

The Blank Tile

XX

SCRABBLE, or THE BLANK TILE

or THE EMPHATIC EXPLETIVE; Ω

On many occasions there is little time for composure, wherein the exigencies of the moment call forth: Geeeeeeeezzzzzzuhzzzzzzz Keeeeeeerrrrriiistuh!! (where are you) as father would bellow in frustration and anger, using only ten letters of the alphabet. Others would exclaim, Jesus Christ!, Holy Christ!, Gee Whiz!, Jumpin' Jasus!, Jumpin' Jehosophat!, Gee Willikers!, Geez-oh-Petel!, For Christ's Sake!, For Cripes Sake!, Holy Ωucking Christ!, Jesus H. Christ!, without much more economy of conventional Runes.

Sounds and their vulgarizations, eh wot!? Aaa wart!? An out-of-the-way dialect, not concerned with dropping its h's or the intrusions of cockney coarseness.

Still, in all, good enough for Will who might have done as much with even less - as long as he had something to say; and good enough 'way over in far Amerikee' for Herman Melville.

One ought be content. Still, it might be said we are, in the least, formative (just look around you). The origins of arresting and capturing sounds, imprisoning them into symbols emerges only some three thousand or so years ago, during, while, or thereabouts the Semites-Phoenicians, who were themselves traders exposed to Assyrian Cuneiform and Egyptian Hieroglyphics. Before that seemingly remote time we plunge headlong into the darkness of prehistory which stretches for thousands of millennia, time unaccountable, devolving into grunts and gestures; and scratchings on cave walls, and stone cliffs; fossils; emblematic; inconclusive; leaving a trail - or so we imagine.

And three thousand years hence, what sounds, what morphemes? Imagine projecting such faith into Homo Sapiens as possessing the capacity to endure its own machinations for another three thousand (doesn't sound too likely does it?). Who says I possess no confidence in Mankind? Aye!, what a marvel; it would be a shame to blow it.

And here 'tis, coming upon the close of the Twentieth Century; some presumption, this Twentieth, hinged upon Calvary and he whose name is uttered in every context: Geeeeeeeezzzzzzuzzzzz Keeeeeeerrrrriiistuh!. The thirty-fifth Century of recorded historicals, our nominal emergence from the darkness of time; and the thousand millionth year of our

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evolution. Still but babes.

One dismal rainy wintery Oregon day, I was riding my motorcycle from the center of the city towards the University, my destination, on a three-laner. I was all duded-up in my yellows to assure for some dryness and to enhance my visibility in the sea **'of those thousands of cars with hard, closed people, all alone in them'**. Riding along in the right lane - suddenly a vehicle, pressed into the service of some impatient closed person, switched lanes into my lane along side of me, forcing me against the curb. Fortunately I did not strike the curb - lest I should not be scribing these very words today. As soon as this vehicle moved ahead of me, I angrily twisted the throttle of my little machine, surging around and ahead of this errant beast, raising both arms to the highest heaven, articulating that most explicit and unforgiving gesture, as each hand thrust vertically, revealed only a single symmetrically arranged, central digit projecting vehemently skyward from each.

Shortly thereafter, I reached my destination, in and around, behind some buildings 'on campus'. Lo!, and Behold!, behind me appeared that selfsame vehicle, having followed me thus, discharging its 'hard, closed' manipulator, a lady, no less (Oh! Mah Gud! - here it comes - the riot act). 'To my amazement' she began to profusely request of the deliverer of unforgiveness, forgiveness. Truly she understood, having herself shared, in her capacity as a cyclist, similar abuses along with an equally lurid frustration on many an occasion. She honestly hadn't seen me in the immortal Oregon murk.

"O.K.! O.K., ma'am, I withdraw my inflammatory and provocative speech".

'Tis not the first or not the last time this ready pictorial will serve to enunciate my disposition. 'Tis well understood amongst us in the Occident. 'Tis a singularly appropriate and communicative gesture conveniently adapted to the **'thousands of cars with hard closed people, all alone in them'** competing for space, for aheadness; irritating, angering and frustrating one another through aggressive, arrogant, presumptive and preemptive behavior - at high speed death-courting speed. (Omega, Thou Art Lord; We Do Not Find Any Motion in the Dead.) Moitessier might have foreseen the shootings on those ribbons of asphalt and concrete, known as the L.A. freeways.

