

V

Apropos Of Nothing

V I E T N A M

Yellow Dominos

Death Before Dis**h n r**?
Make Love, Not War.
A Shambles.

We wait for better times. Often they never arrive.
We must think upon this thing before it gets away from us.
A memoriam.
Written after the event was swept under the Rug by Kissass With **H n r**.

**Where did it all begin?
And When will it all end?**

Man, you know what man is. Or don't you know what man is?
Man is a colonizer. That is, he wants what the other guy has got. In addition, he enslaves; that is, he gets somebody else to breathe for him. If man could, he would do more to possess and control his surround; if only he could. Man is an exploiter, if that says it any better. Man is always seeking the advantage; maybe that is an excusable trait (fault) associated with the notions of Evolution. (Evolution may offer a better prospect, given enough time.)

For the purposes of this rant, we'll name a few of the most recent colonizers; most have come from that civilized part of the planet known as Europe; most of the nations of that planetary region have been colonizers. Even though they themselves have been invaded and overrun by the hordes, they haven't made the connection concerning the sufferings of others when they themselves make conquest. So what's so earth shaking about that?

A Few!, most of them at one time or another have colonized, even little Holland, and Denmark, Portugal, as well as the Little Unattached Islanders. Its probably easier to enumerate the ones who have not conked others.

FRANCE, that nation, whose ass the United States Of America twice rescued from the perils of war in one century alone, had the audacity (one thing the French are really good at is audacity [this is not to ignore their other qualities]). After damned near losing their ass for a very long time, they wanted their colonies returned (status quo ante) even though the colonized did not want them back (Now, that's Audacity).

In particular, in the late nineteenth century, F colonized a part of Southeast Asia, embracing what is now Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam; this wasn't their only colony.

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While their ass was being pulled from the fire for the second time, the leader of the Firemen, a savvy gent, a true believer in democracy and in peace, and a lot of other humanitarian things, FDR, was thinking ahead, wondering if there was a way of ending colonialism, that is making it possible for colonies to achieve independence and self-determination. He raised the subject with Winston and Joe. He also raised other configurations of illicit gain (conquerings and spheres of influence). When Joe discussed Poland, FDR assured him that the US of A would not go to war over Poland. Things got even more tacky when FDR asked Joe for support for the ongoing concept of an umbrella of United Nations that could be established to hopefully end war for all time. This latter is getting off the subject, but was a part of talks and negotiations (division of the spoils) as the end of WWII was nearing its end, and it was clear who would be the victors.

Joe wanted his sphere of influence to be Eastern Europe. He would support the UN idea if he was given free rein (reign) in Eastern Europe. When FDR proposed a trusteeship, comprised of China, the Philippines, France, GB, and perhaps the US of A, for Southeast Asia (The F colony), Joe thought it a good idea, whereas Winston thought it a bad idea. Joe could afford to be magnanimous, since he had other spheres that were of more immediate interest to him, whereas Winnie was afraid that what applied to Southeast Asia regarding France, might also apply to Burma, Malaysia and so on. FDR seemed to have won over Wilhelmina regarding self-determination for Indonesia (How could she really refuse after having her ass pulled from the fire?)

Then FDR died. That was that. FDR sort of got what he wanted, the United Nations in name, but with lots of double talk and equivocation; Joe got what he wanted, Winnie got what he wanted, and F got part of what they wanted. Wanting and getting is one thing, the other is Holding. The people of Southeast Asia didn't want any part of the F's. F was a long way away, so the people led by Ho Chi Minh told F. to F-off. Laos gained independence in 1953, Cambodia in 1954, and Vietnam in 1954, the latter somehow wrenched in two by the US of A, perhaps following the example of Korea, and of course, the influence of JFD, our 'yellow peril' specialist. Where was Ike in all of this?

That's where our muddled story begins.

On the one hand we are all in this long trek together; yet on the other, each of us becomes a solitary - one in five billion (then).

While within, I may be vested with some kind of Vision, there are too many things wrong in my head for me to hope to pass myself off as someone imbued with and guided by any kind of optimism. I am less and less inclined to attempt to build defenses to account for my lacks; they are too numerous; and I do not wish to squander the remainder of my valuable time building defenses for something that cannot be defended.

Thus it is I expect to be judged whether I say something or nothing,
but live in the hope that what I do say will have some effect.
(paraphrasing I.F. Stone)

My life has hopelessly gotten away from me. Already it is nearly over;
what remains treads ponderously, and precariously.

I penned something not long ago:

There is a roaring behind me.
Sometimes I think it is a train
I look around to see nothing.

It does not reveal itself to me
It does not take me into its confidence
I feel it will very soon push me down

The doppler reverberations increase in pitch
I am anxious
I know it is the roar of Time.

If you are religious, these following words will seem heretical and without purpose.

If you are young, these words will not contain much appeal; they are not forward-looking (Somehow my frame of reference has become the particular ethos of the country in which I have been engendered, a country which is reputed to fear death, wherein it seeks and pursues only youth and longevity. [We somehow manage to ignore our purported enlightenment. At this writing [During the Eighties] 'we' have 'elected' a juvenile seventy-three year old as our 'sovereign'. (As I review this writing I have attained that venerable age of 72) It is fair to state that age acquires a relativity within a narrow confinement, defined by the greatest term of longevity possible [for which we might hope]. Other factors are to be considered; e.g., during the Sixties and early Seventies if one was 'over thirty' he was not to be trusted by the burgeoning youth that lived in opposition to the indistinct civilization that had led itself down the road to glory under the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. At this writing, that same youth is now approaching, or is past forty (with this review, sixty) many believing the juvenile seventy odd year old is a 'fair' man. Whatever the arbitrary differences between youth and age, these differences most certainly become absorbed and obscured as some simple-minded fatuity within the larger cosmos. I might assent to some arguments put forth by the young, but 'you spend too much time reflecting upon life' is not one of them. And I will not accept the fact that youth 'knows it all' before it has lived it all. Part of the reflective process involves reflecting upon one's own youth - not

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sitting wholly in judgment [Do not ask me what one is able to learn from his 'mistakes']).

