

Apropos Of Nothing

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Apropos Of Nothing

We The People.

I have listened. I now listen with an abjectly skeptical mind.

I am convinced we have missed our opportunities.

I listen to them fomenting in their imaginative new lingo - blurring our vision. Star Wars; High Frontier; Strategic Defense Initiative; a dome of protection over Amerika.

It all means a lot of effort, time, and now, most importantly MONEY, yours and mine, something we do not have, (or blood of the masses [take your pick]) invested in the Vested Interest, and in Paranoia.

I listen inside. What is it they are saying? They are saying two things, at least.

1). They are afraid of the Bad Guys. They are afraid of losing their pile.

2). Besides wanting to control the ball game, they want to generate a lot of corporate gain through the exploitation of this fear of the Bad Guys.

♪). If necessary, they will create the fear in order to promote the corporate (crapit) cause.

We claim that the price of Freedom (making the world safe for Democracy) dictates a vast expenditure - in armor, measured in TRILLIONS; an amassment of numbers, easy enough to write, but difficult to imagine, except they are smaller units than Quadrillions. But, can you imagine a Trillion (1,000,000,000,000) of anything. Can you imagine counting a Trillion grains of sand, or wheat; or a trillion bacteria, or a trillion marbles, or bullets, or a trillion dollars or rubles expended in building a monument to Peace and Brotherhood? You cannot persuade me that spending trillions on something like peace wouldn't get the job done [let me have crack at It]. You did know, of course, a military economy in a time of peace is absolutely necessary to our survival. This is quoted from the First Afflatus in Economic Realities delivered by Milton Freidman at the First Congress of Iron Mountain. This state of affairs obliges us to create external conflicts in order to fulfill our economic destiny. ALL AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE. OH!, The Power and Abuse of Government (with a smile of course). Oh! Oh! Oh!

I really do not want to listen anymore. When I hear that survival of some narrow interest takes precedence over our mental health, I do not wish to hear any more. Being 'half-dead with worry' and/or paranoia is the necessary condition of Freedom. That is

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YOUR notion of Freedom. It is called a 'mean' survival based in aggression, hostility, destruction and (sadism) ♪♪. 'We' expend Trillions in the hope of a guarantee of survival - we say - within a state of Freedom, or Bedlamized Democracy. Perhaps my closed mind is precluded from perceiving the fatalistic imperative in this arrangement.

It is conjectured and argued that Freedom requires Vigilance. I am convinced we have missed our opportunities. Paul Revere was transformed into pots and pans.

Enough cannot be said with regard to the presumptions of the Wealthy, the manipulators and oligarchs within our state of Freedom.

To say that the balance of humanity, the great proletarian mass, the commoners, are incapable of helping themselves, extricating themselves from this nemesis, brings to mind the wasp-like, stingless ichneumon fly whose larvae live as parasites within the larvae of other insects; we hapless ground bugs are terrified of wings. My meager intellect is perplexed. Will you not at least protest?

Doesn't it hurt?

What is Evil?

He that will differentiate on the basis of wealth, according himself rights and privileges to be denied to those of lesser means, construing such as an inalienable RIGHT; and, to inherently escape all the little evils that plague the balance of humanity (as commemorated in the tales of the Decameron [That was a long time ago, My Bocaccio]).

What is Good?

And to further assume that the great proletarian mass was invented to serve the presumption of the Corporate MAW. It is not possible, or appropriate, to utter the phrase "We the People" without signifying what is meant by 'we'. "We" includes I (or me) and some of you. 'We' is an expansive all-inclusive expression; however, in reality, it appears as more of a gesture, than a realistic appraisal of a self-embracing doctrine of numbers.

"We" may even represent a majority sentiment, but the representatives of the sentiment may be some glib faction which misrepresents its constituency - a faction usurping a process (Democracy) to advance its own ends. We speak of subversion always as a process that acts from the outside, whereas a far greater danger always operates inside; to wit the Watergates, Iran-Contragates et al.

I hear, you hear, such expressions as 'Silent Majority' or 'Moral Majority', or 'Popular Majority'. In the drafting of 'our' Constitution 'we' were warned of the dangers of Rule by Majority

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(regarded also as faction). Whereas a majority of votes are required to elect a representative or a President, even if, hypothetically, by a plurality of one, or by a majority of all but one, the lesser are not to be construed as chaff; their rights remain unchanged - those 'rights' presumably being held in trust - always, regardless of the 'factions' represented by the officeholder, or by the majority. The government, which had received its 'reason to be' through becoming theoretically representative of 'we', has evolved into something with a life of its own, creating issues in which 'we' are expected to participate. All governments follow the same course regardless of their 'reason to be'. If the government elects to create Banality as an issue, then candidates for public office must address the issue if they expect to be in the forefront of their times. To Banal or not to Banal. A public opinion poll may show there is no interest in a Banal, but there is an interest in continuing the Space Program, even though it will mean going into hock. Many people believe that the Space Program is not Banal, so there you are. Icarus believes that a fool-proof ejection system should be designed by man before he launches another space ride. Neptune could care less; he believes the nations resources ought to be squandered on developing ocean probes.

