot venture under what circumstances I would desire to meet you, Mr. Duranachek. But I have known for some time of your relationship to my daughter.

"I have only the most earnest wishes for Catherine's happiness."

"I would make the same claim. Catherine and I have spent many hours discussing the propriety of our relationship. I have known that extricating myself from the relationship is not what Catherine desires.

"I am completely smitten by Catherine, and love her to the depths of my being. More I will not say. Except to say that she and I have discussed all the permutations to our relationship, and after having done so, have decided to continue, come what may."

"At least you will not be a total mystery to me, Mr. Duranachek. I know that Catherine's sister Theresa is unconditionally supportive of the relationship. I cannot deny these two remarkable children. However, I doubt that you and I will find much common ground as long as the relationship continues."

"I would expect that to be the case, Dr. Tellerman.

"Catherine, are you satisfied that we have met, and conducted ourselves in a sufficiently civil manner?"

"Mr. D., please do not become testy. It is completely unnecessary.

"I want something here. You know very well what it is I want. The two most important men in my life. That says it all as far as I am concerned."

"My apologies to both of you. But, Catherine, I do believe it is best that I leave for now."

"Father, please excuse me for a few moments.

"Mr. D., a word with you, outside."

Catherine ushers William outside.

"Mr. D., I think you need to apologize to my father for your attitude."

"Catherine, I do not wish to argue with you. You arranged this little scene. You put both me and your father on the spot. What did you expect?"

"I expected you to be circumspect."

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“You know I will not knuckle under to anyone. Your father condescendingly said to me what was on his mind when he indicated that it would be unlikely we would find much common ground as long as the relationship continued. You, my darling, are the common ground. He will not acknowledge that. That’s who he is, and that is what I would have expected of him.

“My remark about civility was not wasted on him. ‘Testy?’ Perhaps. But restrained. I am not disappointed in his words. It makes it easier for me to know his feelings in the matter. I do not fault him in the least for them. I do understand them.

“In my mind I will not be compromised in who I am by being obliged to relate to someone who wishes I was some place else. I do not believe you would ask that of me. I’ve been in that situation before; I do not like it.”

“OK, Mr. D.. I needed to try, just as I did with my sisters. You know why I wanted to try.

“I’ll not get everything I want, I realize. I hope I haven’t made you think less of me.”

“Sweet life, I do understand. I do not think less of you. I think it best be forgotten.”

“I will speak to father as I have spoken to you.”

“Best to forget it, an experiment that failed.”

“Perhaps Mr. D.. I best be getting back to him. I’ll see you in a few. Father is about to leave for home. We’ll talk more about it later.”

Catherine put her arms around William’s neck, placing her face close to his, smiling sweetly, reaching for a kiss. He gently touched her lips with his finger tip. She slowly withdrew with a coy frown.

“Soon, Mr. D.?”

“Soon.”

Catherine returned to the room. Her father had a look of anticipation or expectation upon his face.

“Father, I’m sorry for exposing you to this little indiscretion of mine. I realize I was asking a great deal, if not the impossible.

“It was so simple with Theresa. She and Mr. D. have become good friends. With Lydia it has been much more restrained. I know she cannot envision such a relationship for herself, and finds it difficult to relate to Mr. D., for that, and other reasons.

“Like, Mr. D. has asked just now, when I scolded him for his attitude, ‘What did you expect?’

“Truthfully, I did not know what to expect. Mr. D. did know what to expect.”

“Dearest child, perhaps I might have shown a little restraint myself. I did not need to say anything obviously provocative. Alas!,

## *On The Road To Civilization*

what I have wanted is only what I could have wanted. But you are so dear to me, beyond words. I cannot be you and you cannot be me. You have fledged, you are you, you have your life to lead. I can only stand on the sidelines wishing what I wish. Whatever happens, I must be guided by your happiness. I know you know that I will always be there for you.

“Do not mistake me in the least, I am proud of you in every respect. I will not judge you. I am truly desirous of your happiness. If a Mr. D., or let me phrase that, if Mr. D. is the source of your happiness, I will not attempt to interfere.”

Catherine threw her arms around his neck, much as she had done with William, but instead of searching for a kiss, hugged him, placing her cheek next to his.

“I’m sorry for having put each of you through my somewhat thoughtless action. Father, you are still my hero.”

“Well, darling daughter, my angel Catherine, I must be on my way. If anything goes wrong with all of this, I’ll come. I’ll promise not to abrade your Mr. D., but will view him as concerned as I, given the circumstances, should they occur.”

“Thank you ever ever so much for coming. Please forgive my impulsiveness.”

“Forgiveness never enters the picture; there is nothing to forgive. I love you, my child. You are part of my heart and soul. I know of life through you.”

With that Catherine hugged him again, kissing him on the cheek.

“I’ll be leaving now, Kitten.”

One needs to play these scenes. Civility is severely tested. As a part of ordinary life, it seems one cannot avoid prejudice and righteousness.

This scribble only obliquely speaks in terms of ordinary life. It is so because ordinary life, the mundane, somehow seems undramatic, if not boring. It is boring to do as one would be done by; unless we note an eye for an eye, exact a higher price for our seeming indiscretions. It is boring to do what everybody else does.

Perhaps an hour after her father left the scene, William had returned. Catherine welcomed him warmly.

“Guess what, Mr. D.!”

“Am I to guess, then?”

“If you wish.”

“Twenty questions? Any clues?”

“What’s in a tort?”

“I cannot see the spelling.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Not a cake, but a feaſance.”

“A riddle, or a ridiculing?”

“Not a torturing, but the firſt.”

“Are you not the clever one today.

“You might have begun with another than: ‘Guess what’.”

“Mr. D., it is a family matter.”

“Your father truly loves me?”

Catherine frowns. “Mr. D.!”

“Your mother?”

“Ah!, a tort, a tort. Your ſiſter, the torte. Piece of cake! Or is ſhe a tart?”

“Have your fun Mr. D. But you are warm.”

“Lydia is coming?”

“The riddle is ſolved. Tomorrow. She plans to ſtay around for a few.

“That means you two might ſpend ſome time together.

“After father left ſhe called. She and I diſcuſſed your preſence here, and that you and ſhe might become better acquainted, while ſhe viſits.”

“She condeſcends to viſit her older ſibling?”

“Mr. D., it is genuine. She confeſſes to being totally abſorbed in her work, to having neglected thoſe who have meant the moſt to her.

“She wondered what I would be doing next. I told her I would moſt likely be returning to the iſland for a while.

“She ſuggeſted we all get together on the iſland this ſummer.”

“Lydia ſuggeſted that?”

“Yes!”

“Coming tomorrow for a few. And going to the iſland for a few. Seems out of character.”

“Mr. D., you cannot poiſon my opinion in the matter. She is allowed to be part of me, of us. I feel her genuineness.

“She might yearn for other things than all that legal grind. She has been known to be very ſweet, and loving. I deem that not a character flaw; but a ſiſter I once knew, and cherish.

“I am anxious to renew things with her, to hear all that ſhe is doing, and what ſhe feels about the poſſibilities of the Wordly entanglements.”

“Yes!, it might be of intereſt, how ſhe intends to build a civilization out of harangue.”

“Mr. D., one more word, and you will be excluded from the family matter. I want to ſhare this perſon with you in good faith, and in a good ſpirit. I expect ſomething from you in exchange.”

“We’ll ſee how it plays out.”

“Mr. D., I expect more from you than that.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“O.K., I promise to be a good boy.”

“More than that!”

“Catherine; I will do my best.”

“Mr. D., I want your very best. You will have to give a little. Be a gentleman with her.

“She is giving a little. Let us see where she wants to take us.”

“Thy will be done.

“Not to change the subject, or as it was, to change the subject, I just had a pertinent flash, pertinent to your earlier surmising in Anthropology, that I might be the ‘missing link’. A ‘between here and there’.”

“Mr. D., has the question of primogenitors found its way into this conversation?”

“As an offshoot of the notion of a ‘missing link’? Are you musing upon that missing link between the barbarian and the civilized man? The more obvious connotation of the question involves the loss between the Biblical Adam and his unmentioned forefathers. I say this, bearing in mind that what has happened since may not qualify as anything so distinct as a civilized entity.

“However, for most people, imagining homo erectus as a forefather strains their credulity.”

“As I have often surmised, To the many, The Descent seems unlikely, if not odious.

“Evolution is betrayed in its aegis through corpulence.

“The subduing, or subduction, has resulted in some amorphous creature, perhaps Freak, despite all the high expectations.

“Any one of us might reach only so far back in his or her lineage. I know nothing of my mother’s family beyond her parents. I know nothing of my father’s family beyond his parents; excepting there was mention of a great grandfather in the service of the Hapsburgs. It’s a long way back to homo erectus. A challenge for the genealogists. A series of adaptations, feints and dashes to safety. The various results of copulations. No royal lineage. Perhaps, like the royalty, some incest along the way. Mark Twain had a friend who could trace the lineage of his dog back to the ARK.

“Mr. D. and Catherine are related. And friendly.”

“Mr. D., my mother has delved into genealogy, tracing most of our lineage to a sudden disappearance, along with all records, coincident with the rise of the Third Reich. She has located a surviving cousin of father’s in Israel. She has found none for her own family.

“The cousin of father’s knows little of lineage, lucky to survive at all as a mere child. We are beginning again, it would seem.

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Your George Lincoln Rockwell was waiting in the wings.

“Others, perhaps worse than he, in the likes of the clever Ezra Pound. His attack on Usury included reference to the Jews.”

“Tough subject, Usury. Survival often involves parasitic activity. Whoever gets there fustest with the mostest. Whatever the market will bear.

“I would not want to talk around the subject. I do have some strong opinions when it comes to what it is we sacrifice when we become animals instead of civilized entities. I broaden my perception of ‘animal’ when I think of those who place some things above others in order to survive.

“In one’s attack on Usury, let the chips fall where they may. Our object is to create a better civilization.

“The medium of exchange is a tool of survival, and it is also a way of creating wealth. ‘A security of wealth’, or ‘A wealth of security’, one could add. But it cannot buy anyone anything of real, tangible, value, to wit, one’s life, and, in my opinion, does bring ruin to the social fabric.

“Unquestionably, there is something wrong. When you cannot buy your life. Even stuffing your precious gems up your anus doesn’t buy you anything. When they chopped up the Russian royalty, the crown jewels were chopped along with the rest. Such vindictiveness, such rage.

“The message: it’s a mistaken assumption to imagine that one can escape a final settlement; a balancing of the equation; a balancing of the books. Can one really be so unaware? So insensitive? So selfish? Righteous concerning Gold?

“Yes!, I allude to many things here. A culpability? Unequivocally? No exceptions!?! The wrack and ruin of civilization rides on the outcome.

“To me there is little difference between a little bit of interest and a bigger bit of interest. It’s the thought that counts. Its inhuman, however much a part it is of the human condition. One resents his part of the bargain. It is a bargain, is it not? Do we bargain out of desperation? Can I blame the other party for his lack of compassion?

“Can one expect to escape the wrath of Raskolnikov?”

“Mr. D., I sense your quandary in this. And your accusation. You refer to something Russian when it might also be applied to others. There is a sense of retribution; others are to pay for our stupidity.”

“No! that is not it entirely. But Yes!, it seems unfair to expect the shelter of civilization when one does things that do not enhance that civilization. One resists assimilation only to become a parasite.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“Mr. D., neither a borrower nor a lender be. Would that suffice?”

“It might. But more to the point, make it unlawful to do so.”

“Mr. D. I sense something in you, in this conversation, that might not bring you satisfaction.

“You want to say something about a certain kind of person, who may belong to a certain ethnic group. You view these ones as parasites, who contribute nothing to the greater civilizational need.

“The love of money, the medium of exchange, if you will, is not the love of one particular ethnic group. The Ezra Pound thing does not hold up. But the Raskolnikov response is understandable without involving ethnic overtones.

“Mr. D., we must always retain our objectivity. Don’t take me wrongly here, I am in favor of total discontinuance of borrowing and loaning where one party gains at the expense of the other; that kind of making something out of nothing. I am opposed to currency trading. Not only because it is parasitic. It tends to devalue many things not apparent. In general, I am unsympathetic to those upbraided for such activity. I do not believe such activity contributes one whit toward enhancing or improving our civilizational requirements.”

“This is a very tricky conversation we are having. I am splitting hairs while at the same time equivocating with the very words that are intended to show my true feelings. To keep the record straight, Mr. Pound may have had one ethnic group in mind when he implicated the USA and Britain in his railing against Capitalism. Even though there were racial laws in effect in Italy during WWII, is there anything on record how the Italians treated their ethnic minorities, apart from the rants of Mr. Pound? Wasn’t the Mussolini thing supposed to be somewhat socialistic, as well as fascist; and wasn’t his attitude rather lax with regard to a pogrom? Was Mussolini the complete lapdog of Hitler? Enforcement occurred after the Italians were defeated, during the German occupation.”

