

On The Road To Civilization

“Just you, doing your thing.”

“Could I fasten your ribbon to my accouterments?”

“All three of our ribbons, Mr. D.” Catherine interjects.

“Their would be no need for the armor; all would swoon.”

“Mr. D., we already know that to be a falsehood. We understand that beauty is something to be more ravished than admired. A thin line of civilization separates the one from the other. Delicacy is not a product of the bowel.

“I would be glad to contribute a ribbon if it would enhance your powers, and increase your resolve. But I would not consider your inevitable death anything but a tragic waste.

“So instead, I will use my ribbon to bind you up, and tie you to a pillar, that I might visit you from time to time to learn of the great wonderful things your wonderful life engenders.

“But more I would attempt to persuade you, as you do me, to remain by the river, contemplating the verities. For aught we would attempt to do in the world, for the world, for anyone or anything, will be swept aside in the next upheaval of the eternal rhythm. Remember the sad observation of Herman again, ‘By how much more pains ye take to please the world, by how much more shall ye ever go thankless’.



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“That I truly believe; it is the lesson you have taught me. It is only this conscience of mine, ingrained from my earliest hours, until this very moment, that insists I do something. I cannot do nothing.”

“Ah!, the Boola Boola girl speaks.”

“Mr. D., whether or not I deserve that remark, it is not nice of you to try to abuse me with it. I already suffer enough with certain consequences.”

“Catherine, if I may borrow a phrase: ‘tragic waste’.”

“Mr. D., I would do it again. I may return to that continent. I was enchanted.”



“Enchanted by poverty, disease, and inhuman suffering?”

“You are an enlightened individual. You know you can do nothing.”

“Mr. D., I can provide ‘love’, human love.”

“What!?, become a source for ‘love’, what kind of love?, when all around you is the neglect of government, the exposure to the elements, to marauding bands, to man-made disease and poverty. Not just the lack of twenty-first century accouterments, but lack of basic nourishment, of clean water, of all the basic necessities, and lack of proper medical attention.

“Love, ‘human love’, you would call it.

“Yes!, a calling, like your father’s?”

“Maybe. But I am not being naïve about what is there, or what I might amount to in that environment. Could one not just unobtrusively do things, simple things, to help out? Perhaps now I would have an

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immunity to Boola Boola. I know there are other diseases. Christ, there are diseases in the Big City, just as virulent.”

“Stay away from it all, sweet life. Man is beyond help.”

“I recognize that you know what you are saying is true; you say it with such conviction.

“Perhaps I cannot match that conviction with one of my own.”

Theresa wants in. “This is not a contest. Two people who love each other very much, agree to disagree, each from a position of ignorance.

“I support the river idea very much; selfishly, because I want both of you here.

“Again, selfishly, lending my perspective to the basic theme, of improving the human condition. Truly, my experience is very limited, and not without prejudice. I sense that there is little I can do personally to alleviate that condition.

“In our discussions I have revealed my waning enthusiasm for doing something that mostly consumes me. I don’t know what to do about that. I have suggested the burden be shared by everyone mandatorily. A Universal Rule to go along with the Golden Rule. I see no other way; despite all we have had to say regarding the GR. Let it be said the GR needs bolstering as well.

“Yeah!, what do we do in the meantime?”

“My instincts inform me that it is time to move on; to climb up out of the trenches, to lead my life, not others, mind you, but mine, as I should, following my instincts; or should I say, my inclinations, my desires, my feelings, maybe like everybody else seems to do.

“My upbringing has led me down a path, a feel good, feel right, path. It felt good, it felt right. But these feelings have mostly evaporated; mostly because I have burned out; the feel good, feel right, thing has gone away. What remains? Arguments for doing this or that.

“I want to be honest; frank.

“I got into something for which I was not suited, not on a whim, but because all those who were closest to me, whom I loved, were involved in this thing, this cause, this noble, worthy, cause.

“Yes!, I felt something of what they felt, the feel good stuff. But one of us decided to go a different path. A weakening in our togetherness.

“I did not judge this departure with thoughts of recrimination, but I did begin to wonder about the assumptions we make about others, even those closest to oneself, whom one might have thought one understood, as being like oneself; because of the camaraderie.

“Now, I have come to admire Lydia in what she is doing; partly because she is defining herself in a way that I am not, and also what she does has a meaning to which I can clearly relate.

“I believe Catherine has defined herself in more ways than one. I find what she does exciting, and somehow necessary. She has boldly chosen

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Mr. D. as her closest friend and companion, from whom we have each benefited. Again, I love this sister so much, and admire her so much I have wanted to be like her.

“But I cannot determine, ‘Who is Theresa?’ from these associations.

“Perhaps I need to go away, Yes!, maybe to another country. Learn about another people, another culture first hand. Not exposing myself to the dire, but to a developed culture, and style. Perhaps there isn’t any escape from the global hype. Do I know this to be true? Can I go to the libraries to discover the truth of my illusions, before I would set out to discover something that may not be there.

“I attended Antioch to follow this family thing of involvement in all the social and humanitarian issues. To get myself educated and trained to think about them, to plan for them, to deal with them. I came away from that institution imbued with a kind of resolve to do something. Easily I fell into Catherine’s notions of involvement. She had imagined something, had followed through, had begun something which seemed right, and consonant with that resolve.

“I gave of myself wholeheartedly in that involvement. But time in the trenches has brought about questions of the underlying flaws in the system, the systematized reduction of humanity to this unrelenting, unremitting horror.

“Yes!, I have loved some of those people who have come under our wing; but I have loved them too much to want them to return to that cold world that neglects them out of hand. I cannot not imagine and endure their agony.

“It’s become a very hard, and bitter, Yes!, lesson for me.

“Eyes opened for the first time?