'Tis a predictable wand presented in all manner of ferocities and subtleties, by all ages, all sizes, ethnic strains, religions and sexes.

We understand each other perfectly (even though we

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pretend otherwise); we do recognize what we have done. (The North Koreans missed it initially, but when enlightened found new occasion for rebuke against the sailors of the Pueblo. And how often we return the fire of our guilt 'Ωuck you!; if you hadn't been driving so slow, hogging the highway'; 'Sunday Driver!'; 'you might know, it'd be some yaking dame!'; 'some smart-ass kid - gotta pop his wheelies!'; 'there goes another one in a Cadillac - thinks (s)he owns the road!'.
Give 'em both barrels!

A satisfying pantomime; Alas!, the exigencies of the moment; a three-dimensional syllabic; a no-letter word; an inconsonant expletive; a non-glottal deliverance: an ignoble savagery. 'Tis better than spilling blood.

Are we now at sea? Have I found my way, at last, into a watery morass from which there is no escape? Twenty-six little characterless characters that resemble nothing; dwarfs at that - the innocuous alphabet. Is it not a wonder that I should elect to while away - away as a muted scribbler?

What is this prodigious SCRABBLE? And what, pray tell, is the utter relevance of the CROSSWORD?

While there may exist imperatively an infinity of things to be said, especially concerning those beyond our grasp, the lexicographer stands dumbly and the lexicon idly by. I say, 'not so with Will and Herman; just give them a quill and an inkwell'.

Should I presume to add a letter somewhere in the middle between m and n, something that might look like the 'last' of old Ω to be sounded at will in any manner, as aspirate, fricative, consonant, diphthong, glottal stop or vowel, and to be employed as a free radical, an absolutely wild letter or Blank Tile; for example: 'That Ωirty Go Ω Ωamn ΩucΩing Ωon of a Ωitch!'; 'You Ωotten Ωousy Ωastard!'; or 'Ωp Yours!'; 'mΩn!'; Ω!?

It would be like adding a fifth wheel; EARTH, AIR, FIRE, WATER and ΩART.

"Ahoy!, Ahoy!, Slumbering Ship, Ahoy!, Ahoy!"

'Am I then to be roused again from my reverie; am I not in the proper place? Have I stumbled into another's territory? Or is it another one of them? Peace!'

"Request permission to come aboard." 'mΩn'.

"Did you hear that!? What an unfriendly ΩucΩer!! Same to you Matey!"

' Ωp Yours!'

" Ω!". **"Blistering Blue Barnacles!"**

The fog cleared.

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What!? - just what hath this digression to do with wayfaring? You Ω ing authors sure do abuse your privilege.

Abashedly, an excuse proffered: Given the absence of a cause, unless it be to end one war only to begin another, let us draw lots - to decide, whether or no, we ought tender eloquence and elegance in both word and deed.

I know the creation of the twenty-seventh letter, while, in essence, a step backwards towards cuneiform or some hieroglyphical symbol, may exhibit an untoward presumption on my part, and poor taste for the particular selection, still I feel the need for that pictorial expletive, an emphatic rune, when all else fails - and much does fail one. Even Will and Herman could not fashion a beast that would assume a three-dimensionality to pursue, embrace, ennoble, dignify, chastise and move us all.

While my taste may offend the refined sensibilities and while the future (there is one; or is there one?), through technology (some nth generation blogging computer) may develop other means of communication, engender other etymologies, rendering these very twenty-six dwarfs an anachronism (already these other means - 'tools' - speak in a shorthand invented, borrowed, adapted, leaving in its wake a language unto itself infiltrating our very own), it is my belief that basic notions and questions with regard to life, its purpose, imagined cause, and its permanence will always exist as a challenge to any means of communication or any system of symbols employed to elucidate them, provided there exists simultaneously an ape perspicacious and articulate enough to 'catch' everything aright (Long sentence?); and provided it is still alive to catch it. (Longer sentence?).

With the advent of the Z - Zero sub-atomic particle we are obliged to invent a new game (Shorter sentence). (Scramble.)