“Mr. D., I am in the dark regarding the particulars. These men do not interest me, even as an object study. I consider them spurious, as I do W. I will note what you have said regarding Poet Philosopher Propagandist Pound and Dictator Mussolini.

“A delicate subject, one which does not tender subtleties of argument. At least between you and I. I would not want to predict the outcome of this kind of discussion with Lydia, who might not be swayed by your charms.

“In any case I will not dismiss what you say about the use of the medium of exchange by any and all; Yes!, let the chips fall where they may – upon those individuals guilty of the offense.”

## *On The Road To Civilization*

“To return to the earlier part of our conjecture; the Descent, and how we might view our unknown primogenitors. Are we truly all conjoined thereby, and as you have intimated, are we related?”

“If the rule applies, yes! A great broad relationship. A lot of begetting, representing an ascendancy or a descent? Most likely a descent into hell. The ethnicity, or the color, may matter to some, but where is the root justification? All the same regardless? Some unconscious selection at work here?”

“I wonder whether your sister could view me as her relative?”

“Mr. D., I wouldn’t suggest it. If there are deductions to be made, let her come upon them.

“Meanwhile the discussion rambles.”

“Another ramble if you will; a mixing of conjectures. Must one suppose that our primogenitors were class conscious? I mean, those before Adam? One assumes them to be tribal; is that a safe word; is that a safe assumption?”

“Mr. D., one might suppose some things. Like the strong prevailed. What if the strong was also an asshole?”

“Like Hitler, you mean?”

“Mr. D., I am referring to something more primitive. Where strength resided in ones body, and perhaps in ones wits. Perhaps an indiscriminate thing. Used for protecting one’s family or one’s clan or tribe. Almost an instinctive thing, without prejudice. However, I would not rule out the possibility that Hitler was a primitive, as well as deranged.

“The asshole quotient comes in when another aspect of a personality used strength for self-aggrandizement, breaking away from the group to serve oneself, or one’s notions.”

“Primogenitor nature, like ‘human’ nature?”

“Perhaps”

“Suggesting it began a long time ago. Before the Dawn? Not as it is practiced in heaven, but upon the earth, which we may be privileged to observe”

“Truly.”

“When do you suppose other factors arose? We’ll assume safety in number. Individuals banding together as a mutual protection society, as we imagine do certain animals.

“Protection against what or whom? Other tribes, bands, clans?”

“From what we seem to deduce, most likely.”

“Do we acknowledge the beginnings of sects, quite apart from the protection aspect of banding together?”

“I would assume so.”

“Before the dawn?”

“I would assume so.”

“Mountain people, river people, forest people. Agrarians?”

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“Axe makers, spear makers, shield makers, traders in merchandise? Spiritualists? Bankers? Classes of primogenitors engaged in these activities?”

“One might assume such a thing.”

“Flowing quite naturally from ‘primogenitor nature?’”

“One supposes so.”

“The somewhat complicated Dawn?”

“It would appear so.”

“Nothing clear-cut here. Something seeking a definition when no concept was there to receive the definition.”

“Something like that.”

“A stumbling into something. Perhaps too many clashes that didn’t prove anything. Everybody lost too much. Something faulty in the modus operandi. More power, more invincibility required?”

“That was tried, and to this day is still being tried.”

“What purpose is being served? Someone must have asked that question. Someone propounded the obvious Rule. And, perhaps added a reference to a higher power.”

“Civilization did not just happen. Herman’s question involved a perception of something not readily apparent. ‘Is civilization a thing distinct, or merely an advanced state of barbarism?’ An advanced human condition prompted the question; is that a plus?”

“Swept in along with this civilizing aegis was all the habits of the beast undergoing this sensible uplifting. The price of civilization was inclusion. I will agree to be civilized if you will grant me my uniqueness. One could not have the one without the other; it was unthinkable. Was civilization a thing distinct?”

“Mr. D., as usual, you are being clever.”

“The bargain. My uniqueness for your civilization.”

“It is a mere step from uniqueness to non-assimilability.”

“Total participation in preserving the intent is not a requirement. However, becoming self-serving, and secretive, separate, haughty, arrogant, flauntingly superior as a what?; tribe, clan, class, race, is anathema to the aegis.”

“I believe that to be so.”

“We are in agreement.”

“On these particulars, Yes!”

“It doesn’t take much imagination to extrapolate from then to now. The aegis is stressed for the same reasons.”

“It would seem so.”

“That much seems distinct, however else you might choose to recognize certain limitations. Barbaric? Does it fit in any way? Have we surmounted something? Are we always in danger of reverting to something?”

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“Mr. D. I do not believe we ever left that something behind. We are what we are. Sensibility and sensitivity are required, if we are to continue as a species. That has always been so.

“All the circumlocutions regarding tribe, clan, class, race, point to a valid consideration. We must address them. We must know what part we are to play, and we must know what we can retain for ourselves. Ortega tried to simplify in his *The Self And The Other*.

“If it is deemed we can retain very little or nothing because it breeds something unwanted, like comparatives, like envy and so on, then we become something other than we really are. Ants perhaps.”

“Uncles.”

“Mr. D.! you are impossible!”

“Godfathers? God for nothings?”

“YOU ARE IMPOSSIBLE!”

“Don’t you like me just a little?”

“Mr. D., at this moment, I want to be a tyrant. I want to cast you into the bottomless pit.”

“I guess tyranny is not a very good solution. We would never see each other again.”

“At this moment ----- Damn it, Mr. D., you do dismiss me.“

“Want me to leave before you become tyrannical?”

“A break will do. A pause.”

“Cuddles?”

“Not on your life!”

“A little bit off the subject, but still primal. When do you suppose Mr. Neanderthal stopped grabbing Mrs. Neanderthal by the hair of her head, and dragging her thereby into the cave for a little hanky-panky?”

“Have you read the *New Yorker* lately? Have you noticed the cartoons depicting those days, when the lady of the cave insisted on circumspection in all things, lest her partner be put to shame?”

“You mean thought a barbaric boor? That’s a real put down.”

“Mr. D., If the shoe fits.”

“There are still rapists amongst us. Has that been an inheritable trait? Like some are still born with gills, regardless of their purported origins?”

“Mr. D., a specious question. We, whether civilized or not, have deemed such behavior intolerable. I know it does not answer the question; it is not something we can discuss objectively.

“We can discuss deterrents. Like Mace. Or a kick where it counts.

“In some circles we can preach respect for the individual, that one does not transgress upon another person with ‘our’ wills. But like a

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clout from a cudgel, it must be made clear, there isn't any room for equivocation concerning the act itself.

"Is there any understanding we can accord the rapist?"

"None!

"It is that the rapist or potential rapist must understand his relationship, and responsibilities with regard to another or others. That he cannot freely, wantonly violate another person. It is forbidden; that must be understood; under no circumstances is such behavior to be allowed; or tolerated.

"Don't test me on this. Again, Ortega attempted to simply in the Self And The Other, with notions about the conquest of the virgin from the other tribe.

"I know you are always looking for roots to things. That is fine. So am I. But don't make a mockery of every question.

"Finding plausible excuses for lapses in the civilizational requirements is not germane to this kind of issue.

"I do not imagine our cartoons depicting the primogenitor dragging his woman into the cave by her hair helps matters any.

"Let me ask, Mr. D., have you ever felt the inclination to take a woman, so to speak, by force?"

"Never."

"Have you ever felt the impulse to invade her space with any kind of untoward action?"

"If 'touching' is considered untoward, Yes! proximity being the chief agent of such inclination. Looks, attitude, manner of dress, perfumes, might have something to do with all that, in close proximity. Some women are natural born coquettes."

"Don't you even imply that 'she was asking for it', even if she seemed to be.

"Yes!, if she turns to face you, smiles at you, touches you, that is, gives you unmistakable signals that she is interested in you, that does not give you any license to do any thing more than be cordial and respectful toward her. That is always your responsibility.

"You demonstrated that with me. In a certain sense it was foolish of me to trust you at any time in an enclosed space where only you and I were present.

"From the very beginning, you were respectful, and never transgressed, even with all the opportunities that were given you to expand, or press the moment."

"Catherine, recalling those beginnings, I can only say I was smitten. Everything I did, or was doing, was done with the hope of gaining your good graces. Not calculated. I felt no impulse to grab you, to possess you. The warmth of your nearness was sufficient.

"Being smitten does things to a person.

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“You were doing enough for both of us.

“Remarkably you were not toying with me. You were serious. You cared about my feelings.

“Besides there were certain things that were unthinkable to me at the time; as you well know.”

“I did not know that at the time, despite what you might have intimidated.”

“I do not imagine there was anything unusual in the way I responded to you, given our social mores. I might have been hesitant for other reasons. I have always been respectful of women. For one thing, they remain a mystery to me; a wonderful mystery, under the right circumstances. Their mysterious quality earns its own respect, something not to be violated, more perhaps, to be worshipped.”

“Mr. D., a little thick, given what has passed between us.

“That is OK. I do not desire worship.

“I must add, that when you get testy, I become angry, because I think you have forgotten who I am.”

“Have we created a civilization?”

“I think we have abetted a good cause. Mostly we have been fortunate to have had the freedom to do as we have done. There is something remarkable in that, given what we know, and further suspect, of man and mankind.

“I am aware of the benefits, the things we have built upon. But I am also aware of the backsliding, the incorrigible part, the part that threatens the whole apparatus.

“Whatever kind of future we might envision for humanity suffers with the taint of the human condition, and what might arise from that. A loose cannon? Something unpredictable, like the volcano, or the earthquake, the path of a wind, of the flood. The pestilences.

“Each of us has some responsibility to assure the continuance of what we have gained under the umbrella of civilization. We cannot take anything for granted. None Of Us.

“Still we may be far from where we want to be. The half-loaf, Mr. D.?”

“I have heard, ‘A slice’.”

## *The Other Sister*

They had been sitting outside in a more or less enclosed and landscaped space. Tables and chairs had been arranged strategically to take advantage of the surround and imaginary comforts of

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vegetation. The roofline was low enough to admit the sun for most of the day. Catherine was sitting in a comfortably padded chaise; Mr. D. in a more conventional patio chair.

As they were so ensconced, a voice of greeting interrupted their serious cogitations.

It was Lydia who rushed up to her sister, who had risen to meet and greet her. They hugged, rather emotionally.

Lydia turned to look in Mr. D.'s direction.

"Hello, Mr. D."

She released her sister momentarily to offer her hand to him, and warmly greeted him with a smile and a meaningful handshake. She then returned to her hugging of Catherine.

"How is it going, Cate?"

"Everything seems to be happening as predicted. A little fever in the beginning. For this past week, everything seems stable. I do not feel any ill effects. So perhaps in another week, I'll have completed this round of stuff.

"I would imagine Dr. Klein would like to expose me again to the virus, but may feel it is an unnecessary risk at this time. If I can resume a normal life with normal activities without a relapse, I suspect that will do as well."

"Is that supposed to sound good?"

"You'll have to ask the Doc.

"We seem to talk around what might happen down the road."

"What do you think of all this, Mr. D."

"I am the guy who supports the patient. Whatever the patient wants, I am supposed to help her make a decision. It is that 'we' have decided upon 'we'. She does not decide, I do not decide, 'we' decide. But actually it is Catherine who decides."

"Mr. D., it is 'we' who decide."

"So 'you' two have decided to leave this place as soon as the Doctor is satisfied, to return to the Island?"

"That is the interim plan.

"That is what I want, that is what 'we' want."

"What do you intend to do there?"

"Enjoy the amenities, enjoy each other. Continue with the writing. Perhaps tape our conversations, hoping to turn them into something meaningful beyond ourselves."

"Have you felt restless there? Had the urge to return to the Big City?"

"Yes and No. Yes, to help Theresa, who is burning out. To maybe keep something from falling by the wayside. But Theresa assures me the place has enough dedicated people involved to endure. The No part has to do with being away from Mr. D.. Additionally, I do want to

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write; something I cannot do in the Big City, because there would be so many more demands upon my time, and my energies.

“I suppose this reflects some kind of ambivalence.

“If Mr. D. would go with me, I would like to return to the African Continent. But in all fairness, I could not ask him to become exposed to the dangers.”

“But Cate, why there?”

“Lydia, why anything?”

“For one thing, apart from my original reason for going there, the place has so many other attractions. It is different. Away from the cities, there is little pretension to anything.

“Yes, often what one sees seems dire when compared to what we expect here.

“There, human life assumes a certain shape, in what we would consider a hopeless venue, and, shaped by that venue.

“Those who live there do not complain. They endure with almost nothing. We could not live as they do, mostly because we have experienced something very different, which we imagine we could never forego.

“I find those people no less human than myself. Perhaps much closer to the earth than I am.

“I feel something, about life, that, until I had gone there, I had not felt before. Beyond the dire and the bareness of things is a life lived without pretense. The simplest things give a great deal of pleasure and meaning.”