“I do need to get away from it for a while, maybe for longer than that; maybe find something else. Maybe get into a band; play some kind of interesting, creative music; not here, somewhere else.”

“Wow Tess, I didn’t realize things were so troubled with you. You fool us all with your apparent equanimity.”

“Don’t really mean to dump anything on you, but don’t be surprised if I go off somewhere.

“I’m part of my problem, I need to be part of my solution.”

“Tess, promise me you will not leave without a full airing of everything you feel. I don’t want to guess.”

“Theresa, are you feeling something different now than when I visited you in the city?”

“Not really, it’s more certain now. I’m sure I have allowed some things to fester, without dealing with them. When you were there I told you of my weariness. Part of the weariness came from what I was beginning to feel about the hopelessness. Then my servitude became very evident to

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me, growing more critical everyday. My heart was no longer in what I was doing.

“I might have continued for some time if Catherine had not gone away. But in a way it was alright she wasn’t there, because I did begin to realize something about myself. L’il ole me. Theresa, the dubious one. Running on empty.

“I feel badly about my change in attitude; I’m diminished in my own eyes.”

“Oh!, Christ, girl, don’t feel that way.’

“Mr. D., all things I have said to other people to get them to contribute; then I walk out.”

“Theresa, whatever you said to other people was based on something you believed in, and still believe in. We are all part of the solution. We must be conscripted because that is the only sure way of dealing with the problem. To relieve people like yourself from assuming the entire burden; it is inhumanly impossible to give everything you have everyday to something that will take everything you have everyday, without remorse. Nobody can survive in such an environment.”

He put his arm around Theresa, squeezing her lightly. As he did so he felt her body quiver, as she leaned somewhat into his hug. There it was again, that feeling passing between them, only this time she did not pull away, but lingered as long as he would hold her.

She did however become self-conscious enough to withdraw slowly, however seemingly reluctantly.

Catherine then came forward to embrace her as well, “I’m sorry sis, for having got you into this awkward place.”

Only for instant did Theresa think of herself and Mr. D. in an awkward relationship, when she responded to Catherine’s apologetic statement. “Cate, you may have been an instigator, but I am my own conscience in these matters. I believe in what has happened, and always believe that man must care about man. For me, I know now that I can do only so much. I do not want to begrudge any of what I do.”

The author seems to have exhausted the permutations of random discussion involving the human condition, in exploiting the three graces for this purpose, in providing sufficient argument to continue with such ponderous activity. He has only marginally abetted his dubious dismissal of regret, and has not found the road to civilization. He doubts the value of a continuation of the seemingly preposterous denouement, only destined to become a repetition of perorations full of dread, of consequences to be ignored, so fatefully does the object of his words resist them.

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What dalliance doth he propose at this juncture to while away awaiting the inspiration to resume? What threads might he follow to add bulk to an already heavy tome?

Ah! It has come to him, a perfect dally to add to the weight of pages, abetting the consumption of the forest in readiness for the ink spilled in a meaningless diatribe. Forthwith he writes.

A Return To The Island & Other Matters

Theresa and Lydia soon departed to their place of their present commitments, being creatures of both habit and conscience. Catherine and Mr. D. continued with their island arrangement, with Catherine noticeably more agitated after her sisters' departure. Catherine felt the need to be more involved, more hands on. She also felt, but did not reveal, her concern for the more physical warmth that seemed to pass between Theresa and Mr. D.

How do you suppose the author might play that hand?

Not long after the sisters departure a letter arrived for Mr. D. This letter had begun something secret, something Mr. D. knew he could not share with Catherine; somehow finding himself not wanting to share with her. It was a letter from Theresa. Although he was the one to pick up the mail; all things considered, it was a chancy way to communicate.

Dear Dear Mr.D.

As a special request of mine, I hope you will be discreet with regard to this correspondence.

I will be trying to write things that I could not readily or easily say to you in person, especially now in the presence of others, who would be upset at hearing them.

Mr. D., from the very first meeting of you and I, something happened within me. Perhaps it was this strange curiosity concerning my sister's love life, which was a new, somewhat thrilling, thing, and a mystery to me. I wanted to be an intimate part of what was happening to her. Of course, this could not be. But it now seems it happened that way.

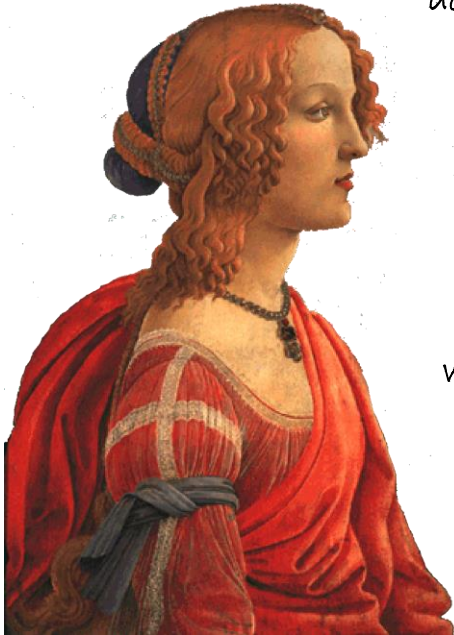
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I have loved my older sister for as long as I can remember; she is another self to me. Perhaps therein lies the clue to what happens to me in your presence.

You were and are such a unique person, a challenge and a delight to all of us, even Lydia; simply because there isn't anyone out there who even remotely resembles you. Believe me, when Lydia takes notice, it's official.

You are, by far, the most imaginative person I have encountered. While you register very strong opinions, along with very persuasive and convincing arguments in support of them, you are remarkably unprejudiced in your views.

Besides you are a rather attractive male presence; I think I respond to that in the same way as does Cate.



I do not want to carry about in silence with what I feel. I want at least to tell you what I feel, even though I feel I cannot tell Cate. She may not view me as another self to her own.

