

Further Persuasions

III

The Island

Further Persuasions.

As yet I have not precisely defined: Island. I have alluded it as a figment of one's imagination, as providing an escape from some earthly overload, as some sequestered place for licking one's wounds. As I cant in the swaying motion of my rocking chair, situated within the metropolis, closing my eyes, preparing to occupy the imaginary world, albeit, of an Island; I succumb to otherthanness. Generally I have been, necessarily, a dreamer on the one hand, and a realist on the other; but perhaps only a dreamist on the one, and a realer on the other.

It is simple enough to want to occupy any other world than the one in which one finds himself. We often get drunk, or dream of the afterlife. Often I have discovered islanders to be amongst the greatest imbibers, and 'trippers', with booze, pot, magic mushrooms, coke and sundry imaginative decoctions. Islandness is not limited to islands alone. We are all too human regardless of where we happen to alight.

Islanders tend, as well, to be markedly individualistic (some tic). I tend to be one of those. I am able to imagine this signifies we are all escapees from the larger world where intolerance labors to eradicate or nullify differences.

In the larger world, many exhibit a concern for the afterlife. I believe Islanders seek something before Death. It is this 'before deathness', the fulfilling of that implacable yearning, perhaps only as a slow form of suicide, as an enhanced form of vegetating, that captures my imagination.

Naturally enough, not all Islanders slip so freely into the mould. But somewhere in their innards, Island signifies a fortress in isolation not unlike the Status Quo within its Institutions. Many raise families, some with purpose (that is, not by accident) in order to perpetuate something (most likely oneself). To them The Island may become incidental, but Islandness remains as part of their very soul; and through them Islandness will be perpetuated. My inclination is to believe that, once exposed, we are all condemned to suffer some manifestation of the affliction.

I realize I am not providing you with any substantive definitions. However, I shall bring into focus my reference Island. I perceive no need to name the place, although, with some curiosity, you may discover its three-dimensionality. While I might focus upon a given Island, and upon given individuals, drawing their portraits with varying degrees of accuracy, possibly causing the evocation of a particular place or individual to recognizably emerge, it is more my tendency and desire to construct composites. In some cases I may even venture wild excursions of my pen

The Island

in order to grasp at or capture the more elusive characters that tend to find their way to islands, secreting themselves there, as if not only to escape, but to hide like a hunted animal, living at the edge of defending themselves against perpetual arraignment. Still others have come to lick their wounds incurred from injuries sustained in the larger world, huge gaping wounds in their souls, inflicted through the gross betrayals (real or imagined) of their fellow man. Still others, sly, living by their wits, and through stealth, furtively reside on the edge, what others might label 'cheaters'. These last are known by their deeds; they 'squat', they filch, betray their 'friends', circumvent the rules (ones which we might grudgingly abide, but which we do not transgress because they hearken to anarchy, that precariousness armed with too finely honed a blade). Some of these sly ones, their fortunes clandestinely procured, become transformed into skulking reformers, possessed of the declamatory: "NO!"

Some clearly do not belong upon an Island, but more in the town square, casting aspersion upon all those who do not curb their dog. The human labyrinth sometimes (as shallow as a pane of glass) encompasses matters of small import, its mentality relentlessly, maliciously, seldom innocuously, producing maligning gossip, as if to prod each soul, attempting to flush it out from under its favorite rock, into the embarrassment of a scandalously broad daylight.

Survivors all, many through the harder demanding labors created by the Island's lacks, necessity calling upon all one's resources; some to qualify as survivalists, others to live from the spoils of ill-gotten gains.