“Cate, what about the disease, the sexually transmitted diseases? What about the malnutrition which makes them a vulnerable host to myriad other illnesses?”

Petulantly, Lydia exclaims, “You are damned right, we cannot live like that. I cannot.

“You imagine you want to do something to change what they experience.”

“Lydia, I do imagine better health, Yes! Mostly because I imagine it would improve their quality of life; it would reduce suffering on all levels. The average lifespan in all the impoverished areas is less than 50 years. Dealing with malnutrition and sickness is a terrible burden for them, however inured they seem.

“Their imaginations are very strongly linked to their surroundings, perhaps because so much of survival is dependent upon the keenest awareness of everything in the immediate. Everything is at their fingertips, a very tactile presence. Everything in nature is animated by their imaginings; they are close to everything that moves, and everything that is solid, and everything that stirs in the atmosphere, or in the water, if it is nearby.

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“They are not separate from their environment; they are deeply immersed within it.”

Still challenging her sister, Lydia banters “Fine, Catherine. What has that to do with you?”

“Perhaps nothing, on the face of it. But I do respond to something, in them, to their predicament. I feel it wouldn’t take much to bring a better quality of life to them.

“I feel the same way in the Big City, but in the Big City, we are dealing with something else; defeat; defeated expectations. Both on the part of those on the receiving end, on the part of those trying to make things better.

“On the African Continent, away from the cities, one is dealing with a remoteness from government, that is still formative, is still trying to balance its books. Whereas in the Big City, the effects and neglect of government surround one. The expectation exists that government is the father who cares. In Africa no such expectation exists. Government means nothing; perhaps only soldiers with weapons who harass, who ransack, who rape. A different, more primitive reality.”

Still taking her sister to task, “Catherine, how can you even think to expose your self to that?”

“Again, on the face of it, it seems foolish. Even without exposing myself to the more savage element, I was exposed to other things, even more hidden, more elemental.

“Lydia, I know I can not provide a good answer to these questions. There is nothing like first hand knowledge. More than that, even in its seeming backwardness, the humanity is glaring; also, to me, enchanting. All they have is their humanity. They live with so little, yet they possess a poise and a dignity. I want to say they are worth more than their government’s neglect.

“Their suffering is more substantial than what we have seen in the Big City, yet they endure without complaint.

“In the Big City we get the rejects, the failed promises, those wounded by the system, the questionable system; perhaps the misdirected civilization that we live in. There very few who do not complain; only the totally beaten whimper, the rest live with their desires and their expectations, and angrily react to their seeming exclusion. I believe it is more than seeming; that it is real, because they feel the truth of nobody caring. There are too many of us already.

“Mr. D. is always ragging on me about throwing my life away with my involvement. That humanity is too fickle. Better to just live one’s own life.”

Argumentatively Lydia presses on, “I think I would have to agree with him in that regard. Besides there is much to do at home.

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“My perspective is different. To borrow from an old expression ‘one needs to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.’ I refer to our own mess here at home.

“Yes! there are defects, there are flaws, perhaps even fatal ones, fatal to our prospect of civilization.

“You will ask, What civilization?!

“I perceive something salvageable from all the effort. Your Y Gasset thought we had gained something with the overthrow of the aristocracy, those exclusive beings who rule over us. But we know there is a new aristocracy, the corporate aristocracy.

“We simply must make them accountable. Like Theresa is constantly berating ‘we are all part of the problem, we are all part of the solution’. It is so. We cannot allow certain things to exist. Because they bring ruin through their indifference, and their unaccountability.”

Catherine queries, “How does one make them accountable, how does one unseat them if they prove unaccountable?”

“As you know, I have been a believer in working within the system. But there are those who are constantly trying to engineer the system to benefit themselves. I speak now of what happens in the seat of government, where certain interest groups are constantly lobbying for things that benefit them. Its almost a Biblical scene in the halls of government, with the money changers in the Temple; all the lobbyists fill the hallways of Congress. One has to run the gauntlet to get to his seat in chambers. These money changers have the means, and wield the influence that goes with the means. There is an implicit payoff. The demos do not have the means individually to augur for the same kind of hearing. So they are left out of the equation, unless someone in the seat of government takes it upon him, or her, self to be an advocate for them.

“That’s where I come in.

“I work with those who show some inclusivity as part of the process. They require drafts of legislation that argue for that principle, as the higher priority.

“It is very difficult to break down the barriers of vested interests. They hire a battery of attorneys who are expert at drafting riders to any proposed legislation. A system of tradeoffs with paydays somewhere down the road. So removed from what the demos need in the way of representation.

“Environmental Law is a glaring example. Where the Law itself is couched in glowing terms that concerns itself with aesthetics and health mixed together into a potpourri of ideals not rendered into legal terms, but enacted all the same. This invites the systematic reduction

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of the ideals into an impractical interference in the operation of industry. One must show cause.

“So we who represent the ‘good guys’, the environmentalists, have to come up with concrete facts and figures, causal relationships, almost in absolute terms, to refute the claims of those who deny the effects. To refute the claims of the weasels, the nay Sayers, like Critchton.

“We are battling the corporate aristocracy. Sometimes it comes down to compromise, but often it is the partisan vote, the opportunistic vote, the compromised vote, that decides.

“The system is corrupted. I do not know how to address the corruption. Yes!, we can draft legislation that makes a lot of activity within and without government illegal, and punishable by very severe penalties. But in order to get passage of such legislation, the vote is required.

“The executive could order the end of the corrupt practices as a matter of National Security. Cold Day In Hell!

“Such a person, such a person. Where is such a person?

“In the environmental cause we have the near ‘good guy’, who fails to abide his own dictum, the Al Gores. There a little bit of him in all of us. What are we truly prepared to sacrifice? We must be able to answer that question. What is our own level of accountability?”

Mr. D. responds, “Tough stuff, Lydia.

“We do what we do as a matter of conscience. That somehow relieves us of some responsibility. When, in fact, it is from an equivocal position. Its like cheating. We are truly ‘part of the problem’.

“I imagine the only way to deal with that is through legislation and stiff penalties; stiffer ones for those who yea Say and do nothing. Back to Moses again, with an outside agent as the enforcer; someone who wields a big stick.”

“Mr. D., those are becoming my sentiments.

“Appeals to reason fail miserably. Appeals to various sentiments seem to fail because they are so inconsistent, and ‘inconvenient’; I want to say ‘arbitrary’. There is one code for me, another for you.

“We think of the corporation as an unconscionable evil, always looking at the ledger. Sometimes their study of the ledger shows that they can do as well by treating the environment with measured concern. In the oil industry it has proven cost-saving to treat the environment with respect. Never risk a spill because the cost of cleanup produces red ink. Well, that’s simple arithmetic. Its those that try to slide by with a lot of risk, little leaks, tardy repairs, done in the next quarter, etc. When the big spill comes, they resort bankruptcy and restructuring to circumvent responsibility. Hence, the

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courts wind up chasing elusive fugitive corporate heads; or 'headless monsters'.

"One cannot wait for those responsible to act; one must deal with environmental messes immediately. Even if one is able to bring these guys to heel, the damage may be immeasurable, the assessment of cost, or fine, still not commensurate with the hidden part. One will be in court a long time trying to prove things that are implicit, rather than explicit. We have learned, 'correlation' is easily argued against, simply because other plausible scenarios can be constructed.

"There are landmark cases where, in the presence of prima facie evidence, though not conclusive, where an obvious correlation did exist, where an inference could be made, courageous judges have acted accordingly. We need more of the latter, however 'arbitrary' that may seem.

"One must seize the initiative."

"Would you like to become a judge?"

"It's not a job for which one applies. At least, on the level of interest to me. Certain locales, or municipalities, do elect judges. But the likelihood of a landmark environmental case coming before one of them seems remote.

"At the level I would seek such a position, one needs to be appointed, and most likely cleared by Congress. One needs to be engaged for sometime in his particular field of law before he would be considered. As we know, these appointments are often political in nature; 'Who's' In, Who's Out'.

"However I would not exclude the possibility. But until then, case preparation is vital, an unrelenting argument for the unknown aspect; carefully presented with allusion to knowns. The bench must be made to suspect the hidden effects, not to ignore them, because every delay encourages the cumulative effect, which is not measurable. The old adage: Err on the side of caution, not with regard to the law, but in deciding not to increase the burden.

"The Law must be made to step outside of its constraints, to use some of its prerogatives. One must seek, and render, wise counsel.

"Do I sound unlike myself in this argument; the person who works from the inside? Perhaps not. The Tellermans have innate forces that move them; they can be known to take the initiative when called upon to do so.

"I know Mr. D. has looked upon me as a stickler, maybe even a stick in the mud. However, my exposure has tempered that in me."

"Lydia, I have withheld any judgment of you, despite our apparent differences. My relationship to your sister has bothered you, but you have mostly avoided condemnation of me because you love your sister, and respect her.

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“Perhaps I have viewed you as less flexible, less open-minded than your sisters, but in no way have I demeaned your intelligence.

“A stickler, yes, but not unwarrantedly so. I do regard you as a fair-minded person. It would not set well with you, if you misjudged anyone.

“I am able to appreciate where your turn of mind is essential in matters of Law. Yes! The Tellerman thing is part of you. Pretty nice combination, along with other persuasions.”

“Mr. D., thanks for the vote of confidence; that does mean something to me. I am aiming high. Do I want to leap? For me, probably not a good idea. If I get there, I want solid footing beneath me. I am not counting on the other persuasions you suggest.”

“Don’t knock them. The argument is often enhanced by demeanor and self-assurance.”

“Mr. D. I am not Catherine, who is aware of the effect her presence has upon others. I know her kind of self-confidence is healthy; it enlivens her, increases her chances of making contact with another. She is unafraid of who she is.

“Somehow I feel vulnerable when I am viewed too salaciously. It makes me want to cringe. I resent something because it demeans the most important part of me.”

“Lydia, I’m sorry I alluded to something that obviously troubles you. All three of you are beautiful women. Theresa lets it roll off her back. Catherine utilizes the response to get closer to others, not by seduction alone, but through ready engagement; cutting to the chase, so to speak. Catherine has had cause to be cautious, but feels safe enough in who she is not to knowingly flaunt, but still engage. Theresa is the marvel, a natural, very comfortable with who she is; perhaps because she has been lovingly associated with her two very able and beautiful sisters.

“You are not less than they. Your beauty is not an obstacle to who you are; that could never be.”

“Well, sis, a little unexpected turn in the conversation?”

“I wish Tess was here; we could all laugh a little.

“I do not dismiss what Mr. D. is saying. But I do feel uncomfortable with roving eyes. Perhaps, as you might suggest, my insides are not as attractive as my outside, at this point in my life.”

“Lydia, I have suggested no such thing; I intuit you know you cannot impute that to me.

“No need to be made self-conscious at my expense. Because your beauty would favor your arguments, can not make you repulsive to yourself. That cannot be right.”

“I think Mr. D. is suggesting something you ought to consider.

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“In the beginning of our relationship, Mr. D. was obviously taken with my appearance, so much so, to mention it frequently, and to show some obsequious behavior in that regard.

“He felt that I was some superior untouchable being.

“I told him about all the adults of the male persuasion with whom I had come in contact as we grew up, and how some of the ‘friends’ of the family, of the male persuasion, would go the round of hugs, and how these hugs began to feel lascivious as we grew older, more shapely and more attractive.”

“Yes!. now that you mention it Cate, I was bothered by that, even sickened by that. Perhaps that’s where some of my aversion began. I even wished I was an ugly duckling at such times.”

“Well, Lyd, I regarded it differently. I accepted my attributes, and tuned up my antennae. I tried to spot the potential touchy, feely huggers. I needed to be able to live in this world on my own terms. Besides there were other things I wanted in my life, far more meaningful than groping.

“Mr. D. was refreshingly different. It was me who hugged him. When he wanted to return the favor, I suggested he not misinterpret the gist of my hug. I had to hug him again to reassure him that I did not find his desire to hug me objectionable.

“I accepted the fact that he was smitten; I had to decide how to handle that. I simply continued to hug him; I felt I wanted to. I was getting involved. I realized at the same time that I had some responsibility toward him. I could not play a game with him. Things became serious almost from the beginning. I took my responsibility to a relationship seriously. I did not want to hurt this person through any casualness.

“I think I fell rather quickly.”

“Til now I hadn’t appreciated the details sis. That’s very beautiful. I guess I am listening.”

“Lydia, to return to the earlier part of our conversation concerning courageous judges. How possible is that?”

“It’s a kind of timely thing. There are procedural things each matter brought before a court must follow. Most judges are guided in what they do by precedents established in other judgments in other courts, even European courts, as noted by the Supreme Court in preparation for the more or less spurious challenges to Roe V Wade. Protecting a woman’s right to her own body is a serious matter that has become a matter of Law, Law rendered by the Supreme Court.

“Some of the procedural things the courts do grates on many attorneys. Sometimes it seems arbitrary, even unreasonable.