When you were comforting me in the Big City; the time which evoked our discussion of what each of us might have felt in those moments, I will not try to conceal what I was feeling. My body was simply responding to yours; and I felt yours was responding to mine.

I tried to cover-up what I felt by indicating a note of repulsion; that was indeed a terrible thing to say, and not at all true.

I want the desire and closeness I feel to be natural, and to find a natural resolution. I do not want to feel shame, or jealousy. Do I want you and I to make love? Probably. Out of desire; out of curiosity? Would I want you to be the first?

I suppose there are many ways to convey what one feels without engaging in love-making. But I am viewing the consummation of feelings in an act, an act of surrendering what one is to another person

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whom one loves very deeply; by very deeply, I mean I feel you within me, as someone who is so very special to me. I want to communicate that to you in every way possible. Hands On!

Apart from what we are expected to be as moral entities, we are individuals with feelings. The feelings in themselves are innocent of taint however lacking in circumspection. I happen to know that you responded to my warm supple feminine body, as I responded to your meaningful enveloping masculine embrace.

I do not want to be talked out of what I feel. I am not in the least concerned with propriety in any of this, our age differences, or that fact that you are my sister's lover. What I feel goes beyond such considerations. Not rashly, but soberly, as a realization of my self.

In the full light of day, my sister would be terribly hurt by such knowledge. Already she suspects there is some chemistry between you and I, not unfounded.

I will not apologize for what I feel. I will not back away from what I feel without knowing what it means; whether or not you and I consummate this something between us. I do not know what 'sex' is, but my intuition tells me what has arisen between us is not 'sex', per se, but is something far beyond such a limited perception; at least what the word conveys in our smutty self-gratifying world.

Perhaps Catherine and I are alike in what we feel, and how we express what we feel.

You have become the model for me; what I want for a companion. Perhaps I will search in vain for another you. Perhaps I am being a foolish novice. I don't know the first thing! Perhaps one day it will all become clear. I will fall hard for some bloke without knowing what hit me.

I try to imagine what a union of two people can become, whether in a perfect world they would consume each other, that is, become each other, each expanded by the other. An increased range of consciousness, a doubling and an enrichment of understanding gained through individual experiences and perceptions. This is quite apart from producing offspring, which is a mindless activity, perhaps necessary if we become conscientious about species preservation and continuance. That's quite another realm of discussion, hardly relevant to what I am trying to express here.

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I have been fortunate to be present and to have participated in many of your debates that have begun with you and my sister. I cannot begin to describe how stimulating these have been to me. Out of nowhere comes this awakening of me. I know you will argue it was in there all along, and would emerge eventually.

I consider myself a very open unprejudiced person. While I intuit things, feel things as though they were 'truths', that is, what I feel is real, is to me, underneath, a knowledge that I cannot ignore, I can go beyond this when you and Cate and I thrash the world, hoping to glean a truer understanding of things. What do I mean by that? What one might intuit is wordless, a feeling that cannot be described in words, but can be communicated or awakened in those with like feelings, perhaps by gesture, perhaps telepathically through looks, body language, whatever.

One has heard for long that a picture is worth a thousand words. I believe this to be mostly true, but when all three of us sisters get together with you, words become something with which we try to describe and define things we cannot truly know, but only intuit, that is, provide an additional sense to something; what others might label speculation, or bullshit. Perhaps all that we do with words amounts to a kind of bullshit. But what I write is not bullshit. How to picture something that is not bullshit?

Those who are in the business of trying to figure this out would like to imagine the brain as some kind of sensory apparatus which can conclude nothing in particular, but because it is composed of a sea of conjunctions, concatenations and cascading of tissues, hormones, and extraneous chemical pathways, it can surmise or deduce, and direct things, engineer unconscious motor responses, as part of nature's design for survival, survival of the whole, amidst a confusion of visceral happenings, and the more primitive responses to sensation and secretions. We are likening our brains to computers, as organs, with an almost infinite memory bank that can process a tremendous amount of information with lightening speed; as a repartee to mother nature? Why!?? Is there a huge component of vanity to this conjecture? Of what use this grand organ if what we do results in such dubious adaptation?

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There has to be a purpose for all of this confabulation. What purpose beyond mere survival, and does it matter whether the one or the many survive?

Mr. D. If I was to return to a university to take up this stuff as a thesis project, depending upon the institution, I might become a sensation myself. Another Hoopla in man's long search for the truth of things. We do not respect the mystery enough. TAO! We want to possess something that cannot be possessed. We want to brand the truth with our vanities. Or do we really seek gratification through knowledge; that is, achieve an organismic acquiescence?

I feel confident, and glad, that one cannot know it all, perhaps very little of it. What we do seem to know is embedded in conceits that have nothing to do with truth per se.

Here I am declaring my feelings for you, the one who has stimulated so much in me, has expanded who I am and what I am. Yes!, we do return to that place where you and Cate often dwell, who are we, why are we here, and where are we going? Such a simple interrogatory which declares most of what characterizes our quandary, if we ever become conscious enough to assess what it is we are truly about. You with your 'Holding Action', and both of you reiterating so often the 'fatefully inevitable'. Your magic container labeled 'Truth'. I'm in with some pretty fine company; and with people I love beyond love.

Have I returned to beginning of where I began? Is there more to be said? Perhaps only to be repeated over and over. Thus it be so. Awaiting the next opportunity to say it all with beseeching and earnest looks, and touches.

Yeah, well, has the author has really blown it this time? Catherine was beyond the scope of probability or credulity; Now This.

One supposes the wretchedoldgeezur will find some senile explanation for such solipsisticslop.

Read between the lines. Think, Don't gravitate to the prurient.

Where does he get off lecturing us?

He needs to be heaved over the precipice. Not On My Watch.