My life has not been conducted in a complete vacuum; I have collided with the subliminal, having thus touched upon some essence, itself in the process of purification. That is to say, I have looked beyond the raw materials of myself; I have been affected, while hopelessly resisting affectation. It is easy enough to resist certain enticements when the higher purpose, or objective, is to arrive at some semblance of 'truth' (In the Character of Tao, it is stated, in essence, that to name it [Truth] is to kill it. While this may sound a bit nebulous [a cop out], 'truths', like age perhaps, have a certain relativity, but, in addition, contain a conditional property, that, while not specifically nameable, are feelable, their feelable quality, perhaps the most relevant part, being evoked through the auspices [or magic, if you will] of 'art'. Without protracting further what has already been stated, suffice it to say that Truth does exist, perhaps mostly as a feeling, that may be revealed not in any specific way, but, nonetheless, with some surety, may be communicated from the one to the other through the auspices of some 'artistic' skill. It might be added that Truth, per se, has nothing to do with relevance, it has only to do with itself, remaining what it is, whether or not some intelligence perceives it.

I am a person who sits ensconced in a mock ivory tower. I suppose my words emerge somewhat like a sermon, while perhaps they are intended as a prayer. One does not necessarily pray to Gods, per se; one may imagine that he prays to humanity. This is the more optimistic view.

I could choose to ignore the supposed 'horrors' of mankind; even though they have made a great impression upon me; that is, they have so troubled me I have spent a good deal of my life thinking upon them, their implications, significance and deeper meanings. I have attempted to view mankind as only, or merely, another extension of nature, devoid of any connection with a partial or intervening deity; in other words, as a solitary existence, similar to all the others one is able to observe. While it suits our fancy to concoct scenarios involving the confrontation of some prehistoric beast, a la Godzilla, it is usually a singular occurrence, rather than a whole race of beasts from whom we are rescued through the combined effort of Tarzan, the big game hunters, the local Militia, the Armed Forces, and the all-knowing Scientist). It is argued that man most likely filled some ecological and/or biological niche made possible or vacated by some other unfortunate or implausible creature. In our imaginings we envision, with the passing of the age of the dinosaurs, it became possible for man (or the apes) to prosper (or to evolve). Perhaps some speculation with regard to our own seeming permanence is in order. Would you care to guess who, or what waits in the wings? And what advent will favor their appearance or favor our disappearance? A Super Nova?

Before I proceed much further, I will say I have discovered that life is not without its enchantments; I cannot say exactly why I do not concentrate on them. In no way do I assume that enchantments are a rightful expectation. I was enchanted as a child without knowing it. I had imagined that life with father, and life with the Sisters of Mercy, was rife with expectations of me, whereas I could have none of them. I had imagined I had little or no freedom to choose for myself. My movements were restricted, my thoughts were being channeled; my life was dominated by rules and ritual through the operative of fear, fear of father's physical punishment, fear of the nun's physical punishment as well as the fear of Gud which the nuns labored to instill (install) within me. The Public School System insistently purveyed the Covenants of Democracy both preceding and following the Sisters, as well as simultaneously vying with father for the dominant influence in my life. Between the Hammer and the Anvil For My Own Good.

The enchantments of the child lie precisely within those confinements; one was protected in some way that was not completely understood, which became more apparent as one was obliged to fend for himself, as he took leave of that environment. Upon leaving one was unceremoniously presented with the freedom to choose for himself. So to hell with all that B.S. about Gud, and all that heady dictum cast upon one by the father; yes, and to hell with one's bed and board. I had no desire to conquer the world; more, I was possessed by the desire to live within that protective envelope without the presence of an oppressive enforcer.

*O give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

*Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word.....*

Perhaps we have missed an opportunity somewhere along the way.

*Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
Above the fruited plain.
America, America,
God shed his light on thee,
And crown thy good,*

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*With brotherhood,
From sea to shining sea.*

Enchanting!

*My country 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride;
From every mountainside,
Let freedom ring.*

William's Father said it was a lot of hogwash. I must admit I had my doubts. Yet we sang these ditties as some kind of enthusiastic yea-saying towards something which was largely a fairy tale. When I speak of enchantment, I am speaking of something that I ascribed to my youthful circumstances - in hindsight, all of which mostly excluded the naiveté incorporated in the songs we sang as group-children.

Some will argue there is no harm done in this sing-a-long perversion of the truth.

Perhaps the Pledge of Allegiance was far more harmful.
That's how we got into the Gulf of Tonkin.

While I was singing these wondrously hopeful jingles, and hallucinating on the Pledge, my government was returning ..er.. French Indo-China to the French after that great and just war known as WW II. Ho Chi Minh was not pleased. Who gave a damn what a slant-eyed gook had to say about his nation, home, and land of enchantment? That was the beginning of a whole series of missed opportunities. Opportunity had a way of becoming folly when perceived and acted upon by the dim-witted old fogeys that ran our sweet land of liberty. The folly began to 'escalate' during the 'Sixties', as that particular period in our history has often been referred. That decade had begun with a promise, or so it was believed, by those who supported the boyish charisma that occupied the center stage of the New Frontier. The beginning of the decade also witnessed the escalating madness of atmospheric testing of the incredible megatonnage of explosive power (Trinitrotoluene equivalent) incorporated into a single "nuclear" device; it also witnessed an end to this testing when it was discovered the "fallout" from these devices followed a cycle of metamorphosis eventually materializing in cow's milk (probably in the milk of the deer and the antelope as well) (Conservation of energy and matter). We began to hear semantic

rationalizations in terms of the distinctions between tolerable and permissible levels of radioactivity in the environment, as a Benediction (absolution of guilt) from the divinity of Nucleardom, Edward Teller (the 'Scientist') and the Atomic Energy Commission. After all, the cosmos is guilty of radiation Too, So There!