I would advise one system of symbols be invented, expanded and reserved for those special purposes, literary and otherwise, pertaining to matters beyond the pale of ordinariness; and another system of symbols, diluted and simplified, to be reserved for the mass propagation and inculcation of trivia - and for the furtherance of the Ω ing art of product endorsements. And one must not forget to assign a special category of sounds and markings to the organs of propaganda (disinformation) put forth by dishonest and enslaving governments (ours included), perhaps the greatest abasers of Language and the Mother Tongue.

Bear with me patient reader, I have yet more to add to this man denigrating theme: the utter goo goo gaa gaa; that wretched

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prattle, the total irrelevance of SCRAMBLE; the Fall of Man into Gibberish, all 69 different positions, the - do re me (mi) fa so la te (ti) dos; ae, ai, ar, ba, bo, db, de, di, el, em, en, er, ex, fi, jo, ka, li, lo, mu, na, nu, od, pe, pi, si, ta, wa, wo, xi, ye, qua, zax, zed, zoa; an onna ita goeza. Fie Foh Fum; Bloody Barsteds!

This kind of usage mostly invalidates language, suggesting that most any street sound, grunt, ugh!, asphalt jungle rhythm, let's say, or any system of mystical codes inherent to the inner circles of druggies, politicians, medical men, lawyers, scientists, financiers, psychologists, sociologists, will suffice to more assuredly isolate us from one another, locking us into or out of some formidable exclusivity.

So much of our 'tongue' has been manipulated and diluted in its meaning in order to excite all manner of 'tastes' through the organ of the Media (Madia) and the Market Place (Ave Madisonia) (I believe these two are coterminous) to such a degree that a most fondled syllable or judiciously reserved morpheme lies salaciously ravished and abandoned, and disheveled in their muck and mire, as to become completely abased - and Alas!, rendered completely meaningless. In this last, there is a sinister force at work that places existence at the level of a food vacuole (this may be 'where its at', but it contradicts what I have been told). The parvenu or parasite that becomes the righteous recipient of the dividend demands maximum return on investment; the means to that end - the sullyng of the finest human achievements devised at high cost, and tendered under the most trying conditions, is of little or no consequence as long as one (who) (he or she) gets to bask on the Riviera, sucking on a straw, immersed in abject titillation. Perhaps there are others with refined sensibilities who study etymology, visit museums, attend concerts or congregate with the 'distinguished' and 'notorious'; I have my doubts. I lament the Prostitution of the language.

Though these (who?) righteous food vacuoles have been around for centuries in some ignoble form, they are, in my opinion, something long overdo for extinction. It serves no useful purpose that some other purpose would serve more usefully, and exists only as a vehicle to extend and continue the Dominion of the One over the Other, the Parasite dictating to the Host. I refer specifically to those (who) who abase the language (The Mother Tongue) in the act of screwing the hell out of their fellow (who) man.

"AHOY! Square Away the Main Course!".

ADVENTURE!? If you don't think trying to write all this stuff,

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making it palpable and palatable for oneself and that unknown reader is an Adventure, well think again. Wading in amongst the readers would surely be an adventure; even the well-meaning get pummeled with brickbats, eggs and vile accusations.

Naturally enough, I have wondered at times whether I ought be concerned for the (my) reader, whom, in the end, may only be myself; and if so concerned, how might one adjust to a more defined symbiosis. Perhaps no better than an anachronism myself, an enemy of the Platonist, one inclined to dictate, alas!, that I might suffer reciprocally at the hands of my own Dictum.

While I may serve little useful purpose, I would hope to be one of those whose purpose would be useful. I am unpropertied in the larger sense, therefore do not gain substance through the profits from another man's labors. While I wouldst wag to no discernable purpose, my Dominion over Another would consist in the other's choice exclusively; and that Dominion would exist only during the time any reader would normally use to while away at the Word (or whatever else). That he would willingly pay some compensation for my labor could be construed as naught but a straightforward bargain; I would be giving full measure and would not abridge my fare even if he sought to pay less or pay not at all. I would not seek to sell my services to the highest bidder.