Dearest Theresa:

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I am very pleased and so much moved by your exquisite letter. Such a declaration!

The author is reaching beyond now into realms where only the mad and absurd will venture. Has he lost his rhumb in the, now, sane?, and civilized?, world?

I want to defend what he does. He so often argues that he needs to keep his mind active, a claim with which I do sympathize. But I feel so compromised by this latest, as much as I am drawn in by your warmth, your humanity, your remarkable intelligence, and above all, by your loveliness; and Yes! So help me, your free, open, inviting, seductive and nearly shameless youth.

We have become complicit in this liaison that transgresses almost every social convention.

If I was a different person than who I am, I would leave the premises forever. But as it stands, I accede to nothing, almost shamelessly.

In our Western World, the days of unbridled Kings, Queens, Emperors, Empress', Dictators, Pharaohs, Sultans with harems, and polygamous arrangements is mostly past. However we still allow ourselves the titillating luxury of mulling over the meaningful tale of Oedipus. You, Catherine and I argue on every front for ethical principled behavior; we argue for a more conscionable civilization, more in keeping with our purported enlightenment. But the author and I are pikers, cheats; we know only what is good for others, while suspecting there is something good for us outside the dictum we preach.

We do have our scruples, the Oedipal concern amongst them. Only two days ago the author and I were discussing the implications of the son who unknowingly kills the father, to eventually unknowingly marry his mother, and to produce further offspring from that union. The psychologists, in the Freudian tradition, have speculated that the Oedipal thing is very real. Question: Is there any complicity (suggestive behavior) of mother and child in this denouement? Further, it must be assumed that daughters would want the mother to disappear so they might have a chance at daddy. Hence Electra. We have so speculated with regard to offspring, and psychologically believe this probable. Edwardipal and Electrical, 'doing in' the opposite parent, Layus and Jokeasta. Where, in the fictional Sophoclean drama, we are meant to

respond to the tragedy, in real life we would look upon such a relationship as disgusting, sordid, unconscionable, and unequivocally forbidden. My father toyed with the Oedipal symbol, likening it to the relationship between my mother and I. But oddly, it is he who claimed the greatest love of his life was his mother, who died when he was nine. Father's closet friend was a Freudian analyst. It was titillating and convenient, but rashly stupid, for father to try to exploit this kind of 'enlightenment'.

One might conjecture more upon the relationship of the aged with the young. Who gains our sympathies in the Faustian tale, the old saintly ascetic salaciously desiring the young beautiful? Gretchen/Marquerite, or the 'victim' of Mephistopheles' wheeling and dealing, or neither, since she was easily seduced with jewels? Low characters enshrined in pretty language? And what of us then? We claim to understand fully the implications of our involvement. Low characters? In my eyes, you would never become a low character. I might construe my self as such because of my involvement with two sisters. Involvement with two sisters is not new to the world of romance, however we might judge such a happening. I think of Charles Dickens feelings for his wife's younger sister, the one who died when very young. It seems fairly clear he loved her more than his wife. Perhaps her early death avoided something very unseemly from happening. Only the social conventions of the time prevented him from other involvements. Only a short time ago the social conventions existed almost in the nature of a straight-jacket; a rigidified, codified list of protocols, at least amongst the educated and socially conscious. Our very ablest and most human, and most enlightened president, Lincoln, did not escape such social entrapments of his day.

But, yours, such a declaration! I have become and exist as your complicit partner, as it is with Catherine. How can I say this all in one breath? Am I able to add in that same breath that neither you nor Catherine will be sacrificed to disturb some notion of social convention?

Must we away to some place where a different social ethic can prevail, where tolerance of high order exists; where even it is unnecessary for tolerance to exist, where being is more a marvel than a thing to be judged for competence, or compliance to a model?

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Yes!, how marvel at us? Catherine might not. Sharing intimacies will not wash. Neither of you should play second fiddle to the other. Each of you deserves the best there is.

Soon enough I will be gone – for ever. You and Catherine will go on to live constructive and full lives with other partners. Yes!, it would please me to leave knowing that I was to be remembered fondly by each of you. That would be my greatest wish and reward.

However we should choose to say what it is we think we have to say, I must return to the most basic of premises. I can not in truth make assumptions about things of which I know little or nothing. None of what I would say would be said in order to deny any part of a responsibility I may have assumed or have tacitly agreed as a civic duty. Responsibility is somehow assumed as implicit when one interacts with others; that is, shares in and benefits from the fruits of civilization. One is both served and servant.

Even though this may be the case, I do not surrender to dictates to which I have not acceded. It is basic that I must accord my own concept of responsibility. If I do not, with purpose, lay claim to something that is not mine, and do not obtrude with, or do not flaunt my self, then I should be allowed untroubled and unimpeded passage.

Social folkways and mores may seem to be part of the burden one must bear. But in fact folkways and social mores are impositions placed upon the individual that do not require or acknowledge his consent.

By way of example, it has been said 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'

One should not travel to Rome, if there is another place one might go. If the whole of the earth was Rome, one would be compromised. Are we thus compromised? All of us?

I am attempting to rationalize something that cannot stand the test of truth.

*It was Paul Gauguin who propounded the most apropos question 'who are we, where do we come from, where are we going?' as the title of what he depicted as an incredible stasis embedded in ritual and hocus-pocus, also echoed by Herman Melville in *Typee*. As an indifferent and distant observer*

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one might imagine it so. Catherine often imagines herself as a person who is asking that very question; and one who is seriously attempting to answer it. More simply answered on some South Pacific island?

Man or 'woman' in the landscape, serving some purpose, not blindly, but as a chosen venue, a meaningful doing; not a writhing squirming thing, living in abject fear one moment, and in another, seeking and pursuing gratifications; and mindlessly producing copies of something that serves no purpose lest it be the repetition ad infinitum of purposelessness.