Man turned his propensity for the dramatic on this larger scale to the "Space Race". Then we lost the boyish charisma; we lost M.M.; we lost M.L.K.. We moved from the New Frontier, which masked what was happening in Southeast Asia, to the Great Society. We, the Pledged constituency, allowed ourselves to be lured with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Soon we were up to our eyeballs on foreign soil involved in a nebulousness, playing Dominoes and Xenophobia under the guise of that awful dubiousness called SEATO (created by John Foster D., our 'yellow-peril' specialist). In the 'Fifties', that other preceding age that had witnessed and endured rampant McCarthyism in our sweet land of liberty, the reds and the red, white and blues tested each other's virility and vitality on the soil (the land of enchantment) of the 'niggers of the Orient'. In the Sixties the confrontations of these sanguinary entities sallied forth in the land of the (yellow) Gooks of Southeast Asia. Guns and butter in the Great Society along with bloodshed and lingering defeat; and a 'divided' nation, hardly crowning its good with brotherhood: Race Riots; 'I had a dream' - Lost!; Billions siphoned away from any kind of a Home on the Range; Jumbo Johnson, the Fall Guy. Exeunt Dumbo into a Foggy Bottom.

Still we persisted in the dismembering, where seldom is heard a discouraging word. What a farce followed! Eugene Stalking Horse, a lumbering eloquence, unhorsed the Texan, the father of the Credibility Gap and the dupe of the Iron Triangle (Broun and Route) (the glaring mention the tin, tungsten and manganese); these two were outrun by the jackal who would 'support L.B.J. all the way' (has a catchy ring to it, like:

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one nation, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.")*

Only Fate intervened, as it often does, clouding the skies, the spoils falling to the biggest Janus (H.H.H.) of them all, in that bizarre political arena of Chicago Daley. I personally knew of lifetime Democrats who voted for R.M.N., the biggest prevaricator in our history, who would not ordinarily have voted for R.M.N. if he was the last man on earth; only there was one worse, and it was he, the Betrayer of all the humane enlightenment, which had been the basis of his own political career. Perhaps it was that Pledge again, which prevents a man from abiding his own conscience (if he truly had been a man of substance). In the end the

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Racist from Alabama very nearly became the powerbroker in our dubious need for a leader. What a choice for our land of enchantment - one of the Three Stooges: A Racist, A Janus, or Tricky Dick. An odd sort of justice visited these three; the Racist got it in a parking lot, Janus got his from one of our arch-nemeses, and Tricky got pardoned and million\$ (Nirvana, the Land of Enchantment).

Yes, I was part of it all. I feel I cannot depart without a commentary. I can only strive to summon a past that had labored to overwhelm me. I cannot see into the future; I cannot predict. My whole life has been comprised of an anxiety that thought it could anticipate the future. My commentaries upon the present are always too tardy, becoming ***apropos of nothing***. What abides, but meager hindsight?

Then, as now, I was an ineffectual part. There were many who felt ineffectual. Somehow, though, despite all the factionalism in the Peace Movement (The Doves? Just a few)):

The Geneva Agreements
The Get Out of Southeast Asia Movement
Citizens for a Sane Foreign Policy
Vietnam Summer
American Friends Service Committee
Fellowship of Reconciliation
SANE
Students for a Democratic Society
The Minority of One
VIET-REPORT
National Council of Churches
Seattle Committee To End Violence in Vietnam
Americans for Democratic Action
World Without War Council
Nationwide Declaration of Conscience Concerning Vietnam
Committee of Clergy and Layman Concerned about Vietnam
Board of Social Concerns of the Methodist Church
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Presbyterian Church Declaration of Conscience
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam
United Church of Christ
UAW
National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam
Faculty Student Committee to Stop the War in Vietnam
Massachusetts Political Action for Peace
Committee of Responsibility

Promoting Enduring Peace Inc.
Committee for Non Violent Action
War Resisters League
Spring Mobilization Committee
Eugene Peace Information Center
Vietnam Day Committee
Contra Costa Citizens Against the War in Vietnam
Bay Area Peace Coordinating Committee
United Committee Against War
Peace Activist Defense
Port Chicago Defendants Committee
Negotiations Now

The Bureau of the International Conference for Solidarity with the People of Vietnam against U.S. Imperialist Aggression and For the Defense of Peace

Tally Ho!!

Somehow the sum total of this apparent ineffectualness, coupled with the immensity of the defeat, had signaled the end; the end of an embroilment, in which there was no heart and no glory - just a wearying attrition, forfeited through ignominious destruction and ignoble death.

Yes, we marched in protest; we were 'giving aid and comfort to the enemy', as the local rag editorialized, until the circulation department received a rash of cancellations, more or less obliging the Fourth Estate to eat 'Crow'. Even so, the seed had been sewn, the rag and its brethren, the self-styled righteous patriots, the proud and the mighty (scoundrels draped in the flag), the Loveits or Leaveits (the lowlifes waving it), they seized upon the theme, pointing their fingers; well, they only sort-of pointed - not directly. Once again, the Fourth Estate had perverted our 'right to know' they had maligned us; I feel certain our names were noted in the little black books. Shades of the Sedition Act. Shades of HUAC, Shades of Joe McCarthy. Yes, the 'Sixties' eventually earned another name: The Age of Paranoia.