It is claimed that "Familiarity Breeds Contempt". You might wonder what would attract one, or me, more specifically, to a place that you may rightfully begin to suspect as already fraught with its own share of controversy. To reiterate, 'Man is whatever he is wherever he is'. It would be the rare time and place that any individual would not be 'suspect'. In the city, if one walks the streets after certain hours, whether or not in violation, or infringing upon any tenet, he becomes suspected of no less than vagrancy. If one walks the Island after certain hours, he is merely going from here to there, and most likely will accept a ride to wherever it is he is going. Within the city, during the daylight hours, if one is politically neutral, or does not speak, or does not adhere to the Gospels; if he does not imbibe or inhale, or inject foreign substances; or traffic in controlled substances; if one is not clean shaven, or wears the same clothes each day, it all matters little, for one is hardly noticed, lest he make an issue of himself; for in truth hardly any one cares; even one's closest neighbors. It is only the police, behaving like some shepherding animal, lymphocytes of the social corpus, constantly on the alert for strays, who notice and identify what their programmed

Further Persuasions

mores have conditioned them to allow as unmolested passage amongst the flock.

As one sets foot upon the Island he is almost immediately consigned to some category of suspicion; placed in a Limbo of unacceptability, Quarantined, as it was, in the hallways and byways of the Islander's minds. If one is an open-eyed neutral, undeclared, so to speak, he is suspect. If he should speak to one person, immediately he becomes associated with that person; if he lingers with that person, certain affinities are assumed.

In some ways one might separate the world of man into the pissers and the non-pissers. In the urbane world there are so few pissers as to count them nil. I am a pisser. I generally piss outside, mostly from convenience, but partly in defiance. I do not care to deal with urine-splatter - 'better outside', I maintain. That kind of terlet usage is for the sick and the elderly. (Yes!, one could sit down.) On the Island, one of its inhabitants declared "When I can no longer swim in the nude or take a leak outside, I will leave the Island". He was a pisser. However, modesty is not flaunted; even the closest of acquaintances do not assume complete familiarity; (one) does not pee in the company of ladies, lest they be trusted friends; one does not brandish his hose even amongst his companions; a polite deference is signified in presenting one's backsides. (It is not my intention to interject sexism into this epistle; although similarly constrained and bound within the natural rhythms, the ladies tend to be more circumspect in their behavior.) The pissers tend to be self-assured and matter-of-fact. The non-pissers tend to be more guarded, more straight-laced, opinionated. Yes, quite naturally, upbringing, conditioned responses (even Gawd-awful hidden 'Freudian' psychic complexities), not to mention shyness and modesty enter into the considerations. But it would be unfair to assume that a pisser did not care for the opinion of his fellow man, or that he was merely being untoward. Quite often it will be a pisser who rushes to the rescue of his fellow man; that is, he will be the first one to lend his assistance; whereas the more guarded will delay in their response. Careful. Cautious. However, since biffies are a scarce commodity upon the Island, even the scrupulous, equipped with indoor plumbing, will, in emergencies, and as a matter of unobserved convenience, resort to the great green mantle, or the open sea. One elderly gentleman was observed to proceed hurriedly from out his skiff tied to the dock, clambering up the slippery precarious ramp, to gain the wharf, fumbling with his zipper, finally gathering up his hose, as he attempted concealment behind the plywood sign which stated: No Trespassing, Private Property, Enter At Your Own Risk; Not Responsible For Any Deaths Resulting From Entering These Premises. The boaters anchored in the bay had a full view of his relief (one's horizons doth a dim accounting do).

The Island

One cannot deduce everything from this outward manifestation of animal behavior. One cannot determine how a man will vote on the issue of obtaining electricity for the Island, securing auto-ferry service to the Island, where to locate fish-farming; or how he might vote concerning open-range on the Island, or whether he would favor or condone an alternate location for a dedicated log-dump. One might apply this categorization to those who grow *cannabis*, but only as a gross generality; however, it might be opined the majority of *mary jane* growers are pissers, revealing some other dimension involving scruples or conventions as some questionable measure of the 'all'.