I realize that I have exhausted the rationalizations for my unseemly behavior, and would not hesitate to use any other that you might supply.

The ages old conflict between the individual and the state. But more still, yet to be determined?

Most important, and significant, at this time, is what we do feel for one another. Above all, we are close friends. I have had few friends in my life. My wife, you and Catherine. Perhaps, from that knowledge, one might deduce a solitude on the prowl. An attempt to relieve a great loneliness.

Like the man has conjectured, we are squoze in between two eternities, and two tremendous volumes; we have not been noticed. Even if we were the only ones observed dotting the landscape, upon the next glance we would be gone. In the Big City one would not notice, amongst so many lives, so many lives. When one returns to the Big City one hundred years later, it is though time had stood still, even though every individual had been replaced by another.

In mentioning Rome, I was aware of the many cultures, tribes, and nations, each having its own set of restrictions; taboos, laws, and system of punishment for violations to the established order.

Don't tell me you don't care what other people think. Even if you didn't, I would, where you are concerned.

That means we must live with a secret, which is OK. Must avoid all the small towns in Rome.

Sweet Life, I take leave now with these cautions as well as thoughts of you, and how much you mean to me.

Your Two-headed Monster.

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You have thought the author reckless and evil.

The author is not inclined to hammer the reader. Even he has some regard for others feelings.

He will argue he poses a threat to no one, that he does not deliberately provoke his fellow man with his carefreeness; he professes not to be reckless.

He speaks with conscience when he speaks of responsible behavior; he does have principles.

The author had thought of returning to his 'western', the LouieDamnedNearNoMore 'western' where the venue is parodied yet one more time. His first attempt at a 'western' depicted a modern man attempting to reenact that self-reliant outdoor way of life; the stump ranch converted into the spread. The hero of the plains ... stump ranch... drove a delivery truck for Sears. After a few years this truck jockey realized his dream was going for naught. With only seven head of cattle, a horse, and a few useless six-shooters (useless because there wasn't anything [or anyone] to shoot); he even had to import hay; the jig was up. There wasn't a chance in hell of a self-sustaining economy.

With a wife and three children he abandoned the dream for foreign shores and the true wilderness.

Obviously he had spent too much time in the movie theaters.

The matinee cowpoke was seldom a character to be emulated. The work seemed grueling, the rewards few. Only the big cattle ranchers, who got there first, fighting off Indians and competitors with violence, became marginally successful.

For the glory of the shoot-out with the bad dude. Nothing more comical than a dude riding herd on seven animals on a stump ranch with a six-shooter holstered in his cartridge belt. The mythology has failed in its mission. It has degenerated into a venue for exploring homosexuality.

What a crock!

Those early days of exploitation and rape of the land, killing off of the wild life, and the inhabitants; burrowing for gold; and finally mining, and oil, and coal and natural gas; what a gas! Nothing left for a pore ole cowpoke, or sodbuster imbued with the 'western' or 'pioneer' spirit; except placing the cowpokes who are fond of each other in western garb.

We may not be able to find a way out of this. Speaking of unconscionable activity, Hollywood deserves a few licks for promoting horseshit as a way of life. A lot of the west is pretty fffing inhospitable. Dry Cold Hot Barren. Furthermore, there is none of it remaining. If there was any of it left worth anything, the Hollywood Stars would have snatched it up for dude ranches. The very best stuff has been gobbled up by Corporations and Agribusiness. The cowpoke!?! The legendary dupe.

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Dear Dear Mr. D. (Not a Monster!)

Your words, your words!

They effect in me such troubled thoughts.

I am a 'good' girl. That is an abstraction, of course.

But what am I, really? Who am I?

I am not a wind-up toy.

I do what others want. That is, I have been trained to do certain things, observe certain conventions. I have and I have not questioned some of what it is I am supposed to be or do.

Most of what I have been asked to be or do has come with the caveat 'it's for your own good.' Not truly knowing what is for my own good, I have acquiesced to the dictum.

Now that I have been doing things that would be construed as 'not for your own good', I am placed in a kind of limbo; hah! out on a limb-Oh! (compliments of the author).

I do not know how to feel about myself. When I did what others wanted I felt good about the somebody who I was. But now, I do not know what to feel about myself.

Oh, Yes!, The things you tell me are reassuring, and meaningful, perhaps more meaningful than all that has been said before, by others, 'may God strike me', even more than my father. My most crucial concern is the loss of something with Catherine, should she discover how we feel about each other, or how I feel about you. What my father would feel does frighten me; I wonder if I could not tolerate the imaginary loss of his affection.

Despite these strained thoughts and complicated feelings, most of the time I am free to contemplate the condition of human civilization, quite apart from myself. The part I play is inconsequential. I am the observer, not the participant. I know you feel this way about yourself as well.

The last few days I have been trying to sort through and absorb all the stuff that's been floating around concerning the 9/11 fiasco, from 'just deserts' to conspiracy theories.

Yours and Catherine's 'Please Pass The Truth' comes to mind. Also, I recall the vitriol of your God Bless America.

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The 9/11 Commission report seemed to stop short of providing real answers, because the participants seemed to be afraid of pursuing the tough questions too openly. Shades of McCarthyism? Fearful of the implications of the Patriot Act?

Faulty Intelligence? Incompetence? Something Deliberate? Or as Mr. Gore politely states of the 9/11 report, 'keeping things at arms length'.