If you don't want to get embroiled in this hominid involvement, then you just stay out of the game - Right? Rong! What applies to Banality and the Space Program or the Ocean Program, applies to the whole scheme of Representative Government. I'm supposed to vote for so and so to represent me on one hundred issues that neither concern me or interest me, or that I, or most of the 'We', had nothing to do with creating. It is purportedly IN MY INTEREST to be concerned with my safety, so when Joe Politician comes along and picks a fight with some foreign government, supposedly representing the 'WE', when maybe he is just a narrow-minded flag-waving idiot. The next thing 'we' know, those dingdongs 'we' elected to represent us are voting on some gottdamned Strategic Defense Initiative so that damned foreign government don't get to retaliate, instead of gettin a holt of that Joe Politician by the short hairs. Anyway its out of our hands, its all a put up job; an' it all goes to say 'we' don't need it. Is it any wonder most of WE do not know which end is UP?

Implicitly the danger exists that 'we' will exclude me (I) (or YOU) - and most generally does.

In my paranoia I have not the slightest doubt that the corporate MAW would wish to enslave me, first as a laborer (number) in its service, to be exploited to its advantage; as a consumer (number) of the material of its raw religion, regardless of its quality; and as a pawn (number) to be part of a front line of defense or offense, in

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the capacity of laborer, body, myrmidon; whose means and life, both, would be the ordained (and inherent) sacrificial entity to be expropriated in a service to protect the entrance of the corpus of the MAW. Whew! Some sentence. SOME kind of HIVE!! An extrapolation of Lords and Commons.

It has been argued that Freedom (Liberty), Rights, Equality, Justice, etc., etc., are not things that grow on trees, that one must recognize them first, gain them secondly, and thirdly, nurture them and remain vigilant with regard to their viability. We argue that vigilance should always be outer-directed towards the Bad Guys - over the horizon - as though we must always assume their existence, or invent them or believe that the world cannot exist without a Bad Guy.

Without a Bad Guy, there would be no argument, therefore we have created a mythical Bad Guy, an Archetypal Bad Guy, a Talismanic Bad Guy who serves to unite the proletarian mass (ignorance) in service of the Good (MAW). Does an inward vigilance seem too myopic?

When I place my name in the hat for public office, I do not attempt to represent a faction; I attempt to represent an idea of human society, something that is not convertible into any kind of currency. I cannot lobby for or against a particular issue for I am a proletarian constituent. Such constituency trades only in human currency. Conversely the MAW lobbies with a very different kind of currency. In public office holders 'we' cannot assume the apparency of propriety; we must suspect that our representatives are influenceable by the faction, sometimes referred as 'consensus', implied as the 'majority', who may only be the dupes of the MAW. The question: "Would I not represent a majority faction in the proletarian mass?" The answer: "Philosophically, Yes; as a matter of practical reality, much would depend upon the cohesiveness of the 'WE'.

One might think we ought worship the 'benefactor', the stimulator of the economy, the provider of employment, as though we were all in this together, e.g. Genrul Mothers as benefactor. The worship would entail extending certain advantages, or dispensations, or prerogatives, to the 'Lords of Industry' for their role in 'stimulating their economy', in providing consumer goods (whatever that means). We should allow them to make profit, to be freed from taxation, to influence government policy with regard to creating foreign markets, employing our wherewithal to subvert, assure and protect the interests of Genrul Mothers wherever they might choose to alight. Genrul Mothers is used symbolically as well as representatively to denote a faction which includes the likes of DoPunt, Dhow, Union Carborundum, IMB, Eastinghouse, Genrul

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Dynamite, Genrully Electrifying, U S Steal, Bethherhim Steal, Annieconder, Lockhoard, EXXOFF, Chovron, Texago, Alkoa, Koka Kola, Bunk of Amerika, Georgiana Pacifica, United Froot, Container Corpse of Amerika, ADM, Monsanto, Cargile, - I'm running out of room... the list goes on beyond the edge and the bottom of the page (Fortune 500). If one truly supports the idea of making the World Safe for Democracy, he could hardly refuse to support the Imperialism of the Corporation, since they are the true beneficiaries of our society.

My paranoia leads me to believe that 'our' government is in bed with the interests of the MAW. This creates in me the feeling I obtain when I recall the presumptive of the *droit de seigneur*.

The government also implicitly announces to us "What benefits G.M. benefits the Nation". Our Lords of Industry, albeit, through the mouthpiece of Government, further announce and emphasize to the commoner, in order to form a More Perfect Union .. and to make the World Safe for Democracy, that he is the beneficiary of a new economic reality, known also as 'trickle-down' from the Private Sector. Sadly, we succumb to this propagandistic baloney; just as the object of *droit de seigneur*; just as we do all the hoopla about the BAD GUYS over the horizon. Echoes of Fascism?

Each day, in order to participate in the game?, one necessarily augers to overcome his acquired store of skepticism (cynicism). It becomes an awkward circumstance to wish to seek some basic common ground in the 'we', that 'we' may yea-say together. It becomes an embarrassing convenience to need to contrast 'our' form of government to the other, that *_bête-noire*; (at the time of this writing, the Soviet Union). (Incidentally, WE, takes the politically acquiescent form of the United States of America.) Our yea-saying together involves the negation of the other, not only the Soviet Union, assuming we may readily and naturally access our own good offices.

We question ourselves, but feel comfortable knowing 'we' could be worse off, regardless of 'our' answers. That is to say 'anything is better than DOOM'.