We wrote letters upon letters to the President, to the Senators, to the Congressmen, to the Governors, to the Press; to anybody who would listen, and to those who would not. It all really happened, the protests, the marching, the campus 'riots'. Then Kent State. It was not until 1971 that a youngster of draft-age was allowed to vote for the Leader who would have the 'power' to wrench him from the cradle to place his body on the firing line. If one was lucky he survived the draft lottery, with a friendly knowing nod, with some kind of deferment, or became a C.O., or a draft dodger (skipping the country). Are you able to guess who got to shoot at all them gooks? Bizarre, I would say. Soft heads in Hard Hats.

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William, one of the protagonists to be highlighted in this tale, this saga, this non-epic, this salutary epistle, had been deeply affected by the whole problem of Man. The conflict of ideologies, the conflict of 'races', the conflict of the haves and the have nots, the conflict between the citizen and his distant government; all served to cast an oppressive spell over existence. William had reflected upon his own induction into the military during the first of those contests conducted between the reds and the red-white-and-blues upon the homeland of yet another. It was all very confusing; his nation had allowed the Bear to gobble up Eastern Europe and Manchuria without batting an eye. Aye, such rapprochement (at Yalta) before the United Nations had developed any semblance of teeth. It was thought that Korea could receive the blessing of this August body as the proper recipient of intervening forces in a conflict doubtlessly promoted and fostered by the reds to antagonize and to test the resolve of the red white and blues; however the reds were not obliged to contribute any of their manpower to the encounter while luring the red white and blues to commit their manpower. The whole involvement proved a gross absurdity; really there are no words to describe what happened in Korea. A Stalemate; a return to the status quo, and heavy losses to the red white and blues. Not incidentally, the yellows were the pawns in the maelstrom, sustaining the heaviest losses; the U.N., some kind of unwitting bystander. What would make it possible for a General Inductee to comprehend this madness?

Reflecting upon his own ' leap in the dark' William had written to the local newspaper:

'I would like to relate the short story of Horatio.

Horatio was in this thing whether he preferred to be or not to be. To a meager ruddy-faced youth, acclimatized to sweet sights and sounds, and even sweeter odors, the issuance of a little white card classifying him 1-A, deeming him a warrior fit to engage in battle across the waters of this earth, stirred not a little wonderment at the nature of things. The period of wonderment was brief, for the battle raged, induction becoming imperative, time sweeping him toward the day when all wonderment cried a long loud lament as he felt the giant steal him away. "But I just left high school; I can't fight; I've never fought anyone in my whole life. And you want me to kill - men!? Why?"

"Have you not heard of Hitler?" "Yes?", was the querulous reply, being unsure of the association, yet somehow persuaded of its significance. Although war is not an ordinary occurrence in every man's life, it does seem to arise as a determinate in every man's life. But to Horatio life was barely an idea and much less, a tangible reality; death was practically nonexistent.

So he went off, reluctantly and apprehensively, to war; rather to boot camp, denudation, humiliation, and indoctrination. "By your leave, sir?"; "No Captain, sir"; "Fall In!"; "Present Harms!"; along with one-hundred-odd oppressive details overlapping to quite fill his day and prepare him for the simple detail of combat, each preceding detail merely equating with a bullet that one received or delivered according the opportunities invested in each. Before too long War appeared as a natural involvement apart from any cause. Instead of sowing seeds, Horatio sowed projectiles, and under ideal conditions advanced over the field until some objective was attained, and under less ideal conditions he, of a sudden, quickened, muttering some haunting flesh-syllable, falling hard and indecorously upon his cooling stellar ball, wrestling a little with some invisibility that had already departed; then to stir nevermore'.

William had written many letters, all filled with an aching cry of some kind, a cry compounded of anger, a raging against injustice that confounded one's sensibilities, causing one to feel shame for his country, and knowing that Mankind could not endure the consequences of such bestiality for long. He wrote again to the Fourth Estate:

'Does it disturb your sense of propriety, of decency, of equitableness, or even your innate sense of rightness, that such a nation as ours in "answering its call to greatness" would 'break every rule in the book' in order to destroy an unyielding fellow (Viet?) who believes differently, but no less, than we do?

Do you feel a restless and unmitigated shame, as I do, when viewing the barbarity (napalm, ? gas, crop poisoning, you imagine the rest) that our government perpetrates in the name of the idealities that comprise the very ethical and moral fiber of our great nation? Do you also consider it a personal affront that your Government can so implicitly dispense with your ideals?

Are you tired of reading, and hearing, from all corners of the globe, the imputation that we are "bagging" so many VC (gooks) per day, as though we were hunting quail? Do you find such an impression incompatible with your notions of what we are purportedly doing in Vietnam (and Southeast Asia)?

Do you feel that President Johnson, Secretary Rusk, and Secretary McNamara do not speak to you, do not speak your thoughts, and would act for you and me without particularly consulting us? Is it your impression that your thoughts and feelings are being disregarded by the arbitrary prerogatives of an office that gambles on your ignorance (and gullibility) and prostitutes your natural store of patriotism? Do you feel a shroud of secrecy engulfing this entire 'national' endeavor?

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Do you feel your children are gradually being bound to a senseless and inescapable perdition through acts we commit, apprehensively, against "Communism", and (one should add) against the "yellow peril"?