“Roe V Wade was and is a big thing. It always gets a lot of attention, and has heavy political overtones.

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“The more ordinary cases involving law-breaking and charges, and rules of evidence, wherein an individual is considered innocent until proven guilty, guilt being decided by a judge or a jury, whether it is Martha Stewart, or John Doe, is where one needs to be especially careful. Due process is one thing, the procedural stuff of the Law and the court is something else; often there is a conflict between the two. Often it is hard to avoid the transparency of favoritism, and a prejudicial outlook.

“Judges and juries are made up of the usual human clay, subject to all the permutations and whims of the kind. One needs to appeal to their sympathies and their concept of humanity and human failing, as well as their sense of justice, a la Gerry Spence, or Clarence Darrow, for example. One also needs to try to ennoble the juror, to remove him from his viscera, his prejudices.

“Law is what holds it altogether; our civilization, and our civilizing. Civilization is always a working model, affected by transient things. We are its guardians assuring a continuity, and continuance, from generation to generation.

“In that environment, there is a power granted to both judges and juries to act as they see fit. It is sometimes for the good, serving justice in new ways, more in keeping with our more enlightened ways.”

“I am mindful of something that happened when my future wife was before the court in her divorce proceeding involved in her first marriage. This was in her home state of Oregon. Her proceeding was to be heard under the existing law, where her character and the way she led her life was to be brought before the court, to assess degree of responsibility for the failed marriage, perhaps to influence division of property, and other more vindictive things. Who knows what might have happened if that had been the case. The State Legislature had, shortly before the court date, passed a new No Fault Divorce law. The case could have been heard under the old proceeding since it was prepared to be heard in that manner. But the judge called the two attorneys into his chambers to announce he would hear the case under the new law.

“One was not even required to state irreconcilable differences, all that was required of my future wife under the new law was to state she wanted a divorce. The judge asked her one question: ‘Have you ceased to love this man?’ She answered ‘Yes!’ and that was it. The judge granted the divorce, subject to the usual waiting period, ninety days, for the final decree. The judge ordered the parties to divide their property at that instant, in the court room, obviating any further court time, and unnecessary contact between the two individuals.”

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“Yes!, Mr. D., I like that. A most humane manner of doing the routine business of the court. Especially when one considers the number of failed marriages. It also enables a woman to get out of a bad relationship with ease, as far as the court is concerned.

“You will no doubt note my prejudice. The court might have to deal with stalking, abuse, brutality, murder, further down the road. But at the time of a divorce, attorneys need to bring to the courts attention, the need for instructions to the parties regarding those possibilities, and probabilities; and how unfavorably the court regards them.”

“When my daughter sought divorce, there was a different set of conditions. While the No Fault law was in effect, and would ordinarily have sufficed, there were other issues involved. Custody of a child, competency of the mother, alimony, and child support issues, along with division of property.

“The judge awarded her custody of the child, with liberal visitation for the father, child support, and the house, with its mortgage which her husband was obliged to pay as long as she lived in that house. If she decided to sell the house while he was still paying the mortgage, half of its proceeds were to go to her ex. It seemed a good settlement for her, although enduring the bullshit about her competency was very hard on her.

“She was having difficulty finding a steady job, and was finally offered steady employment in another state. Her ex. went back to the court, asking relief from the child support payments, the visitations, made more difficult because of the distance involved. My daughter had sold the house and had already paid him half of the proceeds. My daughter was poorly represented in this court appearance while he was supported by the same very aggressive and nasty sleazy scumbag attorney. My daughter retained custody, but with some very strict visitation requirements which required a lot of driving back and forth, delivering the child every other weekend, involving a distance of at least 100 miles one way.

“It needs to be understood that my daughter is not a strong person emotionally. She was not spending much time with her daughter, she was tired after her days work, and the stress of her new circumstances, and the pressure that was coming from the father who had remarried in rather more plush circumstances that he was using to lure the child away from the mother. Her daughter did in fact did begin to push for living with her father.

“My daughter finally yielded to her daughter’s urgings, too tired, emotionally bereft, and without any reserve to mount any resistance.

“The final irony to whole business was the court ordering my daughter to pay child support. The court under the influence of a very persuasive attorney, crushing a woman; the court creating a victim.”

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“Mr. D., Yes!, ugly business. No Justice there. Vindictiveness on the part of the court for moving out of state, and probably for not appearing for court dates.”

“All because she moved out of State to obtain employment. She still works at that job, probably willing to do anything to keep it.”

“Hard realities.”

“It all began because he was a Christian philanderer, A Promise Keeper. Perpetuated by a sleazy scumbag attorney hammering away at a defenseless individual, abetted by the court. Three males against one female.

“For my daughter an ironical déjà vous. Our neighbors across the street, he a graduate from bible college, a used car lot owner, and she a redhead, with a daughter younger than my daughter, all ‘good’ Christians, which gathered and sublimed my children, both suckered by the redhead with her sappy Jesus stuff, and her looks. All lovey dovey, until the bible thumper needed to be prodded by me, to pay my son monies owed for his work at the car lot, and until he philandered over the horizon. Caput!”

“Hard realities.

“What happened to your granddaughter?”

“She was a survivor. Given to tantrums around her mother. And crafty with her opportunities. Probably like her father in many respects. Pity’s the soul that gets hooked up with her.”

“That’s your granddaughter of whom you speak.”

“Hard reality!!”

“The attorney for her ex.; you described as a sleazy scumbag. What made you characterize him as such? Was he not doing what he could to win the most favorable judgment for his client?”

“Probably. Should I consider the judge a sleazy scumbag judge for allowing his court to be used in a manner that demeans a weak, almost defenseless woman?”

“A judge’s prerogative, whether or not it lacks a certain class. Judges do tend to look unfavorably upon those who do not appear in court.

“From what I gather, in his new marriage, her ex’s much improved circumstances were such that he did not need the child support he requested. But if your daughter was not in court to tell her side of the story, the judge was left with what seemed a reasonable request, considering what your daughter was earning in her job. It would not require a sleazy scumbag attorney to argue his case; or a sleazy scumbag judge to render such a judgment.”

“I know you are right in what you say. But there are other circumstances as well.”

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“Yes!, Mr. D. I recognize them as well, and perhaps even others that color the case. I do fault the system in that regard.

“I imagine your daughter barely hanging on to her emotions and her sanity; barely able to function. Giving up for lack of reserves and the proper kind of support. I imagine she did not confide in you. You learned of her circumstances after the fact. She was put in a position of defending herself against your judgment as well.

“A no win situation for her. She appears to have burned her bridges with you. I suppose you were against the marriage in the first place; most father’s are.”

“In my case, not unfounded. He too was a sleaze.”

“Lot of sleazes out there Mr. D.”

“Don’t mock me, Lydia. He passed himself off as something he wasn’t. He wore the colors, but was a scoundrel all the same.”

“Perhaps a survivor, like most of us.”

“Are we then all scoundrels? NO!!!”

“I’m sorry, Mr. D. That didn’t come out right.

“I’m sure your instincts were right in the matter. The real nice guys are few and far between. Fathers are hard pressed to find someone like themselves.”

“You are cutting today.”

“Perspectives, Mr. D. I happen to know you appreciate them, even when they are utterly true.

“In our family we always emphasized, equality, fairness, and justice. I still believe in those precepts. Our system, in principle, also believes in them. But so very many fall through the cracks because life is not so simple as the precept and the principle. The reality is that equality, fairness and justice do not exist for a large number of individuals because they are never in a position to avail themselves of them.

“I speak of conditions, the human condition, which lives outside of the law. The precept and the principle may be observed in a court of law, but outside the court, the state of our civilization may tacitly deny such high minded sentiments, for the lack of application; and dedication. A person most likely comes before the court with a lot of baggage.

“I want you to know that I feel the serious lacks and discrepancies in our civilizational presumptions and assumptions. That we are always on the edge of anarchy because of the apparent failures of our governments. The human condition is pretty much abandoned to vested interests, power struggles; the meaner side of the animal existence. Inclusivity, if ever it was an ideal, has long been forgotten.

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“Perhaps it does your heart good to hear me speak this way. Miss squeaky clean, Miss upholder of the law, denouncing the hand that feeds and nourishes one.

“Mr. D. we have to go with what we have got. Yes!, it is an individual thing. Each individual magistrate, regardless of the apparent fixedness of the law, is empowered to make judgments that become law. Every judgment risks an appeal, but the appeals process is costly, and very tenuous; not much leeway is given to a plaintiff against the system.

“Something gets perpetuated, perhaps a great error, or a great injustice. To a small person who is denied recourse in a matter that is important to him or her, it may seem a small matter in the overall picture. But it does represent a crack in the system.”

“Lydia a ‘small’ case in point when I was young man I was arrested for trespassing, and thrown in the clink. It required three appearances before the local municipal magistrate before the complainant appeared. Upon each failure to appear I was returned to the clink. When the complainant did appear he was allowed to impute other charges during his rant; in addition he was able to say to the judge, ‘you know whar the fahrplace is’ indicating a cozy familiarity between the two.”

“Yes!, Mr. D., a glaring example of the failure.

“I realize we will never be able to step outside of the human condition. Judges are part of that human condition. When they exacerbate the condition, even if it seems fated to be this way, one must be adamant in his denunciation of such complicity.

“I intend to do what I can, through the courts, to alleviate that condition.”

“I wish you every success Lydia.

“By the way, you have proven to me you are indeed a dedicated public servant.”

“I suppose I have to put up with that assessment from you. I will assume you mean that in the best sense, since we have entered a more amicable phase in our relationship. Besides I am my sister’s sister. She still thinks well enough of you after all the exposure. Theresa seems fond enough of you. I wouldn’t want to be left out for mere recalcitrance.”

“Lucky day for me.”

“Mr. D., don’t press it.” Catherine admonishes.

“Catherine, I mean that sincerely. I know it pleases you to witness our comity; as it pleases me to experience it.”

“Mr. D., you seem always inclined to immediately test a good thing. Its as though you were afraid that reality is playing tricks on you. You are reluctant to believe in good things for yourself, as though you deserve only the worst.”

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“You must admit it is highly unlikely that an old geezur would be befriended by the three graces.”

“Not in this script, Mr. D.

“We are necessary to the denouement. We are the mylde, faire and merry, to be contrasted to Harpies, the Furies, and the Fates in their multiplicity of dire muck and mire.

“We are the accompaniment upon the road, the road to civilization. We maintain the spirits and the focus of our journey together.

“Yes, we are dedicated, each in our own way. We have been imbued with the right stuff, the makings of our own destiny.

“We are not permitted to fritter. We will die in the traces, because that is who we are, what we are, and where we are going. May we have long lives and accomplish much.

“You will always be with us Mr. D.. You will always be next to my throbbing center and accompany every breath.”

“On Page 165, no less.”

“On every page, Mr. D.”

“If I may ask Mr. D., how is the writing going? Or is that an untoward or improperly phrased question?”

“The question is appreciated however you form or phrase it? You may regret the inquiry.

“But to answer you. It goes. Sometimes ploddingly, sometimes with ease and satisfaction. A necessary activity in any case. It differs not from that which we encounter in our conversations.

“One does wonder why. There are so many tomes circulating these days, most of them anointed as Bestsellers. New York Times, National, or?, bestseller in the allies and byways of the planet, even in the remainder bins of Costco; eventually the overflow bins of the used bookstores, as freebees; BestSmellers!.

“Enough to dissuade anyone. But us fools persist.

“Do we really want to become a household word like some *NEW* detergent, or is that ‘deterrent’? A bestselling dirt deterrent? Or is it bestselling dirt; are there any distinctions to be made in the marketplace? Whatever the market will bear?

“So much of the hype leaves us empty.

“I want to fill the void with substantiality, but resort to silly denouements, improbable romances, and yak about civilization being on the rocks. The romance is there to take ones mind off the horror of reality. The horror of the human condition; the horror of man’s insensitivity to life and the living.

“So I combine the two, the romance and the horror.

“Like the bumper sticker: ‘Help Save The Environment, Feed Yourself To A Bear!’

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“So very common. I cannot transcend the common human experience of birth, growth, decay and death; an unremitting cycle of purposeless activity; another bumper sticker: ‘Life is hell, then you die.’

“Sorry you asked?”

“Not at all, Mr. D. I realize the seriousness, and from my viewpoint, the necessity and importance of your endeavor.

“And Catherine’s too. Even as futile as it seems.

“The Bests(m)eller phenomenon, as you parody it, is a gimmick. The good with the bad follow a similar course in human affairs; certainly in the marketplace. As you suggest, there are no distinctions to be made.

“Does what you do, or Catherine does, merit any distinction, like: ‘*Not Just Your Average Bestseller*’ or ‘*Forget Bestseller, This Is The Real Thing*’?”

“What’s the fad, what’s the fashion? The twenty-four hour bra. Some of us do not sleep.