Because we don't know, we are vulnerable to countless conspiracy theories, some which people believe as 'truth', while it can only be a great distortion of the truth. Some of the conspiracy conjecture involves Pearl Harbor as a sacrificial gambit knowingly encouraged by FDR in order to get us involved in that war. I may not know anything about politics, but to believe that about FDR would strain all credulity in me. Would I believe that the Bush Administration could knowingly allow the carnage of 9/11 as a pretext for getting us into a Central Asian imbroglio over OIL? It does strain my credulity to believe that as well, as much as I dislike those people. Do I think them capable? That I cannot answer. But I do feel our leader is a stupid man, a bully, a disaster for our country, and one who cares little for life and the living. But he, and his closest 'advisors' are not alone. Our acquiescent, fearful congress bears a great deal of the responsibility and blame. As do we all for our non-involvement, letting others act on our behalf. Can you imagine supporting the 'war on terrorism' because you feared not appearing as a patriot; saying this is not a time for cool heads, but a time for unity, even if it turns out to be a fascist unity. Can we really sell, or abandon, ourselves so cheaply.

The larger picture, what is it? I see an incompatibility of aims. I see terrible foreign policy, although I do not know what that foreign policy should be. I see a fascist takeover of our government, because the void was there to be filled by low characters, who cared not for their country, but only for themselves and their interests. These later parry all the slogans and all the seeming patriotism, mocking ours if we dissent. Somehow they seem to feel there is no accounting; they are on top where nobody can get at them,

How could we have come to this impasse? Is it as you and Catherine often speculate 'fatefully inevitable' that man cannot stand up to the test of his own thesis? That all the high-sounding rhetoric is insincere, that

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baser motives are the truer substance of the beast? Do I want to believe that? I think once again of our heroine, Tony Smith.

I can conclude nothing regarding 9/11. The people who pressed for truth have been denied. They managed to force a token response from a government that seems duplicitous and silently complicit at all levels. Believe it or not we damned near had the chief fox, a man, the supreme egoist, in near total disrepute, Kissinger, as the chairman of the search for truth. Someone had the backbone to challenge this shameful proposition.

Mr. D. it is my belief if we cannot get by this mess with a clean slate, we are doomed as a nation. I think the American people are too slow in realizing what they are about to lose. I am reluctant to regard the recent election as really a meaningful step; more a spurious thing; I suspect the general public will lapse into taking whatever there is for granted. It is so much easier to follow the least path of resistance, even to one's own doom.

I cannot begin to describe the loathing I feel when I see our leader smirk, equivocate, lie, deceive, scrunch up his pathetic countenance that passes as a human face. With all those arrogant twisty facilitations. He believes he can get away with anything; he makes it up as he goes along; laughing at us all the while, secure in his self-deceiving righteousness. He's not the only person dealing with the public that treats the 'people' (who are they) with condescension. I remember Lydia's recall of Mr. Rumsfeld's cant.

But soon he will be gone. Do our people have what it takes to redefine their place in the world? This is where my heaviest doubt lies. I fear we cannot gather our wits in a timely manner. There is no outcry, only a whimper, perhaps a whimper above the noise of fear of the Patriot Act. We need to rescind that Act. We need honest debate concerning where it is we want to be, what we want our ethical lives to be.

The Oil thing is one of those 'fatefully inevitable' things that we have felt we could wrangle by force for the short term instead of dealing with a real problem. We are all party to something that we know is wrong on so many fronts. It has influenced our diplomacy, it has compromised our fair-dealings with all peoples. We are using others and they are using us.

We cannot 'bomb' our way to further 'our way of life'. 'Our way of life' is wrong; I speak mostly in reference to the consumption of the planet to

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maintain a 'standard of living' that is out of whack with the environment. And those who want to imitate us, Alas!!

We must return to the basic principles of the democratic process enshrined in the Constitution, but more, we must also modify our thinking with regard to making sure everybody has a place in our society; it is the humane thing to do. We must borrow the good from socialistic thinking. By 'place' I mean a basic level of nourishment, shelter, health care, and education, without stint, without equivocation; the least also serve, especially if they are included and treated with respect. I so believe.

Listen to me, will you.

Mr. D., I do recall our first meeting. I didn't know what to expect. My cool sister, enamored. I had guessed a two-headed monster, because she was being so evasive in her details about you. Then my curiosity got the better of me. I became unwarrantedly excited by what was happening to her. Then when I met you, Yes!

I was amazed by her choice, yet, I sensed an immediate rapport, an immediate liking. Then came the magical moment upon your island bluff, where I lay with my head on your lap, we each looking into each other's eyes, reading something unspoken, but full of mutual acceptance. At that time there was nothing physical stirring within me, and nothing physical had stirred within me for all those years until your visit to the Big City, when the first physical thing I had truly felt I had interpreted as revulsion. When in fact it was the assessed inappropriateness of what I felt that was troubling me.

Mr. D., you are dear to me, precious to me. I am like my sister in my liking, and loving of you. The two of you have become the unspoken three of us. Eventually Cate will detect the something between you and I. I must prolong that day. I do envy her daily proximity to you, even though you are hers.

Anyway, my dearest friend, I carry you in my thoughts and feelings. I will sign off for now, expectantly awaiting yours.

We have been up to our eyeballs here. I still question my involvement, feeling my lacks in that regard. As do I feel my lacks as a trustworthy sister. Avowedly Yours!!

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What of Catherine and Mr. D.?

Was William allowing himself to become compromised by Theresa's letters? He wanted to reveal to Catherine the extent of what was passing between her sister and himself; again, as with he and Catherine, mostly encouraged by the other, Theresa; he only a somewhat willing participant? But he felt he could not betray Theresa. Awkward to say the least. Even these words are revealingly awkward.

Could he separate the two sisters in his feelings? Not possible, he thought. When push comes to shove, he seems certain of one thing; he must not hurt Catherine. The alienation of Catherine would be too great a sacrifice. In that eventuality he sensed he would lose both. Distancing himself only a little from Theresa might still insure a relationship with Theresa. She must know she comes second. She might find such an arrangement acceptable, rather than a complete distancing.