*Do you feel, as I do, that you cannot tolerate any more of our shameful and cruel devastation of a struggling and relatively powerless nation, any more of the wanton usurpation of our national **h n r** which we all labor so hard to maintain, and any more of the increasing and the binding debt in blood that we are allowing to amass for our children?*

If you answer these questions affirmatively and wish, yet, to help alter our course of action in Southeast Asia, write to your Senator or Congressman; write to the President. And vote for the man who proposes to alter the course.'

A rather polite and peaceable fellow, really. The Pen raised against the purveyors of Cain. Sedition! Vote for whom? Oneself!

The opposition candidate had said these things:

"If we don't fight them in Southeast Asia, we will have to fight them on our own shores."

"Maintaining the will of The American people is a real problem". "We shouldn't let individual differences on details contribute to the spread of disunion in this country".

"I am more convinced that the real danger lies not in Southeast Asia, but right here in this country".

"I fear the possibility that dissension and disagreement in this country may become so great as to force our withdrawal from Vietnam".

"The American people can be proud of what we are doing over there".

Then the Militia (in their Brown garb) finally pulled the trigger on the citizenry, and Kent State became the eloquent expression of our blessedness; a Cause Celebre; a symbol of our shaky society, of our intolerance, and of our hostility, aggressiveness and proclivity towards destructiveness. Our creeping ossification, the disease of the Status Quo, fired live ammunition on the younger generation who were protesting the Vietnamization of Cambodia.

Brother against brother; what a lovely age! "Is civilization a thing distinct, or merely an advanced stage of barbarism?" Ask it again, and again and again, Herman. What is there to redeem us?

Yes!, Rose's brother-in-law was a Chicano who had lost an eye, had his fingers and body riddled with shrapnel, and was exposed to Agent Orange while fighting on the front lines in the jungles of South Vietnam, while she marched in protest, "giving aid and comfort to the enemy". The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America was

weathering some tough times. Who was it that was expropriating the sacred scrolls?

Have you ever been to a Love-in? Let's make Love, not War. Operation Muscatine into "Pinksville" (an area in Vietnam where 'people' lived in hamlets, colored pink on the map) led to slaughter at Son My, mistaken for My Lai, which became our most notorious attempt towards a genocide of the gook, the dink, the slope, or the slant-eye. In observance of the acronym M.D.R. (mere gook rule), we had coined the phrase, "The only good dink is a dead dink".

And what of the Chicano? Before being shipped 'overseas' (*Johnny will go marching over there, over there.*), Rose's brother-in-law, exercising his more elementary, instinctive, and intuitive self, had contemplated going A.W.O.L. south of the border. Rose's father had counseled him to 'stay the course', to go with the flow, not to become a hunted man, a dish n red man, never able to return. He survived the shrapnel to return to a disability award from his (grateful) government, (and country), with a semblance of h n r, but a knowing bitterness in his heart which proclaimed 'it was not just'. And later when he had heard of the Agent Orange exposure, he had said "I should have gone A.W.O.L."

The Chicanos, Blacks, and White Trash received 'the blessings' of, and few deferments from, their 'Messianic?' government.

'Piece of Cake!'

Let's make Love.

Yes, everything has to be put into perspective. It is a dreadful accounting; a testament to the lack of foresight; a testament to racism, to colonialism; a testament confirming us in our ways. As WW II was drawing to a close we did not permit ourselves to recognize the People's struggle led by Mao Tse-Tung; we did not permit ourselves to recognize the People's struggle led by Ho Chi Minh; we had been informed of their sentiments; we lacked wisdom. Instead, we propped up the swaggerer Chiang Kai-Shek, and paved the way for our French 'ally' to regain her colony. It could be said we were not only without vision, but that we had reverted to form - we were stupid and insensitive. We were not able to reflect upon our own Revolution and Declaration of Independence. We were ordinary people, complacent and deficient; we couldn't do it all. HST claimed 'The Buck Stops Here'. Some Buck!

Or were we just up to our old tricks? Bertrand Russell finds in the New York Times of February 12, 1950: '*Indo-China is a prize worth a large gamble. In the North are exportable tin, tungsten, manganese, coal, lumber and rice; rubber, tea, pepper and hides. Even before World War II Indo-China yielded dividends estimated at 300 million dollars a year*'. (It was aid for every dollar [franc] invested, the yield was ten.) A year later an adviser to the state department said the following: '*We have only partially exploited*

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Southeast Asia's resources. Nevertheless, Southeast Asia supplied 90 percent of the world's crude rubber, 60 percent of its tin and 80 percent of its copra and coconut oil. It has sizable quantities of sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, sisal, fruits, spices, natural resins and gums, petroleum, iron ore and bauxite'. In 1953 President Eisenhower (Beware the Military-Industrial complex) stated: *'Now let us assume we lost Indo-China. If Indo-China goes, the tin and tungsten we so greatly value would cease coming. We are after the cheapest way to prevent the occurrence of something terrible - the loss of our ability to get what we want from the riches of the Indo-Chinese territory and from Southeast Asia* (sounds like the President of General Electric)'. Is it any wonder we (Dulles and Eisenhower) did not permit the elections to occur in Vietnam in 1956? Is it any wonder that we removed Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 as he was attempting to 'negotiate' an end to Saigon's hostilities with the National Liberation Front?

There were so many elements to this nightmare. How many do you remember? Wherein lie the message?

"Grab 'em by the balls - and their hearts and minds will follow"

The Sermon from the Mount; one might wonder if that is the attitude of Corporate America towards their fellow Americans.

We tried to 'Bomb North Vietnam back to the Stone Ages'; In South Vietnam we tried to 'destroy the villages in order to save them'. Yes, we bombed and destroyed. What else?