“The best with the worst, all bearing the same distinction, at least initially. Time will tell in all cases. Excellence and Durability require time; what’s left over; perhaps for an unknown future time.”

“Yes!, Lydia, that is my viewpoint; I assume what I do has a lasting value, but as I wrote in the Introduction to *Catherine* (reading the Teleprompter):

*‘Additionally, the author knows with a certainty, should his opus join the ranks, and should it survive the ages, that its concerns will seem suspended in time, its ideas musty, that its language will seem stilted, perhaps obsolete, albeit, become antiquarian, as so often does his predecessors. For he knows, the future, should it be allowed by its protagonist, will hold forth volume upon volume, as man (that very protagonist) restates his case to the universe, also suspended in time, haranguing, cajoling, chanting laments and singing praises, in a language always in transformation, always inadequate, as it seeks to express definitively, for all time, both truth and falsehood, and all persuasions attendant to these notions.’*

“As you see, I haven’t any illusions. Reality is the taskmaster.”

“I know you are right, Mr. D. I am beginning to appreciate your perspective.

“I know you will tell me that you haven’t any alternative.

“One might wonder how the ancients felt about their endeavors; how self-conscious they might have been; how they regarded the promulgation of their works, without a printing press, and after the printing press, without computers, and along with computers, websites where one’s blog could be accessed (Googled) randomly by typing and entering key words.”

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“It is true, today, we are a self-conscious lot, desiring the prize, because there is a prize. Also there is this day to day boredom, a vacuousness that the entertainment industry attempts to fill. Literature, Art, Theater, Cinema, The Concert, all work toward the same end, both the contributors and the promoters, to make a buck filling the void; content is immaterial, because advertising compensates for any deficit. We are as easily sold on shit as we are on value, just so long as it kills time.”

“I recognize him; our cynical Mr. D., is alive and well. There to challenge us with his conventional sourgrapes.”

“Catherine, that’s not nice. You know very well, my sweet, I would not say these things if they were not true. Perhaps the truth is boringly conventional. What can we do to spice it up? Ah!, I know: *The NEW Dazzlingly Superior Wisdom; Guaranteed To Win The Nubile Prize!*”

“That’s it, isn’t Mr. D., to hell with all the recognition, all the fine words, the finest truth, the finest civilization, alleviation of the human condition; without Ms. Nubile, what is any of it worth?”

“I happen to know a Nubile that went a long way across the oceans to find a human condition that could not be bettered; and I damned near lost her.”

“We all damned near lost her, Mr. D.”

“Hear that, wonder woman?”

“The grass is always greener.”

“That’s OK for cows.”

“I would imagine even cows don’t dig the Human Condition!”

“The metaphors are getting pretty rank.”

“All silly allusions aside, Kitty, we did damned near lost you. Can you imagine how that would have affected each of us?”

“You are part of our world. Your near loss has grown upon me. At first, to me you were alive, a survivor, as I have depended you to be. My older sister, that wonderful always welcome beacon. It is inconceivable to think of you not being here, so much are you a part of me, of us, the three of us.

“I love you as much as I love anyone. You must remember when you traipse off, that you are not entirely at liberty.

“You must know how Mr. D. feels.”

“Mr. D. doesn’t want to influence me, so he doesn’t tell me how he feels.”

“I think he should.”

“Lydia, my feelings about your sister are similar to yours. You have the right to say what you do to her. I do not. The basis of our relationship does not allow for any prerogatives, if that is how one might construe his concern and attachment.

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“Yes! love enters into the picture, but love achieves its own place and its own definition, something occurring between two individuals. Yes!, all the feelings are there. But one is denied possession. Ms. Nubile is not my possession. I am not Ms. Nubile’s possession. Even though we are inclined to insist upon ‘we’.”

“Lot of semantics here, Mr. D.. Every thought, every feeling, every emotion belonging to that person, is involved in that person; one is possessed whether or not one desires it thus. Quibbling over niceties is dishonest.”

“Oh!, sis, it is true what you say; I mean about my selfish actions. I have no right, as you say. I do have an obligation to you, to Theresa, to dad and mom; and Yes!, perhaps most of all, to Mr. D.

“We are who we are. Sometimes we decide things rationally; that may be all to the good. Then we decide things with our viscera, decisions not readily understood by others. But it is our life; it is my life, to put it another way. I think you know what I mean when I say it is my life. You are on your road somewhere; you are following that road. Yes!, we are out there on another road; but somewhere we converge, or we know of a route back to those whom we love.

“Sadly we cannot all travel the same road. That is fated to be.

“Anyway, this is a very heavy conversation that will not lead us to any change in what we do once we have returned to our road. We might be a little more considerate. I know I intend to be with Mr. D. I owe him one; one, at least.

“I do not dismiss, in the least, what you say, Lydia, with regard to your being a part of, or my being a part of us, the three of us. However, as Theresa and I have been doing our thing in the city, it has been without much thought of others, admittedly. Poor Tess, she can’t devote the time necessary to pursue relationships, as she might like. We are dedicated to something that maybe cheats others, perhaps our closest associates, from whom we ask the most; an unfailing understanding and love. We look to their support to give us the extra strength to continue what we are doing. What is our obligation to this thing that is happening in the background?”

“Sounds dangerously like you wish to return to the trenches.”

“I see it as an eventuality. I know I will need to supply the ‘beef’ for my words. That’s my personal accounting.

“Don’t misconstrue what I say, I do intend to proceed cautiously. I do not intend to overdo anything. Not only would I jeopardize my health, I would not be of much benefit to those I would desire to help, if I am sickly and cranky.

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“Right now I do want to take the time with Mr. D. and the writing. But I am conscious of Theresa maybe burning out. She needs a break. She needs ‘a life’.”

“Tell you what, sis. What if I proposed to Tess that we three spend time together on the Island?”

“What an idea Lyd, you would be willing?”

“I would not have suggested it if I was not prepared to do it.

“Would that be OK with you Mr. D.?”

“I suspect you know already.”

“I think its settled then, if we can pry Tess away.”

“A summit of the Three Graces, with one enchanted onlooker.”

“I should know more by the end of the summer how ready I will be to resume ‘my’ active role.

“Speaking of enchantment, perhaps misplaced. I want to be honest with everyone. Africa is a place to which I would like to return. I cannot say in what capacity. I would like to write about what I observe there, and what it represents to me of the human condition. I know it will be almost impossible to become a dispassionate observer; I may not be able to escape becoming involved.

“When I summon a vision of that continent, I do not see the cities. I see the villages, and the groups of families; and the individuals in the landscape. These are not necessarily barren landscapes, but they are devoid of large scale agriculture, although there is an agrarian subsistence in various locales. There are a few animals. Many individuals are nomadic, hunter gatherers. Those who live in one place, live in simple structures constructed of mud and thatch, or sticks and thatch. While what they are may not resemble anything we are, they are none the less, with their rituals, superstitions, their music, their dance, their celebrations, all formed and shaped from their lives, emergent from themselves without any influence, mostly a genuine expression of themselves,

“Before you say anything, let me add; when I speak of the human condition, its more than the dire and the neglect that strikes me, as I have suggested earlier when I spoke of simplicity of life there, and the integration I feel of that life with the landscape, however barren and devoid of the civilizational aegis. To me it is so valid, however passive and submissive seems the life.

“Would I want to see what we see here in the west?”

“Hospitals Yes!, staffed with trained people, with adequate equipment, with consciousness of the importance of sterile conditions. I would like to see a health system that served even the least, the so-called ‘safety net’, something we find lacking, even here.

“It all falls under the heading of ‘quality of life’.

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“Part of that system must account nutrition, adequate nutrition; and without preaching, a health consciousness, that precludes unsafe conduct in all manner of activities; the notion being to prevent disease, to avoid raging epidemics.

“One must deal with sanitation at all levels.

“Yeah!, that’s’ right, me, the social planner. Big ideas. How to avoid all the other shit that comes with our polluted western world, polluted in every sense. How to have these beneficial things that perhaps require the city environment; how to have a city without it being a city, but just an important place where human services are readily available. A place that would not separate the individual from his environment, either with plan or temptation. Christ, learn from our fucking mistakes. OOPS!!, excuse the vernacular. I promise not to print that. But I do want to emphasize my desire not to include the bad with the good.”

“Catherine, you are enthralled.”

“Mr. D., indeed I am. But I am daunted with the imprint of ‘reality’. As I have indicated in our previous conversations, I am not as daunted by our Big City ‘reality’, although what is there also represents another aspect to the human condition. In the Big City, which might easily be viewed as representative of most of the Big Civilization, we are seeing the human condition that results from uncaring indifference amidst plentitude. The possibility of remedy seems more like it should be happening. It is unreasonable that it is not happening. If we accept what we see as inevitable, by ‘we’, I mean the whole of our species, accepting something in such a way that we cannot escape the shame associated with it, indeed, the world becomes very black to me. I want to believe the species cares enough to do everything in its power to remedy what it sees, not turning aside, as we do on every street corner, but becoming involved in a human commitment. Never to say again, ‘God helps those who help themselves.’, or ‘There but for the grace of God go I’.

“Yes!, I want a great deal. Little ole me, hampered by Boola Boola; and without Boola Boola, hampered by gratuitous indifference, and by conditions that may prevail despite any amount of human consciousness mustered to deal with that ‘fatefully inevitable’, to which we always refer in our sapient ‘last analysis’ summations.

“I want to announce that it is not ‘fatefully inevitable’. I want to declaim aloud, ‘It is **not** the best of all possible worlds’. A human cry from out the dark side of life. I want everyone to care.

“What is lacking in humanity that prevents it from becoming the thing that it ought?”

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“Catherine, you are clearly a dreamer, headed for a life of disappointment.”

“Mr. D., there is absolutely nothing wrong with envisioning and cherishing an ideal. How much greater the ‘disappointment’ if I did nothing, if I said to myself everyday, ‘The human condition really sucks’, and did anything I could to avoid its implications, even for myself, cast a blind eye at my own peril by living in such an environment.”

“AH! The big ‘what if?’. The soliloquy to end all soliloquies.”

“Mr. D., the only one that matters to me.”

“Cate, there is something too ponderous in your conception. Something out of balance.

“Self-denial, self-sacrifice seem antithetic to the life force within us, within you.

“You do have a ‘right to life’ to coin a phrase often used these days. Oddly enough that phrase comes from a quarter that really doesn’t care what happens to the life that is so full of this ‘right’.

“If your life, if led as a scholar, as a thinker, as a humanitarian, given to humanitarian ideals, cannot be sufficient to its own genesis, then everything we are, is held up to question. Because things don’t turn out as expected, it does not follow for us to ask of ourselves, ‘What am I doing wrong?’. Is it because we are here, because we are given life, that we must perform some particular feat, that in our absence, would not happen?

“Do we delude ourselves with unrealistic notions, brought on by an equally unrealistic set of ideals. For example, are we really in our ascendancy? To play on Mr. D’s obversions regarding our descendance from the apes. Are we really destined for an improved species? Is that possibility invested in the genes? Do those bones we uncover really belong to our genesis, and what do they represent?

“We demonstrate a huge desire for ‘civilization’ per se. If a rationale exists whereby we can bypass civilization, genesis, ascendancy, however we choose to envision it; that is, if we can forsake the assumption and the construction as suits our whims, what kind of argument can we put forth that is meant to convince us we should, any of us, to consider civilization as the way to go? An idle philosophical speculation, a dubious hypothesis; it goes to the crux of anything we might imagine about life, the purpose of life, and Oh!, not incidentally its meaning to ourselves, as we are apt to entrap it, our reverence for life, as though it was and is a great mystery at which we can only marvel, in all its forms, even the ones that threaten us, that seem ugly and disgusting.

“The conundrum Cate. If we had not been born, all would happen without our intervention. We would not and it would not. By the mere

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happenstance of our birth, we have imagined ourselves as interventionists. We have some obligation to perform, to act out our genesis as though we were given a part to play, to assure a permanence and an improvement, not just a passive 'holding action', against both hypothetical and certain extinction. Do we prolong something by what we do, or do we leap from the heights to our doom, not as martyrs, but as raging lunatics?"

Mr. D. interrupts "Pretty heady stuff there Lydia.

"What's your take on the recent elections?"

"I don't know that there is any take. Although it seems the demos, the plebiscite have spoken, there is a great separation between the politician and his constituency. Part of the arrangement of representative government consists of a usurpation by the politician, and a forfeiture by the constituent. The usurpation comes naturally enough when the constituent is remote from the scene, is not informed, and barely cares what happens, and, as long as he doesn't know what is happening. The forfeiture follows naturally enough also, where the constituent is busy with his or her life, ceding his political life to another. In between there is a little bit of Pied Piper, a bunch of slogans, and equivocation, and perhaps deliberate obfuscation that makes the uninformed feel truly ignorant. This latter condition is favored by the politician; it gives him a freer hand to do whatever it is he or she deems the 'way to go'. Representative government exists mostly in name only. At election time it only seems there is some kind of choice, mostly when things get pretty screwed up by the politicians; changing politicians who yammer the good yammer seems like the thing to do; who's got the bragging rights!.