In the civilized, particularly urban world, where property reigns over the soul, the marketers of fencing materials thrive. I should know; I have erected one to KEEP the dogs and kids OUT, assuming the masters and adults will get the message. My neighbors have erected fences on two other sides, one before I arrived, the other in reaction to my presence. The 'side facing the street' presents its own barrier allowing passage of the horseless carriage. We live on a rectangle, as part of a grid. We are what is called 'platted', part of a subdivision that was concocted in some municipal or county drafting office, with a taxing district mentality, without regard for topography. Some day I would love to plat a subdivision with cookie cutters, creating gingerbread lots to accommodate our gingerbread homes; an American Scream!. The tax-base cannot tolerate open, unused spaces. I'll not belabor the point; I have been through it all before, in a very real way; part of the source of my bitterness and contempt arises from my involvements in these arenas, only to have realized, in the end, that I had *summum summarum* wasted my time. Suffice to say that those who look like us and who man the bureaucracies are not like us. It matters little whether one lives in the 'free' countries or in the unfree countries, it is these Lilliputians who run our lives; every contact with them disturbs one's equanimity.

And still a greater part of the contempt stems from my fellow man's lack of response to rationality. Policy, prejudice, and prerogative take precedence over reason and the needs of humanity. I would caution anyone to remember this when they attempt to persuade city hall, the status quo, the vested interest, and the established orthodoxy, that you are human with human needs. They are very adept at saying, "Tough Shit!". They are better at providing sewers, water, electricity, police 'protection', fire puter-outers, schools, all for which we are privileged to pay, whether or not we want what they have to offer. We pay for privilege, but ours is not a cookie-cutter privilege. The orthodoxy argues for efficiency and more taxes, the latter as a kind of graft all bound up in ribbons and statutes. Its odd, and certain, we pay, but are not allowed to choose. The Lilliputians are put in charge of our implicit rights, whether these rights are declared or not; whether bound in gold-edged tomes, or etched in the sand. Not that choosing a cookie-cutter lot

Further Persuasions

would constitute any great expression of will, especially if it was only crumpet-sized; but a large gingerbread man might grant some breathing room, and an arm or leg for taking a leak outside. The Lilliputians save their pee to spoil the brew.

Did you ever observe a house built catty-corner to square rectangular lot? We are good little soldiers; and we basically dislike our neighbors - or do not even bother to know them. Odd, odd, odd. If one is not familiar with his neighbor, how is it possible to find him contemptible?

I have identified a general condition known as misanthropy, which develops more rapidly and reliably as one's neighbor's dog barks continually; his 'monkeys' climb the fence; his 'ghetto buster' blares (something awful); he tunes his auto engine, or cuts his lawn at random hours; motorizes his every activity; burns his socks and underwear, poison oak, inner tubes, asphalt shingles in his fahrplace; chainsaws his kindling, etcetera; known as suburbia; also felt as saturation, with sirens screaming, with helicopters flying overhead, motorcycles roaring about, macho jake-braking, unmuffled youth and brashness, beating their drums, full of sound and fury; TOO, TOO MUCH!!! Grumble! Grumble!; I can not imagine how much more yet I would grumble if I was jailed in an apartment; in a box, from which I could not ... Gentle Suicide, I Prithee. (While, at times, living a 'Spartan' life, I am able to say truthfully, that I have never gone hungry; in addition, that I have never lacked for the healthful substances; and I have eaten, not only for sustenance. I have lived in a nation where the cup runneth over.)

Hopefully, without repeating myself too often, I have provided you with an accurate projection of 'familiarity', a condition which you would most likely tend to avoid if you were given the choice. It is obvious to me, the more one exposes himself to the redundancy of the mundane, the more contemptuous of it he becomes; and the more likely he would begin to fantasize the perfect escape.

Suicide is perfect - over and done with - forever. No more garbage.

Moving into the 'country' is an alternative many of us envision. But if you are considering a move, go some place where you will minimize or do away with human hassles (those invented by one's brother) else one would wish he were some other place (once again) or dead. Getting wet and cold, and being sick and hungry is hassle enough.

On the real, but unreal, island, familiarity makes its inroads into visionary schemes. Shangri-La might read like Gulliver's Travels, if it was not wholly again the substance of a real fiction.