The 'animal' had risen to the surface in both of them, mostly at her instigation. But, she was not entirely at fault. He had wanted more physical contact with her, simply because she is a warm body, a giving yielding reciprocating presence; female presence, beautiful female presence, young beautiful female presence; the undeniability of her presence was undeniable. He would still want that in a continued relationship, but it must be with the understanding, yes!, with the understanding, without stating what that might be; the disengagement of touch at the appropriate moment.

A delicate balance, involving secrecy, a dubious option?

Mistake not this dalliance for something it is not; not intended as a titillation designed to obscure the real issues of this rambling opus. Those remain.

We need all the principals to work out the details of their escape from the 'fatefully inevitable'.

Although the author is only one, as a one, he cannot escape the part he must play. He asks: 'What part do you play?' Are you able to answer the question?

The young women are human, intended to be exemplary in their thoughts and their deeds. Yet, the intent is not to make of them martyrs, nor to make of them saints, but individuals who are willing to put their words into action for the betterment of all forms of life. One might fault or discredit them for their other human attributes, judged by others as failings. If it be so.

For his part William pursues the denouement, his rational now becoming predictable; after all is said and done, what is human that is not predictable? That humans were ever thought as Gods, or thought of themselves as Gods, or made in the image of Gods; such base assumptions for such base clay!

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Dearest Theresa:

Today is sunny and quiet, a refreshing stasis after so much Drang coming from mother nature.

Your beautiful wonderful sister is computer scribbling away in the new room, very up and happy these last few days, working like a fiend, insuppressibly. I do fear for her at times when she gets into these crashing the gates from the ramparts moods. But I love her dedication and her belief in what she is doing. She is a doer (as are you).

Your letter moves me. I feel the wonder of your life as I do your sister's. I do wish you could be with us, however treacherous and painful that might be.

I do believe a confrontation with Catherine is inevitable if we do not find some accommodation with each other. I would dread such an encounter, because I would feel so ashamed of hurting someone I truly love, who also loves me. You would also be hurt by all that would happen as a result of such an encounter. It cannot be allowed to occur –Never!

We humans are such miniscule creatures, too large for our britches; we are too outscaled for how we perform. Not you and Catherine, each of you are not large enough. But I am, with all my 'wisdom', such a pathetic thing, occupying far too much space. I realize you will argue with me regarding the scale; Brobdignagian versus Lilliputian. Some, many, individuals, are disproportionate in scale to their actual worth, worth measured in terms of value as human beings. When the social fabric is made up of self-interest, it soon becomes threadbare, to exist almost as no fabric at all. This rent product of self-servingness leaves us with a sick exposed feeling in our gut. Trash along the roadside.

Regardless, whether Brobdignagian or Lilliputian, as we study our selves with satellite images as their trajectories head for infinity,, our planet recedes into a barely distinguishable speck, ultimately to disappear in the strange purposeless abandon of the firmament. Rightly, who are we, where do we come from, where are we going. It doesn't matter. Yes!, what matters is that we love each other; all three of us, not so strange, if one measures strangeness against

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that strange purposeless abandon. Hah! but why such pain associated with love; from the heights of elation to the depths of despair.

Do I make my case? Probably not; a weasel! I want everything. Weasels want everything. A weasel wants a Catherine and a Theresa, some of each; but what is left after his feed? Something still human? Ennobled protoplasm.

I do not want to be remembered as something I am not intrinsically, innately perhaps, but not intrinsically. Since we are regarded as choosing animals, choosing with the head, as wise entities, entities motivated by scruples, I must live up to the billing, else I fall into another category of beast.

I think I am not above all that. I love two people very much. Two people from the same pod, so much alike in their intelligence, in their youthful beauty, in the subtlety of personality, in their discernment, in their complete lack of prejudice. I love these two with an irresponsible abandon. I think they have encouraged me thus, I am willing, but know of things which make the whole involvement perhaps a too explosive mixture.

Best case scenario for you and Catherine, to see me for what I am, dust me off.

Perhaps Catherine would be more forgiving in only one sense, but not in yours - her sister's; that conjures another sense not to be equated with any other. She would blame me, whereas if someone else came along she would blame herself. Very delicate sensibilities involved, not negotiable, I suspect.

Well, dearest one, I'll leave you with these imponderables.

Love You!

The author feels the necessity to get back on the road. While his protagonist hopes to avoid regrets, it seems the author is making it impossible for William to avoid them. His attachment to two lovely sisters, his avowed attachment to the one compromises his affections for the other. Pretty soapy, huh!?

All that high-minded stuff can barely stand the simple test of loyalty, fidelity, and self-control. However, Regard!; this is not a morality play.

Lest we lose the thread completely, the author feels compelled to return to 'regrets'.

One dreams. The soothsayers attribute these unconscious wanderings to 'wish fulfillment'. It cannot only be that. There are dark dreams where

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one becomes frightened to almost abject speechless terror. To what does one attribute those? Does one, at that simple level, of 'wish fulfillment', receive some kind of message, or signal, that he or she has been missing the point of life in his conscious existence? Get with the program. Disregard the scruples. Fear the inscrutable, the unrevealed.

What do we know of William, Mr. D., of his revealed person?

What is the author hoping to achieve by concocting this individual?

If he is dreaming, why not simply return to his early life for a different kind of start, where gumption would replace hesitancy, awkwardness, and a feeling of inadequacy? Where he might in reality pursue the Catherines and Therasas of this world when he was a young man? Persist in such a pursuit? Why this old geezur Faustian, dare one impugn, dirty old man, thing? This withered thing towering over these saplings, these budding presences?

The symbolism of regret?

It cannot all become regret? Did the author, albeit, William, not overcome all the conventions and scruples in the pursuit of the girl/woman who became his wife? Was that not the elemental, the germinal, experience of his life? Is this an experience that one is intended to undergo only once?

How do we consult with the maker of all things? We do not. Do we thus make it up as we go along? For whose appraisal?