"It is what we have got. Probably the departing Secretary of Defense characterizes the whole cynical obfuscation with his dismissal of the American public: '*As we know there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know.*' We have had a number of these glib individuals circulating through government in the last fifty years. They talk down to us, every one of them; Kissinger is one of the most glaring.

"I am not 'cautiously optimistic'. I fear the lapses into complacency, into a kind of self-congratulation. Its not an overwhelming victory by any means. 'You can't fool all of the people all of the time.' still bears a lot of scrutiny. A lot of damage has been done. A lot needs to be remedied. It will require principles and courage to get us where we need to be.

"We have a lot of bad habits to overcome."

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“Gee, sis, is this coming from an insider?”

“I suppose it is. But I do not want to create the impression that I have any better understanding of the truth of things. Most of those who represent us can come up with the good say when it is required, but one senses something else in them as they speak. Something difficult to characterize. A hesitancy mixed in with the good say. Something calculated, an acquired denial of those to whom the good say is addressed. Something not to be trusted.

“The only way around this dissembling is for the people to be eternally vigilant, to stay involved as though their life depended upon that involvement. There can be no other way.”

“I suppose what you say has always been true. Because we have allowed representative government to become a charisma, a celebrity thing, like democracy itself, a bunch of slogans without any merit, any beef, as the man once said, we have ceded our basic right, to hot air. We do not have a leg to stand upon; we have no claim to equity fairness and justice because we have not been involved.”

“It would seem so. And it would seem it will be a long road back to something we all cherish in our hearts. Those in power will do everything to place obstacles in the way. They will use their power to destroy the little freedom we still do possess. Even if you are squeaky clean, they will find a way of soiling you, should you speak your mind, should you even catalogue, from the public record, their failures, their usurpations, their unprincipled behavior; holding the mirror up to them; they will smash the mirror and dump shit all over you. The truth is anathema to them.

“Yes!, that is how bad it has become. We are barely holding on to the tenets of human decency.”

“Wow!, sis, hard words; Frightening!”

“I sincerely wish it was otherwise. The words wax, the action wanes.”

“If I may interject, I think of you three graces as the epitome of something desperately needed. You are involved in the best ways possible. Doers, all three. All incredibly decent.

“While I say this I recall our discussion in an earlier tome of the distinction between Toni Smith and Jessica Lynch, by their actions, both claiming a fulfillment of a patriotic duty; the one dissenting, the other on the front lines; philosophically, the two essentially opposed; antithetic.

“In the light of all that has happened and is happening, how do we regard each now? Any differently? The one vindicated, the other misled; and exploited?”

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Mr. D., I think our discussion, then, still stands. What we might add is that the two are still alive. What further they do with their lives remains in the future. Perhaps we will never hear from them again as they slip into the mainstream of life and the living, as did the Vietnam protestors. Some publisher and/or ghost writer might approach each. Perhaps Jessica will appear on the silver screen as a heroine on some mythical battlefield. She might appear as some more ordinary pretty girl who fulfills some saccharine role in our dreamy American cast.

“That the two would join forces to point the way to human decency in all things, that is the highest hope. But once again I fear the lapse; do not expect the vindication of the one, or the shame of the other.

“Mr. D. when you spoke of your involvement during the Korean War, it was as fodder in an embroilment between two ideologies testing their hegemony on another’s soil, all the while HUAC and the McCarthy Hearings were taking place at home. The picture painted is poignant with futility and waste. After all the centuries, after the horror of the most devastating war only ended five years earlier, it had begun again between previous allies – only five years. Then to have that blown up into red-baiting, not too differently than our preoccupations (terrorism) that have made cause for the PATRIOT act and Homeland Security.”

“Does make you wonder, doesn’t it?”

“Wonder!, Mr. D., Wonder!?”

“Perhaps it was as simple as the our old prez indicated, ‘Beware the military industrial complex’. Too much hardware, too much money involved in the manufacture of the stuff, got to be used, the pork barreling, log rolling. A lot we don’t know. A lot of bad guys out there, got to keep hammering them.

“Maybe it took a while with MAD, and a few lucky breaks, or a few natural enough fears that prevented something awful from happening. Joe Stalin was a worthy opponent for Harry and Ike.

“Each side had to build up their store of dread before they could go after each other. The Cuban Missile Crisis was a bit of derring-do that might have backfired. Fortunately the Space Race and the Olympic Gymnasts, Runners, High Jumpers, and Skaters were giving some satisfaction to one of the players. Meanwhile the ‘fallout’ was catching up with the players. MAD had received a setback when Strontium 90 was found in cows’ milk in the Midwest.

“Glaring at each other, one no better then the other. The Space Race and the Olympics offered some relief, the latter, itself, relieved through an occasional killing or boycott.

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“There were those of us who couldn’t see much difference between the antagonists. Human life was bought cheaply on both sides. The Soviet Union made its gains without shedding its own blood, until they ran amok in Afghanistan; their Vietnam. Then along came Gorbachev, while we were producing some dumbass like Reagan and Bush; Bitburg, and we knocked down the wall, followed by Read My lips, The Peace Dividend, and Jump Start the Economy.

“Maybe there is an undercurrent of the innately good that surfaces from time to time. What do I mean by ‘good’. Do I mean ‘sensibility’? Do we become weary from the constant strain of the conflict; whereupon something else takes over?”

“Mr. D., one supposes you might be right. But we want something more reliable, and more predictable, don’t we?”

“There’s something else which has not been mentioned, but perhaps implied in all we say. Besides being involved, let’s say, by voting, by keeping tabs on our representatives, practicing that eternal vigilance, must we not also be informed, must we not know what our constitution states explicitly, must we not know and understand fully what the issues are that confront us? Must we not have a dialogue with our leaders so that we will know; and will be in a position to render an informed consent or dissent.

“If a prez or his or her administration (sycophants and minions) is to hide behind National Security in all things, keeping us in ignorance, restricting our freedoms, invading our privacy, what can be said of such feudal government; that we do not need it?”

“Damn it, I want to know everything there is to know so I can give an informed consent or dissent. Consent of the governed!!??”

“But what of ignorance, Mr. D.? One needs to care enough to become informed. Most people live by their prejudices, their gut feelings. I suppose our leaders are partly responsible for this, they so often dissemble, equivocate, temporize, foment, and outright lie. Whatever link might have existed in a trusting relationship with government, government has exploited in its desire for power, for control, for dominance.

“If one does not believe in his government, what then? Even the most educated come away shaking their heads.”

“At this date we are hearing the charismas yaking the yak, Hillary and Obama. Giuliani; and now Gore again with the prize under his belt. What do we know of them, their secrets, their hidden agendas? Their compromises, their trade-offs, their political moves? Do we have to have political animals; people playing games? NO!!! NO!!! NO!!!.

“I want to see these people walking about in the nude!!.”

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“Novel! Mr. D., Novel! Perhaps that is the solution. Nothing hidden. All revealed. A requirement for public officials to let it all hang out. Yes!, a very good good idea, Brilliant, in fact. The best idea yet. I know it would make a huge difference. Such simplicity in thought; it has to work. Hillary stripped. Obama swinging it. And Mr. Gore, as he is now known, exhibiting, on his ample belly, his ecological tattoo.

“Hah!, Mr. D., then for what would we be voting? The broad with the best figure and the biggest tits. The dude with the best physique and the biggest dong, or the plump Nobel laureate?”

“I like the perspective you create. Perhaps if we could remove the blatancy of everything but tits and dongs, things would assume their true place in the affairs of mankind. Lets get down to the ‘bare’ facts. Then when they open their mouth to speak, and wave their arms to gesticulate, we might be amused by what else is happening.

“Do we assume a different kind of rhetoric? One rendered by self-consciousness? Are my tits shapely enough; how’s my ass look in this position? Is my dong really dinging, getting the point across. Geezz, I’m so excited, does it show?”

“Mr. D.; I know what you and Lydia are suggesting merits a good deal of thought. But I doubt our laws and system of values would permit such exposure, whether or not it founded the only basis for truth. Truth be damned, it’s a circus full of high wire acts, full of tricks and deception. We want to be able to dig into a person’s underwear, for the scandal. If one does not wear underwear, what recourse do we have to shame those who are not fit for the job. That is, those with the biggest tits and biggest prick, or the pugiest pudge might not have any brains. Then what?”

“Back to square one, Catherine.”

“So, we accept the status quo?”

“A benevolent dictator might seize power.”

“Not a chance Mr. D.. Anyone with an ounce of benevolence could not succeed. Only the brutal have such capability. As you know, we have very narrowly escaped a takeover by a really mean and dumb SOB.”

“Perhaps he wasn’t mean enough; not enough tenacity once you are on Prozac. They say he’s on something. They say he reads Camus, searching for more of the kind if enlightenment found in ‘all the people do is fornicate and read newspapers’. They also say, with all his accumulated failures, he’s hitting the bottle again.”

“One supposes there is some value to the Second Amendment. The people do have equalizers. For all the bad associated with the amendment, it is a safety valve for the masses when the idiots reign supreme. Prozac does not guarantee rationality, only a subduing

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effect; some restraint with regard to profanity in public; one exclaims: 'Gentlemen Of The Press', instead of 'Motherfuckers'."

"You know, Mr. D., while this conversation seems the most absurd and ridiculous, it might just be the most fruitful. After all the high-minded stuff we imagine language will provide, all the call to humanity and human decency; maybe we have been on the wrong tack in all of this.

"Instead of trying to improve the beast, which may not be improvable, acknowledge the beast for what it is; which many of us only pretend to do, because we dupe ourselves into believing in something that cannot exist. Believing in some ideal seems easier than dealing with reality."

"You have hit upon it sweet one."

"Mr. D., where do you suppose the pursuit of an ideal comes from?"

"Let's think for a moment about a more pragmatic approach and where it has brought us. Take the Golden Rule for example. On the face of it, the implication is simple and clear. But it does require sentience. One needs to be aware of the presence of the other; but even more, aware of him, or her, self.

"One cannot shoulder his way through the crowd if he is to observe the tenet.

"Being realists, we know that some people are not bound by any tenet that proves inconvenient to them, even though they might be compromised by such an attitude. They take the risk they can escape accountability.

"What do we do with these risk takers? These ones who bring such calamity to our societal covenant, who wreak havoc upon our civility?"

"Why isn't the Golden Rule good enough?"

"Catherine, I think you have answered your own question. Some of us, or some of them, are not about to be bound by something that prevents them from being who or what they are; the beast!"

"Then we require the enforcer."

"A balance of forces, equalizers, obversions of the Rule. A preemptive Do unto others before do unto you; not, 'Do as you would be done by' or as Matthew put it, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law of the prophet'. We know who was the prophet. The Lamb, amongst the beasts.

"Turning the other cheek got mixed up in the argument. Only two cheeks however. A forced error."

"An armed camp, Mr. D.?"

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“It would appear so, lovely one. How say you, ‘fatefully inevitable’.

“Can we pursue ideals in such an environment? ‘What environment?’, one might ask.

“It seems we must, perhaps as a challenge. Can we do better than this ruinous standoff?

“Lydia can tell us about the effects of the pragmatic. Those with means and influence pervert, subvert, the system.”

“I’m not sure what you mean, exactly, Mr. D., but indeed, if you are implying the dallying with the swiftness and sureness of justice, as both, measured punishment, and deterrent to those most in need of them; Yes!, the system is being, and, has been corrupted.

“Our First Amendment suffers some hard knocks when this kind of activity is permitted, when it should be censored. But the First frowns upon censorship.

“Not unlike the Second which does not address the lunatic fringe, whether in the form of presidents, or the malcontents.”

“Wait a minute Lydia, you skipped over something here. What about that whoring entertainment industry? Should it be involved in promoting morality, when its true objective is the acquisition of capital? Is not the R rated the route to success? Our tinkering with morality, to the detriment of our objective?

“Lucrative prospects, like currency trading, rentals and leases, gambling in the stock market, outsider trading. What be your proclivity? As long as its legal?”

“Mr. D., there is a nasty slant to your disquisition. But agreed, it is legal. As much as it is their choice to entertain us for the profit motive, it is our choice to deny them their profit, should we so choose.

“It seems certain if we were to be entertained by morality plays, they would not generate a profit. We would be bored with morality. We are more entertained when we can identify with someone who flaunts morality and gets away with it. Is that not so?”

“Seems we are ‘intrigued’ by dubious possibilities.”

“Imagine Mr. D., you and your paramour upon the marquee.”

“I have, even more crudely, as a property of the First Amendment; Everybody’s Right To Know. Know What?!”

“What is it about our interest in prurience, and our shame that follows?”

“Mr. D., do you consider your relationship prurient?”

“Holy Christ, how can you ask such a question?”

“Mr. D. lets remain objective. Do you feel shame?”