I proclaim 'fiction' because I do not wish to believe what man is able to do to Quack-up Shangri-La. I proclaim 'real' because man does Quack-up Shangri La. At least he recreates the heavenly place in his own

The Island

unaesthetic and tasteless image, being crude on the one hand, and in service to his lazy expedients on the other. One recognizes a certain imperativeness as a natural circumstance to be associated with the living. However, given the adjudged 'natural carrying capacity of the earth' {for humans}, i.e. without agriculture (and stored foodstuffs), which is less than one percent of the 5,000,000,000 (adjust as necessary) presently being sustained thereupon. Are you able to imagine attempting to survive the 'worst case' scenario - the Nuclear Winter? Where I live presently, the Oregon Lottery rates one's chances as one out of ten to win two dollars every time he purchases a one dollar lottery ticket. I have never invested (I lack self confidence {no psycho-kinetic energy either}). I do not wish to test my probable success if my chances were only one in a hundred.

In order to alter the odds I would need to become more aggressive, i.e. become a mean son-of-a-bitch like some Latin American dictator. I would need to aggress upon my fellow man in order to survive. One must take his hat off to the partial success of Agriculture. (Only those capable of defending themselves deserve to live, or have the right to life.)

The 'natural carrying capacity of the earth' is a frightening scenario. I feebly try to imagine a foraging 50,000,000 (adjust as necessary) and how these might interfere with the habits of the balance of us 'survivalists' living on remittance, drug traffic, coconuts, taro root, primitive tubers and maize, breadfruit, berries and the occasional Bambi transformed into plate-sized cuts to serve our partially carnivorous palate. 50,000,000 LIVING ON COCKROACHES. I believe we would be overwhelmed upon our Shangri-Las. Don't ask what happened to the other 4,950,000,000 (adjust as necessary). O.K. Ask, Then!

We have taken some pride in our agricultural accomplishments. We like to cite the farming practices of the natives of the Amazon jungle as a perfect example of why the earth could not tolerate more than a natural carrying capacity. Slash and burn; then move on as the fertility of the soil begins to wane. Primitive agriculture, poor agronomy, poor resource management. We, of course, are smarter, coming from a civilized enlightened extraction. All well and good; lotsa brownie points; and a surfeit of red marks for the aborigines. 'Comparisons are odious' They attempt to promote falsehood (assumptions).

Unfortunately the Shangri-Las have been obliged to sustain the ravages of the civilized entities. Islands quite innocently attract all sorts. An island without amentias and resources does not attract, but a very few, perhaps those without choice; the languishing seaman, escaped convicts, the deranged or other categories of social outcast. Not only America was settled by such a motley contingent. (Our forefathers, George.) (Which George?)

Further Persuasions

Shangri-La had, at one time, been graced by virgin forests. The 'survivalists' soon savaged the verdure to meet the capitalistic world's demand for cold hard cash. Shangri-La was not an awe-inspiring haven beneath heaven, but a ripe plum to be felled. Legal tender, my love. Soon Shangri-La becomes a bit disheveled, then finally denuded, with chaff, slash, trunk, root and scarification remaining as mute testimony to the natural carrying capacity of the Urban Commercial Banks. I have heard it said in Harmony Heaven, "The only Good Tree is a Dead Tree". The aborigines may offer some more durable rationale. The only favorable statement to be made for modern civilization, albeit technology, involves accomplishing the task more expeditiously. We do pay lip service to 'sustained yield', acknowledging our recognition of the depletion, considering the theme a worthy inclusion in the curriculum of our institutions of higher learning, as some task with which the future generations should concern themselves. 'Don't think of it as less later, but more now.' The picadors believe there are tomorrows, while the capitalists take the cash and let the credit go.