Perhaps the same individuals who occupy those unwarranted Lordly positions in 'our' world, which has been made over into 'their' world (was it ever 'our' world?), would occupy the Center Stage in that 'other' world of the *_bête-noire_* if it had been their fate to live amongst them, instead of here, with us. Krupp, Mitshubishi, General Motors, and the Rothschilds, survive Everywhere! All the time!

Given what the system encourages and tolerates, it is not an heretical impropriety that accuses anyone of occupying an unwarranted Lordly position, whether he or she be a Supreme

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Court Justice, Elected Representative, Corporation Executive or a plain Vested Interest hidden within a PACS. The 'bottom line' serves those who have a vested interest, whether it exist, in the corporation, or through its links in government. A classic example is our Supreme Court Justices who arise as political appointees. They are nominated, not for their swearing to uphold the Constitution, or for the renown of their astuteness within the field of jurisprudence, or their exacting knowledge of the Law, but for their legally revealed sentiments and prejudices, and for the utility of establishing precedents which protect and further the interests of those from whom they have received their reason to be. We expect that this is the way the game will be played, just as in Mexico, a public office holder is expected to enrich himself while in office (It is his only chance).

You might be inclined to retort, "So What?". Surely I ask for too much. 'One ought not be human', is what I am saying, 'but statue-like, upon a pedestal, fixed in a known and reliable attitude'. To ask anyone to be unprejudiced or unbiased, in his outlook, is to ask that person not to be human. Yet, it must be so.

There seems to exist a need to influence the system in the uncomfortable arena of Free Enterprise. It had been thought it was possible to buy elections through campaign contributions, or to buy the candidates, therefore we arranged to disarm the monetary approach to representative government by limiting the size of contributions, while simultaneously leaving loopholes through which influence peddling could still operate - through the happy offices of Political Action Committees, and the bonanza of Matching Funds. Those who make these decisions were none other than the same proverbial Foxes Guarding The Chickens; the Congress deciding its own fate. If 'we', the chickens, want a piece of the Action, we had better become Foxes.

Free Enterprise means the Freedom to subvert the system with enterprising schemes such as the PACS, in the cynical belief that every man has his price. Even without the so-called PACS, influence peddling is a continuing form of active employment, keeping a number of people off the unemployment rolls as they practice a time-honored tradition of hawking, confidence peddling, soliciting, and lobbying.

Why is this necessary? Why is it necessary to influence the Free? (Market?). It is only necessary to Subvert! I am reminded of an encounter we experienced with a Fishing Seiner christened FREELAND, whose skipper, during stormy weather, told us 'where to go' because we had anchored our little bark, during savagely

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inclement weather, in the place he wished to set his net. The liberal usage of the word FREE has spoiled the vintage.

It goes without saying that many men have been discovered to have had their price; too many connected with government. Watergate has provided 'our' More Perfect Union with a particularly spectacular and acute example of corruption in high places, its participants comprised of a bevy of highly trained professionals, one of whom encapsulated their 'discovery' and attempted concealment as a Cancer, more aptly stated as 'chicanery unfrocked'; perhaps chicanery is a prevalent governmental form of Cancer.

We continually reiterate to ourselves after each episode, when further dwelling upon the import and morality of the event drives everyone into as remorseful drunkenness... "That's all behind us now".

"We have learned". "We" promise ourselves not to forget, to be vigilant. He (the automobile) pardoned the President, forgave his chicanery. But right or wrong, a draft dodger was a foul human, not deserving of amnesty, even though one 'heroically' dodged that Goddamned travesty of every thing human, conducted in Vietnam (which a helluva lotta people now recognize, especially those who fought 'valiantly' to keep the World Safe for Democracy. [I know, you are getting tired of hearing it over and over again; I sure hope so.]).

(Never forget the Iran-Contra privatization of foreign policy)
(Outside the Law, by the way).

The significance of William's life had been underscored through his own peculiar awarenesses, as represented in the foregoing worded ambulations.

"He realized he did not belong.

He realized he has been abandoned to this particular fate.

He realized there was an Imperfect Union.

'In this day and this age', in this particular configuration of community or social order, an arrangement (accommodation) that had evolved, was in a perpetual diathesis of transience, despite its seeming compulsion to ossify. The older order sought a stasis, something constant and unperturbed, wherein it becomes involved in regulating, leavening, dispensing, doling, judging, assessing, fitting, arranging a comfortable symmetry around itself.

While from below, from the new, from the fringe, from outside, a pressure is exerted. It clamors for recognition despite our engraved lip service:

*"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breath free,*

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*The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

(While they, the Copper and Iron Bitch, restore.)

The dilemma: should the old order become expansive and inclusive or should the old order close ranks about itself? Is there a choice?

There appears to be little or no choice, simply because we are governed by animal instincts and not concepts of human fairness and equity in all things.

While the new builds something for itself from and with something that is culled from the leavings, the abandoned inspirations, and the 'eternal' verities, the old watch, apprehensively, arming themselves with righteousness, morality and steel".

The voice behind William cautions his wilder cogitations; 'Be fair; think of the multitudes who believe in social order, in the state, who want only a peaceful setting in which to partake of their simple needs and pleasures.'

He speculates again that 'one may wish the peaceful setting; one may earnestly believe that social order (the state) is the only solution; whereas I believe it is only a solution of convenience'.