Probably I would not make a very good business man, a fact of which I am not ashamed. Is 'incentive to gain' the proper way to describe one of the manifestations of the business mentality? Whatever, I would hold, as a matter of Common Human Sensitivity, the Least of you higher than any profit; this necessarily being, within me, a steadfast humane principle. There are not too many writers who make big-time money; there are very few who make a sufficient living.

The process for making money is usually out of their hands, and in the hands of the market place. Publishers are a different breed than most writers; while certain of the brethren may seek lots of money, the Publishers seek even more, and any hack will do, dear reader. So what's new? 'Ω'.

Some Adventure! I would propose subsidies for writers, but can you imagine what a bureaucratic nightmare would ensue? It would have some parallels to the attempts to regulate the 'fishing industry' wherein there existed a limited number of fish (readers with time for reading) and an excess number of fishermen/fishing boats (writers [or bagmen]). In order to limit the number of fishermen/fishing boats to equate the limited number of fish, a 'buy-back' of boats (the fish bureaucracy buying a certain number of commercially licensed vessels, removing

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them from circulation). How does one choose who will be bought out? Obsolescence of fishing gear? Age of the fisherman? Through lottery? Or through skill (or lack thereof)? Would one propose there be only so many writers? To qualify for subsidy. (who said anything about subsidy) one must: A.) Produce a book-length epistle, novel; so many verses, dramas etc. B.) Demonstrate skill. C.) Be selected by lottery. D.) Know somebody. E.) Write only expurgated pap. F.) Work through a Government agent. G.) All of the above. H.) Let the Literary Critics decide.

Now there would be a very depressing adventure. You probably get the drift that I would like to be off somewhere; the Enchanted Islands. "MAN THE LIFE BOATS!!".

I have speculated what it would be like to find all of us out there on the high seas, like I have speculated what it would be like if we were all Fishermen or Writers, Chemists or Businessmen. While all five billion cannot be off on boats, because five billion attempting to lose itself on three-quarters of the globe instead of its assigned one-quarter would only third the ratio of bodies per square mile. But whereas one, as long as he is able to cling to a thread of land, is able to endure certain harsh extremes of the Terrible Mother's whims, upon the open ocean, quite another circumstance would prevail, which in the end would mean all five billion would attempt to congregate in the most amenable place. OH, Mah Gud, let me outta here!! I am familiar enough with the aggregations occurring during the summer cruising season, when just a few hundred boats per week rush to the 'publicized' secluded anchorages that everyone seems to know about. Its not really a matter of not 'sharing; its just that bad things happen where too many people congregate. Hah!, Be Cautioned - Paradise is apt to be overcrowded.

If you have followed this harangue and feel abused thereby, in that some promise was not fulfilled, allow me then some compensatory action - a bauble from the 'box of Cracker Jacks'. I had begun with a vain epithet which caused me to be mindful, as it always does, of the paucity of our language in answering the urgency of our needs. Perhaps this represents my own peculiar aphasia. Still when one reckons what we actually do to implement communication, even though we cannot be saved from ourselves, it is a wondrous marvel, that in some small way provides an inkling of hope, if the language itself will survive its own abasement. Still language is, in the end, only a very small part of any real communication.

Surely my jesting number twenty-seven offers little more

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than some ribald bantering to while away another moment. While I might wish to appeal exclusively and cultivate refined sensibilities, it is my belief we are made of baser components; nevertheless we do burst forth occasionally to display a 'marvelous' and inspired 'transfiguration'.

It is my hope I may benefit some day from the abatement of the more spontaneous passions which have led me to the formation of unforgiving judgments regarding my fellow man. However, in the last analysis, I may be guided in my 'precepts' regarding my look-a-likes, through their very own teachings which have conveyed some certain tendency, indicating some vague idealism that has presumed upon its own nature, a nature not inclined to adapt and conform to its own dreamier aspects.

These aspects exist to be confounded by a 'meaner' temperament resulting from Nature's own peculiar disposition which remains uninfluenced, unresponsive and unmoved by our meager or grosser supplications, however earnestly or carefully considered or contrived we are in our efforts to charm 'Her'; and 'She' also ignores our moralizing.