All the virgin forests have been stripped clean, excepting those in the Indian Reservations, and protected Wilderness areas, and sacred backyards. The devious mind of man will find a way of acquiring them. We are at the second level now, we have arrived at the first century of sustained yield. Nature, Gaea, Mother Earth has been solely responsible for the sustaining of the yield. That is, the harvest of today, while yielding a far more emaciated product, has come into being through the generosity of Gaea rather than through any sustained effort on the part of man to replenish, despite his say-so. What are a few trees laboriously planted compared to the take? The sustaining follows - only. It does not co-exist, and will never precede. All the while, the process of removing (taking away) accelerates. The machinery for decimation and denudation (harvesting) grows more efficient and expeditious while the replenishing is done at one's leisure, by hand, and abandoned to the anomalies and vicissitudes of 'inspired' labor. We are too busy as consumers to give a damn about nurturing. Your on your own buddy (with an anchor in heaven with tree farms for the Yule). A terribly long lag, to be sure, longer than a human generation. We would argue only a simple-minded person would propose that replenishment precede a taking. Ah so. Obviously we are not accustomed to thinking in such terms. It doesn't follow that one should anticipate the conclusion.

So much lies bare as a result of our servitude to the Banks; we might begin to imagine some face-saving remedy through the contemplation of the emptiness existing as a potential for creating a belated precedent. We can not harvest lip service or bumper stickers.

Trees Are America's Renewable Resource.

Sierra Club, Kiss My Axe.

The Island

Love at first sight.

Where does it all begin, and what can we do to provide remedy?

I am assured it begins with a demand. The urban masses, primarily, clamor for Buildings in which to conduct their lives. The Vested Interests and the Banks descend upon the forests to serve the common weal - at as large a profit as the market will bear. Simple is as simple does. Soon Shangri-La is as bald as a Baboon's rear end. What remains on the fringes becomes fair game for gypos and pirates (survivalists), until one reaches diminishing returns. There is no remedy. It happens over and over again without respite; there is no remedy. And if you are not prepared to do what is in the interest of the future, that nebulousness we are unable to reckon, then some Watt-headed bible-thumper filling your void will argue its all pointless since we are soon headed for Armageddon (After Rapture); so rape away, MEN.

Anyway (I'm reluctant to call them) people tend to leave Shangri-La when there's nothing more to be gleaned, and after it has been made unlivable. Then it is stunned with peace and quiet.

In addition to the Bankers and Vested Interests we, being what we are in other areas as well, have applied the square to the round in the platting of Shangri-La. Shangri-La was established as a possession, a possession thus divided into gridded sections in order to become the still smaller possessions of others. Shangri-La was not established as an eco-system. Unfortunately we arrived too late with a notion of ecology; the whole damned earth had already been divided into real estate pursuing some Biblical admonition to 'Multiply and Subdue the Earth; too little, too late, as usual. Thus Shangri-La was unable to benefit from the hypothesis of a 'multiple-use' concept that would have envisioned the native possessory holders as being the eventual recipients of a sustained yield in terms of forest management, agriculture, and water resource management. Shangri-La evolved as a hit or miss chance medley, sustaining practices that were hardly an improvement over the aboriginal practices of the Amazon, over which we are wont to pontificate - unless one accounts mechanization an improvement. Mechanization is swift in what ever it achieves. The promise and prowess of the industrialized society has allowed us more time to imbibe, inhale, injest and inject. A prayer for Modern Man might sound:

Mechanization, in principle frees the lot of all man from an unremitting and burdensome physical toil, allowing him time for other things (so the script reads); like building cathedrals, writing poetry, composing symphonies, painting masterpieces, carving statuary, dancing into the sunset and celebrating life; A women!

Mechanization, in a variety of forms has become an integral part of Shangri-La. Prestressed concrete, word processors, synthesizers, compressors and spray guns, pointing machines, (wind-up dancers?).

Further Persuasions

You have heard enough of the expression 'Shangri-La'. I have repeatedly dinned you with the expression. Of course, no such place exists now any more than it did in James Hilton's novel, *Lost Horizon*, and could not possibly exist as a creation of collective man, because man is more baboon than he is the manifestation of his own thesis.

To me Shangri La must exist without bureaucracy, yet without bureaucracy how will it be able to survive the wantonness of man?