The voice cautions again. "If a member of the community labors for subsistence for himself and his family, let's say; that is, he finds within the vast incomprehensible system of your established orthodoxy a way to provide sustenance and shelter, and is able to live with the hope of a consistency and constancy of these circumstances, should he question this convenience, this hand that allows him this much, permits him to function within this something?

What are his expectations? Do you have a right to agitate him, to play a chance-medley for him, suggesting that he is being exploited?

How do you know he is being exploited? Perhaps this is the best of all possible worlds, in the truest sense of the expression. Perhaps your kind can only dream of the impossible"

William argues "To you, to form a 'More Perfect Union' signifies a Union solidifying into a mutual protection society; an 'I was lucky, I got there first; I'm hanging onto what I got', Union. Cheap labor, Slavery and 'whatever the market will bear' are the means towards your ends."

The voice argues back angrily: "You have not listened".

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He argues in return: "You are saying, 'Do not rile the waters, that something worse maybe in the offing'. Is that fair? or just?."

You argue for a survival of something exclusive. Perhaps I do agitate, in your view. Perhaps I ought take the bribe, be allowed to live quietly on the fringe as a remittance man, becoming neutralized, so to speak. Perhaps I ought be executed as well, in a final irony, by one of those dupes of the established orthodoxy, one whose nominal cause I championed. The establishment dolls them in bright new uniforms with an embossed shoulder patch and shiny brass buttons, and gold epaulettes, distinguishing them with their little medals to proudly display on their puffed-out chests: Fastest Gun in the Territory, Straightest Shooter in the Land, with little red stars representing the tally, by tens, those enemies whom they have annihilated. Obsequious animals standing guard over a private heaven."

The voice seizes upon his use of 'nominal cause', demanding: "Who do you think you are to identify a nominal cause for someone else? Are you so lacking in your own minority? Are you some kind of self-styled savior of mankind? Haven't we heard that one all too often? What is your game?"

He argues with this voice which has suddenly seemed to take sides, which seems about to betray him. How would it be possible to live within the same mind and spirit with such adversity? The voice, hearing his thoughts, moderates: "Are not all individuals required to reckon with the mass, or the collective? Can it be otherwise? Are we to begin at the beginning with each new life? Are we? Are we not ahead of the game for having experienced all these aspects of our nature throughout the millennia of evolution, and the formation of human society? Are we not a revealed entity? Have we varied so much in what we are? NO!. That being the case, are we not better served by the orthodoxy and its protectors (what you would call its hatchments)? What makes one man any different than another? Are they so different? Of course you are different; you possess a Vision where the human community emerges as the Perfect Union, what you would sarcastically characterize as something beyond a glib lip service. You wear a halo; you are one of those".

The voice presumes to burlesque William. "Leave Off!" he exclaims.

"You would put me in my proper place as the insignificant minority of one, consigned to the proletari of Servius. You wish to force me to be on the defensive, provoking me through my fears, hoping to persuade me into a withdrawal - in a fear of the Great Mass. You wish me to believe there is no right of self, no just

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claims for individuality, that one ought be thankful he is permitted to live at all.

Why do you want to bamboozle me, to overwhelm me?"

William kindly shared with me a brief he had written concerning a friend of his, with whom he had strongly identified in spirit. I'll include it here without modification.

*It is Said "... he hears a different drummer"
Perhaps it is THE drummer.
In Pursuit of Self.
Affirmation of Self; Denial of Nothing.
The Throwback/The Holdout.
"... Master of My Fate
....Captain of My Soul".
No Reconciliation.
The Very Last Frontier.
The Exemplary Man?
He left Us.*

He exclaims to us, "I seek to be free; I seek to roam; I seek the company of no other man. I have no possessions other than myself. There is no destiny; there is only Life, while it lasts".

He had tried the other way; the Organized Way. In order to obtain in the Organized Way, one required capital. Obtaining of the capital deeply enslaved one to the Organized Way. It was as though one were always going to another country to do his business in order to be able to live in his own; yet, there was only one country.

His mind and spirit could not adapt to the Organized Way. To adapt was to suffer; this suffering suggested incongruity and unnaturalness. To suffer bodily from the cold and the heat were natural; and in their essence they were acceptable; they were also accounted, within the capabilities of one's own resources. To suffer in mind and spirit was not acceptable; their effective prevention was a prerequisite for living.

'Pain Without Locus' is what I have come to call this latter condition. It drives a man from behind, then again from in the front, and from above or beneath.

He desired to be more than a slave. He preferred what seemed a more conscious and deliberate choice. The more dramatic the choice, the more it stood out against the subtle acquiescence of following a program of salutary existence - and Alas! - To What End? His choice however was more purposeful than dramatic. It was not refusal or a rejection of

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life, nor was it a withdrawal, nor an attempt to transform what confronted him. He still observed obedience to corporeal health. He radiated a confidence in his feelings and thoughts, convinced of their reality and viability; as individually meaningful. Choice was exercised in affirmation of self and in denial of nothing. Such is his drama, if we must perceive the dramatic.

"Selfish! Ha! We got him there; he's selfish. No! Eccentric, that's it. Imagine!, a Trapper; What a Barbarian!"

"No .. 'Barbarian' is an accusation you may use against many, in many different contexts."

"Ah!, now the plot thickens!"