Is it any wonder that the youngster was burning his 'cannon fodder' notice, proclaiming: **"HELL NO, WE WON'T GO!"** They also left the country.

Something for our amusement? A form of entertainment? If so, the cast of characters leaves something to be desired. There were no heroes emerging from the front, lest it be the anonymous gook. At home our leadership lacked class, and the 'peace movement' appeared as a segmented discontinuity, each segment proclaiming its own formula for peace. The media aligned itself with the Establishment. There were prophetic voices who emphatically stated we could not win a land war in Asia. We were like the British in New England, taking on George Washington. Yes, we had grown so huge as to imagine we had the right to engage in 'adventurism', a pastime that others from another quarter characterized as Imperialism. Was this not the truth? Let's face the truth, ours is a rather crude nation. Truly, we are a industrious people, an industrial nation, manipulated by corporate interests, forever seeking a profit, needing to create demand, needing to create markets in order to enhance and enlarge the profit and the profit margin; and forever needing raw materials to fuel this unconscionable maw.

(While I use the '**we**' freely, it is meant only to be an inclusive term conveying the suggestion of a larger responsibility. 'We' pertains to a notion of all-of-us-being-in-this-together, which, of course, is untrue. In our name these things are done, but we do not receive the benefits proportional to the usurpation; and if the truth were to be known we bear the larger

part of the burden of responsibility in a number of areas. While this 'comes as no surprise' in the affairs of men, I thought it best to 'keep the record straight'.)

To be sure, there are other ways of perceiving this pervasive, yet enterprising corporate presence. Why should we allow some other industrial entity, beyond our borders, beyond our sphere of influence, to accomplish the same conditions that we seek, especially if the 'enterprising' perceive in places like "NAM" or Guatemala, Chile, or Timbuktu, the raw materials, the markets and the spheres exist for the taking (are 'up for grabs'); who is to say that one should not consider these as 'fair game'? If we persist in an economy of waste (over-producing consumable and obsolescing 'goods'), and in maintaining a sink-hole of military hardware; and if we insist upon expansion of markets with these 'goods', quite 'naturally' the imperative exists to go 'wherever the getting is good' to further those interests. Putting aside for the moment the lust for profit, what else can be said for the whole world driving General Motors products, fueling them with Standard Oil Products, packaging in Alcoa, drinking Coca Cola, paying interest to the Bank of America, and attending to one's toilet with products made from the Weyerhaeuser pulp mills?.

We are hypocritical in the free market, and devious as well. When the free market eventuates in the suppression of our own productive capacity, we set quotas for the competition; we malign our own citizenry when it buys the other guy's. We establish Anti-Trust Rules to enhance the benefit to the consumer (you and I; so the script reads) but we design forums and legislation where competing entities may get together in collusion to deal with the foreign markets, all the while pretending it has no effect upon the domestic market. Just more of the same, a crass bit of greedy manipulative thinking goes into the securing of the marketplace, both foreign and domestic. The corporate hegemony berates, dictates and blesses us with the rhetoric of Trickle-down. "As a Nation we all benefit. We don't force anyone to do anything against their wills at home or abroad. Something for everybody, you will have to admit". So sayeth the Great Communicator.

What have we done in our lusting after the market place and the raw materials to fuel it - besides contribute to the real benefit of the few? Whatever (you) do, do not try to anoint our activities with high mindedness, or imbue them with an ennobling purpose or equate them in terms of contributing to the 'national glory'. The bottom line is PROFIT. Perhaps the average Joe, who does not calculate the dividend, because most of what he earns is expended in chasing the phantoms produced by the market place, that great materioconsumeconomical edifice, cannot and does not conceive the immensity and intricacy of the whole edifice. Besides GREED is essentially out of control.

In some ways it boils down to its simple crudities; 'how can I exploit another man's labor; how will I be able to persuade him to yield the

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contents of his pockets to me?' Its all very impersonal, even though I'll use every technique I know to get from him what I want. What I want most of all is to Gain in the 'bargain'.

When we must add in the sucker element - the 'whatever the market will bear' element, we have obviously entered another arena of human relations. We have become grasping impersonalities. We are not 'all-in-it-together'. And we cannot fairly characterize this as 'the best of all possible worlds'. Even the 'winners' must live with their, albeit, diminished conscience. We certainly have not provided a sustaining argument to support the ballyhoo concerning that boudy enchantress 'national glory' or 'national **h n r**'.

In the last analysis, it must be said that Vietnam is a place that witnessed the waste and maiming of human life, those lives having been relegated to a secondary importance in the operatives attendant to the failed Conquest. 'Human Life' once again failed to achieve the significant place in mankind's hierarchy of values. And we, the banner wavers, hiding behind the 'Christain' ethos, hiding behind Gud, hiding behind the flag, grimly dispatched the yellow, heathen, Gudless enemy. Oh, how pure and good we portrayed ourselves in our blatant wantonness. We cheapened every aspect of the creed we espoused. And we denied life to others as well as our own front ranks; the little people, the peons, the piss myrmidons. And we had the Balls to speak of **H N R**.

We merely exercised our predatory natures; our hostility, our aggression and our destructive propensities; all on the more primal level. What remained of our civilized nature became exposed as the sadistic expression of the foregoing. I regret I am unable to provide any insights, or to expand beyond what you already know.

In elegizing our history, I regret, as well, I am unable to sweep under the rug or to gloss over this episode.

You admonish "Forget the Past; Look Ahead to the .. **WHAT?**"

I bear witness to SHAMBLES.

Once again, in stalking my game, the culprits, I wander off too far into the wild, following a scent, a trail, knowing instinctively, innately, the creature I pursue - for I AM ONE OF THEM.

