

This Isn't The Only Game In Town.

You have heard most of this before, from this author.

As he writes some of this again, he may attempt to provide a rationale for some of it.

'At the outset', the reader should be warned this episode may or may not involve the self-consciousness or conceits of the author. (Caveat: hypothetically, good or bad, the author knows more about himself than he does just about everything else.) (In contacting various [hypothetical] publishers, some have recommended publishers of 'memoirs'. The author's question: "What isn't a memoir?")

Beginning at an early age, my particular sentience alerted me to different things, other than those I was supposed to be learning.

The most persuasive argument for learning anything: 'Its for your own good.', wasn't convincing.

My own good, as presented, may or may not have been important to me.

The *good* one learned at home was refined by a kind of tyranny.

The *good* one learned outside of the home was embedded in a surround of other look-a-likes, usually in an institutional setting. Peer pressure, intimidation by 'well-meaning' teachers, were the active ingredients in this kind of learning. The New York State Regents was another of those enforced conformities; everybody intended to think alike.

It might be argued that if I wanted to avoid certain kinds of altercations, it was in my interest to pay attention to the forces around me that wanted my compliance; or else! These implicit survival skills were not taught by anyone.

Conform! or 'take what is coming to you' was the expectation, and the admonition.

Am I getting ahead of myself here?

'For your own good' was an enforceable edict.

'Conforming' became the issue, and natural extension, or purpose, of learning.

I can bring part of what is being presented here, into focus, by mentioning Toni Smith. Many of you have not heard of her, and those of you who have, life has moved on past such memories. Toni was a senior at Manhattanville College, majoring in Sociology. She played for Manhattanville basketball team. During a pregame ceremony, in March of 2003, the players and the audience were expected to observe certain ritualistic customs, amongst them, standing with one's right hand over one's heart, facing the Stars and Stripes, singing the Star Spangled Banner.

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On this occasion, Toni, suited up to play, turned her back, her hands by her side, her head down, during the banner ceremony.

This behavior caused a stir, as one might well have expected.

Toni later told us what follows:

"For some time now, the inequalities that are embedded into the American system have bothered me. As they are becoming progressively worse and it is clear that the government's priorities are not bettering the quality of life for all of its people, but rather on expanding its own power, I can no longer, in good conscience, salute the flag.

The war America will soon be entering in has reinforced my beliefs, while further angering me. I am aware that this is a time of fear for many Americans, and the media has done a fine job of maintaining that fear and riling up people's emotions. However, amidst this fear people have lost sight of the fact that Bush's plan for "maintaining our safety" will cause many innocent people, women and children, mothers and babies, to die overseas. Furthermore, going to war will likely provoke more violence in this country.

It does not bother me that so many Americans oppose me. If anyone looked deeper than the headlines they would find that my arguments are true. Besides, whether or not people agree with me is irrelevant. It is my right as an American to stand for my beliefs the way others have done against me. Being patriotic cannot simply be an empty slogan. Patriotism can be shown in many ways, but those who choose to do so by saluting the flag should recognize that the American flag stands for individuality and freedom. Therefore, any true patriot must acknowledge and respect my right to be different."



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Not for her own good?!

Don't take this amiss. Its an example. Toni was defended by her college president, and attacked by those scoundrels hiding behind the flag.

There are many more examples, some to do with flag waving (patriotism), but not all.

Later in life, when my wife and I went 'cruising' to Alaska, in our sailboat, we had, more or less, left behind the impositions of a world in which we had become surfeited. During our journey, we became steeped in something different, lacking those daily pressures to conform, to mirror the society in which we had been immersed, and inculcated.

The water experience is/was, by far, the more absorbing, and superior experience. Part of that experience is revealed in that 'memoir', Knotted Twine, but also noted throughout my various writings, as the most important reference point for what this world has to offer.

The Alaska trip (lasting 6 months) is raised to illustrate something; not only the ambience, but the things that happened in our absence, as they might have happened to the unconsciousness of the unborn, or the already dead.

We were not there. Our ears were deafened to the clamor of the media, to the momentous sensationalism of catastrophic happenings.

On the transom of our boat we had painted **CAEA** over **eugene**, as we had painted **eugene**, over Seattle.

Symbolic? Perhaps.

Something had to be right with the world (no war ripping things apart, and using us for cannon fodder) for us to be able to traipse (sail) off into the wilderness, in such an unaccountable fashion. Certainly, for us, it was the first of its kind of experience. But we had primed ourselves with many summer cruises and many hikes in the Cascades, with the children in tow. The adventure under consideration occurred after the children had fledged.

Yes, the Cold War was on, and MAD set the tone. There were stirrings in the Muslim world between Shias and Sunnis. There was violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians, bloody violence in Northern Ireland between Christians, and racial tensions and violence on the city streets of the US of A. And there was Ronald Reagan on the marquee. On a daily basis, there was a lot more violence in the world, murder, rape, armed robbery, arson; a seeming unending supply of their right to tell us and our right to know. And there was Bonzo swinging by his tail.

We did leave the world behind. In addition to all the unnatural calamities, before leaving, we had heard, on a daily basis, all the rumblings and predictions and prognostications regarding Mount St.

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Helens. This was amidst my daily reminders to Charline what day it was; she had not turned in the finished copy of her Master's thesis to the Graduate School. It was time to leave!

Finally underway, navigating the channels of Desolation Sound and beyond, northward, we arrived at Sullivan Bay to fuel up before the challenge of Cape Caution and beyond.

Besides **GAEA**, the registration numbers were also painted on the hull of our craft: OR 498 EH. It was May 19th, 1980. As we motored up to the almost rickety dock, we were greeted with "Quite a show you had down there." Only the day before, Mount St. Helens had erupted with considerable violence; mother Gaea purging herself in one great belch.