"How shall we judge him, presuming, first of all, we have such a right. We may be confusing what is right with our 'majority'. We ought to listen fully to his story in the interest of 'justice'. Shall we judge him by his own conscience and his own feeling of well-being? If we so judge him, what fault can we find? He has made no contract with us; only with himself. He is fulfilling the latter. 'NO!', you say. You indicate that no man has that exclusive privilege or freedom".

"That I do say".

"It will be difficult for us to be objective concerning our 'Throwback'. We need to define what we mean by privileges and freedoms (rights). While we are about it, we should question our assumed 'rights' with regard to him".

"Wait!! Why do you label him 'Throwback'?"

"Oh, Yes .. He is not a Throwback in the ordinary sense of being a genetic reversion, atavistic, or culturally backward. He simply steps outside the realm of organized, mechanized, programmed existence, as though it had never existed. In so doing he becomes as an individual, more dependent, by necessity, on his own resources. He also attempts to break a spell over himself.

He would appear to be an anomalously dubious character if we were to depict him as rejecting certain advantages to be found in the system he is attempting to abandon. In their entirety, the 'things' within the system, in its entirety, fail him in their substance in the same way certain diets fail to maintain bodily health.

In labeling him 'Throwback' one defines him only in relation to the state of the world in which he is found. Defining him in this manner is somewhat limited and unfair to him, but it does create a framework which we understand more readily, even if it leaves us with only a partial definition. It is though we defined everything through its opposite, which we very often do.

For the lack of a better term 'Throwback' expresses the gist of the juxtaposition, without suggesting something anachronistic.

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Our Throwback is not an intellectual, per se, thus does not share in the stigma associated with 'eggheads'. He is not driven by 'mad' passions, nor any divine creeds. He is an individual who does hear the beat of THE Drummer. Perhaps this will help to improve his image.

It would be pointless to conjecture what he would have become, given other opportunities. We are obliged to deal with what exists and not with impossibilities, as he has chosen to do. There is in him however what appears to be an element of rejection (of what he perceives as the 'system' - The Established Orthodoxy).

The argument he might propose follows: there are certain advantages to be found in partaking of the advancements resulting from industrial technology; that is, it is apparent one would have certain tasks performed that would ordinarily require many 'man-hours' of labor to achieve. What he is unwilling to accept is, once he allows mechanization and all its complexity of extensions to become a part of his existence that he necessarily be bound to depend on these extensions for the exaction and accomplishment of all future endeavors, to the exclusion of his own innate resourcefulness, what others might crudely characterize as a primitive existence.

He feels his dependence upon the machine; he observes his fellow man's dependence upon the machine. Also he sees in his mind's eye an hierarchy of makers, sellers and promoters who exist for themselves apart from the end user, the latter whom, almost to a man, blindly accept the dependence, exercising their choices within that particular hierarchy. What had initially begun as the servant to mankind, conceptually, has become an extension of the possessory individual, and who is 'nothing' in the eyes of his fellow man without such extension; what evolves into an self-enforcing inutile system that has achieved an existence of its own quite apart from the conception, its practicalities and realities. How easy it has become to manipulate the dependence, and further enslavement through the most illogical extension of the concept - planned obsolescence. Caveat Emptor!

Therein lies the rub.

Also, therein lies a basis for emphasizing our inclination towards the stressing of inequalities through the stratification of our 'society' founded in superficialities; one of our more benign persecutions.

In his mind he rejects the hierarchism of mankind. To project an hierarchy through materiality and superficiality is incredulous. He simply cannot accept such a state of affairs which, unfortunately, really and truly exist; so he believes.

He does not reason 'maybe that's the way man is meant to be'. However, he somehow realizes it is beyond him to alter the conditions he finds; he feels obliged to act accordingly, in his own self-interest.

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He also realizes that he does not need the machine; when he divorces himself from the machine, he removes his enslavement to it, that is, he need not purchase nor maintain it, nor live with its failed promise. While it exists as too great an expectation to want permanence as part of the investment, 'planned obsolescence' is certainly not a reasonable expectation.

He thus steps off the treadmill. He has pulled away from the 'field' effect of human society; he essentially abandons his companions.

"Who am I?", he does not ask. Rather he states, "I am"; in essence he states also, "I am not". "I am a 'human' being, Yes, but more than being a 'human', I am a 'Life' ".

"I know something about the natural order of things. I am a predator of sorts, and also I am an agrarian, and both of these conditions exist within me still; this is part of my 'heritage'. I recognize that I am not a cave man, that I would not ask my family to live a 'cave' existence. But neither I nor my family need, to any degree, 'modernity' under the terms it is presented to us. Which of our needs can man provide collectively that we cannot obtain for ourselves?"

He answers himself; "None". Of course he would not be so uppity, casually 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater', so to speak; he realizes that collective man can provide food more easily, can manufacture clothing more easily, can build shelter more readily, can make life more comfortable and secure; and can help fight illness and repair broken bones. But the truth reveals, but for the rare exceptions, it is only for those who possess the means; for the remainder - PITTANCE, and some inexplicable indifference, along with a shoddiness in the marketplace.

He feels that collectively man fails because individually man is motivated by GREED, and not by serving collectively the ends the means were purportedly designed to meet.

While one may accuse our 'Throwback' of arrogant presumptions in denying the crowning glory of man's collective achievement, one must accuse the collective man of an equally arrogant presumption in expecting anyone to accept shoddiness and PITTANCE as equal to the expectations of the participants. (The pitfalls of enslavement and addiction and man's inveterate inveterateness).