Because I am one of THEM, and because I am who I am in addition, imbued differently, wanting to test our thesis, our argument to ourselves as a (WHOA!) divine species, an Elevated species, an ascendant species, doggedly I make issue of our failings, wanting desperately to force you to respond - to WHAT!.

Yes, To WHAT?; to become the product of your own Vision, the Substance of your own Hypothesis. And that entails precisely the - Leaving off - the atrophy of the 'Capital (Sins)' - the self-serving, visceral life. It is my belief it is only the 'imaginary' insecurity of the unintelligent and unintelligible viscera that place us in our precarious position with respect

to one another. We are not inflamed by Reason, we are inflamed viscerally. Some RUG.

Until we do as I suggest, and as you may suspect to be true, there will be a forever of Vietnams. Mutually Assured Destruction functions (operates) at precisely that visceral level we need to obviate.

And its not just Vietnam. We are otherwise attuned to violence; making much of it, as a form of entertainment!?

Ordinarily I do not encounter Violence per se in my daily life; I leave it to the Bull Terriers, the Sam Donaldsons, to bring it to me, so that I might make feast, in my 'right to know'. I sometimes wonder, if, in my writings, I do not resemble these mongers of the Fourth Estate. Whatever may surface from the wash, I recall now something I had seen on the ole Tube, which touched me in a way we all should be touched. I recall also, in Time magazine, the photograph of a suspected V.C. at the moment of his shooting by an ARVN, standing with his hands tied behind him, the gun having been pointed and fired point blank at the head, already the powerful impact of the charged projectile twisting the face into a grotesque shape (to which I responded quite viscerally with seizures in my scrotum).

Oh, Yes!, what I have read of the Gorillas in the Mist; or had seen on the Tube; the latter of which provoked something in those lower regions of the viscera; to which I thus refer. In Botswana, after a protracted drought on the edges of the Kalahari Desert, the wildlife, the animals of GUD's kingdom, who suffered, as all these dumb creatures do at such times, were forced to range farther and farther afield in order to find moisture. The wildebeest (gnu) was the most seriously affected because it was obliged to range the furthest. Doing what the wildebeest does, as only it can do, rather marvelously, inexplicably (although we try in our own limited way to explain natural or zoological phenomena), if you will, it, en masse, as a body, traveled, sensing, knowing its destination. Wonderful, all well and good, except that many, many perished on the journey; for those we may anthropomorphize. Hah!, the ravages of nature, a grim discipline for the living whom it dothe engender. And, alas!, as if 't'were not enough, there stood man in its way as well. Man overgrazing with his cattle, man the visceral animal, fearful, despite what was known to be the contrary, believed the wildebeest to be the carrier of foot and mouth disease. How long had these survived without the benign intervention of man? Fear, and perhaps gluttony, acting together, certainly vacant of empathy with life, the life of the beast (beast), man cordoned off the land; unable and unwilling to permit their passage. Many, many more perished as the march continued, many on the barbed fences, and even more, as the beast, lemming-like, but only gnu-like, followed these confines until the way around finally came unto them (as things are apt to come to some creatures in the desert). This happening, being very real, and very tragic, in such a way, and in such proportions, leaves us

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cold, because we had imagined man could, and had tendered even more empathy and affection for the poor dumb brute of an animal than he did his own fellow man, uniquely identifying with a kind of helpless life as though he were a God looking after hapless man himself. But, not so in this case, rather the opposite, and presenting such a Righteous and Intolerant stance with regard to the poor dumb creature who could understand none of it. The Botswanan Wildebeest will suffer annihilation, perhaps extinction. While the Tube revealed snippets of the plight of the wildebeest in its decimating march to water, it also captured in motion, unlike the photograph of the executed V.C., the 'savage', stoning and beating to death of a lone wildebeest found wandering along a stream bed by some of the Botswanan populace. Thus brutally dispatched; not stoned and beaten to put it out of its misery, but from out of fear, fear of something that was not true, not even wanting to know whether it was true, instead, allowing fear, prejudice and ignorance, intolerance, perhaps hatred, to overwhelm life, overwhelm helpless life. One not only saw, but also heard the throes. "Savages!", you will say; were we then savages when we decimated the American Indian and the Buffalo; and what are we now?

Botswana is not alone. Africa was colonized; then broken into nations. Nations have become desperate confinements to peoples and to animals. The Missionaries of doom have arrived, as Oucking always; the world savaged by the 'civilizational' ethos.

In Vietnam there were just too many people in the way of our gluttony.

I'm sorry soldier, if it is ye who peruse these words. There can be no honor amongst this pack of thieves, for whom you conducted your exploits. You were duped, beyond all duping; while you thought you would bring glory and **h n r** to a nation, a flag, whom others willingly sullied; fully comprehending the act, you must realize what dish **h n r** has befallen thee, not in the defeat - not in the defeat -but in the very act itself. Are you to be held responsible? While it is the most obvious of questions, the imperatives of the occasion demand one ask, "What have we learned?" Are we to forever remain a caricature of ourselves.

Damn it man: Hear Me! Hear Me!

This Must Cease _ **MUST !**

You may feel that the wildebeest is irrelevant to what happened in Southeast Asia; that I too freely associate; that what I am attempting to say by such juxtapositions is not apparent.

The scales of violence weigh heavily in one direction; violence engineered by MAN. Violence coupled with brutality. Violence somehow separated from the need to survive. Brutality, an ingredient that defines us in ways that only an outside agent may understand.