Paradise, Eden, Elysia, The Happy Land; (Ellis Island, Heaven?) shall I recall all those fond expressions of desire and hope that have sustained the despairing over the centuries of our evolution? *UTOPIA, PARADISE, EDEN, ATLANTIS, SHANGRI-LA, HAPPY VALLEY, EL DORA DO, CASTLE IN THE AIR, ICARIA, LEMURIA, LYONESSE, PARNASSUS, ELYSIAN FIELDS, ARCADIA, LOST HORIZON, PROMISED LAND, MECCA, SWEET FELICITY, THE PRIMROSE PATH, UNALLOYED HAPPINESS, GOLDEN AGE, GREENER PASTURES, ENCHANTED ISLAND, ENCHANTED FOREST, ONE'S HEART LEAPING WITH JOY, LIFE LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, NEW(ARK), NEW ATLANTIS, NEW ATHENS, NEW BEDFORD, NEWBURG, NEW ENGLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, NEW FRANCE, NEW GRANADA, NEW HEBRIDES, NEW SPAIN, NEW SPAPER, NEW YEAR, NEW YAWK, AND FOR CRIPES SAKE, NEW ZEEEEELAND; NEW, NEW NEW. THERE'S NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN!!!*

Shall we try one more time? *HARMONY HEAVEN*, a place completely devoid of bureaucracy, where we are turned loose on our own recognizance. What right have I to such an illusion?

If I wish to believe that Harmony Heaven exists peopled with kindred souls, if it be peopled at all, you will say such is unreasonable; as a matter of fact, a predisposition bordering on insanity; it is not only illusory, it is delusional, which some might further characterize as paranoid grandiosity.

Only in afterlife, you say.

And that is not delusional?

Let me assure you that Harmony Heaven exists, but it is only partially peopled with mock kindred souls, many of whom belong to borderline disenchanting; disenchanting, both with Harmony Heaven, and with the larger world. They realize they are trapped; they leave, and they return; pillar to post; post to pillar. They appear as some sort of scurrying creature. They have made their move, and have burned their bridges; actually the bridges collapsed of their own. It becomes obvious that all other moves would only result in a downward vacillation until the grim reaper silences the wail. No one had accounted the tedium of Harmony Heaven. As you may have guessed, the failure of the escape is not the fault of Harmony Heaven; it is a shortcoming of this life not to be content wherever we are. We have made an insistent issue of destroying our own innocence, and we choose not to turn back. Thus the tedium

The Island

transforms itself not into creativity, but into a gossip, or malingering until the sun sets.

Upon The Island, people have murdered people, people have disappeared, bodies have washed upon her shores, people rob each other, blame each other, and malign each other.

People have alighted to 'squat', to poach, to rustle, to pilfer, to grow *mary jane*, to traffic, to circumvent, to survive without conscience.

Longtime residents of Harmony Heaven have lamented and cried out 'Foul', '**Cheats**', obviously sensitive to a feeling of being short changed by the new wave of social contraventions. To have labored ones life away as a dutiful citizen, obedient to a tenet that 'labor has its own rewards' observing a given set of rules to which all agree; yes, for so long, and so diligently; and now to be mocked by these others, these cheaters; what is the value of labor, of diligence, of rules; Then!; then, to suffer the dictates and arrogance of these counterfeits.

Not all is evil; not all alighters have followed the progression from squatter to trafficker. The variations are many. Whether or not one has played by the rules does not predict the level of enjoyment to be experienced once one gains her shores.

Draft-dodgers from other lands, peaceniks, pacifists, non-violent, non-involved, dope-heads, escapees from down under and doom have found their way to Harmony Heaven, some to alight, some to squat, some seeking alternatives, some with the wherewithal to escape, alight, squat, all to survive, something the longtime residents had been doing as fishermen, as shipbuilders, as farmers, teachers, store and post office operators, bus drivers, road graders, loggers, remittance men, open-range ranchers of sheep and cattle, and yes even as greens pickers; whatever would get bread on the table. The new wave, product of the newer generations, desires to shorten the process with instant wealth, whichever way they may. Survivors and survivalists; only a scant difference separates them, in the last analysis. All the diligence and wishing that labor contained its own rewards has only subtracted years from ones all too-short existence.