The 'Throwback' interests me personally. He did not, with ease, leave the state of collective man and all such 'leaving' implies: security, leisure, brotherhood and certain other social amenities, and advantages, no matter how superficial. It was his initial quest to become a combined homesteader and cattlerancher, with an element of Taming the West and Two-Gun Kid thrown in. On the one hand he modeled himself after a folk hero; on the other he relished independence and an outdoor life.

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Domesticated animals foraging upon the open range, providing a marketable commodity satisfied his basic requirements. The only obstacle to his prevailing fancy was his lack of cattle, the traditional ranch and the means of obtaining them. Even with his credit and G.I. Loans, he would be unable to achieve his ends with any degree of immediacy. With his G.I. Loan he was able to purchase a 500 acre hilly, rocky, stump-ranch, which provided poor grazing land, and no means to grow hay without a good deal of clearing, leveling, ditching and fertilizing. In addition he needed to maintain a full-time employment in order to earn the capital to pay his debts and care for his family. He needed also to procure the live stock as an out-of-pocket expense. The number of animals required to provide an adequate self-sustaining supply for income purposes not to exceed a diminishing return would have been more costly than the land. It is doubtful that the land could have supported the animals without supplemental feeds, that is, in order to meet the competition.

To acquire the necessary income beyond the initial loans and credit, he was able only to offer his youthful body in common labor tasks. His initial investment made it possible to acquire the land and to remodel an existing dwelling to satisfy the requirements of the lending agency. He would have needed at least a few hundred head of cattle to make a self-sustaining operation which would be required to provide for his family and himself, to make payments on the mortgage and to purchase supplemental feed, and all other contingencies associated with raising a family and living a ranch life. The whole dream could not be accomplished with his income with any degree of immediacy. As a matter of fact, after several years, it became apparent that his dream could not be accomplished within the realm of his own resources or within any meaningful period of time, perhaps extending beyond his own lifetime.

Perhaps at this juncture, we could begin to speculate on the nature of fantasies, or we could speculate on general philosophy. In relation to any one man's accomplishment during his lifetime, in the Occident, particularly since the Advent, the Advent of man's presumptions with regard to the 'Promised Land', that, with virtue and dedication, anything was possible. Ah, but dreams were a thing of the past; reality had produced an expectancy of attainment of the more modest goal. The expectancy of self-sufficiency was not thought an untoward goal in the 'Promised Land'. Unfortunately for our 'Throwback' someone else had arrived there already, ahead of him, in a big way. He might have persisted more in the Oriental tradition by leaving part of the dream to his progeny. In his case however, the expectation of achievement had to be measured against the spirit-draining mentality of his 'slave' labor. To hope to achieve self-sufficiency during a meaningful amount of time would have seemed a

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natural enough goal; to have achieved it prematurely may have seemed to be one of the assumed side-benefits of progress in the Twentieth Century; to never have achieved is open to all kinds of Sisyphean conjecture.

"Dreams are the stuff of life"

Such Profundity. Vicarious fulfillment of dreams is not sufficient for some. A dream did not ease the pain for our 'Throwback'. The dream cried for the substance it found lacking in the real world.

He stated to himself his first axiom, "I seek to be free; I seek to roam". He could no longer labor within a 'system' that did not make it possible for him to achieve this first simple proposition. Perhaps it should be mentioned that he was anything but a 'shirker', nor was he in search for the 'soft touch'. We would demean his elemental purity of spirit to construe him as one who is looking for 'something for nothing'.

I am willing to accept him as he sees himself; I identify with his statement of himself. I will restate the position in both his terms and my own.

It would be premature to become defensive; however certain relevant queries are anticipated. The attempt is not being made to close off discussion, but more to avoid being defensive when it is felt there is statement to be made like "The Tree Is", without feeling compelled to justify its existence, or defend the place where it grows, or what form it takes.

You might remark as the 'forward-looking' mayor of some 'burgeoning' metropolis, "If the tree grows in the right-of-way, it has to be cut down". (I'd like to cut him somewhere [that's beside the point]).

I would say there is no end to progress, no end to cruelty, or to barbarism. Perhaps it is always destined the Natural Tree cannot survive on The Commons.

In our conjecturing we were somewhere between seeking to be free and the insufficiency of dreams. We are in the midst of a Pain Without Locus. Our 'Throwback' cannot 'carve out' a life within the Established Orthodoxy; even if he had the energy, he had not the means.

The 'system' did not want his inclusion beyond a laboring to serve its ends. The 'system' was prepared to offer nothing; his identity was subsumed in the 'marketplace'; the 'Promised land' was designed for manipulation and exploitation, not for the constant reenactment of the pioneer's dream (The New Frontier?) The 'system' usuriously made something from nothing repeatedly, producing fat from fat; its raw materials being a ledger, a pencil, and the essential ingredients of AVARICE; and a mass of acquiescent and subservient and symbiotic humanity; the pyramid.