Does the perseverance of certain forms of social convention argue for some fixed outlook for all future relationships?

Lets go primitive, or 'natural', for a few.

Testosterone and Estrogen. Amalgamable chemicals bound for union? For the ultimate neutrality? Stasis in union, amalgamated?

As long as the hormone is circulating in the blood stream, the potential for attraction exists, regardless of age (perhaps, regardless of sex). Drive you crazy huh?! 'Nature's' way. In the more primitive setting, opportunity sometimes dictates the exigencies of the moment. In other circumstances, the urge drives one into confrontation with the master of the harem. Is there an equal parallel representing the distaff side? (Catherine the Great, though grown corpulent, and aged, was supplied with young lovers at will.) What of the doe, the ewe, the bitch? Or is it always the buck (Bambi), the ram, or the counterpart to the bitch, that determines the amount of foreplay in the real world, the real world that does not recognize conventions and scruples, only the continuance, however accomplished. Is there not an element of that same compulsion toward continuance that is operative at all times, regardless of gender, age, and species? That is, apart from the pleasure derived. Or is there no separation between the gravity of pleasure and the urge for continuance?

What was it with Faust? Simply a dirty old man? Only if one applies a system of values to outside agents. Social Convention, a product of the

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civilizing aegis, interferes with a process already established in its modus operandi. Poetry becomes the organ of propaganda of the ancient Weimar gentleman. Does the product improve with the interference? If we determine that an inferior product results from incest, we ban incest from our book of established methods. If we determine that an old geezer produces inferior seed, we ban the intercourse with progeny-producing partners. Each of these might be argued in order to enhance the eventual product intended to be produced through a dubiously objective process. However unconscious may be all other acts performed in order to achieve the unnamed goal. In other words there may not exist any model in mind emanating from a mostly mindless activity.

After all is achieved, however achieved, in the name of continuance, we enter into war.

How much of this intended to color the relationship between William, Catherine, and Theresa?

Spurious concerns?

This is not a treatise on conventional behavior.

It is not intended to engender disgust.

The principals are of age, and wise enough to know the implications of certain behavior, whether social, or of another origin.

Some might argue that the author, by merely mentioning the social environment in which a thing takes place gives away the game.

No one is to be appeased by extraneous arguments whether or not social convention is a determining factor. Meeting a certain criteria does not resolve all the failures that occur, regardless.

Do we question whether it is a matter of tolerance? In '*Catherine*', Ms Watson proved herself 'tolerant' with exceptions. The exception was the potential jeopardy to the career of a young woman who, she felt, was destined for great things. Her basic criterion was the happiness of Catherine, giving her credit for her ability to recognize, understand and appreciate her own happiness, also to caution her with regard to frittering away her time on some distracting activity; however, she did not consider the distraction frivolous. Catherine was allowed to clarify her position to the satisfaction of Ms. Watson, without having to justify it to her.

The denouement of *Catherine* evolved beyond the relationship into concerns for the human condition, which made every other consideration seem irrelevant. In this opus, the intent is that the same condition should persist.

Part of the social convention instructs us that if we are to become exemplary, we must be exemplary in every way, perfect. There can be no stain. To the author this seems patently absurd, for two reasons; one, no one is perfect, and, two, it is the nature of the critics of the exemplary to discover or invent stains. One ponders the stamp of approval emanating

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from the highest repute; a Nobel Prize, in one case awarded to a champion of the environment, an individual, grown pudgy with laxity, a millionaire a few times over, on the board of several corporations, a many times over consumer, deriding those who act more aggressively (Green Peace, for example) than himself, in environmental matters. Do we question the standard? Was not Greenpeace in the forefront, leading the way? Is the Nobel like a Miss America pageant? Probably not. A Dynamite Prize?!

Projecting an exemplary individual into our consciousness might be intended to lure us into mimicking such an individual, which in reality, we can never imitate; for example, J.C. If we are relieved of the compulsion to mimic by a little staining, for example, M.M., then we do not feel obliged; thus we mostly welcome the stain.

Did HE get it on with Mary M.? Simply asking the question augers for doubt. The good guy got it on with the penitent prostitute. After expiation, a sensual washing of one's feet with those alluring tresses. The washing away of sins, Forgiveness, has its reward. Try it, you'll like it. If I could get my feet washed with long sensual filaments donning the head of a beautiful woman I might think a lot about what is heavenly upon this earth, coming to different conclusions than those spouted from the pulpit. Doubtlessly JC was aroused.

While all this has been going on, Transport Canada finds itself dealing with a couple getting it on, on the bridge of a BC Ferry in the middle of the night in waters that required attention to the navigation instruments. The Ferry collided with a rock that rent it to the bottom in deep water, causing the death of two passengers (bodies not recovered), all others, some one hundred rescued by summoned locals. Negligence!? Man Slaughter!?

This may illustrate what happens when the 'act of procreation' 'act of recreation' results in a dereliction of duty.

Obviously they will be given the boot, but will they ever screw again?

Were you fornicating on the bridge of the HMS Hanky Panky on the night in question?

'Invoking Section 13 of the Charter Of Rights, I refuse to answer that question because it may tend to incriminate me.'

Put 'er there; yeah!, right there!

There is only so much high-minded activity in which one might engage before the lattices of purity fracture from some unwonted strain. Nothing is presupposed in this statement. What we become emerges from a base material fashioned into something we imagine, in a milieu of transience. The permanence we might seek, that is, the enduring quality of excellence and purity, must run the gauntlet. The test is always before

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our presumptions. The ineluctable realities defy and deny the human interference in their realm.

One might like to imagine the beast freed from his protoplasm, to become something beyond that which comprises its bulk, as a bodiless spirit, escaping such meager trappings.

The utter realist will deny our flights of fancy. He will judge our suitability as social entities.