“Lydia, what I feel is a love for a person, someone I could not have imagined becoming a reality.

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“Yes!, I have imagined relationships, relationships with the opposite sex, in a dreamy cast. Dreams that fade to be supplanted by others. Sometimes with starlets, other times, someone I might meet on a walk in the park. Never anyone so real as Catherine; who still astounds me, by the way; requiring her voice, her reassurance, that reality is as it seems.

“The same could be said of her two sisters.

“Yes!, to the reader, a crock, so improbable, a deficient prurient, perhaps pubescent, underdevelopment. A pedophile, something sinister dark and black. With a very warped and limited imagination.

“Hormones gone off the track into the gutter.

“So, I have come upon a young beautiful female alter ego, an anima; what nicer thing might I do? I have amplified her with sisters, anointed as Three Graces; how lascivious can one get?.

“As I had explained in the beginning of the original tome, one needs to start somewhere.

“I have not abandoned the denouement. As I abandon something glum in the reality of the moment; an unrelenting struggle with the tediousness of filling time; all, so I will be able to say at the end of the road that I do not have any regrets.

“Catherine will not become a regret, as might have those moments frittered on something, or someone, else.

“I must live by, and die by that time so occupied, what others might view as squandered in, and remaindered into, drivel.

“One’s ego must be able to withstand such judgment. Else, not an easy passing.

“In real life, wondrous it would be if the ministering angel was one such as thee.”

Lydia takes up the baton. “Since I am part of the script, an invention who would never have seen the light of day were it not for some wayward author, whiling away. fighting off his demons, by devising such as me; I am thankful. I know from this reality that you devise, that no one has a monopoly on any part of that reality.

“The credibility is tested easily enough, as one would touch a rock, we lack substance. But what do we know of a rock in any case. Do we not imagine so much about the rock? Do rocks not appear in dreams, only imagining their tactility? As we dream we sense without sensation; only a recalling of eons of recallings of substance; all transient in any case. St Christopher, that disenthroned one lies close to our breast, prayer is formed by our lips; a rabbit’s foot hangs from our hip, your Knotted Twine, Green Shirt; fie fie fo fum, incants the powers that be, to allow safe passage. We seek more than safety, do we not; an assured arrival?

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“Once we grow accustomed to the safety, our thoughts lose a certain preoccupation, they wander to other parts of our natures, our beings, unexplored parts, parts that remonstrate regret in their lack of fulfillment.

“Yes!, we might engage in childish, or childlike fantasies, fairy tale romances, Potterings, that not only children find entrancing. That great unfilled part of each of us, living in a world of unknowns and a world of restraints, restraints imposed upon us so others are at liberty to fulfill their fantasies.”

“Lydia, you amaze me.”

“What!?, you thought I might be as straight as an arrow? That I would find restraint a necessity against our wilder emanations?”

“Yes I seem to favor something here, but when the three of us were together in our little conspiratorial huddles, we thought of everything bad that one could do. We were revolutionaries, we were anarchists, we were do gooders, we were also people who satisfied our appetites. We were very naughty in our thoughts. But we lived differently than what we might think.

“We feared rebuke. We also lacked courage.

“We were chastised when we made provocative statements, when we challenged authority. Each upbraiding placed another chain upon our thought; we wanted to be loved, not for what we were, but for how we conformed.”

“Now look at you. Openly unfettered in your thought.”

“Mr. D., present company allows the wilder emanations. One needs to air these doubts that haunt one, as the opportunities present themselves. I do feel comfortable in this gathering.

“Its not to flaunt something, its to express something that seems stillborn; at least unexplored. One cannot explore something if he or she continually corrals his or her self behind doubt and fear.”

Lydia speaking: “Mr. D., in a back-handed way, there is hope. We, we who are in a position to do so, have stirred, have trampled the ground flat, filling the air with discussion and harangue regarding how a developed civilized nation should conduct itself. Homo sapiens has failed on so many fronts; mostly because of those individuals who want to be in control. Eventually the people tire of the rhetoric used to justify failure; so they, the people, those that will, and those that can, mind you, vote for a change, a new rhetoric, a new hope.

“So, yes! there might be said to exist a hope in changing the faces. But those who newly arrive on the scene do not really come with hopeful solutions, more a possibility of choosing a slightly different way than what preceded them, and when the opportunity arises, to

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remedy some of the damage done. The basic system doesn't change. Those who represent us still come from the same milieu, dare I assay, the Least Common Denominator? On the individual level, where a commitment might be required, as much as 'man' would like something better for himself, he is very resistant to change, suspicious and untrusting of the unknown.

"Opportunities arise when legislative action clearly addresses a problem.

"Representative government, as we choose to describe it, is a slow process, for you and I. The Executive, especially the Executive that wants to operate outside the will of the people, has all the moves. We the people cannot counter these moves in any timely manner. We become disenfranchised as citizens, immediately.

"The 'rally around the president' stuff leads us away from ourselves down the road to unknowns about which we can do nothing. Everything we are becomes squandered in lost causes, lost, because they do not spring from us, they do not have our energy to give them force. We become reactionaries. We fail.

"Our representatives fail us, simply because they are not us. They are somewhere out there in this strange world of tradeoffs, of so-called compromises. Their principles, if they have ever been guided by any, get hammered with the rhetoric of compromise, and the appearance of doing something; flag-waving if nothing else. That's our 'democracy at work', *they* are led to believe.

"In a different world, things might be different.

"We have two contiguous neighbors, Canada, and Mexico. It is fortunate for us these are not aggressive nations. Our borders are not particularly threatened. We do not show our neighbors a proper regard. We do not treat them as equals. They are free nations because we allow them to be, but they feel like subjects anyway, because of the way we treat them. We tend to exploit them, use them. When they act independently of us, we shoulder and elbow them with one thing or another.

"The different world I might envision would begin by changing our attitude toward our neighbors. I would curtail the power of the executive; return it to the people. If the 'consent of the governed' is to have any meaning, we must do this one thing. We must reclaim what is ours by right. A free nation, a democratic nation, is not one that allows the usurpation of the individual right through executive fiat. The power to remove the executive must be retained, and retained with some expediency.

"We are expected to revere the office of 'president'. Perhaps we expect too much of the executive, but he or she becomes whatever we expect of ourselves. If we appear not to care, then we make ourselves

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vulnerable to takeover. This must not be allowed to happen. It does happen, it is happening.

“We cannot, I repeat, we cannot, allow certain things to happen without our say-so. Every time we allow something to happen without our say-so, we live to regret our lack of participation. It may only seem that our participation is precluded. It may only seem we are not adequately informed. Free is free, not something doled out to us when somebody gets around to it. Secrecy in government cannot be allowed. Skullduggery, Wag The Dog bullshit may be fine as entertainment, but it is not a reality to which we should expose ourselves. We must know everything, firsthand, if we are to grant an informed consent. We cannot allow the cynical bastards who run our country to feel they can walk all over us. They must be held accountable for every decision, every action; as must we. It is in our interest to make those guys toe the mark. Otherwise we get into the position of having to be humiliated by such crap as: *‘As we know there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don’t know we don’t know’.*

“When I heard this last, I became enraged that this once great nation, this bastion of democracy, could produce such claptrap, such a contemptuous harangue of its citizenry.”

“Yes Lydia, I come to that feeling again, ‘what is missing?’ feeling. Catherine, Theresa and I have pondered this ‘missingness’. When attempting to obtain a grasp of the meaning of ‘civilization, we have brought Y Gasset into our discussions: (Teleprompter)

*‘ ..... What is most valuable in man is his eternal and almost divine discontent, which is a kind of love without a beloved, and like an ache we feel in members of our body that we do not have. Man is the only being that misses what he has never had. And the whole of what we miss, without ever having had it, is never what we call happiness. .... man (is) the only being who is unhappy, for the very reason he needs to be happy. That is because he needs to be what he is not.’*

“If we ever achieve this thing we have never had, will we recognize it; and if we do, will we grasp it firmly, defend it to the death?”

“Suppose the guy who uttered those contemptuous words had instead spoken to us as Y Gasset might have, would you have felt differently about what was being said?”

“Mr. D., this question is a non-sequitur. These individuals are in different leagues. Y Gasset would never pervert language; never use it

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to put us down, to obscure the truth, to attempt to inform us of our ignorance with such bad taste. A class act, Mr. D.

“In a way, they might be alike, if we did not make the effort to do our part, to know the difference. We might attune ourselves to this ‘missingness’, of which you speak. We might prepare ourselves for the inevitability of knowing what that ‘missingness’ is, or was.

“Is there something out there that is for the taking? If we would only discover it? Is it right under our noses?

“Are we to assume that man is not what he needs to be? To be what - Happy?

“Does the question elicit or infer any kind of clue as to what it means to be happy?”

“Yes! there is helluva big difference between the politician covering up his tracks, and the philosopher trying to find his. The gross inhumanity of the one would overwhelm the other.

“Dismissing the one as irrelevant, the question persists, regardless. If the ‘missingness’ is a yet unexperienced ‘happiness’ is it inevitable that we will never experience it? In this quandary, is there a matter of degree? Did not Alfred North Whitehead intimate that we had *missed* a great opportunity?

“Suppose our human civilization finally achieved certain goals, like removing all the foils to peaceful coexistence, namely religious and racial intolerance, national boundaries, xenophobia, non-assimilation, ideological persuasions, tribalism, degrees of wealth, all conditions that would isolate us from each other, that would establish hierarchies, or emphasize differences, that resulted in class distinctions, castes, stratifications, dominations. Suppose it should happen that all these obstacles were removed, would not our awareness of impermanence make us unhappy? Would we not long for eternal life? All the more reason to desire it, if we created the perfect social condition.”

“Yes! Mr. D., a matter of degree. We might be better able to cope with the last bit of unhappiness if we were truly all in this together. Some part of our concern forms a doubtful equation. Our awareness, which must become acute, in order to establish the first condition, would test our understanding of life, especially when it seemed to come to naught through dying. Why bother?

“We argue too far a field now in this discussion. I would like to concentrate on the ‘missingness’, without declaring that it might be ‘happiness’ that is missing. Unless we want to drive the impossibly hard bargain, whereupon we have achieved everything but eternal life, leaving the last as a precondition for accomplishing the rest.

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“In any event we cannot escape what ‘we’ must do. I want to say the ‘all’ must do. I know there are those amongst us now, who cannot be trusted to represent us. Mostly because they do not see us; they see only their agenda. It might be alright to have an agenda, but I argue it must not be something secret. Its OK if it’s a secret on someone else’s time, in someone else’s life and someone else’s space. But if it is in my space with my life, on my time, then I need to be involved, as is my right. Simply put, no one, not any one has a right to my life.

“Missingness’. What is the opposite to this expression? A feeling of purpose? A feeling of direction? Stasis without end? Fillingness? What did Whitehead envision?”

“Lydia, I am mindful of what a middle aged woman told me of her youth, of living in a distant republic of the USSR, when that Union was still intact. As a youth she felt secure under the umbrella of ‘socialism’. What I noted immediately was the choice of words. not ‘communism’, but ‘socialism’. To us it will be noted the USSR was regarded as ‘Communist’. ‘Communism’ was bad. It was not bad, it was different. But it was not communism anyway, it was socialism. It was not the Union of Soviet Communist Republics, but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. To me there is a difference, there has always been a difference. The one represents an ideology, the other a ‘way of life’. The woman who was describing her youth felt safe and secure in Kazakhstan. Brehznev came from Kazakhstan. To her there was a somewhat personal link. She did not question her circumstances; she did not indicate that anything was missing. She felt a ‘cradle to grave’ security. One day I need to ask her about the propaganda concerning the ‘capitalistic’ West.

“To continue. When Gorbachev came along with ‘perestroika’ and ‘glasnost’, she agreed with the sentiments that he was putting forth, but felt there was an open-ended undeclared something to this way of thinking. It made her feel insecure. There was no direction. It was unsettling because it was formative and its destiny unknown.

“She made a few comparisons, one in particular involved health care; she spoke of the prevalence and sufficiency of clinics operated by the state which treated everyone equally. She spoke of the apartment style living of her people; those with more means having a ‘dacha’ in the country. She spoke of a very controlled economy, but also of a sufficiency of the essentials provided by the state. When the change came the economic activity changed to individuals assuming the responsibility for their own welfare. A huge change, which brought with it a feeling of insecurity. But her province held great wealth in oil reserves that the state had not exploited. She mentioned that

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nowadays, the medical needs of the people are met through private enterprise, that everyone yearns to have a single family home in the country. That people bring whatever they produce to a market for sale or trade. The state is no longer involved in assuring each of a safe and secure future. Its basically each and everyone out for him or her self. The word 'capitalism' was used to describe what was happening. She clearly preferred 'socialism'. She now lives on an island in Canada. Her husband is a 'capitalist' he makes his way through 'Internet trading'.

"She also spoke of her youth as a member of the 'Komsomol', the preliminary step before becoming a member of the 'communist' party. One supposes the party to be the political arm of the state. That which must exist to maintain order, and control, within the state.