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Accident created beings. The accident serves no purpose beyond continuance. When there are too many, as during the period of my life, then 'being' ceases to have meaning, unless it can be converted to servitude to the 'system'. The 'system,' denies any responsibility for our 'Throwback's' dreams. A man is mad if he takes all that 'Hero of the West' stuff seriously. He's nuts if he thinks "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness" is the responsibility of the 'system'. (Only the Actor reaps the harvest - sucker!) One must, at birth, recognize that there is no Equality. One must, at birth, recognize that he will be preconditioned to accept the 'system' (brainwashed). Conversely one must, at birth, declare his independence from the 'system'.

"IMPOSSIBLE", you say. Impossible, indeed. Yes!, the seeming impossibility of realizing simple dreams.

The crux of the matter resides in: if you do not 'love' the 'system' and subsequently not desire to participate, should you be institutionalized or executed? What other alternatives?

The 'system' failed our 'Throwback'; he admits that it is not his choice to be the slave of another, either as laborer, or in the more extended form, as consumer. Unfortunately it was his choice to become self-employed in a manner that duplicated the efforts of others who 'got there first'. His choice to become a trapper represents the compromised alternative which takes into account the fact that he was not the first; he was the last as many are 'the last' in a replete 'system'.

He had to 'move on'. Once he realized that it was hopeless to pursue his dream on the strength of another's PITTANCE, offered for his labors, he had begun to look elsewhere. The already replete 'system' offered more of the same, with minor exceptions to be found in even more inhospitable areas. His thoughts moved away from the 'Promised Land' to other nations, and other alternatives which would make it possible for him to realize the first proposition to himself. It was clear to him that the homesteader-cattlerancher, 'Taming The West', 'Two-Gun Kid' was less likely to be achieved in what was to be considered more inhospitable land than what he was leaving behind. That was the alternative.

The new alternative represented a new, unsettled, though explored territory, in another nation. He was nearly the first, certainly not the last. He was able to gain assurances from the new government that he would have a secure territory in which to set trap lines. It would be lawfully his territory not to be encroached upon by other trappers.

It was indeed a less hospitable place; it was extremely cold in the winter; dry and insect-infested in the summer. It was barren of humanity, save his immediate family; barren of ready-made amenities, of human progress. Formidable? To Most. It was better than

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institutionalization, better that execution. He was living within the parameters of his own declaration. Perhaps it ought also be mentioned this new territory was devoid of the 'false promise'.

*-- "Struggle, struggle, struggle; why all this struggle? Its all so futile anyway. You say this guy wants to be free and roam. A mere gesture, I say. Let him escape the forces that really limit him; then he will have done something. You quibble over some spiritual deficiency that he experiences. I may agree that maybe he isn't suited for mass production on an assembly line, but certainly he has other opportunities. How much freedom does he require, and how much territory for 'roaming'? Suppose everybody wanted those special conditions, or similar special conditions? With four and a half billion**, can you imagine the consequences? ... You state he cannot be servant to the 'system', but he is a servant to humanity whether he likes it or not. He isn't just a life without a past, that needs to fulfill itself in a vacuum."*

*** Author's Note: Writing mostly penned in 1966.*

++ "He is. And conceptually, he is. But there are certain emotional and psychic attachments, or mechanisms, if you will, that make it quite impossible for him to bring about a complete separation from his own kind. We do not need to argue the point beyond the recognition of it. Conceptually, and as a physical entity, if he so willed, he could live for himself alone; that need not be argued. What needs further expression, and what I will argue for is the direction taken within his being that seeks fulfillment. We haven't any conflict in this area. The ramifications of the four and a half billion you mention would become a more practicable possibility if it was not for 'private property'. I'll skip this little nuance for now, mentioning there are whole generations swallowed up in the facelessness and anonymity of urban 'sardine' tenements. - almost forcibly (If there is no choice, or no exit, what is there?). Even in the Greatest, Most Superlative nation (Promised Land) upon this Earth (according to its own proclamation) whole generations disappear within the urban ghetto. I do not know what this purports to say regarding the 'system'. We harbor some theories regarding 'humanitarianism' (or human rights), some theories regarding economics (very long-winded and devious), some theories regarding 'free enterprise' and free markets; we promote some theories, even some studies and reports, regarding the negative and demeaning aspect of urban ghettos. What we need are some theories regarding the effects of indifference and the lack of love (whatever that means). Individual rights are considered endemic and vital to the preservation of the 'free enterprise system'; there appear to be no limitations, as well, upon the enterprise which results in the enslavement

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and prison-like constraints placed upon the financially deprived, notably and inescapably evident in the metropolises. Within this interdependence one begins to identify the Locus of slavery.

Yes one might say there exists a great interdependency within the human community, even under the aegis of 'free enterprise'. They may follow the carrot into an earthly hell; therefore, to tread in their wake seems unwarranted. Continuance of what one finds is not the sufficient persuasion towards participating in more of the same.

Perpetuation of the species cannot provide sufficient reason; providing for the future generation does not comprise a sufficiency. Doing all the socially amenable things is not enough; doing the latest, being the latest, buying the latest; being 'mod', Fast Track, World Class, Global, (and OH Shit, Universal, or Cosmic) is not enough; as a matter of fact, it very little more than time consuming.

"Where the skies are not cloudy all day, where the deer and the antelope play": epitomizes the trite setting for the enactment of a very personal drama that is but a breath in the cosmos, a breath uttered but once. To assert it is not 'just a life' which needs to fulfill itself alone, misses the point of existence. As already stated, "Affirmation of self, Denial of nothing". The affirmation of self will become a human affirmation by virtue of being human and not dog-like.