If one's life is threatened immediately, confrontationally, a reflex is set in motion, an adrenalized response, defensive in nature. Whatever it is that

threatens must be subdued, must be neutralized. Perhaps a physical altercation requires measures that would characterize violence as well as a defensive reaction. Be that as it will, let's say the force was appropriately equal to the task. Somehow we have been compromised into an action that we imagine our more civilized and peaceful natures do not conceive as the chosen way to go. However, in hindsight, we strive to justify the action, however inappropriate, rather than face the fact that it was inappropriate.

But no matter how you rationalize the Vietnam situation, The wildebeast situation, or the American Indian/Buffalo situation, survival, per se, was, and is, measured in terms of brutality, no differently than the brutality of the so-called NAZIS; mostly only as a matter of degree. We had exceeded the requirements of survival; we sought vengeance, destruction and annihilation; overkill. Because this last cannot be justified by any conscionable definition of a civilizational entity, removed from that constraint and apotheosis, we must accept the lesser perception of ourselves as brutes. Recognized as such, we must reexamine our claim as rational civilized (human) beings.

I wrote the foregoing mostly in anger and frustration at my own impotence; and horrified by the violence exercised by the most highly evolved form of life on this planet.

My life was not my own. I belonged to somebody; to a nation. That nation; through whatever means; controlled my life. Its leaders did not feel any obligation to inform me of what they were doing at any time; of the truth, that is; what I wanted to know; I was merely a number and cannon fodder..

Since that writing, using the scant information available to me at the time, I have learned other things through the revelations of the Pentagon Papers; that is, more details of a failed policy.

FDR wanted to end colonialism, as he was also pushing hard for the creation and viability, and credibility of the United Nations. He envisioned all the places that had been occupied by the Japanese, particularly, Indochina, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia, as well as Malaysia and Burma, being freed of that occupation, and allowed independence, and self-determination.

Great Britain was averse to the notion, as was France, and the Netherlands. While the wheelings and dealings regarding this precept were being digested, FDR died. HST was not of the same mind; that is, he was somewhat indifferent. He opted for neutrality, and non-intervention. It was up to the French in Southeast Asia to solve their own problem of To Have And To Hold. And it was also up to Ho Chi Minh to solve his independence problem. Both appealed to the US for support. Great Britain was capable of solving its own problems with its own colonial empire. And the Dutch were far from able to do anything to hold onto their Southeast Asian influence.

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The French could not hold on to Southeast Asia while it was trying to rebuild its own Nation, after a devastating war. It was forced to negotiate a settlement with the Viet Minh, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, hoping to still have access as a State within a French Union. Ho Chi Minh would have none of it, and would not accept the puppet Bao Dai as the rightful leader of the emerging nation of Vietnam. Each forced the other into intense hostilities, with the US gradually getting drawn in on the side of the French. At the time the US was smarting under the success of Mao Tse Tung, and the detonation of a nuclear device by the Soviets. It formulated the Truman Doctrine in response to the paranoid fear of the Bear; the Red menace. The emphasis changed from one of favoring non-intervention to supporting non-communist government, to outright anti-communist propaganda; and to containment. And Korea became the first major battle field confrontation of two ideologies. Vietnam was also developing into one, as was the Continent of Africa, the Continent of South America, and part of North America. We thought we had The Persian Gulf in our pocket.

Its all downhill from there, for both the Soviets and the US of A; each bringing out the worst in each other. The Imperialist and the Totalitarian, red white and blue and the red, the good guy and the bad guy. Domination and Hegemony; access to and control of natural resources; creation and control of markets; and ideas. The world was not a happy place. It was full of hostility, aggression and destruction (mutually assured); MAD; all so soon after a war that cost the lives of ~15,000,000 battle deaths, a purported ~6,000,000 in one ethnic genocide, as many as ~20,000,000 Russian civilians; and perhaps countless civilian deaths ranging worldwide, from Japan to China, Southeast Asia, to Europe, to North Africa.

While we claim that we outlasted the Soviets, even, that we brought them down, it was the Soviets who brought themselves down, just as we are doing to ourselves today, under George W. Bush.

Conceptually, Communism has a sensible basis, as does Socialism, even as does Democracy, but a Social(istic) Democracy is even better, conceptually. Each in concept, gets away from a single ruler, a monarch, an oligarch. Each, in concept, recognizes everyman.

Individuals in the Soviet government abused the system, just as individuals in the US government abused the system. By this I mean they usurped powers that rightfully belonged to the people, in whose name they were created. The State became the purview of the few.

Vietnam evoked the worst in our government. We might have been good guys in our own estimation, but we were also very inept (lacking in perspicacity), perhaps even stupid (This doesn't say much for our State Department any more then, just as it does now, concerning Iraq.) Of course I use the unfair advantage of hindsight. And the government had (as it still does) the full weight of its military capability as an advantage over me; also unfair, because only might makes right. Under those terms, the government

is immune to dialogue. It can blunder its way to disaster, as it is doing, without the benefit of assistance from me (or you).

And we will go down with the ship; mark my words.

We have touted ourselves as Great Nation. Tout Tout

In the Hanging of Kissinger it was revealed that when Nixon took office, the Johnson Administration had outlined a peace proposal for ending the war in Vietnam. This proposal was ignored by Nix and his cronies (notably Kissassinger). They wanted victory, Peace With Honor, etc. After five more years, practically the same proposal offered by the Johnson Administration was offered by the Nixon (Kissinger) Administration. During those five years the people of Vietnam, and Cambodia suffered the consequences of a foreign policy based on winning, and glory (besides a bunch of other unrealistic non-humanitarian notions). Lets not forget the American sojer in all of this. Remember those class action suits, and the suing of the US Gov. regarding Agent Orange. Guess what, we did it again in Iraq I, with depleted uranium.

The aura of the good guys is a little more than tarnished.