We can honestly say it happened with or without our approval, with or without the approval of the media, but mostly we were not responsible, because we were not there. We were oblivious, more concerned about Red Tide, and the security of our anchorings; how far to travel in a day, what 'awesome' sight to photograph, where to go fishing, and how often to snuggle.

We knew that Mr. Truman was going to stick it out, no matter what, but we had forgotten him until we got the news, then we began to wonder about the tough staunch old geezur. We felt, if anyone deserved to live, he did; but he went down with the ship, as he had vowed.

Having left behind the pulse of the big mountain has its parallels in politics, around election time. At such a time, and long before, we are literally smothered in costly name-calling, underwear revelations, shady dealings, character flaws, outright malicious malignings, innuendoes and accusations, the all-too-human failings, by the salivating fourth estate, right down to the last second, before we enter the voting booth. Informed at stupendous cost, our brains scoured; ignorant to the last.

Just take a moment to think about what is being written here. It happened without us, despite us. On its own time.

And the Gip, a feeble-minded right-wing old geezur, was getting nominated, so he could consult the Astros, break the unions, scandalize those on welfare, and argue for the SDI; and work a deal between the Iranians and the Contras; invade Grenada, and get pissed off that Jimmy had given the Canal back to the Panamanians. Pore Jimmy, besieged by the hostages, a failed rescue, taking flack over the Shah, high interest rates, inflation, sundry political liabilities. Well, some of this happened after we returned. But, if you believe in predestination, just like Mt. St. Helens, it was all bound to happen, whether we were there or not.

Most of this is not relevant to what is trying to be expressed here.

However, it is true, this world is not of our making. We fit or we don't.

They tried to instill, with snarling, that 'this is the only game in town'; 'learn to play'. Reinforced by the bannered shoulder patch that read: Love It Or Leave It, and the Patriot Act and Home Land Security, and the

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NSA; and a right wing Supreme Court. This sure adds a lot of credence to The Declaration and The Constitution. Outmoded!?

Is there any part of this equation that the author likes?

Because things have deteriorated markedly since the author was young, things are simply worse now; more threatening. Initially, even though one was not a true believer, living with the scoff, he was not threatened, but only with rejection, mockery and humiliation. That was the name of the game. Now the stakes are higher; a real game changer; all who are different are suspected as incipient or actual terrorists; unpatriotic, to say the lesser. No scoffing there, only scaffolding. Paranoia, promoted and exploited by government and its henchman, the fourth estate, is what you gotta Love Or Leave. It's a control game now; you got no moves. Disaster breeds opportunities; ask Milton Friedman.

And we heard it Politics 101: "There oughta be limits to freedom." (W)

Too bad, really. One wonders if ever there was a chance for Fairness Equity and Justice; or even that misbegotten Golden Rule. Its not a matter of Greener Pastures; it's a matter of what is lacking in the hominid creature, even in a nice place like Elysia.

This Isn't The Only Game In Town.

Because I have a 'mailing address' or an e-mail address, or a telephone number, I am subject to harassment by every god damned hawker on the planet, whether or not I am a terrorist; even whether or not I am a non-existent occupant. How's that for your conceits, I am a wanted man, whether I am here or not!

You wanna know what its like out there in that world to which you are trying to force conformity.

Hey, this not a game; this is for real, this is a reeking hell hole. Man has befouled his nest, and wants to do more; he's got the habit. And you better like it, or your ass is grass.

Talk about games.

Take this new congress, flexing its muscles. Their very first order of business is to assure the fucking up of the environment by moving some ugly shit through a big pipe to generate more carbon emissions, and only incidentally to potentially expose every yard of transit to contamination. "Stupid Bastards"; can I say that, Still? There is no such thing as Liberty, there is only Death!

The prez has said he would veto the thing. Let's see if he will cower before the power. Will I be forced to mock him too?

Is this a game, or is it for real? If it's a game, you wanna play?

What is the objective; what are the rules?

Before we get started, keep in mind, homo sapiens is spinning the wheel; he is in complete control of your fate; you are not any longer free to choose. You hafta play! All bets are off! No rules. Bub!

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If you have read 'Thumping', you will imagine what I am thinking when I write something like 'This Isn't The Only Game In Town'.

You ain't somebody unless you are somebody.

'Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?'

I can tell you, it ain't Mitch McConnell or John Boehner.

Whadda ya wanna be when ya grow up?

A daisy, so I can mark your grave. Remember Harry Truman.

Is this the time and place to provide a rationale for all that has transpired in this rant?

That's The Name Of The Game.

Big game.

Die game.

Make a game of it.

The game is up.

Play the game.

The game of life.

Cool game.

My game.

He's game.

(wild) game.

Plays a good game

Fair game.

Game (lame).

Game (brave).

Game to the last.

What's Your Game Plan?

Is it too easy to say: "That's The Name Of The Game"? Is that a cop out? Is that same as saying "This Is The Only Game In Town"?

One tries to glean something of hope from the media yak. PBS is pretending to be more enlightened, broader in its right to tell you it is like it is. But if you follow them daily, they too are using yesterday's sensationalism to carry them forward, to have something shocking, to, not only reveal, but to emphasize, to hammer home with feigned groans and noisy righteousness, your right to know. It takes its place alongside the political banter, a harbinger of more to come.

There is no hope to be gleaned, because reality, their stock in trade, is even more shocking than it seems, just simply because there is no hope. And they know this too, but they will not say so. They will not close up shop and go home; they live to exercise their right to tell it like it is, because it is your right to know.

So, you will ask, "Why not tune out?" "Why plague yourself with half-assed knowledge of this momentous world, this only world?" Got Me!