For our 'Throwback' the affirmation of self did not transpire as he drove a delivery truck for seven years; it was merely a means towards an end that would not materialize.

In essence we (the common humanity) are asking that our 'Throwback' renounce the 'cowboy-cattlerancher-homsteader-Two-Gun Kid' while we collectively have perpetrated this dreamy character of the past, as we do other dreamy characters, on a pay-to-see basis, and as a catch-all for the promotion of every piece of shoddiness, from shit to shinola.

We ask our 'Throwback' to afford himself a degree of realism that we are not especially prepared to contemplate. We would ask that he pay a fee to view our Handsome Jack brave the perils of an untamed world in order to pursue "Life, Liberty and Happiness" all amidst the glory of the banner that waves o'erhead. Handsome Jack, through his own resources, emerges heroic; he has captivated the belle of the plains with his 'decency and self-sufficiency'. The basic human unit marches off the stage with our 'Throwback's' heart merrily in pursuit. We appeal to his instincts and concerns about himself, to his fancy, but after the show is over we ask that he please be realistic. We even go so far as to elect these 'screen' heroes as our President. One necessarily argues, "That's democracy!".

Obviously he would be a fop if he swallowed all that bull. Perhaps he would be better served if he ingested some hallucinogen, perhaps a 'designer drug'.

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He was and is susceptible, being 'human', being trained and conditioned by us collectively. Like most people, he responded to the 'word' in an innocent manner, mostly as an act of faith, sometimes through the reasonings we had provided. He could not begin to question any of it until he had acquired some experience of his own, or was provided with some greater perception than others with which he had been supplied in his little 'getting-acquainted kit'.

We must marvel that he does not condemn us collectively for suckering him with unrealistic dreams, or with our own confused and baser direction. He does not wish to blame (which I will do of course); he does not wish to procrastinate; he wishes to make something of his own dream, from a redistillation of the crude elements placed before him by us, and perceived by his own intelligence; he elects to live his interpretations within the capabilities of his own resources. We could assist him; somehow we are too unconcerned with his mere life, as we are with all the mere lives, that cannot and will not yea-say what we have provided; besides there are already too many dreams and dreamers - in conflict.

Some forms of expression that have developed collectively do seem to be the product of the ingestion of some hallucinogen. We conduct courtships through our mechanical extensions, our vinyl interiors, our polyester exteriors, our deodorized selves. We are a fabrication, or the stuff of some other kind of dream; a real dream, as unbelievable as it sounds (some would allude these little aberrations as being imaginative and creative, perhaps reflecting some of our adaptive capacity).

Self!? - hmnn - explain that. Try explaining a Tree; I mean "Why is it?", and all that. A Tree - is just there. People write stories about Trees. It helps to write stories; that's what I am attempting to do. I am unable to say whether the story will provide enough of the proper ingredients to capture the essence of what it is I feel. Well, maybe this is not a story; more like 'musings-before-breakfast'.

I would not wish to take anything away from our 'Throwback' by identifying with him, yet I do identify, because I am like him in many ways; we are also both like Trees, although he is more like a tree than I; I am more akin to a potted plant requiring a special environment. However much I might yearn for the 'outdoors' it may not be conducive to my good health to conduct too avid a pursuit thereof; however, in the last analysis, what is written, most likely reflects a state of mind. I'd rather muse upon Trees than live in pots.

He would be so fortunate to exist as a Tree, out of harms way. Both of us, while magnified as Tree and Potted Plant, exist, after all, as Weeds (more than as humans?). If left alone, Trees retain some

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prospect of living to their full potential. As Potted Plants, we Humans we do not; we are mostly unformed, although appearing, through a projected exteriority, to have arrived; whereas our roots fold in upon themselves. His roots would burst the vessel asunder.

He has taken leave of us.

Can we so easily dismiss him?

Author's Note: At the time this was written I knew of such an individual. There were more details about him I might have added that would have detracted from the original intent of this writing. At the time it also served to express some of the ways I felt within the 'system'. It also provided a framework for a more disciplined writing effort. It was also some fifteen years before I was to leave my place of employment, and to more seriously take up a different life, which included fulfilling certain dreams, some of which included writing.

At my place of employment, there was a very sensitive office worker with whom discussions often involved the independent life. Unfortunately for her she was genetically predisposed to manic depression, which greatly complicated her life. When manic she was vivacious and fun-loving and full of dreams expressed. When depressed she was anxious, insecure and frightened. In her search for a way to lead the independent life, she would always relate stories she had discovered in magazines of people who went on vacations that changed their lives, where they found something different to do with their lives.

Eventually this lovely troubled person did find something, as did her husband, who was also a dreamer. And it happened when they had taken a vacation to another state. Although more to her liking, the new life did nothing to alleviate her mental duress. And, even more sadly, the older of their two daughters also manifested manic depression while in her late teens.

Only by word of mouth through a mutual friend did I hear that our Throwback had indeed established himself as a trapper in the interior of BC.

As I write this I realize I should seek out my former lady friend, once again.

Just lately, and sadly, I have heard of her demise. That one should have so lived.

The author will leave off with a quote from Yevgeny Zamyatin:

"True literature can only exist when it is created, not by diligent and reliable officials, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels and skeptics." *Yevgeny Zamyatin* (He died in Paris, aged 53, in poverty).