"Does one submit to 'Big Brother', if Big Brother' supplies and meets our basic needs? Does one question his modus operandi? Was it anywhere near what Orwell described in 1984?

"In the 'capitalistic', 'free enterprise' 'West', we have been taught that her life was missing something; whereas she felt nothing essential was missing. Did she feel anything was missing? Was she unhappy? Was she any more aware of 'Big Brother' than we are of the Secretary of Homeland Security?"

This rap was interrupted by a deedlede deedeede dedeedle of the phone. Mr. D. answered.

"Ah, Ha!, the lovely one is curious about what is happening here. We are missing you.

"I am getting to know your other sister.

"Catherine is doing very well.

"Yes!, it is about time you came.

"So, we'll be seeing you shortly.

"I'll give you to Catherine."

"Theresa; for you."

Catherine speaking: "Hello Sweetheart. Do I gather that you will be coming soon?"

"Yes! it has been a real treat to have her here; but we miss you in our discussions.

"Yes, Mr.D and Lydia are doing well; it's been good for both of them.

"That'll be wonderful; we'll talk about things when you get here.

"Lyd, Tess wants to say hello."

Catherine passes the phone to Lydia.

"Hello sis. We miss you here.

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"Yes, its been a good time for me, very good time. But it will not be a complete success until you come.

"So we'll see you when you get here; in a couple of days, you say? Lots of love from all of us; definitely looking forward to your arrival.

"Bye, love."

"Great, Tess will be coming."

"Yes! she sounded lonely. She knows we are here together, so probably feels deprived. She needs cheering up.

"See what you got us into Mr. D."

"Me, what do you mean? It seems to me you are the culprit, if there is a culprit."

"Mr. D., we are all in this together. I meant that, by coming into our lives, you have enriched us beyond the pale."

"That's laying it on pretty thick. It seems to me that you were the bait, with your sweet endearing ways; you lured me into this complicated life."

"Complicated?"

"Can you imagine how dull and uncomplicated my life would have been if I had not met you?"

"Mr. D. I do not wish to be regarded as a complication."

"I think we are getting into a silly discussion.

"My life is enriched beyond the pale. The complications arising therefrom pass mostly unnoticed. But you cannot deny that our pursuit of this togetherness has led to a lot of running around, in search of something as yet unquantified.

"You must realize that all three of you are just entering life, whereas I have pretty much left it behind me, grumbling about where I have been, and what I have found.

"I have been forced to take stock of myself; an accounting, as it were; what have I done? I have been forced to take responsibility for my opinions about things; I have lost the luxury of being a hard-assed cynic. I don't say that is a bad thing, but I am being enchanted by a beauteous object that clouds and biases my judgment."

"Who is overdoing it now? I may have inadvertently challenged you in areas where you have been remiss, simply because you didn't give a damn; even if there was no reason to give a damn. If my beauteousness has caused some improvement in your outlook, that has to be a plus. It makes me feel that my life with you has had some meaning; that is, beyond the mutual admiration, and the touchy-feely stuff."

"Thank the gods for small favors."

"Mr. D., believe me, I am not a small favor."

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"Hey!, you two, what are you trying to say to each other?"

"Forgive my rankling Lydia. Its like Catherine has said; I am afraid of happiness. It is not a natural state for me; I do not trust such equanimeous dispensation, so I get testy. And I hurt everyone in the process, perhaps myself, most of all."

"Mr. D., you'll not get any sympathy from me. By all appearances, you are an adult, so adult behavior us expected."

"I don't think you can make any assumptions about adults, and expected adult behavior."

"Mr. D., after hearing you talk, I cannot do anything but regard you as an adult; I might add, as a particularly acute adult, who should know better. I cannot make allowances for those who say they don't give a damn. Perhaps all the more reason to condemn them. Giving a damn is what our family is all about. We take that seriously."

"Lydia, that puts me in my place."

"Better you, than me."

"There are those of us who cannot help but be who we are. Early in life, we are shaped by forces beyond our control. This may sound like blaming. But the reality is such that our coping, adapting and adjusting is colored by our experience. We may be told how we should behave in every case, but in order to do as instructed, one must believe in the validity of the proposition; there needs to be a rational and plausible component. If one's leaders, parents, teachers, peers, seem arbitrary, which is often true, then the whole project fails. If one possesses the perspicacity and the aplomb, he might shrug his shoulders, simply dismissing anything that smacks of arbitrariness, double-dealing, equivocation, hypocrisy. It takes a tall man, and a thick skin to come out whole."

"Has it been so bad, Mr. D.?"

"Your question mocks the experience."

"I was little, I did not have a thick hide. Perhaps there are some that would be better off not born; or, as soon as birthed, heaved into the bottomless canyon. Because, if they live, they become the festering malcontents that spread doom over human society. They feel something awful is afoot in our midst. They live with their paranoia, unhappily. As much as they try, they cannot assuage the missingness, the certainty that they do not belong. Their senses are overwhelmed by the noise and clamor of civilization. They cannot, simply cannot respond, they are out of place and out of time. They truly do not belong. They sense this acutely many times during each day. Besides not belonging, they cannot relate, they can find nothing to which they are able to relate; they have no desire to relate to what they sense as the hollowness of human society, the surface emanations of civilization."

## *On The Road To Civilization*

"I am trying to understand what you are saying. You feel strongly that you are remote from your fellow man. You feel you have been disengaged, or estranged from birth."

"Yes, that is pretty much what I feel."

"A life in isolation?"

"That too, with a few moderating exceptions. At this point in time, Catherine alleviates the solitariness. In the past my wife made my sojourn amongst the many more possible. But it became a burden to her, as I am sure it does, to your sister."

"Yes, a veritable sourpuss, always harping on the worst."

"For good or ill, our historical record is accessible to us. Catherine and I often refer to Ortega Y Gasset in our discussions. Ortega made the observation that, with the fall of the aristocracy, the common man became a freer entity, elevated, as it was. Perhaps that is true on the face of it, but also free to run amok, and free to be enslaved by government acting in collusion with corporations. Catherine and I do not often refer to George Wilhelm Hegel, but to quote his famous statement regarding human history; that all one sees is ruins. Hegel was around long enough to witness the havoc caused by Napoleon; perhaps that was the precipitant to his negative appraisal. It was most likely true he knew enough of history to realize that Napoleon was just another manifestation of something perhaps inherent to all of life. Imagine what he would have had to say after World Wars I and II, followed by the incessant carnage ever since. In his day there were no international agreements concerning how man should conduct his wars. Today, with all the fine rhetoric, and the impotence of the stuffed shirts at the UN, we seem more barbaric than ever, certainly no more human, rhetorically speaking."

"Well, yes, it might seem one dwells too much on the negative, seeking an easy out for condemnation of the species. If we try to lighten the dialogue, we might encounter Sigmund Freud, who, underneath it all, didn't hold out much hope for the species. Hope is a luxury in the affairs of homo sapiens."

"Why not look upon the good, seeking out the positive?"

"If I attempt to answer that question, I soon gravitate to the negative. Am I doing so because of my own black insides, or do the observations, of their own, lead in that direction? The basic observations almost always elicit the same self-evident questions. I cannot escape this state of affairs; that is, I cannot argue for one proposition, when confronted with the evidence of its improbability, that is, the certainty of the opposite's probability."

Touching him on the arm, empathetically, Catherine interjects. "Mr. D., I think you have said enough for now; after being with you for

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some while now, I believe I know where you are coming from. As much as I want to disagree with you, I am now cautioned not to assume anything, especially about our presumed ascendancy, and our civilization. I know you feel that something is drastically wrong, requiring drastic measures to get us on track. I am inclined to agree. But maybe the drasticness is not real, maybe it is only our assumptions and our expectations that lead us to wrong conclusions.

"I don't believe your upbringing needs to be singled out as the cause of your appraisal of the world. The world is what it is. I think your concept of Holding Action addresses the situation perfectly. Your reiteration of, 'It is ours to do with', is appropriate. Yes!, and we need to do a good job of it. Perhaps your early upbringing cast your soul into a state from which you will never recover. But I know you to have been happy, and that you will be happy again. Maybe you will never be happy concerning what you observe of human society. You know that society to be what it is. Most of what we do to live our lives, is accomplished outside that society, as it must be.

"I have not thought of you as a burden. As you and the author have speculated, I am an apposite, a sounding board. However, I do not feel relegated to a lesser position, an echo, so to speak. I feel I have been given opportunity to argue my case; perhaps naive in the beginning, but now more apt to see things as they are.

"I believe we are attempting to be constructive, even with so undependable a building material as the human clay."

Lydia speaks. "Mr. D., and Catherine, I am sorry I pulled so hard on the bit. Perhaps I was trying too hard to find a chink in Mr. D's armor. It almost seems malicious on my part. I realize this attitude comes from my deep resentment of those who are forever tearing down what we are trying to build."

"The doomsayers, the prophets, the Cassandras, the naysayers, are unwelcome, whether proven right or wrong.

"The anarchist is unwelcome, whether right or wrong. The non-conformist is unwelcome. The cynic is unwelcome. Anyone who awakens us, awakens and challenges our conscience is unwelcome. The more righteous, the more egocentric, the true believers, are unnerved by the presence of the shit disturber, the one who is pointing out our lacks and our failings, the one who questions the assumptions.

"I travel in the company of those who disturb; and yes, my early life predisposed me to be this way, yes perhaps inescapably. I am the moron who is trying to prove that he knows better, that, at least, he was always right in his feelings, in his intuition. Truly, a lonely schizoid path. An awkward presence in Paradise. Do I have a place in the landscape? Does Toni Smith have a place?"

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"Once again, I recall the image of the man on the highway overpass, in Paris, Texas, looking upon the stream of humanity rolling beneath him, gesticulating wildly, shouting, 'I warned you, I warned you'; the epitome of prescience, and impotence."

"Mr. D., let us forget this for the while; let us sit upon the bluff, looking out upon the eternal element, allowing it to sooth us in our over-inflated concerns. It is clear, we are too important to ourselves. We are completely irrelevant in the larger scheme of things. Let us take the time to bask in our irrelevance."

"Well said, love."

"Would you like to join us, sis?"

"I would prefer not to be deprived of the amenities; I'll condescend to join you."

"Dearest sister, please don't push the envelope. Mr. D. is important to me. I have abandoned him once already; I do not intend to do so again. You, of all people, who are most capable of enlightened conversation, should not wrangle with Mr. D.. Ideas are of import; petty considerations are not.

"I realize Mr. D. cuts to the chase long before others; he has cut me off in my arguments where I project too much Idealism. He wants everything founded in the hard realities. He gives more of a damn than he lets on. We need to realize that he is attuned to something that we are, only peripherally. To him, there is a direness to reality with which we do not deal in our thinking. While he faces reality as he does, he wishes what he senses was otherwise. We have discussed at length that it may all be a trick of the mind that we do not do what we ought. While the rationale exists that we ought to do something, we find excuses for not doing things NOW, or we leave it to others; all because it requires so much effort to overcome the inertia of ever having done anything so daring as to be vigilant, to be our own keeper, our own representative. He questions whether any of us has the right to speak, if all we do is wave the flag as a righteous shield.

"And further, one of the more remarkable things about Mr. D. is his awareness of transience, and how that affects his thinking. We can learn a great deal from his approach. It changes the whole complexion of reality, especially about the things we assume and the things we expect. In a constantly changing world, changing because man is a furtive animal, and changing because that is what we get in a finite unfixed world, we can assume little, and expect even less."

"The saying goes, 'We shall overcome'.

"To me, there are no excuses for dereliction.

"Awareness of 'transience' as you put it, as an intellectual construct, seems too much like a convenient cop-out."

## *On The Road To Civilization*

"Lydia, this is intended as a friendly place. I'll assume for the sake of argument that your jibes are merely the work of a devil's advocate, that there is no real malice intended."

"Malice enough. However friendly the environment, I feel called upon to defend myself."

"Lydia, there is no need to do so. You are so well received and welcomed, as a sister to a wonderful person, as an enchantingly lovely, and intelligent person in her own right, and as one who brings precision, a sharpened point of view, into the dialogue.

"Yes, we give credence to 'transience', not as a dodge to more responsible thinking, but as a plausible explanation for the uncertainties we feel.

"If Theresa was here, she would chide us for our stubbornness, our unwarranted tenacity, our tempest in a teapot. And most importantly, with a most gleeful and enthusiastic delivery, she would offer a spontaneous, unbiased, perception of our dilemmas; and she would sweetly infuse questions concerning the dilutions brought about by quarrelsomeness."

Thus the arguments lingered, auguring for an escape from the gathering impasse.

The author realizes he may need to strike the last series of words between the protagonists because they may seem inconsistent in their character delineations. That's a mouthful.

Samuel Clemens might simply lose interest in the characters, and not write another word regarding them, leaving the reader high and dry.