Emblazoned in the family coat-of-arms, hanging over the doorway of one of the longtime residents of Harmony Heaven is found **PERSEVERENCE**, on oddly insistent admonition inconsistent with what one might imagine concerning the Happy Land. The Lord moves in mysterious ways - within this world anyway.

Yes, we had finally navigated to this place called Harmony Heaven, long after it had been acquired under a flag, and had been subdivided into quarter sections without regard for ecology, topography or anything more than what a straight-edge and transit could devise. The marks on the maps delineated areas that had long become possessions of

Further Persuasions

individuals, some areas having already changed hands many times. The flag had retained a portion unto itself.

We had anchored in a bay that bore the apparent stamp of man. We had dinghied to the only obvious point of disembarkation, served by a roadway; or break in the bush as the case may be. We were greeted by the customary PRIVATE, further amended to read "Any DEATH Resulting From Trespassing Upon These Premises Is Assumed At Your Own Risk". The premises consisted of a Quonset-like covered wooden barge, linked to a fixed shore wharf by a short wooden floating dock-walkway and a wood-slat covered log gangway resting and residing between the two, and following the excursion of the tides.

We had merely wished to walk upon the roadway, which we had assumed to be public, to stretch our limbs, but, upon reading the dire admonition, nearly returned to our waiting floating Heaven to disappear over the horizon, never to return.

Alas, nothing ventured, nothing proverbial. The place seemed deserted; we felt no malice, intended no harm; we thus ventured, walking upon the further extension of the unpaved roadway that was not in view from the water, the roadway barely two small vehicles wide, that meandered through the forest and bush.

Forest and Bush, and Abandoned Vehicles in assorted disarray, appearing at random along the roadway. Heaven could use a little tidying, we thought. We had walked only a short distance when an Islander appeared alongside in what latterly became the ubiquitous Japanese Pickup. The native insisted we accept transportation to wherever 'she' was traveling, which turned out to be a very short distance indeed. Our declinations were met with further insistencies, the origin of which we knew not. This personage wore no Halo; perhaps she was allowed to wear it only upon certain occasions. We dared not inquire.

Actually we were unaware that we had landed at Harmony Heaven, for the land, in general, seemed similar to all the other islands we had seen from the shore, just more of the same: dirt, rock, bush and trees surrounded by water, marked, in this case, by a scant number of dwellings as well. True, 'twas the first occasion we had ventured beyond the shoreline into the forbidden, which we had always suspected had "Belonged" and as being guarded by mad dogs. Dogs, however were not in evidence, and as we learned later, were scant upon the island, and if found on the loose were considered a menace.

Our first impression might have convinced us that we had entered quite another place; perhaps it was all an intentional disguise to thwart the bad influences. By special invitation only (RSVP, Love). None of the individuals we encountered were observed to be sporting Haloes, nor did they speak in a Heavenly Dialogue. One would naturally draw the conclusion he was not in Heaven.

The Island

Harmony Heaven exists as a euphemism for our (my wife's and my {the 'we' in this epistle} inclination to dream, even though the stuff of our dreams is a bit fluffy and awkwardly defined).

Still, in all, although haloes and heavenly dialogue were not in evidence, we were impressed in a way we had not anticipated, which was further augmented when RCWD suggested we accept an invitation by the insistent islander to visit their newly completed perch upon/above the water, in what they must have envisioned in the beginning as a facsimile of the aforesaid Shangri-La.

Truly, a beginning for us. We practiced little restraint in our imaginings, that 'this is the place', whatever 'this is the place' could possibly mean to anyone, but ourselves. I suppose a friendly welcoming face acted as some catalyst to yet other embryonic selves requiring only the propitious or adventitious to encourage a latent and further burgeoning.

Harmony Heaven soon gave way to other realities; realities, which in themselves carried unknown, and unrealized possibilities.

The Insistent Natives who urged us upon their sacred turf, whose perch occupied such as provide view of the sea down below, indeed eventually tired of that Eden, unable to draw or suck enough juices from the environs to assuage their languishing souls, hers neglected by her mate as he flew about in his cloud of smoke and drink blurred assessments of reality, craving more obliteration. The modus of Escape is to escape from escape.