If one is deprived in his judgments on the one hand, as his passions interfere with an attempted evenhandedness of his intellect, and on the other, by the utter realization that a still heavier hand resides in the Universe as an impersonal, indiscriminate and indifferent force to quite diminish our flamboyant specter, - how is one to obtain a grip on this 'nature' of ours? What tactics?

Silence??, as the better part of wisdom, or a constant lamentation as a constant persuasion to abide the Dream?

Obviously these last preceding paragraphs are some kind of exercise performed for my own amusement as much as to render assistance to a recalcitrant humanity, the latter of which, in its multifariousness, eludes the Word and perceives this kind of 'assistance' as meddling. Exposure to some 'social conscience' is akin to a knat in one's ear.

Having thus precluded my own existence, I am free to saunter about 'ghost-like' insinuating myself where I am not wanted.

You doubtlessly observe I am repeating myself. You think I am an actor who offers the same performance each night (like Eugene O'Neill's father in the Count of Monte Cristo). It IS my favorite role; the role of the Alienated Person, who wears his Alienation almost as a badge; a gargoyle who exhibits from on

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high a contemptuous disregard for just about everything, who questions the remainders; attacks sacred cows, whittles away at our most fondled prejudices, our dimwittedness and hypocrisy; who proposes utopian and 'unrealistic' schemes to those whose task it is to devise solutions to our common human problems. Yes!, I am a knat in the ear. I am an Alienated Actor whose buffoonery seems as purposeful incoherence, when in fact the seemingness is a parody of the purported coherence (order) which surrounds us and is passed off as the True Way, much of which unfailingly alienates me.

Yes!, in attempting to make a study and assessment of Man as he awkwardly and unclearly envisions himself, perhaps only in silhouette, and in exploring Man as an IDEA - an IDEA beyond this ordinary observable human clay that is always making excuses and asking for forgiveness, I assail with a thorny and abrasive appraisal that emerges as somewhat Quixotic, somewhat Moralistic (pretending to be reasonable) and suggesting an element of the ABSURD (too far-reaching) - and not shedding much light on the center stage.

Scrabble, Omega, Ω .

We are inclined to sensationalize our encounters with the seas and oceans when they quite overwhelm us, personalizing them. We wretch such expression as "Killer Storm", "Rogue Wave", "Freak Wave", "Cruel Sea", "**R O A RRRR ing Forties**", as though some Man-eating Monster was after us. Doubtlessly we adhere closely to the script; we simply cannot find the words to express our impotence in the face of such insouciance.

When we expectorate 'killer', 'cruel', 'freak', we profess to understand what it is that has happened, and by thus identifying, feel more intimacy with what has happened; maybe the next time it will recognize us in our hapless situation, bypassing us, fondly e'er waving.

These sweeping appellations serve to harness our fear into matter-protoplasm-organ-larynx-tongue-sound-word that we might better persuade some elemental thing to intercede upon our behalf.

We would wish to perceive ourselves as victims, thus qualifying for protection.

We stick our ass in a ringer; we get crimped; we spitefully 'name-call' the ringer "Killer Storm", "Freak Wave", "Cruel Sea". Why not; "Unjust", "Unfair" or "Insouciant Barsted"?

Why not protest: Ω , It's all the same, is it not?

As one sinks beneath the waves, knowledge succumbs as fear supplicates - and we drown regardless.

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I cannot envision the next century looking back upon us wistfully, because I am not given to know such things. I cannot predict with any certainty there will be a next century for man, even though we slipped by 1984. I may suppose, the way things go in this world, it is conceivable, man's preoccupation with the past will grow dimmer and dimmer, for all the more will he have become saturated in a 'nowness', he will seem so unlike his past; nothing it will have to offer will seem relevant - but - but - it is possible he will be all the more desperate for a language with which to cope, even though it has been demonstrated by the facts themselves that words do not accomplish our task; that words, in themselves mean nothing; they may as easily be used to deceive as to convey the truth. That seems not good enough. We require something else, some other medium that harbors its own integrity, in order to sustain the continuity of our cherished human edifice (Sound like a stump speech, a sermon, or a sales pitch?).

Truly it is probably time to Ship Out. I have tarried much too long in this shore leave. I have allowed the vestiges of the aggregate beast to invade and contaminate the free spirit; It is truly time to embark on another journey of purification.

